[GUIDE TO THE NN23 SEA ISLANDERS FILE]

[The NN23 Sea Islanders file was selected for inclusion in the Human Relations Area Files as a representative of one of the few Black North American ethnic groups in the system. The file includes much of the socio-cultural literature on the Georgia and South Carolina Sea Islanders, with perhaps some emphasis on the inhabitants of the islands of St. Helena, Johns, and Wadmalaw.

**Ethnonyms** Gullah-Speaking African Americans

**Orientation**

**Identification.** The term "Sea Islanders" refers to the African American inhabitants of the coastal islands of the southeastern United States. The population is characterized by a distinctive Creole language, Gullah or Geechee, and by a long history of land ownership and autonomy from mainland authorities. The region is often cited as a repository of African cultural "survivals" among New World peoples of African descent.

**Location.** The Sea Islands are a series of over 1,000 transgressive barrier islands extending from South Carolina to the northern border of Florida. Although most are small and uninhabited, the largest and most densely populated (including John's, St. Helena, Port Royal, and Hilton Head) lie between the cities of Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. The major islands are today connected to the mainland by bridges and, on many, the African American population has been displaced by White-owned resort and residential developments. The islands are topographically flat, climatically semi-tropical, and subject to periodic flooding during hurricanes and other storms. The maze of rivers, estuaries, and tidal marshes separating the islands from the mainland provide a rich wetlands environment for a variety of plant and animal species, some of them endangered.

**Demography.** The population of the islands has varied considerably through the years, along with economic cycles of prosperity and hardship. The region has, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, been characterized by an African American majority on the islands and in some coastal mainland communities. African slaves were being imported into the area as early as 1682 and the trade reached a peak of over 11,000 by 1773. This high rate of importation, coupled with a tendency toward large, concentrated land holdings, resulted in a greatly unbalanced population. According to Rose, by 1861 almost 83 percent of the coastal population consisted of slaves. Entire islands and their populations belonged to single landowners and worked under the supervision of one or two White overseers. After the Civil War, much of the former plantation land passed into the hands of the freedmen in the form of small parcels (see below). Sea Islanders participated in the general trend of African American migration from rural to urban areas which characterized the early years of

this century. St. Helena Island, for example, saw a population decline of approximately 45 percent between 1900 and 1930. Jones-Jackson reports that African Americans constituted more than 50 percent of Charleston County in 1930 but only 31.4 percent in 1970. Since resort development accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s, the White population has been growing rapidly. Hilton Head Island, which was almost entirely inhabited by African Americans in 1950, has undergone a particularly dramatic shift, with Whites now holding an eight to one majority.

**Linguistic Affiliation.** The distinctive Creole language spoken by Sea Islanders has long attracted researchers. The terms "Gullah" or "Geechee" are conventionally used to refer to this language (although not to Sea Islanders themselves, by whom they are taken as terms of abuse). Linguists believe that Gullah is the only surviving form of a generalized Plantation Creole which at one time was widespread in the southern United States. This Creole undoubtedly originated as a pidgin, or trade language, from the practical necessity for communication between Africans and Europeans engaged in the West African coastal economy. Gullah is a true Creole in that it differs from other African American dialects of English, which do not vary from the standard in phonology, vocabulary, or syntax, and are thus intelligible to speakers of the standard dialect. Creole languages, on the other hand, may be similar to the "primary" language in vocabulary but differ significantly in grammar and syntax; while the Gullah lexicon is composed of mostly English words, its grammatical rules are demonstrably closer to West African languages such as Ewe, Mandinka, Igbo, Twi, and Yoruba. It is on the basis of these grammatical features and on the lack of intelligibility to English-speakers that Gullah is considered a language in its own right and not a regional dialect of English. Sea Islanders, however, speak a variety of English dialects as well as using Gullah as the first language at home. Choice of language used varies with social context, with "true" or "deep" Gullah reserved for the primary community. Sea Islanders use various dialects of Black American English in their economic or bureaucratic dealings with non-Islanders. It is important to note that there is considerable ambivalence attached to the use of Gullah in public contexts at which outsiders are present. The use of the language is negatively sanctioned by mainlanders, both African American and White, as denoting backwardness, poverty, and rural lack of sophistication. To be called a "Gullah" or "Geech" is to be insulted, inferring that one can neither "talk right" nor understand what others say. With the recent increase in White tourism has come increasing curiosity about the language, and tourists often express surprise that Sea Islanders can "speak English." Islanders frequently find that visitors speak slowly, loudly, and deliberately to them, as if they were deaf or mentally incompetent, and they quite rightly resent such treatment. Yet, Gullah remains the primary language associated with home, family,

and an independent life-style, in spite of the obvious impact of mass media, schools, and out-migration. Children are still taught Gullah as a first language and Jones-Jackson speculates that, for the near future at least, "some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist."

**History and Cultural Relations**

The strategic location of the Sea Islands is reflected in the history of conflict in the region. Port Royal Sound is the deepest and most accessible harbor on the east coast south of Chesapeake Bay; consequently, Spanish, French, and English colonizers all competed for control of the area. Fierce resistance by the indigenous Yemassee peoples made stable European settlement on the southernmost islands impossible until the early eighteenth century. Early British planters came from Barbados, bringing with them a plantation system based on monocrop agriculture and African slavery. The original cash crop, indigo, was replaced by long-staple cotton after the American Revolution. This "Sea Island" cotton produced huge fortunes for the White planters and the region developed a reputation for wealth and luxury. All this came to an end on November 6, 1861, when the Federal fleet, moving north to blockade Charleston, attacked the two small Confederate forts on Hilton Head. The planters evacuated inland, leaving behind their slaves and the year's cotton crop, still in the field. This constellation of events set the stage for the famous "Sea Island Experiment" (or Port Royal Experiment), a federal program to determine whether or not ex-slaves could function as free, small-holding citizens. The experiment, sponsored by the Secretary of the Treasury and administered by a young abolitionist lawyer from Boston, envisioned freed slaves working for wages on government-owned cotton plantations while being prepared for eventual citizenship. Missionaries, teachers, and agricultural specialists were provided by Northern benevolent societies, bringing an influx of young, well-educated, fiercely abolitionist men and women from the North behind the battle lines of the Civil War. As the Reconstruction promise of "40 acres and a mule" was revealed as a myth throughout the rest of the South, Sea Islanders, working with northern advisors, managed to gain legal title to most of the land they had formerly worked as slaves. In the words of Willie Lee Rose, the Sea Island Experiment was indeed a "rehearsal for reconstruction" and one of the few places in the South where African Americans emerged from the war with a secure land base. Although many researchers have stressed the physical isolation of the Sea Islands and imply that their people have been "cut off" since the nineteenth century from mainland U.S. history, this is clearly not the case. In actuality, the islands have never been fully self-sufficient and periodic male labor migration has been an important source of income since boll weevil infestations at the turn of the century destroyed small-holder cotton production. Sea Islanders have historically produced and sold agricultural products in the markets of cities like Savannah and

Charleston, and the men have worked as commercial fishermen and longshoremen up and down the eastern seaboard for generations. What is unique to the island communities is not their geographic isolation but their economic and cultural autonomy. The ownership of land appears to be the crucial variable in Sea Islanders' ability to choose what off-island work they will accept and for how long. Many of the islands instituted their own legal and criminal codes, administered through the churches, allowing them to by-pass the White-controlled "unjust law" of the mainland. Since the 1950s, much of the traditional land-base has been eroded by out-migration, rising property taxes, forced sheriff's sales, and other coercive practices employed by White developers. As a result, the remaining African American population is increasingly dependent upon wages earned in the service sector of the seasonal tourist economy.

**Settlements**

Settlement on the islands follows a dispersed pattern with few nucleated centers or villages. On some islands, notably St. Helena, the boundaries of former plantations remain important community markers and define local identity in significant ways. Adult sons strive to acquire land adjacent to their parents on which to build a house and raise their own families; this practice results, over time, in kin-based clusters or compounds of dwellings around a parental "yard." Guthrie has argued that households as social units (as opposed to physical structures) are defined by the presence of a stove and a woman to cook on it; families are defined as those who "eat from the same pot," regardless of where they physically reside. Mobil homes now provide a low cost alternative to new home construction, although many of the older dwellings conform to the model of the "shotgun house," indigenous to the American South. As waterfront property was the first to rise in value (with concomitant increases in yearly taxes), most remaining African American-owned land is located in the interior, less desirable, portions of the islands.

**Economy**

**Subsistence and Commercial Activities.** After the Civil War and prior to the erosion of the land-base, the islands supported a mixed economy of small farmers and fishermen who produced both for subsistence and for the urban markets of Savannah and Charleston. Infusions of cash were provided by the seasonal employment of men in off-island occupations such as commercial fishing, logging, and dock work. Outside employment was necessary for paying the all-important property taxes on land and for buying the staple foods of rice and grits which were not produced on the islands. Fish, shellfish, game, garden vegetables, and domestic animals produced on the islands provided the rest of the diet. Industrial pollutants have seriously reduced marine resources (particularly the oyster and shrimp populations) and have placed severe limits on the ability of small, independent fishermen to meet subsistence needs. The identification of island men as "fishermen" or

"rivermen," however, remains ideologically important. Full-time employment in the service economy, especially in the resort industry, has now become the major source of income.

**Industrial Arts.** A number of distinctive island crafts have recently become items of interest to tourists. The well-known coiled baskets, made of local materials like pine needles and sweet grass, are an especially popular art form for both domestic use and for sale. Some communities have become specialized in the production of distinctive foods and as destinations for urban excursion boats.

**Kinship, Marriage, and Sociopolitical Organization**

**Marriage and Domestic Unit.** Kinship among Sea Islanders generally follows American cognatic descent. A married couple constitutes the basic unit of the household, which may also contain their direct descendants, together or separately, adopted and foster children, and their co-resident partners. Formalized marriages are preferred and can be documented as far back as the census of 1880, in clear contradiction of the popular notion of African American families as "destroyed" by slavery. Children are considered members of their parents' households until marriage, at which time residence is ideally virilocal. Newly married sons bring their brides into their parents' household until a new dwelling can be provided, preferably in the "yard" or nearby. Additional household members are added through informal adoption and fosterage and by the tendency of young adults working in mainland cities to send their small children to be raised by grandparents in relative rural safety. Households headed by single women typically represent the end of domestic group cycles and consist of widows alone or with grandchildren.

**Inheritance.** Inheritance descends to all children of a married pair equally, although "outside" children whose parents have not married inherit only from their mothers. The increasing number of off-island heirs who hold rights in small parcels of island property has contributed to the acquisition of formerly African American-owned land by White developers.

**Social and Political Organization.** On St. Helena Island, former plantations serve as important socio-political units. Island citizenship is determined through membership in a particular plantation, acquired not by birth or filiation but through "catching sense" in a specific community. Guthrie defines catching sense as a process by which children between the ages of 2 and 10 begin to "understand and remember the meaning of social relationships." Having "caught sense" on a particular plantation confers eligibility for participation in the system of dispute management and litigation which operates through the Baptist Churches and their affiliated "praise houses." The church hierarchy, consisting of the ministers, deacons, and local praise house leaders and their committees, also functions as the politico-jural structure. Disputes between islanders can go through a series of levels within the religious court system; the

goal is to achieve confession and reconciliation between the parties rather than punishment. Islanders who insist on taking cases before the secular courts or "unjust law" of the mainland authorities are sanctioned informally through gossip and general disapproval and may even lose membership in their congregation. Beyond the religious court system, social control is exercised primarily through informal means, such as respect for elders, beliefs in the ability of recently deceased relatives to punish social transgressions, and mechanisms of gossip, reputation, and respect characteristic of small, fact-to-face communities.

**Religion and Expressive Culture**

**Religious Beliefs.** Most Sea Islanders are at least nominal members of the Baptist or Methodist Churches, although many of the smaller island congregations can no longer sustain a full-time minister. The praise house system, as described above for St. Helena, was once widespread on the islands and allowed for immediate, local-level participation in weekday praise meetings which supplemented Sunday services. Praise houses in former times were the settings for "ring shouts," a form of religiously inspired dance. With the decline in the African American population, most praise houses and many churches have fallen into disrepair.

**Medicine.** Local medical practitioners, primarily women who were also skilled as midwives or "grannies," are also rapidly disappearing in the face of restrictive state regulations. The grannies are remembered with great affection and respect for their ability to "put you on your feet out of the woods" through the use of locally available herbal medicines. The general feeling is that White-run hospitals and doctors use the same "plants" in their pills as were known to the grannies, but charge much more for their services. The ability to cause others harm through illness as well as the ability to heal is likewise held to be available to skilled and knowledgeable people.

**Death and Afterlife.** Concepts of death and the afterlife depart from standard Christian doctoring in the belief in multiple souls. While the "soul" leaves the body and returns to God at death, the "spirit" remains on earth, connected to and still interested in its living descendants. Graves are decorated with favorite objects belonging to the deceased in life and elaborate funerals are planned and saved for by the living. Many of the practices relating to the treatment of dead bodies, graves, and burial grounds have clear West African origins. The historical continuity of practices still observable today has been documented by Creel.

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## Source Evaluation

The NN23 Sea Islanders file consists of 11 sources, all in English, dealing with a variety of ethnographic topics. There is no single study in this file that covers all aspects of the ethnography of the Sea Islanders, but a combination of sources 1-4 should provide the reader with a fairly good overview of what these people are like. The first source in the file, 1: Federal Writers' Project, is a pioneering study demonstrating the continuing influence of African folklore among Georgian coastal Blacks as it existed in the late 1930s. The material in this study was gathered by members of the Federal Writers' Project from interviews with sharecroppers and ex-slaves and from other available records (e. g., court records, cemetery inventories, etc.). Although much of the material collected deals with religious practices, such as conjuring (sorcery), death customs, belief in spirits, magic and curing, and baptism, there is also a considerable amount of data here on naming practices, music and musical instruments, dance, and the Sea Islanders' knowledge and beliefs about their African ancestors. 2: Jones-Jackson is an important contribution to linguistics and folklore, and is one of the first book length treatments of contemporary Sea Islanders' language and culture. This source provides a general survey of the area and its people, concentrating on geography, demography, and economics and social history. A major portion of this work is devoted to a study of Sea Islanders' folklore, and story-telling

techniques with a few biographical sketches of some of the prominent storytellers of the area. 3: Creel is basically an historical account of slavery in the South with particular reference to South Carolina, Georgia, and the coastal Sea Islands. Primary emphasis in this work is on the relationship between the community, religion, and resistance to slavery in the early historical period. Creel also provides much additional information on missionary activities, slave-master relations, and the Black religious experience. 4: Carawan & Carawan, dealing with the inhabitants of Johns Island, South Carolina, is a study largely based on memory ethnography -- the community's recollection of its history back to the turn of the 20th century (from ca. 1988). The source contains information on the early days of sharecropping and subsistence activities on the island, as well as on folk medical practices, house types, the religious experiences of the people in the "shouts", the thoughts and feelings of the islanders in experiencing the civil rights movement for the first time, the development of citizenship schools on the island, and the enormous changes that have taken place since the 1960s. The music and songs of the Sea Islanders have long been of much interest to musicologists and ethnologists alike. Quite a bit of detailed information on music, musical instruments, songs, and song texts will be found in: 1: Federal Writers' Project; 8: Smith; 9: Parrish; and 10: Johnson. The language spoken by the Sea Islanders is known as Gullah (or Geechee). It is basically a Creole language combining elements from English with various other West African languages such as Igbo, Ewe, Fanti and Mende. Several of the studies in this file concentrate on this particular aspect of Sea Islanders' culture, notably: 2: Jones-Jackson; 5: Nichols; 7: Jackson; 8: Smith; and 10: Johnson. Culture history is a topic well covered in this file unit. 3: Creel and 4: Carawan & Carawan, as already indicated, contain much information on this subject which is further supplemented with the data contained in 8: Smith and 11: Johnson. Other ethnographic topics given varying degrees of coverage in the file are as follows: slavery, in 3: Creel and 11: Johnson; parental disciplinary practices, in 6: Smith; techniques of methodological analysis (author's data), in 6: Smith; riddles, proverbs, toasts, rhymes, and games in 10: Johnson; and agriculture, particularly in reference to cotton growing, in 11: Johnson.

Special marking decisions for this file are as follows: segregation policies imposed by White South Carolinians on the Sea Islanders -- Category 177; ideas about race relations (by the Sea Islanders themselves) -- Categories 177 and 829; information on the NAACP -- Category 668; the Progressive Club, a consumer's cooperative -- Category 474; biographical information on Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins, founding organizers of the "citizenship schools" -- Categories 159 and 875; Moving Star Hall, as a structure -- Categories 344 and 346 (depending on context); Moving

Star Society -- Categories 794, 456, 767 (depending on context); religious "shouts" -- Categories 796, 786 (sometimes in combination with 533); Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation -- Category 741; root doctors -- Category 759; and hags, a witch and/or disembodied spirit of an old woman who practices witchcraft -- Categories 754 and 774.

The cultural summary of the Sea Islanders which appears here was written by Mary H. Moran for the Encyclopedia of World Cultures. The information presented in the source evaluation was prepared by John M. Beierle in January 1991.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## INTRODUCTION

175 Although in 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited slave importation directly from Africa and in 1808 the Federal Constitution made the African slave trade unlawful, the favorable topography of the Georgia coast encouraged smuggling. The tidewater coastline and large navigable rivers penetrating for miles into the interior facilitated the landing of cargo. Consequently illegal slave traffic flourished in this region until 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* landed its cargo on Georgia soil.

Newspaper advertisements indicate that a large proportion of these early cargoes came from the Gambia River and Niger River sections; later the coast from the Congo River to the southern end of Portuguese West Africa was the base of operation. Accounts of various explorers' travels through Africa at that time, however, indicate that native traders frequently collected their slave cargoes from interior sections and shipped them from the west coast of Africa. Although to the white man, Negroes of an average cargo might have seemed similar in type, it is possible that in many instances they were brought from widely separated regions.

•101 The coastal Negroes of Georgia are sometimes called Gullahs, although in general parlance the term is applied only to the Negroes of coastal South Carolina. Because of the similarity in type and speech, however, it is sometimes loosely extended to include the Georgia coastal Negroes as well. The place name, Geechee, derived from Ogeechee River, near Savannah, is also used locally to designate the Negroes of this district.

175 The coastal plantations that absorbed the slave traffic were remote from one another. The jungle swamps of the low country and the wide expanses of water separating the coastal islands made communication difficult among the plantation laborers of this section. With the continued ar-
(178) rival of Africans to these isolated plantation communities, native ceremonies and customs were renewed or exchanged.

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
795 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
[551] Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
[101] "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
[192] edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25g] and a hog *gulluh*.

[322] To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

•101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one
491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

•101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.'" When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: "'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk'" (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

823

3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

197 113

4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

[114]

7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina

# Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African-American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of significant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

248 249 567 179 178

The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peoples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

101 175 567

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

[p. 15]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina



slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples. 101

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

114 174 101 175 174 197 174

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala (gola, gula)* which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

174 114

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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114 174 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

•101 [567] African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gisi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)."[6] Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11] [578]

174 55 One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

*Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

● 101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
113 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).
113 6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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174 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

[101] 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

[567] 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird. "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy. "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

[113] 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

125 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 212 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, 114 that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived [101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

(p. xi-A)

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
•101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
[464] there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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# GULLAH

## Historical Background

101 Even to those familiar with the American Negro through the medium of either life or literature, the term Gullah is a little-known word for a less-known people. It is applied to a special group-type of Negroes, limited historically and geographically to the sea-islands and the narrow tidewater strip bordering the coast counties of South Carolina and Georgia and a small section of north-east Florida. The 197 language spoken by these Negroes constitutes a patois unique among the dialects of the United States, and differs from the more familiar upland Negro dialects as written by Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, as markedly as those dialects differ from the French Creole of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta.

174 Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came 101 from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River.[1] A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year 1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly

[1]This was the opinion of Mr. Ambrose E. Gonzales, a high authority on Gullah and author of the Black Border Series of Gullah stories. This was also the view of the Rev. John G. Williams. In the Preface to his *De Old Plantation*, Allendale, 1894, he wrote: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and a part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger'. In Appleton's 'New American Cyclopaedia' the Guinea negroes are described as 'black and having thick lips and flat noses', and the Angola, or 'Gulla' negroes as having 'few of the negro peculiarities of form and feature. They are brown in color'. These differences between negroes in the country have been often noticed and remarked upon frequently, the explanation of which differences is that the 'thick lips' and 'flat noses' point to Ashantee and Dahomey as the places from which their ancestors were brought and the 'brown color' and features more like the European in some negroes, very different from the Guineas, point to Angola or 'Gulla' as the country from which their ancestors came. So deeply fixed are the race and even tribal characteristics. There is history in the word 'Gullah', as it is improperly spelt."

[p. 7]

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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174 [10] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [101] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

174 [527] Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing [197] their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1]Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; [127] Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the sources of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Cangmi or Comi Negroes called Gwalla.

[2]Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface [illegible]): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

[8] *In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 16.*
[9] *Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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South Carolina
St. Helena Island

# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers [101] 101 175 567

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. [113]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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•101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 174

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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•101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (567) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field- (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•102
131
133

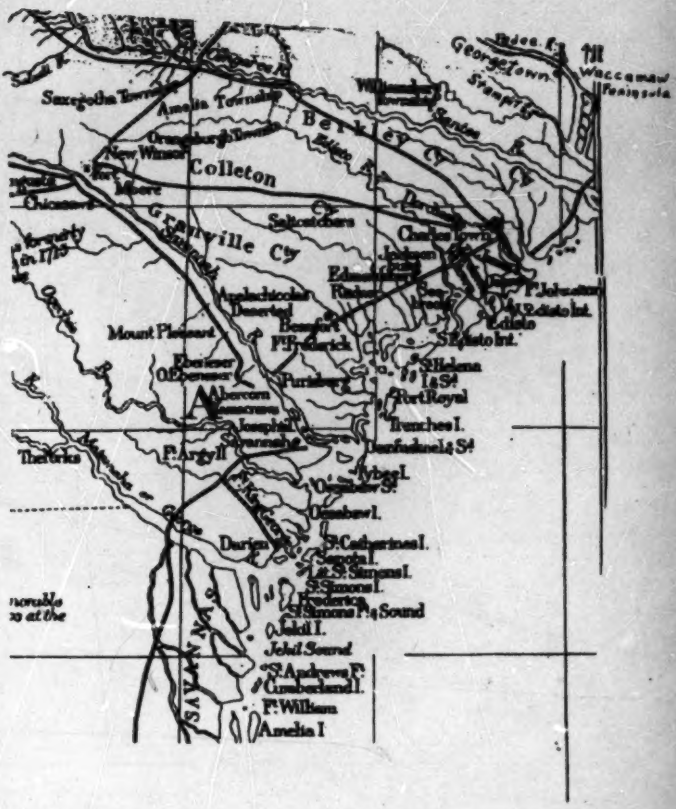
[p. xxviii]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

102
133
131




*Map of the Sea Island Region. (From the South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, vol. 27, no. 4 [October 1926], 189.)*

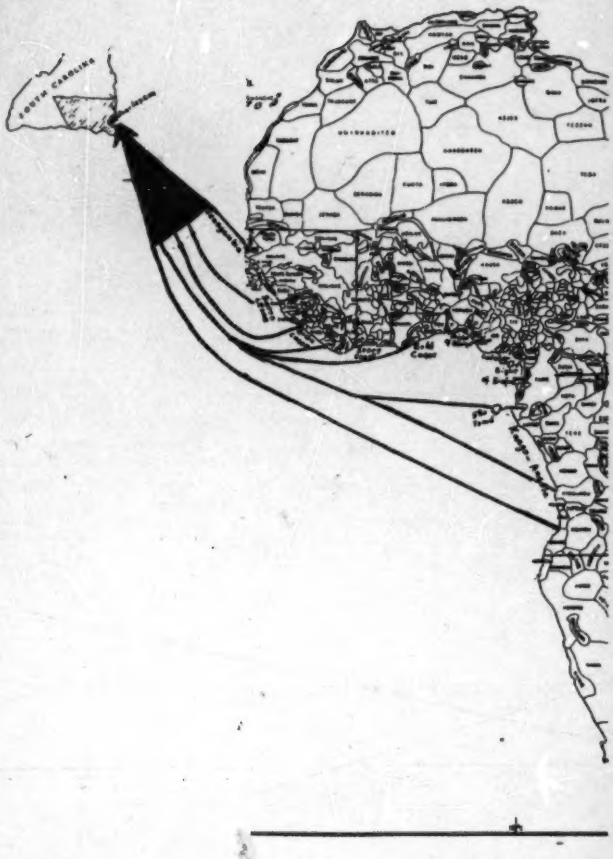
[p. 16]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

•102
175




*Cultural map of Africa.*

[p.32]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

JOHNS ISLAND

[p.vi]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

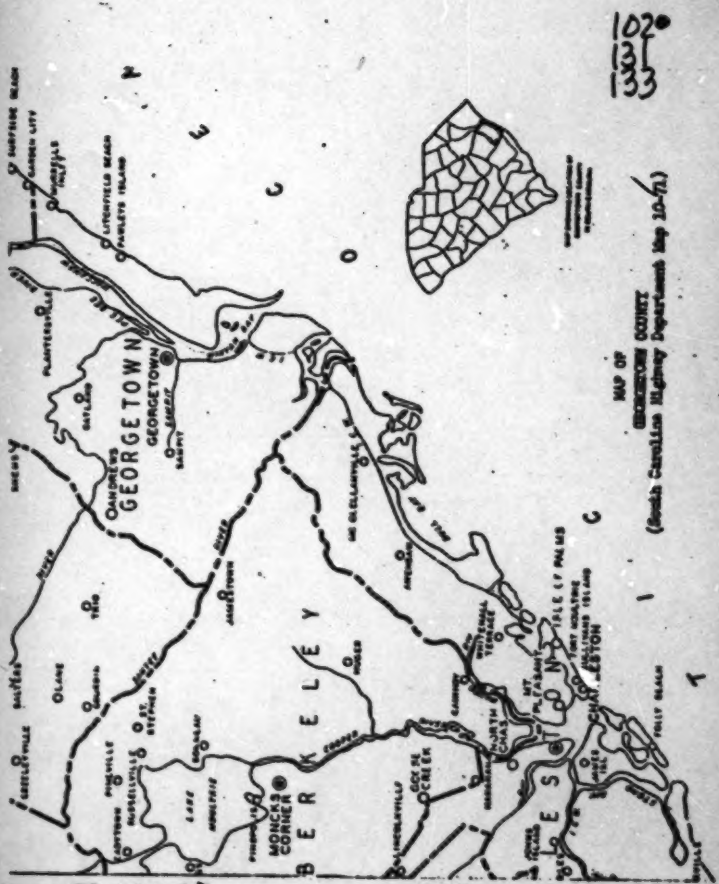
South Carolina

Georgetown

102
131
133

[P.143-A]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown




102
131
133

(P.143-B)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

•102
131
133

3. *Map Showing the Sea Islands*

[p. XXXII]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

[Front End Paper (A)]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

[Front End Paper (B)]

*A Section of Beaufort District from Mills, Atlas of South Carolina (1825)*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff,
361 eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
•103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road
are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which
they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
361 Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and
built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with
blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors
and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491] set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at
the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger
church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
162

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Sapelo Island*

131 SAPELO ISLAND IS ONE OF THE CHAIN OF "GOLDEN Isles" lying along the Georgia Coast. The word Sapelo was
• 103 derived from "Zapala," the name used by the Indians when the island was a favorite hunting ground for the tribes that had given up much of the mainland to the Spaniards and
172 later to the English. Among the landmarks that recall colorful historical episodes are Indian mounds, tabby ruins of colonial days, and the remains of a house built by Jean Berard Mocquet, Marquis de Montalet, a French Royalist who immigrated to Georgia from Santo Domingo about 1797.

000 Plantation life flourished on Sapelo in the early nineteenth century. Here Thomas Spalding conducted one of the most extensive agricultural enterprises in the coastal section. The "big house" on the south end of the island was a spacious tabby mansion, so strongly constructed that the original walls are still standing and form the nucleus of the present dwelling. The island, with the exception of a number of Negro homesteads, is now the property of Richard Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but, although many improvements and changes have been made, much of the atmosphere of the early days has been preserved.

464 Industrial activity is concentrated in the central portion of Sapelo, where there is a sawmill that gives employment to many of the islanders. Nearby are the company houses, a
368 post office, and a store. Several Negro churches and a dance hall are located elsewhere on the island.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Foreword

133 The Sea Islands are low and flat, and they have a beauty beyond
137 description. When I was a child growing up in the South Carolina lowcountry, we used to take Sunday afternoon drives. If we went down from Charleston across the Ashley River and Wappoo Creek onto James Island and then across the Stono River onto Johns Island, we saw great live oaks leaning dreamily over the road. I remember (or perhaps I imagine) that their low branches, almost hidden by gloomy, gray moss, seemed to enclose the road into long miles of gray tunnel. Here and there we passed through swampy lowlands. I was told that in such places snakes and alligators (and haunts and plat-eyes) were lying in wait for bad little boys and girls. The tangled vines and underbrush had a menacing and sinister beauty. Here and there, too, the oak-lined avenue was broken by fields and pastures. Mules and cows dozed and switched flies
[132 under a torrid sun. Rainfall seemed an ancient memory: there were spots where the grass sometimes seemed to have abandoned the effort to be
000 green. And here and there families of black people waved from the porches of small, gray, weather-stained cabins. Shouting children and barking dogs chased one another across neatly swept yards. I can still recall the fresh clouds of fragrance wafted in from the nearby salt marsh and the soft sound of pine needles rustling in the breeze.

133 Atlantic waves break upon a series of barrier islands all along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Tidal streams and inlets, draining an intricate system of shallow, marsh-filled coastal lagoons, separate them from the mainland and from one another. From Waties Island in the
133 mouth of Little River near the North and South Carolina line south past
• 103 the wide beaches and thick dunes of the Grand Strand; past Pawleys and North islands to Georgetown; from South, Cedar, and Murphy islands to Cape Romaine; down past Bull, Capers, and Dewees islands and the Isle of Palms to Charleston; from James and Johns, past Kiawah, Wad-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting, Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle. Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story. They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include *Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.*

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and devel-
[491] opmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## Demography

175 The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Euro-
[103] peans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves
175 and their free descendants.[10] Not many whites or Europeans inhabited
162 the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas
567 have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importa-
567 tion from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African
[178] population. The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14]

175 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-
162

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A [137]
closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 175
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune 103
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen 131
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, [175]
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region. 491 484 [505] 487 505

### THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region. 175

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort [103]

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Glossary*

104 ahmeen—spoken in a prayer
ameela—spoken in a prayer
anansi, An Nancy—spider
balonga—watermelon
belambi, hakabara, mahamadu—spoken in a prayer
boo-boo-no—circular African house of sticks and straw, plastered with mud
cop—to cut, to bleed
cunjuh—magical practices, the casting of spells
de big raid—War Between the States
deloe—water
diffy—fire
dose—conjure mixture
figlin water—wine
flim—pancake
gran—grandfather, grandmother
ground house—African dwelling
gumbo—okra
hakabara—spoken in a prayer
han—a magic charm carried to insure good luck
heaby root—a powerful spell
hoodoo—magical practices, the casting of spells
juba haltuh—water bucket
line scahs—tribal marks
maduba—mistress
ma-foo-bey—ejaculation of surprise
mahaba—master
maulin a bumba—thunder
mojo—charm

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



•104 mosojo—sojo—pot
nayam—to eat
nyana—seafood
planted—place an evil charm
plat-eye—especially dreaded ghost
put down—place an evil charm
rootin—casting an evil charm
saraka—flat rice cakes
settin-ups—wakes
shadduh—ghost
shoutin—rhythmic beating of hands and feet
skinskon—expression of anger
strikin roun—working conjure
tabby—a mixture of lime and oyster shell, used for building material
totem, taboo—forbidden article of food
tuh fix—cast a spell
voodoo—magical practices, the casting of spells
wukin roots—curing by magic

1: Federal Writers' Project. Savannah Unit. Drums and shadows; survival studies among the Georgia coastal Negroes. By the Savannah Unit, Georgia Writers' Project, Work Projects Administration. Introduction by Charles Joyner. Photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. Athens and London, University of Georgia Press, 1986.

46, 274 p.; 40 photographs on 32 plates.

HRAF copy.

[This source represents a pioneering study in demonstrating the continuing influence of African folklore among Georgian coastal Negroes as it existed in the latter part of the 1930s. This work was undertaken by members of the Federal Writers' Project--unemployed novelists, poets, Ph.D.'s, journalists and free-lance writers--who operated as an agency of the New Deal's Work Projects Administration. These fieldworkers interviewed sharecroppers and ex-slaves, studied court records, inventoried cemeteries, and collected oral histories and folklore. The major bulk of the material in this source focuses on interviews with informants in a number of small Sea Island communities (e. g., Old Fort, Tin City, Yamacraw, etc.). Most of the questions asked of the informants are particularly concerned with various aspects of religious customs, such as conjuring (sorcery), death practices, belief in spirits, magic and curing, and baptism, but there is also information here on naming practices, music and musical instruments (particularly drums), dance,

1: Federal Writers's Project

and knowledge and beliefs about the Sea Islanders African ancestors. The comments of the informants are recorded in the dialect of the Coastal Blacks of Georgia and South Carolina, a form of creole language which played an important part in shaping the culture of the area.

Footnotes in the text refer to the appendix at the end of this source and to specific African parallels described therein. (See Category 171, pp. 195-249.).]

Field date: no date

Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Organizational Documents and Reports-5

Processed in 1990

2: Jones-Jackson, Patricia. When roots die; endangered traditions on the Sea Islands. Athens and London, University of Georgia Press, 1987.

30, 189 p.; 15 photographs, 1 figure; 1 map, 1 table.

HRAF copy.

[This source is an important contribution to linguistics and folklore, and is one of the first book length treatments of the contemporary Sea Islanders language and culture. Its sound scholarship and clear and engaging style provide a wealth of information for both professional interest and lay readers. The work is divided into four major chapters. Chapter 1 provides a survey of the area and its people, with data on geography, demography, and economic and social history. Chapters 2 and 3 make up the largest portion of this book. Chapter 2 provides much information on the settings in which folktales are told, the techniques employed in story-telling, and biographical sketches on some of the prominent storytellers. Chapter 3 consists of Sea Islanders prayers and tales, with comparisons made to some of their African counterparts. The final chapter, chapter 4, is strongly oriented to the linguistic features of the Sea Islanders speech, again with comparative data provided on African parallels. Four appendices conclude this work providing information on fishing, a text of a Brer (Buh) Rabbit tale, a phonetic text concerning the soul

2: Jones-Jackson

and spirit, and the land question in contemporary society.]

Field date: 1973-1986 Evaluation: Linguist-5
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

3: Creel, Margaret Washington. "A peculiar people"; slave religion and community-culture among the Gullahs. New York and London, New York University Press, 1988.

18, 417 p.; 12 plates; 2 maps, 9 tables.

HRAF copy.

[This study is a general historical account of slavery in the South, with particular reference to South Carolina and Georgia, and the Sea Islands along the coast. Given primary emphasis in the source is the relationship between community, religion and resistance as these concepts affected the Afro-American population during the period of slavery. The work is divided into four major parts. In Part I, the African background of the slaves is discussed. This section includes information on the slave trade itself, ethnic composition of the slave population, and the significance of the African socio-religious legacy. Part II deals with Black-White relationships, or "counterpoints", as the author calls it, up to the War of Independence. This section deals with missionary activities, slave-master relations, and the Black religious experience -- the Great Awakening, and the development of a Black-to-Black spiritual interaction. The Black-White relationship concept is continued into Part III, but here the subject is rebellion and the White's reaction to it in the form of repression. In this section Creel discusses the efforts of Methodist laymen and Baptist planters to convert the Gullahs, and their reaction

3: Creel

in turn to Christianity, slavery, and life in bondage. The counterpoint technique is dropped in Part IV, with the discussion turning to a presentation of Gullah socio-religious culture in a collective setting. Here information is provided on how the Gullah interpreted Christianity, how various aspects of their African heritage were integrated into this "new" religion, and their general attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural.

Much of the generalized information on slavery in the South and on mainland South Carolina and Georgia has been marked only for Category 175, to provide background information for later discussions on slavery in the Sea Islands when and where these references occur in the text.]

Field date: no date Evaluation: Historian-4
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

4: Carawan, Guy. Ain't you got a right to the tree of life? The people of Johns Island,South Carolina--their faces, their words, and their songs. Revised and expanded edition. Recorded and edited by Guy and Candie Carawan. Photographs by Robert Yellin, et al. Music transcribed by Ethel Raim. Preface by Charles Joyner. Afterword by Bernice Johnson Reagon. Athens and London, University of Georgia Press, 1989.

24, 240 p.; 141 photographs; map.

HRAF copy.

[This work is an oral record of sea island life, based on the community's recollection of its history. These memories reach back from the ethnographic present (1988) to the turn of the century. The source describes in detail the thoughts and feelings, joys and trepidations of Blacks' first experiencing the civil rights movement. It tells of the early days on the island when sharecropping and "living out of the creek" were the primary means of subsistence. It tells of medical care based exclusively on herbal remedies, and of log houses daubed with pinestraw and mud. In these pages the islanders speak of the Moving Star Hall praise house where religious "shouts", carried well into the night, raised the spirits of the participants in a time of extreme poverty and social injustice. This source also presents much material on the development of the citizenship

organizers, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins. The work concludes with a discussion of the enormous changes that have taken place on Johns Island from the 1960s, (when the last edition of this book was published), to the present time, not only in civil rights and educational development, but in many other aspects of the culture as well.]

Field date: 1959-1988 Evaluation: Folklorist, Sociologist-5

Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

5: Nichols, Patricia Causey. Linguistic change in Gullah: sex, age, and mobility. Dissertation (Linguistics)---Stanford, Cal., Stanford University, 1976. University Microfilms, Publications, 76-26,049. Ann Arbor, Michigan, Xerox University Microfilms, 1976 [1989 copy].

2, 9, 152 l.; 11 figures; 1 map, 7 tables.

HRAF copy.

[This is a study of linguistic change in Gullah, the language spoken by the vast majority of Blacks living along the Georgia and South Carolina coasts and the adjacent Sea Islands. The author attempts to show how rapid change in this creole-like language can be observed today as it functions across age and social groups and within cohesive speech communities. Nichols believes that as a contribution to an emerging theory of linguistic variations this work will provide evidence that changes of this nature are systematic both for individuals and for speech communities, and can be activated by social factors such as sex, age and population mobility, which may vary from one community to the next. To illustrate this concept a comparison is made between island communities and those on the nearby mainland. A major portion of the discussion of linguistic change in Gullah deals with a detailed analysis of the grammar.]

Field date: no date Evaluation: Linguist-5
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

6: Smith, Franklin O. A cross generational study of the parental discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks of the Carolina Sea Islands. Dissertation (Education)---Amherst, University of Massachusetts, 1973. University Microfilms, Publications, 73-14,681. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms, 1973 [1989 copy].

3, 7, 84 l.; 6 tables.

HRAF copy.

[The primary goal of this research investigation is the study of patterns of discipline in contemporary Sea Island society. The author identifies the discipline habits of Sea Island parents, measures the direction and extent of change in these habits and beliefs across three generations of the population, and discusses the affective influence of isolation on them. Most of the primary data in this source were obtained from interviews with the members of fourteen family units on the five Sea Islands of James, Johns, Yonges, Wadmalaw and Edisto. A structured questionnaire was used to record the responses of those interviewed, which was later submitted to statistical data analysis using the chi-square and Fisher Exact Test procedures to compute the significance of the responses at the .05, .01, or .001 levels. These tests were designed to analyze the relationship between the variables of island isolation, generation, and sex in reference to disciplinary practices. The discussion of the

6: Smith

results of these text make up the major bulk of this source.]

Field date: no date

Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Indigene, Educator-5

Processed in 1990

7: Jackson, Patricia Ann Jones. The status of Gullah: an investigation of convergent processes. Dissertation (Linguistics)---Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1978. University Microfilms, Publications, 7813672. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms International, 1978 [1989 copy].

3, 5, 175ℓ.; 1 figure; 10 tables.

HRAF copy.

[This study is based on three years of field research by the author from July 1973 through August 1976, primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. Additional linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs, and James Islands. The focus of Jackson's research is on the study of the Gullah language, its placement within the Creole language family, and linguistic change from the early days of slavery to the present day. The author reviews and critiques various theories of linguistic change, notably those suggested by DeCamp, Rickford, Turner, Bickerton and Cunningham, and then presents her own analysis of the language based on the quantitative investigation of evolutionary patterns of retention and movement in Gullah with a discussion of the dynamics involved in this variation and movement process through a detailed analysis of grammar and phonology (p.5). Comparisons are made throughout the text to comparable linguistic elements in the mainland Black dialect. The source concludes with the presentation of several Sea Island texts

7: Jackson

illustrating in context various manifestations of Gullah/Creole phonology, syntax and morphology.]

Field date: 1973-1976 Evaluation: Linguist-5
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

8: Smith, Reed. Gullah. Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190. Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina, Bureau of Publications, 1926.

45 p.

Yale: Fzj2 1 Sm6.

[This source is essentially a linguistic study of the Gullah dialect of the Carolina-Georgia coast and adjacent Sea Islands, preceded by a brief historical introduction. The linguistic material which comprises the bulk of the source is relatively superficial in coverage and deals with Gullah as a dialect itself, and its grammar, phonology, and vocabulary. A list of common proverbs is appended at the end of this section. The work concludes with a brief study of Sea Islander songs, primarily "spirituals", and their origins.]

Field date: no date Evaluation: Humanist-4,5
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

9: Parrish, Lydia. Slave songs of the Georgia Sea Islands. Music transcribed by Creighton Churchill and Robert MacGimsey. Introduction by Olin Downes. New York, Creative Age Press, 1942.

32, 256 p.; 32 photographs on 25 plates; map, music.

Yale: Cross Campus Library M1670 P37 +S6 (LC).

[Indelibly impressed with the sounds of the Negro songs she had heard as a child in Philadelphia during the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the author's interest was stimulated to learn more about this fascinating form of music. Many years later Mrs. Parrish found herself the owner of a home on St. Simon's Island on the coast of Georgia, a district which turned out to be a veritable sanctuary of Afro-American music. Her investigation of the subject soon branched out into the neighboring territories of the coasts and islands of Georgia and South Carolina, even extending as far as the Bahamas and Haiti. The collection of slave songs presented in this source represent twenty-five years of research by the author (p.v) working with Sea Island informants who had intimate knowledge of the songs. In this study, Parrish provides some general background information on the slave songs and their preservation, then divides them into five major categories for discussion: those that represent African survivals on the coast of Georgia; the type

9: Parrish

known as "shout" songs; ring-play, dance, and fiddle songs; religious songs; and work songs. Each category contains background information on the particular type of song style represented, as well as the accompanying song text and musical score.]

Field date: ca. 1916-1941

Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation:
Folklorist-4,5
Processed in 1990

10: Johnson, Guy B. Folk culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

12, 183 p.; music.

Yale: Cross Campus Library E185.93 S7 J64 (LC).

[This source is divided into three parts dealing with the dialect, folk songs, and folklore of the Sea Islanders of St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Part I, dealing with the Gullah dialect, provides information on the cultural background of this unique language, including data on phonology, grammar and vocabulary. The effects of African influence on the dialect is also discussed. In part II the author describes the current (i. e., ca. 1930) status of folk songs on St. Helena Island, with particular emphasis on the Negro spiritual and its derivation. Here the author digresses to some length to show the relationship of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The final section of this work, part III, sketches briefly the folklore of the island, with several illustrative text examples to give concreteness to the discussion. This section also contains information on riddles, proverbs, toasts, rhymes, and games.]

Field date: no date

Analyst: John Beierle

Evaluation: Social Scientist-4,5

Processed in 1990

11: Johnson, Guion Griffis. A social history of the Sea Islands, with special reference to St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

12, 245 p.; 5 photographs; 2 maps.

Yale: C 66 401.

[This source presents a cultural and economic history of the Sea Islands of Georgia and South Carolina from the pre-revolutionary period (ca. 1525) up to the close of the Reconstruction Period following the American Civil War (ca. 1880). The primary focus of the study is on the island of St. Helena. Much of the information presented here represents the ante-bellum period of history and covers such topics as the special crops grown in the area -- rice, indigo, and especially cotton; slavery; the planters and the management of the large plantations; the Federal occupation period during the Civil War; and the aftermath of the freeing of the slaves. Emphasis throughout this work is placed on cotton production and the use of slaves as a source of labor. Data on the White planters and the management of their plantations will be found only in Category 116, pp. 103-123.]

Field date: no date Evaluation: Historian-4,5
Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

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[For additional bibliographical citations, see Category 113.]

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5. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *American Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 667–70, 674–75; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 13, 16–18, 27, 28, 32; Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 5–6, and "Political Function of the Poro," Part I, 349–56, and *Mende*, 240–43; Richard Fulton, "The Political Structures and Functions of Poro in Kpelle Society," *American Anthropologist* 74 (1972): 1222–23; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 176–86, 217–36; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II; 10–12, 16–22.

6. Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 671; Little, "Political Function of the Poro," Part I, 357–58, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 200–205, and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 1, 4–6, 9–10; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 19–20, 6–7, 15, 31; Matthews, *Voyage to Sierra Leone*, 82–83; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Primitive Political Systems: A Preliminary Comparative Analysis," *American Anthropologist* 61 (1959): 202–3, 208.

7. Little, "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–206, and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 3–4 and "Political Function of the Poro," Part I, 350–54; Fulton, "Functions of Poro in Kpelle Society," 1221, 1226–27; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64, no. 3 (1962): 513–14 and "Gola Society and Culture," 70–76.

8. Little, *Mende*, 226–27, 240–47 and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 3 and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–201; Fulton, "Functions of Poro in Kpelle Society," 1226–28; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 3–9, 11–12, 29–31.

9. Harley, "Notes on Poro," 7.

10. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 70; Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 2; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 67.

11. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 70, and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* I (1980): 15–16 and "Mask Makers and Myth in Western Liberia," in A. Forge, ed., *Primitive Art and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 126–130; see also Margaret Washington Creel, "The Significance to Female Diviners in Antebellum Slave Communities," unpublished paper presented at the Dark Madonna Symposium, November 8–9, 1986, University of California, Los Angeles.

12. Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 1, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 210–11; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 5; Dominique Zahan, *The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 53–65; Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–92; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 258.

13. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); John S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1962), 104–13, 174–76; Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Jurong, Singapore: FEP International Private, 1978), 14–29; J. B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1944), 30–42; R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (London: Clarendon Press, 1923), 1–2; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 192–97; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, 1:5; John H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive BaKongo* (London: Seeley, Service, 1914), 276; Kwabena Amponsah, *Topics on West African Traditional Religion* (Accra, Ghana: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 20–30; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 132–41; Janheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture*, trans. Marjorie Greene (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 104–8; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Re-*

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*ligion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), 39–41, 83–86; Little, *Mende*, 2, 217–18; W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 2–13, 119–20; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 22–24, 163–69; Folkways Research Series, *Traditional History of Folklore of the Gbebo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83, 123, and *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 21, 25, 27; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 156; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 6–7; Gamble, Wolof, 39; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols., (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 222, 226; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1958, repr. from 1807 ed.), 60–61; Karl Laman, *Kongo*, 5 vols. (Uppsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensis, 1962) III: 1–2, 53–63; Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), 244–45; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 72–76; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 4–5, 28–38, 159–62; Willie Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 52–56; Beryl L. Bellman, *Village of Curers and Assassins; on the Production of Fala Kpelle Cosmological Categories* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), 129–30; see also John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970). This author's approach seems more theological than anthropological or historical. African concepts of God are placed in Christian theological terms rather than discussed and interpreted in their own contextual environments. An older study is Edwin Smith, ed., *African Ideas of God* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1950). It provides the best information on concepts of God among various African peoples.

14. Jahn, *Muntu*, 109–14; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 167–69, 181; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 194–96; Little, *Mende*, 218–221; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18, 30–33; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 6–7; John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 34; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27–28, 42–47, 134, n. 50, and passim; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103–58; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 245–49.

15. Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 26; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 159–62; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 88–90; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 199; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 27, 29; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 153; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 59–60; Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God*. 153–64.

16. Laman, *Kongo*, III: 1–6, 216–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 43.

17. Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 76–82; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 26–27, 75–76; Harris & Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 216; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 35–39; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 11–12, Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 85–91.

18. Igor Kopytoff, "The Suku of Southwestern Congo," in James L. Gibbs Jr., ed.,

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51. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 6–9; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 1–2.
52. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
53. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
54. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 13.
55. Ibid., 14, 36–37.
56. Ibid., 15–28, 31–33, 36–39.
57. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 45–56, 364, n. 3; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 27, 61.
58. Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 96–98; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 400.
59. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 484, 498–501 and II: 436–38; Anon., probably George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America* (London: J. Hart, 1743), 3–6; Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery," 243–56.
60. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 438; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 5–6; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 162.
61. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 499–509; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–22; Joseph Ottolenghe to SPG, December 4, 1751 and July 12, 1758, SPG, London Mss. of Dr. Bray's Associates; Habersham to William Knox, July 17, 1765 and November 26, 1770, *Habersham Letters*, 38, 95–99, 102, Wood, *Black Majority*, 324–25; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 40; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–86.
62. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 160–65; Darold D. Wax, "Georgia and the Negro Before the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1967): 73–75.

## 5. *An Almost Chosen People*

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1. Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), Bibliographic Note; Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September, 1863): 295; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 11–12.

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2. Robert Starobin, ed., *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 11; John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 132–37; updated ed. of *Insurrection in South Carolina: The Turbulent World of Denmark Vesey* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1964); Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, 1744–1849, SCHS; William Jones to Samuel Jones, Jane Bruce Jones Mss, 1784–1831, SCL; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 4–14, 18, 21–22, 57–59, 111; Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 133–36.

3. Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition* 6 no. 3 (1985): 57–58; Joseph Cepas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1938), 17, 19–24; Peter H. Wood. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 285–307, 314–35; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 31–36; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 157. Although Morgan offers no explanation for the discrep-

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175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of
•112 the difference between the two colonies.

[669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
567 Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern*
113 *World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 138.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

175 8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its
113 harshaness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better conditions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–94; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

17
113 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*

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cock Jones. But Jones began about ten years after Capers. See Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 39–45 and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155–57.

11. Andrew, "Slave Population," 314–15.

12. Ibid., 316–19, 322.

13. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 356–61, 365–66, 452–53, 460–62; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 350–62. For a different, more sympathetic view of the Methodists, see Sidney G. Diamond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), passim, especially 18–41, 87–103, 254–73.

14. Andrew, "Slave Population," 321.

15. Letter about the life of George W. Moore, missionary to the slaves in South Carolina, written at the time of his death in 1863 (name of writer of the letter is illegible), HSSCC; Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; *CAJ*, March 16, 1932. Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Pinckney, *Address*, 23, (Appendix); Andrew, "Slave Population," 314; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 66–69. Both Jackson and Fickling take the position that the South Carolina Conference made the first moves toward religious instruction. They probably got this impression from Jones, *Religious Instruction*. In Georgia, two associations were formed by planters for religious instruction in 1830–31. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155.

16. *CAJ*, April 12, 1833, January 22, 1836; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, January 9, 1839, 14–18, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288–91, 295–96; Andrew, "Slave Population," 315–16; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 72–73.

17. Courtlandt Van Renssalaer letter, n.d. (between 1835 and 1836), SHC; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 90–91; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 93–96; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, *CAJ*, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 86; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96.

18. Van Renssalaer letter, SHC.

19. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

20. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 78–79; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

21. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 74–80; Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–18; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 86–87. For an excellent treatment on this surge of activity, see Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4.

22. *CAJ*, May 3, 1833, October 22, 1833.

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23. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Virginia C. Holmgren, *Hilton Head: A Sea Island Chronicle* (Hilton Head, S. C.: Hilton Head Publishing, 1959) 61–67; James Kirk to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 12, 1833, HSSCC.

24. Holmgren, *Hilton Head*, 130–31; William Pope, Sr. to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

25. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834: James Sealy to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

26. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

27. George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of*

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*American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University 19 (1941): 3, 7; Wilfred D. Hambley, "Initiation of Boys in Angola," *American Anthrologist*, 37, ser. 2, (1935): 36–40.

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28. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

29. Ibid. and June 20, 1934.

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30. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–90. The First African Church's association with white ministers and with the regional Baptist Association was anything but smooth. Because many members were slaves, the African Church was subjected to jurisdictions contrary to Baptist policy. In January 1833, Marshall was barred from preaching in his own pulpit, and the Church expelled from Georgia's Sunbury Association. This struggle and turmoil lasted for five years. The Church managed to keep its status, but lost many members before returning to the good graces of white Baptists. See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–94.

31. *CAJ*, October 4, 1833.

32. Ibid.

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34. John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 14, 1834, January 31, 1834, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836. Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, July 29, 1836; Pierce Butler to James Smith, March 19, 1839, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 38 Letterbook 1838–1840, HSP; *SCA*, June 26, November 13, 1840.

35. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 9, 1839, 18 and December 25, 1844, 19, HSSCC.

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38. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 134–35; R. King, Jr. "On Management of the Butler Estate and Cultivation of Sugar Cane," *Southern Agriculturalist* (December, 1828): 597; Kemble, *Journal*, 42. For a different version, one which views the power of the driver as representing an enlargement of black autonomy for Lowcountry slaves in general, see Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the*

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40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1763 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21. 175 113

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43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal*, 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction;* The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27. 567 113 [248] [461]

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57. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Allen Diary, 37, 71, 87–88; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Whipple, July 3, 1863, AMA; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 32–33, 40–41.

58. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 377; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 674; Allen Diary, 32, 143; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158–59, 162, 179–81, III (3) 273–75.

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60. Allen Diary, 48, 62, 72, 84.

61. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 456–58.

62. Ibid., 124.

63. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, March 31, 1849, 133, May 5, 1849, 134, June 30, 1849, 135, BC.

64. Thomas Wentworth Higginson to Louisa Higginson, October 23, 1863, Papers of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Allen Diary, 91–92; Typescript copy of Diary of Laura M. Towne (varies from Ms. Diary), April 3, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. Theodore Rosengarten perhaps in support of arguments favoring paternalism on the Sea Islands (a point on which we disagree), maintains that black sentiments toward masters "were sometimes not always understood or accurately rendered by the people who solicited information." He cites by example, Laura Towne's reaction to Clarence Fripp's relationship with his slave Rachel. They lived together openly, and during the war, Fripp deeded over his plantation to Rachel. Towne said Fripp "led an infamous life, too bad to write of, to vile to speak of." Rosengarten implies that Towne's disgust toward Fripp centered on his living with Rachel. Yet Laura Towne was not so naive as to condemn Fripp for this alone, However, she was very upset upon learning that Clarence and his two brothers passed Rachel around for sexual favors. "She lived with her master and his two brothers infamously and her children are almost white," wrote Towne. Thus Towne reacted to the wanton license exercised by the Fripps toward slave women. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 166; Towne Diary Typescript, February 14, 1864, Penn School Papers, vol. 2, SHC.

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[For additional bibliographical citations, see Category 112.]

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### *Notes*

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

"I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
775 is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
787 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
556 Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114

127 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

122 4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

113

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123

123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

609

113

## Chapter 1

131 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

113

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

Ra. 1697

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•113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building [505] materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some 775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see 567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

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113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority*; and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on
264 the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an
825 avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks
538 drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

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825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which [805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the [554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

•113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

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764 178 171 on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

113 53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thought for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

## Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

538 3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

113 4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

000 10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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## Chapter 3

782 533 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

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000 19. 1 Cor. 1:53–54.

782 20. "Ain't gonna study war no more" is a reference from an old Negro spiritual. The concept itself comes from several references to war in the Bible, such as Ps. 46:0, Isa. 2:4, and Mic. 4:3.

000 21. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16–27.

22. Job 3:17.

128 23. I am again indebted to Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton, who assisted in transcribing this sermon from a recording made during the church service.

538 24. For further discussion of the call-and-response technique see Grace Sims Holt, "Stylin' outta the Black Pulpit," in *Rappin' and Stylin' Out*, ed. Thomas Kochman •113 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 189–204.

538 25. The Gullah and African tales given in this chapter are classified according to the scheme set out by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale* 128 (Helsinki: *Suomalainen Tiedeakatenia*, 1961). Motifs and the names and numbers as- [113] signed to tale types are from Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58).

In the search for systematic methods of presenting such paralinguistic features as voice quality and nonverbal expressive phenomena, Ray L. Birdwhistell proposed a system of notation for describing certain sound phenomena, for example, an arrow pointing upward or downward to indicate various pitch ranges. He likewise developed an elaborate notational system for analyzing body motions and gestures, a system that distinguished hip, leg, ankle, shoulder, wrist, arm, and other movements (see Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*). Some of these notations are quite complex, and they are not yet widely used. Here, because the language of the narratives is complex in itself for most English-speaking readers, I decided to eliminate reading handicaps by minimizing foreign symbols that would tend to interrupt the natural flow of the tales.

538 26. For example, Richard Dorson has a variant of this tale in *American Negro Folktales*, p. 114.

000 27. This observation was brought to my attention by Charles Joyner, who is a native of the South Carolina coastal area.

113 28. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands;* Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* Florence M. Cronise and Henry Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider and the Other Beef* (Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969); and Dorson, *African Folklore*.

000 29. The precautionary measures taken here do not assure that the Igbo tales collected were not influenced by other cultures. No culture can be totally without outside influence; I tried only to decrease the likelihood of obtaining tales with non-African origins. Accordingly, I collected the tales from children and adults only in their native tongue. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, those in remote areas have little reason to use it. I also did not ask to hear any particular type of tale, nor put any restrictions on the length or number of tales told by any one person. I asked simply to hear some of their stories.

30. I am indebted to the renowned Igbo writer Obi Egbuna for his observations concerning African folktales and their implications in Igbo society. Any misrepresentations that might remain are, of course, my own.

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•113 31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

101 1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Af-*
175 *ricanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to
the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City
567 Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote
in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corrup-
tion of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower
Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of
the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of
one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the
[829] Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the
people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz
"Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar,
and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla"
Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas
wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

000 2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

823 3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and
water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Fran-
cis's reply is not without some merit.

197 4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the
113 American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*,
Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South
Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II*
(New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co.,
1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

[114] 7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has re-
cently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in
Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coex-
isted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)."
(Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;*
Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson,
"The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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CHAPTER 1

# Gullah Roots

175 The majority of the tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast were active participants in the Atlantic slave-trade. . . . But the Mandingas, Susus and Fulas stood well to the fore—partly because of their own key role in the slaving operations on the Upper Guinea Coast, and partly because they succeeded in reducing many of the littoral peoples and the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon to a state of vassalage, under the banner of Islam.*

But I must own to the shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kidnapped and betrayed by my own complexion, who were the first cause of my exile and slavery; but if there were no buyers there would be no sellers.**

## *Ethnic Origins and Carolina Preferences*

European traders divided the African shoreline into Upper and Lower Guinea, although opinions differed on where the division occurred. In this study Upper Guinea refers to the area from the Senegal River north, called the Senegambia, to the Cross River south, termed the Slave Coast. Lower Guinea is south of the Slave Coast, to the Kongo-Angola region. Most Africans imported into South Carolina were taken from trading stations in four areas of the Guinea Coast. From Lower Guinea Africans mainly from the Kongo and Angola region comprised black cargoes destined for Charleston. From Upper Guinea they came from the land between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, present-day Gambia; from the

[113] *Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 436.

[113] **Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969; repr. from 1787 ed.), 12.

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CHAPTER 2

# The Socioreligious Heritage

171 One of the most interesting problems of pre-colonial history is the relation of so-called secret societies to indigenous government. . . . Associations of this kind are prevalent . . . and are particularly numerous in the coastal area of rain-forest . . . including the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone. . . . They are not secret in any other respect. On the contrary, not only is the existence of these societies known . . . , but in many places the wide range of their activities makes them the dominant social force.*

In the case of a burial site, the coffin and the mound are the obvious containers; the soul of the deceased is the spark. In addition, . . . there are decorative objects that, in both Kongo and the Americas, cryptically honor the spirit in the earth, guide it to the other world, and prevent it from wandering or returning to haunt survivors. . . . The surface "decorations" frequently function as "medicines" of admonishment and love, and they mark a persistent cultural link between Kongo and the black New World.**

## *Upper Guinea Culture Circles*

Just as the impact of the slave trade in the West Atlantic region of the Guinea Coast has been treated with relative disinterest, so also has this area's cultural homogeneity either been glossed over or dismissed as the result of recent intergroup contact and European administration. For purposes of study Upper Guinea is not particularly rich in documentation, nor did the societies there possess high degrees of political central-

[113] *Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro," Part I, *Africa, Journal of the International African Institute* 35 no. 4 (October, 1965): 349.

[113] **Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 132.

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CHAPTER 3

# Missionaries and Masters

000 The ignorance therefore of these poor slaves in the principles of Christianity in a Christian country and under a Christian government is not so much their fault as their unhappiness in falling into the hands of such ill masters who not only neglect to instruct them but scoff at those that attempt it, and give them likewise strange ideas of Christianity from the scandalous lives they lead.*

We apprehend the Master, acting according to the law of your Province, in gelding his slave hath not committed any crime, to give any offence to any member to break communion with him in the Church.**

## *Anglicans*

175 In 1701, about thirty years after the founding of Carolina, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was established in order to bring the Anglican church to the British colonies. The SPG was also chartered to Christianize so-called heathen blacks and Indians. In South Carolina the two missions were at variance throughout the Society's presence there.[1]

South Carolinians first came into contact with Indians through trade and war. The practice was to enslave Indian prisoners of war, and early eighteenth-century letters of Society missionaries mention Indian slaves often enough to indicate their sizable presence among the bondspeople. The Society hoped to address the spiritual needs of both slave and free

*South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8.

**Baptist Church in Devon, England to Baptist Church at Charles Town 1710, from William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 501.

[113]

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CHAPTER 4

# Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening

Just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text and looking round . . . as I thought directly upon me, and pointing his finger, he uttered . . . "Prepare to meet thy God O'Israel." . . . I was struck to the ground and lay both speechless and senseless. . . . When the people were dismissed, Mr. Whitefield came in to the vestry, and being told of my condition he came immediately, and he said, "Jesus Christ has got thee at last."*

As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children to parents, or from young to old.—They are as 'twere a Nation within a Nation. In all country settlements, they live in contiguous houses, often 2, 3, or 4 families in one house, slightly partitioned into so many apartments, so they labor together, and converse almost wholly among themselves, . . .**

## *The Coming of George Whitefield*

The late 1730s were trying times for South Carolina as one calamity after another befell the province. In 1737, widespread fear and alarm occurred over a pending Spanish attack which never came. In 1738 and 1739 smallpox and yellow fever ravaged the colony. In 1739 the Lowcountry was shaken by a slave uprising that left more than sixty people dead. It was no wonder that many residents of pleasure-loving Charleston were psychologically prepared for the coming of George Whitefield

*William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785), 13.

**Alexander Garden to London Office, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury.

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CHAPTER 5

# *An Almost Chosen People*

"How is it," asked Samuel Johnson, "that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"* 000

Mingo said *that all those belonging to the African Church are engaged in the insurrection, from the country to the town—that there is a little man among them who can't be shot, killed, or caught, who was to be their general, and who would provide them with arms—that some arms were provided but he did not tell me where they were.*** 175

## *Rebels and Outlaws: White Independence, Black Liberation*

On November 9, 1861, a Massachusetts man, S. M. Weld, was going through "old pamphlets and newspapers" in the garrett of Baptist planter William Pope's deserted house at Hilton Head Island. It was two days after the battle of Port Royal. The papers Weld found had apparently been "thrown out and forgotten by the owner," who like every other white Sea Islander, had fled to the mainland at the thundering sound of Yankee gunboats. Among the pamphlets found was one entitled "Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes Charged with an Attempt to Raise An Insurrection in the State of South Carolina." Weld observed that the pamphlet was rare, since every effort was made to destroy all

*Quoted from Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 35. [113]

**Testimony of slave informant Willian, in Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An official report of the trials of sundry Negroes*), 85–86. [113]

[p. 113]

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CHAPTER 6

# "Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantation Missions and Methodist Impact

But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency. . . .*

In slabery, nigger go to white folks chu'ch. Slabe don't know nuttiag 'bout baptizing. W'en nigger dead, you can't knock off wuk for berry um. You berry um by de light ob torch. . . . Dey wasn't no nigger preacher on de plantation but dey been people to hold praise. (prayers).**

### *The Movement*

The South Carolina Methodist hierarchy was apparently stimulated into action as a result of the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy and other events. Methodists came to view religious instruction of slaves as their particular calling. The mission was designed to Christianize the slaves on the one hand, and on the other, to demonstrate that Christianity would not foment rebellion or threaten the public peace. Rather than a two-edged

*James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 314–15.
**Sam Polite, former slave, in George P. Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 Parts, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), III: (3)274.

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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

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# Notes

## *Introduction*

1. C. J. Calhoun, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in Macfarlane's Proposal," *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 369, and his "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 109–16. For other views of community, see for instance Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); and Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). 121 113

2. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89; C. J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 159. While Calhoun's views on community are useful here, we strongly disagree on other issues, especially regarding his anti-E. P. Thompson view of how ideologies affect laboring classes. Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, passim. [114]

3. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90–105, 124.

4. Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 173–76, 179, 183–85; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old New* (London: James Clarke 1928), 187–88; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 2–16; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 85–93.

5. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965, first pub. 1903), 213–21, 337–49; Julius Lester, ed. *The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1971) I: 252–62, 277–82; Manning Marable "The Faith of W. E. B DuBois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1984): 15–33; Sterling Brown, et al., eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Dryden Press, 1941); 6, 412–21; Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 9, Pt. 2 (Summer, 1968) 417–37. Stuckey's newly completed work is an addition to the new scholarship. However it was unavailable when my book went to press. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3–135, 54.

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121 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.

113 7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

114 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

114 113 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–98, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35; E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–37; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

114 567 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

114 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.

113 23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
113 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).
113 6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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174 114 •113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

[101] 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

[567] 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy. "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

[113] 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

125 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

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1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

18. Charles Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC. See also Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 218–19; Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), I: 244–45; *SCA*, July 14, 1863 and December 29, 1843; Allen Diary, 18, 127–28, 151–54.

19. For an extensive bibliography on works about Gullahs and the need for more modern approaches, see Mary A. Twining, "Sources in the Folklore and Folklife of the Sea Islands," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 39 (1975): 135–50; In 1980 the *Journal of Black Studies* devoted an entire issue to Sea Island culture. Twining and Baird, eds., *Journal of Black Studies;* Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, passim; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), passim.

20. Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 291; Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," quoted in Edwin C. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79; Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed. and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), 13–14, 76–79; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row. 1965), 72–76; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860" (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16–17; Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Henry Irving Tragle, *The Southhampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Materials* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Rev. Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism Among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 79–79.

21. Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 16–18; 80; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), passim; Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism*, 13–34, HSSCC; Report of the Board of Managers of the South Carolina Missionary Society, in *SCA*, January 3, 1851.

### *1. Gullah Roots*

1. James Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers: A Study of the Atlantic Slave Traders, 1441–1807* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 38; Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 34–36; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: Precolonial History, 1450–1850,*

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175 113 originally published as *Black Mother* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 105; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 34–40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), passim; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 14–20; The term Upper Guinea Coast has altered over centuries. Here our definition is taken from Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2, 7; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935), vol. 4, *The Southern Colonies*, passim; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1975), 58–60.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 131; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156; Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review* 33 (1927–28): 816–17; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734; London: Frank Cass, 1971), 173–74; William Smith, *A Voyage to Guinea* (London: John Nourse, 1744; London: Frank Cass, 1967), 135; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 56–68; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, 17–18; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 35; Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers*, 58–59.

3. Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, 282.

4. Ibid., II:xxxi–xxxiii, 355; IV:301, 382.

5. Wood, *Black Majority*, 301–4, Appendix C, 333–41.

6. Douglas L. Wheeler and Rene Pelissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 28–51; Davidson, *African Trade*, 144–52; Donnan, *Documents*, II:xvii–xviii; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37. Roger Bastide has written that the official documents concerning the Portuguese trade were burned after slavery was suppressed "in an effort to expunge a blot on the country's escutcheon." See Roger Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretation of Civilizations*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), 33.

7. Jan Vansina, "Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 375–90; Walter Rodney, "Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 431, 440; Quoted from Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37–38.

8. Vansina, "Trade Routes," 375–83; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), passim; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 9–19. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 38; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 157, Table 45.

[567] [669] 9. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 59–67, 82–102, 125–33; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (October 1764): 487; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 143; Augustine Smyth et al., *The Carolina Low Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 173; Vass, *Bantu Heritage*, 3–5; Wood, *Black Majority*, 96–130, 195–217, 272–326; Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 11–15.

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10. Wood, *Black Majority*, 52–153, 324–35. From 1741 to 1743 a prohibitive duty was imposed. In 1744 four African cargoes arrived. No slave cargoes entered Charleston in 1745 and from 1746 and 1748 another prohibitive duty was in effect. Three African cargoes arrived in 1749 and 1750, respectively. By 1752 the trade was once again in full swing. Donnan, "Slave Trade before the Revolution," 807–8; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 9–10; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 42–43. 175 113 567 [669]

11. Wood, *Black Majority*, 148, 323; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 69–70; 72; Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1730–1760* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 206, 230–32. Rice was never raised to any large extent on the Sea Islands since salt water in poisonous to the rice plant. Some Sea Islands did have a few fresh water ponds where rice was grown, but the amount was small and only for local consumption. Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of the North Carolina Press, 1930), 18; Frederick V. Emerson, "Geographical Influences in American Slavery," *Geographical Society Bulletin* 63 (1911): 108–9. [669

12. William A. Schaper, *Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 51; Emerson, "Geographical Influences," 108–11; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 386–88; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 35, 37, 46–47; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1728–1765*, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 37–38; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 84; Peter Wood offers interesting evidence which points to Africans' immunity to certain diseases, such as malaria. Yet, as he states, this was not "absolute." Moreover, Todd L. Savitt notes that malaria certainly took its toll in human losses among slaves. He maintains that some blacks did possess an inherited immunity to one or another strain of malaria. But adds that even adult African-born slaves had to go through a "seasoning" period because the "strains of malarial parasites in this country differed from those in their native lands." The "acquired" immunity that blacks reportedly developed was "risky," according to Savitt, since this involved repreated, uninterrupted exposure to malaria over a period of years. Furthermore, we must rely heavily on the words of colonial whites with a vested interest in rationalizing that blacks were more suited to labor in the Carolina swamps and marshes. Africans may have had a varied immunity to certain diseases, but it appears unlikely that this determined white attitudes toward black labor. For Wood, See *Black Majority* 85–88, 90–91. See also Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illiois Press, 1978), 21–26.

13. Schaper, *Sectionalism* 55–56; Emerson, "Georgraphical Influences," 112; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 40–46; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–19; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 267–69; Donnan, *Documents*, IV: passim; See Appendix A.

14. Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 48; Philip M. Hamer, et al. eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), IV: 294–95. 175 113

15. *SCG*, July 14, 1759.

16. Hamer, *Laurens Papers*, I:252, 331.

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175 17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his con-
•113 tention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction
[197] of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number
[197] of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, *15–16*; *SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

(567) 20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

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113 21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

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113 23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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from 1788 ed.), 13, 18, 74–75, 91–95, 141–42; Corry, *Windward Coast*, 94–95; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 3–7; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 232–29; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 2–3, 5–6, 9, 65; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), xiv. 226.

28. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 236–53; Appendix A.

29. Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), Paul, 1951), 28–29, 37–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 5–6.

30. Higgins, "Georgraphical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), 45–46; Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1906), I: 107–10; II: 921–24, 947–48, 1095–96: Warren L. d'Azevedo, "The Setting of Gola Society and Culture: Some Theoretical Implications of Variation in Time and Space," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* (Berkeley: University of California, 1959), 21, 51.

31. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 55–59; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 255.

32. Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Denwoin People* (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior 1955) 140–42; and *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) I: 2–3; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 255.

33. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 253.

34. Diary of William F. Allen, 63, in William F. Allen Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconisn, Madison; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84, 87; Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 20–21.

## 2. *The Sociorelligious Heritage*

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16. Laman, *Kongo*, III: 1–6, 216–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 43. 17 113

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171 *in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–
113 39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr.
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21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Reli-*
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113 *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

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(791) "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

### 3. *Missionaries and Masters*

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*Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 25; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* ( Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 196–97. There was a tendency some early missionaries to indiscriminately refer to Indians and Africans as "blacks. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 39, n. 20.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 37–38; Samuel Thomas to Dr. Bray, January 20, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Thomas Nairne to Dr. Marston, August 20, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 2.

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3. South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8; William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Gilbert Jones to SPG, November 16, 1716, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 13, series B, vol. 4 (1).

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4. Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

5. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 5.

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6. Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 19; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; Robert Stevens to SPG, February 21, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 2, series A, vol. 2.

7. Frank Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle, the Papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston, 1707–1716* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 118–19; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

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8. Thomas Naire to Dr. Marston. August 20, 1705, SPGLL; Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28 SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 20; Frank J. Klingberg. *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 127–30; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 111–16; Verner W. Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 1670–1732 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 168–69, 184–85.

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9. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 81, 99.

10. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Wood. *Black Majority*, 150.

11. Verner W. Crane, "Dr. Thomas Bray and the Charitable Colony Project, 1730," *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, 3d. ser. (January. 1962): 58–61; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 168–69; Henry A. M. Smith, "Purrysburgh," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10 (October, 1909): 189–91; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 1–18.

12. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 18–19.

13. Smith, "Purrysburgh," 187–95; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 17–18; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), 1 Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–96; "Letters Showing and Rise and Progress of the Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January, 1916): 69–92; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139–42; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, June 20, 1834.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68, 69–70, 72; Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–26.

15. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–74; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colo-*

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*nial Slavery*, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606. 175 567 79 113

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17. John Wikhead to SPG, September 26, 1715, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

18. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL.

19. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL; Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 20, 1712, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 7; Letters of J. Ottolenghe, July 12, 1758, SPG, London Ms. of Dr. Bray's Associates, Letters from the American Colonies, BX 19, reel 10; Klingberg, *Carolina Chronicle*, 118–19.

20. *SCG*, May 4, 1734; Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapter 10; *SCG*, April 16 and 23, 1737; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 342.

21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19. 17 567 79 113

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51. 17 113

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13. 175 113

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

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*First Baptist Church of South Carolina, 1683–1883* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodland, 1899), 7, 39, 56–59, 84–86, 94–97; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 1–79, 221–26, 242–52; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848), 700–702; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 172–73; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 26–35. There is some controversy over Screven's actual arrival with the largest group of Baptists. The Charleston Baptist Church maintains that the date of its establishment and Screven's arrival is 1683. Baptist historian Joe M. King places it at 1696. Here we use the generally accepted date of 1683. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 13.

27. Samuel Thomas to SPG, January 25, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Le Jau to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

28. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28, SPGLL; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 74–75; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 25–35.

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29. Francis Le Jau to SPG, February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 7; William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 497–501.

30. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptist Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98; New Jersey prescribed death for slaves convicted of murder, arson, mutilation or rape of a white woman, and castration for attempted rape. The Lords of Trade (in London) denounced such "inhumane penalities on Negroes," and the Privy Council voted to disallow the law. See Edgar McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 84–85; *Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey* 42 vols. (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society), 3:473–74; W. L. Grant and James Munro, eds. *Acts of the Privy Council: Colonial Series; 1613–1783*, 6 vols. (London: Wyman Publishers), 2:848.

31. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98.

32. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 14–17, 26–35.

### 4. *Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening*

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1. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 77, 81, 308–9; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 180, 185–88; Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 207–8; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–96.

2. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to England* (London: James Buckland, 1740), 5; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 418–19, II: 60, 139–43; John Pollack, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 3–10, 47–54, 62–68; *George Whitefield's Journals* (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1960; repr. unabridg, from 1905 ed., with unpubl. Journal, first publ. 1938), 82–93, 156–59, 302–11, 571–88; Sir James Stephens, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1837), 382–83, 389–90.

3. Whitefield, *Journals*, 165.

4. Ibid., 302–5; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 45–50, 63–71.

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5. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 413–42; Whitefield, *Journals*, 338–62 and passim.

6. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 442–43; Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

7. Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

8. Ibid., 386–89.

9. Ibid., 400–401.

10. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 482–83; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization*, (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 71–73; Seward, *Journal*, 5; Whitefield, *Journals*, 401, 439–49; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 596–602. Whitefield was preaching to up to 4,000 listeners in Charleston in 1740 on his summer tour. He finally grew tired of listening to Garden bewail against him and no longer attended St. Philip's when he was in the city. Instead he "went to the Baptist and Independent meeting-houses, where Jesus Christ was preached." Whitefield, *Journals*, 449–50.

11. McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 246–47; Rev. Alexander Garden to Rev. Samuel Smith, September 24, 1742, in John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: the Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 93–94, 338; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 101–17.

12. Klingberg *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–14, 119–22; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 245–46, 439–40.

13. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 121, n. 56; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 247.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 119–21; Clarke's population estimate was very close to the mark. Philip D. Morgan's recent article places the Lowcountry population at 53,257 in 1760. See his "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1983), 85, Table 1.

15. Seward, *Journal*, 6, 7, 11; Whitefield, *Journals*, 379; Stephen J. Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church History* 42, no. 2 (June, 1973): 243, 248.

16. Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 124–26; Dallimore, *Whitefield Great Evangelist*, I: 482–84, 495–501; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Alexander Garden, *Six letters to the Rev. George Whitefield*, 2nd ed. (Boston: T. Fleet, 1740), passim; Stein "George Whitefield on Slavery." 244.

17. Whitefield, *Journals*, 406–7; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 495; *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740), 13. Whitefield's "Letter . . . Concerning . . . Negroes" was written in Savannah in January 1740, *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

18. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 13–14.

19. Ibid., 14–16.

20. Ibid.

21. Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL: Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vols. 4–7.

22. John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 13, series A, vols. 24–25.

23. Francis Le Jau to SPG, June 13, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and July 18, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 6.

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24. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 130–31; Garden, *Six Letters to Whitefield*, 50–53; *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

25. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 221–25; Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 66–67; Stein "Whitefield on Slavery," 245; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 391; Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 116–17; James Habersham to Countess Dowager of Huntington, December 31, 1770, *Letters of James Habersham 1756–1775*, Collections, Georgia Historical Society, vol. 6, 109–11.

26. Quoted from Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 117.

27. Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 5–6; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446–50; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 219; *Hugh Bryan and Mary Hutson, Living Christianity, Delineated in the Diaries and Letters of two Pious Persons lately Deceased; Mr. Hugh Bryan and Mrs. Mary Hutson, both of South Carolina* (London: J. Buckland, 1750), 13, 70, 91, passim; William Maine Hutson, "The Hutson Family of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 9 (July, 1908): 127; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan, 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 31–45; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 19.

28. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 1–4, 13; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 7–9, 32; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 440, 502–4; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in Colonial South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3d ser., no. 4 (October, 1986): 596–98; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 70; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 238–43; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 71; Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 248–51.

29. Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 450; Hutson, "Hutson Family," 127; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1741–42*, 404, 406–8, and *1742–44*, 72; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 241–43; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 594, 605–9; David S. Lovejoy, " 'Desperate Enthusiasm': Early Signs of American Radicalism," in Margaret Jacob and James Jacob, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 237, 241, n. 24.

30. Whitefield, *Journals*, 502–4; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 586; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 600–3.

31. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 605–10; Lovejoy " 'Desperate Enthusiasm,' " 237; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 240–42; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; *Journal of the Assembly, 1741–42*, 406–8, 461–62.

32. *Journal of the Assembly, 1742–44*, 72–73, 364–368, 394, 398; Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 55–126; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 604, 609, 613–14.

33. Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 599–601; Mrs. R. W. Hutson, "Register kept by the Rev. William Hutson of Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church and (Circular) Congregational Church in Charles Town, S. C., 1743–1760," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 38 (January, 1937): 21–33; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 606, 612–13.

34. Whitefield, *Journals*, 501; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 66, 92, 209, n. 12; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 11–20, 29–30, 32–33.

35. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 84–87, 111, 114–15, 159–66; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–77; "Letters Showing the Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January, 1916): 73, 77–78.

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36. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 164–65, 195; "Early Negro Churches," 77–78, 83–86; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 177, 182–84; William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785). 175 113

37. Thomas Hassell to SPG, December 2, 1731 and March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series A, vol. 4 (2); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); Peter H. Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee at Last," *Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (November, 1979): 2–5.

38. Quoted from James B. Lawrence, "Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 14 (March, 1930): 46–47.

39. Ibid.

40. Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–85, 87–88. For a discussion which denies, incorrectly I think, that there is a distinction between Gullah and "generalized Black English vernacular," see J. L. Dillard, *Lexicon of Black English* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 103–4. An interesting discussion of Gullah as a Creole language is found in Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Chapter 7: see also Wood, *Black Majority*, 172–90. For a discussion of cultural unity joining Gullahs with blacks of the Caribbean, see Velma Pollard. "Cultural Connections in Paule Marshall's *Praise Song for the Widow*," *World Literature Written in English* 25, no. 2 (1985): 285–98. For a fascinating, informative debate over the formulation of Creole and the impact of Upper Guinea versus Gold Coast and Angolan influences see Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," 3–16, and Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 17–35. 175 177 113

41. See Chapter 2. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1971). Thomas discusses systems of beliefs current in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and retention of some beliefs after that time. As Thomas states, almost every "primitive" religion was for the adherents a means of gaining supernatural power. Yet this does not preclude religion as a means of explanation, decreeing of moral imperatives, or representation of social order. 175 113

42. Benjamin Pownall to SPG, October 24, 1723, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4(2); Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; J. Ottolenghe to SPG, July 12, 1758, November 18, 1754, SPG London Mss of Dr. Bray's Associates.

43. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, and, Francis Le Jau to SPG, October 20, 1709, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5.

44. Ibid.; Thomas Hassell to SPG, March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

45. Whitefield, *Journals*, 382–83, Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 246–47.

46. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 14; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1).

47. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 56, 57, 63, 72, 90, passim; Hutson, "Register of Stoney Creek Church," 22–26; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," passim.

48. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 70–91.

49. Ibid., 63; *Journal of the Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505.

50. Whitefield, *Journals*, 419, 422, 444, 446; Seward, *Journal*, 6–7; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*.

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175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
112 Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of the difference between the two colonies.

[669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
567 Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern*
•113 *World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 138.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Common House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

175 8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its
113 harshness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

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113 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*

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*of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 176–77; Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons), 22–26, 41–57; James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870* (New York: Dalhousie University Press, 1976), 1–5, 10–12; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7, 12–13; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 19–26, 113–14; Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763–1789* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1958), 121–29, 130–31, 144; *Papers of the Continental Congress*, Inspection Rolls of Negroes, Book I, April 23–September 13, 1783, Book II, September 22–November 19, 1783, passim. The name "Mellia Marrant" and her two children, listed as slaves of John Marrant, raises the question of whether these were the slaves of Whitefield convert John Marrant. Marrant was born in New York and there is no reason to believe that the family (apparently free) took the surname of a white South Carolinian. Mellia Marrant may be the sister or wife of John who was impressed into the British navy during the war and eventually went to England. His services to the British would enable his family to be given a certificate of freedom, and he related in his narrative that he had family in Nova Scotia. See William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785).

13. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 325. For a view which argues that South Carolina blacks did not "take advantage of their owners' predicament during the Revolution," see Michael Mullin, "British Caribbean and North American Slaves in an Era of War and Revolution, 1775–1807," in Crow and Tise, *Southern Experience*, 235–36; this interpretation is also presented in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 108–9. For a discussion of the Afro-American family during the War for Independence, see Mary Beth Norton et al., "The Afro-American Family in the Age of Revolution," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 157–91. For a discussion of structural manifestations of autonomy in black life during the postwar period, see Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," 363–71.

14. Quarles, *Negro in The American Revolution*, 171–72; "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher," *London Methodist Magazine*, 21 (1798–99) 105–110, 157–61, hereafter referred to as "Boston King Memoirs"; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks* 13, 30–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 5, 7.

15. "Boston King Memoirs"; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 31–34, 56–66.

16. "Boston King Memoirs"; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 10–12; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 156–57, 163–65, 171–77.

17. Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 16–21 and "Revolution in Black Life, 355; Oakes, *Ruling Race*, 28–29; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 61, 102–04, 124–26, 163–66, 171–77; Philip S. Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), 46; David Ramsey to Benjamin Rush, June 20, 1779, March 21, 1780, Rush Correspondence, Ramsey Letters, HSP; Wood, *Black Majority*, 124–30; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 6–10; Quoted from Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 31, 41–47. For works on black participation in the War for Independence, see Sidney Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1770–1800* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1973); Graham R. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone, 1775–1783." Unpublished paper presented at the New-York Historical Society Conference on the Constitutional Era in New York, May 15, 1987.

18. Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 30–31, 35–41; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 38–43, 51–55, 59–64; Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 29–

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17 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10,
•113 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

175 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöepf,
567 *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29; Avonor Samuel to William
113 Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahn, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP;
113 Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New
[567] York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel
[669] G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 66–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

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175 29. Ibid., 113–30.

•113 30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

17 31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

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175 32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

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33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

(797) 38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

175 39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

567 40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

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41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

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51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

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54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

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58. Article written by Sancho, a former slave, in the Papers of Hugh A. C. Walker, HSSCC.

59. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10, 22–23; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 122; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 79, 91; Wightman Ledger and Notebook, 1801, Papers of William May Wightman, HSSCC; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 9, 14; Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings*, 102–3, 105–6.

60. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 22–26; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 467.

61. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 156; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 61–62; Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings*, 96–97; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, passim; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64.

62. George, *Segregated Sabbaths*, 69–86; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 80; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 14–15; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–93; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 120–124; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 70–72.

63. Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 124–26; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 2–3.

64. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 93, 145; Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement," 71, 75; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 74, 87–88, 125.

65. The most thorough study is Lofton, *Denmark Vesey*; Also see Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 113–153; Richard Wade, "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Social History* (May, 1964); Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Black Rebellion* (New York: Arno Press, 1969; repr. from 1889 ed.), 215–75; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 49–86; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*; Richard Wade has maintained that the conspiracy never really existed. Wade is refuted by Sterling Stuckey in "Remembering Denmark Vesey," *Negro Digest* (February, 1966); and to a lesser extent by Freehling, in *Prelude to Civil War*, 53–61. Yet John Oliver Killens has made objections to Freehling's and Wade's presentations of the conspiracy, describing their interpretations as distorted. Freehling adopts the language of the slaveholders. He portrays Denmark Vesey as "a powerful unscrupulous man who was given to fits of rage and violence," and as a man who employed a "skillful fusion of the high ideals of the Age of Reason with the ruthless savagery of a barbaric chief." Bibliographic note in Kennedy and Parker. (*Trial*, xiv.) Freehling's characterization of Gullah Jack is also taken from the slaveholder's presentation. The author wrote:

> Possessed of tiny limbs, which looked *grotesque* despite his small frame, Gullah Jack had enormous whiskers, which seemed monstrous on the *halting* Denmark Vesey. No witch doctor ever looked more the part . . . a sorcerer whose bizarre appearance, wild gestures and malevolent glances could terrorize the bravest slave. (55–56).

66. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 45, 58, 63–65, 114–15; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 21, 62, 25. The late Professor Starobin's excellent edition of primary sources related to the Vesey Conspiracy was most useful. Testimony not in the official record but part of manuscript collections, contemporary reactions to the plot, and private letters are contained in his volume. Starobin's edition adds to the body of literature on this little-studied rebellion effort and reveals that some sources related to it have yet to be fully utilized.

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67. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 142; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 25, 50, 61, 64; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 46, 58–59.

68. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 66; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64; Gayraud S. Gilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 57–58.

69. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64.

70. Ibid., 43.

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71. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins, Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Vintage, 1963), 83–89, and passim.

72. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 13–14, 76–79, 89; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 26, 32, 41–42, 45, 46.

73. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 117, 121; Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), passim.

74. See Chapter 2; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 45; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 76–77, 163, 17, 37–38, 81, 85–86, 95–102, 105–6, 125.

75. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 50, 88, 90, 95, 130; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 144; James, *Black Jacobins*, 86–87.

76. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39; Killens, *Trial*, 75, 89, 86, 109, 117, 122–23, 125, 134–35, 164–65.

77. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 79, 81–82, 95–96, 140–41; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 52.

78. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39, 42, 63–64, Killens, *Trial*, 28–38, 42, 74–75, 77, 79, 86, 112–13, 125.

79. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.

80. Ibid., 38–40, 79.

81. Ibid., 137.

82. Ibid., 94–95, 131; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 38, 40.

83. Among them are Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*. Here Wade argues that the urban environment was "inhospitable to conspiracies because it provided a wider latitude to the slave, a measure of independence within bondage. . . ." According to Wade, this environment served to deflate the insurrectionary impulse, 241–42. Also see Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*. Vesey did not make the mistake which Mullin claimed was made by Gabriel, that is, not providing an appealing ideology to country slaves and the African-born. We will never know if indeed Gabriel did make this mistake since the record reveals no spiritual presence in the 1800 revolt. This does not however preclude the existence of a spiritual force undetected by the court.

84. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 38–53, 96–99; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 64–65, 83.

85. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 26.

86. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 19, 23–25, 39, 47, 65; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 19–22, 50–54, 56, 62, 78, 80–81, 86, 92, 97, 100–5, 109–10, 119, 130–31.

87. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 18, 20–21, 26–27, 62, 78–79, 85; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, passim, Beaufort Township Library; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter, The Story of Robert Smalls* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1958), 24; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 36–37; Rosengarten, *Tombee*.

88. William Jones to Samuel Jones, July 23, 1822, Jane Bruce Jones Mss., 1784–1834, SCL; Jacob Rapelye to Paul Rapelye, August 5, 1822, Napier, Rapeley and Bennett Papers, SCL; E. M. Starrs to Zalmon Wildman, July 19, 1822, Zalmon Wildman Papers, 1812–1840, SCL; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 184; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 29.

89. Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," as quoted by Edwin C. Holland in *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institutions and Existence of Slavery Among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79.

90. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

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91. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Ibid., 132–33; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 173–75, 182–84.
94. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL.
95. Richard Furman, *Exposition on the Views of the Baptists*, 15.
96. Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–17; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 60–61, 72–73; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 27, 33–49; Harding, *There Is a River*, 81–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 82, 163–64; Aptheker, *Negro Revolts*, 273, 279; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 182–85.
97. Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 11–13; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64. Cornelius maintains that international events such as Latin American independence movements and West Indian slave revolts were among the factors which hindered religious instruction.

### 6. *"Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantations Missions and Methodist Impact*

1. Anon., "Letter to the Editor," *Christian Advocate* 4 (January, 1826): 96; Not to be confused with the *Southern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist newspaper.
2. Ibid., 4 (June, 1826): 258–59.
3. See Chapter 5 for references to "Philemon"; *Wesleyan Journal*, July 1, 1826 and July 22, 1826, HSSCC.
4. Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 83–84; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 68–69, 71–72; William W. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 291–92; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 46–47; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 15, 40–42; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina at Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim and 1–8, 10.
5. Pinckney, *Address*, 11–12.
6. Ibid., 13.
7. Ibid., passim; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 101–53; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 73, 78; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831) 315–17.
8. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 70–71; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860," (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16, Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 81–83; Andrew, "Slave Population," 291–92, 315–17; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 161–66.
9. Andrew, "Slave Population," 316–19; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71.
10. L.J.C. Lambert to Methodist Conference, South Carolina, January 10, 1829, HSSCC; "Statistical Report," *MMQR* (1828): 40; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288, 292–293; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 45–47. Much of the work of religious instruction in coastal Georgia was done by a Presbyterian, Charles Col-

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cock Jones. But Jones began about ten years after Capers. See Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 39–45 and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155–57.

11. Andrew, "Slave Population," 314–15.

12. Ibid., 316–19, 322.

13. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 356–61, 365–66, 452–53, 460–62; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 350–62. For a different, more sympathetic view of the Methodists, see Sidney G. Diamond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), passim, especially 18–41, 87–103, 254–73.

14. Andrew, "Slave Population," 321.

15. Letter about the life of George W. Moore, missionary to the slaves in South Carolina, written at the time of his death in 1863 (name of writer of the letter is illegible), HSSCC; Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; *CAJ*, March 16, 1932. Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Pinckney, *Address*, 23, (Appendix); Andrew, "Slave Population," 314; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 66–69. Both Jackson and Fickling take the position that the South Carolina Conference made the first moves toward religious instruction. They probably got this impression from Jones, *Religious Instruction*. In Georgia, two associations were formed by planters for religious instruction in 1830–31. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155.

16. *CAJ*, April 12, 1833, January 22, 1836; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, January 9, 1839, 14–18, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288–91, 295–96; Andrew, "Slave Population," 315–16; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 72–73.

17. Courtlandt Van Renssalaer letter, n.d. (between 1835 and 1836), SHC; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 90–91; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 93–96; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, *CAJ*, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 86; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96.

18. Van Renssalaer letter, SHC.

19. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

20. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 78–79; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

21. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 74–80; Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–18; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 86–87. For an excellent treatment on this surge of activity, see Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4.

22. *CAJ*, May 3, 1833, October 22, 1833.

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23. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Virginia C. Holmgren, *Hilton Head: A Sea Island Chronicle* (Hilton Head, S. C.: Hilton Head Publishing, 1959) 61–67; James Kirk to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 12, 1833, HSSCC.

24. Holmgren, *Hilton Head*, 130–31; William Pope, Sr. to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

25. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834: James Sealy to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

26. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

27. George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of*

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88.

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21.

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchman Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21.

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal*, 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27.

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

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17 Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing
567 Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Ed-
113 dings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

[197] 48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

17 50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6;
113 ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

797 52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

793 53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

17 56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York:
113 Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*,
[797] February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Missions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

[797] 61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

17 64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare
797 Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who ar-
533 gues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–
113 84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

### 7. *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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17
113 stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

175 2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society
797 Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6,
113 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert,
[795] *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10, BC; see Appendix C, Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

175 3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 41, February 18,
797 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church,"
567 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian
113 planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C, see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

175 8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839,
113 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A, [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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175 *of Charleston Meeting*, 5–6, 14; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, October 21, 1841,
•113 4, BC.

12. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 14–15.

13. "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Almira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," John H. Tucker to T. D. Grimke, n.d., early in 1845, SCHS; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72; "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6, November 24, 1849, 7–8, BC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; John B. Adger, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev. J. B. Adger of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*, May 9, 1847 (Charleston: T. W. Haynes, 1847), 12–13, and *Life and Times*, 164–99; Reverend Alexander Glennie, *Sermons Preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844), passim; Charles Colcock Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, 27–33; and *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Savannah: T. Purse, 1844), passim; Reverend A. F. Dickson, *Plantation Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855), passim; Tupper, *Baptist Church of South Carolina*, 317–18; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 71–85; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4; Rev. J. H. Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters. A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of A Church Erected in Charleston, S. C., For the Benefit and Instruction of the Colored Population* (Charleston: Steam-Power Press, 1850), 48–51.

14. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6–7, November 24, November 26, 1853, 10–11, November 25, 1854, 19, November 23, 1855, 12, November 14, 1857, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, November 11, 1843, 66, BC; Benedict, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, 39.

15. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, passim, BC; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 7, 1853, 179, BC; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History: A Historical Sketch of the Old Black Swamp Church," Lawton Family Papers, SCL.

175 16. See Chapters 3 and 4.

13 17. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Savan-*
194 *ah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1831, 18–20, BC; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Diary of William P. Hill, 1833–39, SHC (Hill was a Universalist from Maine who went South for health reasons and became a Baptist preacher); Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 67–68; W. H. Dowling, "Black Swamp Church," n.d., SCL; Baker, *Life and Labours*, 144–45, 157, 169–73.

18. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed. "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 34–36.

17 19. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–36.

113 20. *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Stoney, "*Autobiography of Grayson*," 34–37.

21. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 154–55.

(194) 22. Racial designations were not yet indicated nor names of slaves included on membership rolls. But the slaves' acceptance into the church was recorded in the Minutes. *Minutes*,

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Labours*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1839, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerusulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145, 147, 151.

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46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197, November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

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47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 149–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

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49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

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55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

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56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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195 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

•113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[195] [797] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[793] [797] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 113 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombe*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### *8. Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 175 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombe: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 113 797 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn., 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 113 799 795 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55.

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81.

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33.

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix.

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently view's slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid.

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62.

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40.

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

### 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977).

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5.

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70.

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22.

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592.

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13.

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

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15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162: John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

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19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

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21. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels;* Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

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24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Deuwoin People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* I (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

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202, 210–12; Gibbs, "The Kpelle," 221–22; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 666–68, 670–72. The fact that initiation into society was not peculiar to Windward Coast and Gambia groups has been mentioned in Chapter 2. Yet its existence elsewhere could reinforce the Poro and Sande influence since no initiation process was as pervasive and germane to sacred and secret life as these associations and their equivalents under different names. In other African-American societies, such as Jamaica, there is evidence of Poro power in socialization and group authority. This is reflected through the Jonkonnu masquerade tradition. Masks were central to some African Poro and Sande means of expression, leadership concealment, and instilling obedience through intimidation. The masquerade and other apparent manifestations of Poro power have been discussed by researchers of Jamaican history and culture. The mask-wearing conveys "supernatural authority" in the Jamaican Jonkonnu, but appears in a "secular/entertainment context." Mask-wearing has no part in Gullah culture but this may be the result of Gullah incorporation of secret society elements into Christianity. In Jamaica, where little Christian instruction of slaves was conducted, the masquerade and festive aspects of the association could continue, whereas there was no base upon which the religious element could remain. Also, covering the face with ash, as done by Gullahs, may be a substitute for the mask and for clay, since both are used in African supernatural and spiritual rituals. For an account of the relationship of Poro and Jamaican culture, see Cheryl Ryman, "Jonkonnu, A Neo-African Form," Part I, *Jamaica Journal* 17, no. 2 (May, 1984): 50–56.

26. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 2–5, 21–22; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), 219–20, 231–32, Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 351; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–14; Little, *Mende*, 121; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 669–674; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–100.

27. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1846; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 145, 162; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152; Kemble, *Journal*, 84.

28. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–16; Little, *Mende*, 183–85, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 204–5; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 355; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 5; John H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive BaKongo* (London: Seeley, Service, 1914), 100–102; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 71 (November–April, 1890–91): 826–27.

29. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 176–86, 222–26; Little, "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–200; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 670–71; *SCA*, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; Lawton, "Religious Life," 138–43; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152.

30. Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 673–74; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 214, n. 1; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 15–21; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 228–29; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 103.

31. Towne Diary, 52.

32. Thorpe to Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

33. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 17; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 671–73; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–104.

34. Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York; Harper & Brothers, 1849), I: 231; *SCA*, August 111, 1843.

35. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 145–46; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, and March 6, 1863, AMA; Laura Towne to J. M. McKim, July 1 and August 2, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rarebook Room, Cornell University, AMA; Towne Diary, 75, 104.

36. Lyell, *Second Visit*, I: 269–70; Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion of the United States," *The Southern Quarterly 23*, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 34–37.

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37. *SCA*, April 18, 1843.

38. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20–22; Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99.

39. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99; 199; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 22–23; Higginson, *Army Life*, 41; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672.

40. Allen Diary, 155; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 199; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xii; Winter, "Recollections," 17.

41. Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20; Winter, "Recollections"; Sumner to Clark, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, SHC; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xii; Cooley, *School Acres*, 150–51; Towne Diary, 83.

42. John Beattie, *Other Cultures* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 229; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 190; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36.

43. Erika Bourguignon, "Ritual Dissociation and Possession Belief in Caribbean Negro Religion," in Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John F. Szwed, eds., *Afro-American Anthropology, Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 96–97; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–3; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 349–50, 359–65; Sciela S. Walker, *Ceremonial Spirit Possession in Africa and Afro-America* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 3–9, 52–58.

44. Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36–40.

45. Stuart Recollections, 2–3, SHC.

### *10. Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

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1. Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Diary of William F. Allen, 96, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, Atlantic Monthly 13 (June, 1864): 666.

2. Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4.

3. *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 11, 1843, January 19, 1844, August 20, 1847, May 5, 1844.

4. South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

5. James Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, or the Life of an American Slave* (New York: H. Dayton, 1860), 150.

6. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

7. Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr. from 1906 ed.), 253–54; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 64, 75, Penn School Papers, SHC; Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

8. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 252; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–83; Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27, WPA, SCL; T. W. Richardson to Rev. George Whipple, September 14, 1863, AMA.

9. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 31–32; George W. Ellis, *Negro Culture in West Africa* (New York: Neale Publishing, 1914), 70; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969, repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 236–37; Dennis Benjamin, *The Gbandes, A People of the Liberian Hinterland* (Chicago: Nelson-

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Hall, 1922), 173–74; Karl Laman, *Kongo*, 5 vols. (Uppsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, 1962), II: 85.

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24. Vlach, *Afro-American Decorative Arts*, 143; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 21, 37; Thompson, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 198.

25. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 139–42, and *Four Moments of the Sun*, 183; Vlach, *Afro-American Decorative Arts*, 141. Laman writes that "the porcelain articles may comprise mugs (with holes knocked in bottom), to prevent their being stolen," *Kongo*, II: 95.

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2. Anna Carter to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 22, 1863, AMA.

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2. Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 157–58.

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128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly (113) studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

533 128 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 216 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the constitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.

666 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women
153 ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read and write.

666 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that
185 I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

• (113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

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In the 1966 edition of this book we gave a short list of books and albums for additional information on the sea islands. By now there are so many valuable writings, albums, films, tapes that it would be difficult to give a comprehensive list. We recommend the following sources and make note that many of the books listed have a much more complete bibliography.

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175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea- [248] island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1898) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

[4] If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.' Living close to nature they are

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[567] case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognizing him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

'This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

[113] For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

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Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction," a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced." Within the last few years in South Caro-

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"See Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 62-94.

"Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

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I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya; or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

*Slave Songs of the United States*. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 61 fables, 8 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 68 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

*With Jump Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

*The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 2 illustrations.

*Laughing, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 2 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

Dubose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 192 pp., 25 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 5 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

*Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 93 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are war-time pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 540 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-206 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 294 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amends*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shepherd, 1893. 286 pp.

*Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War*, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

*Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884*, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumbling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 148, 175, 184, 190, 196, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1925. 128 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1926, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C." This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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"*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun," I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: 'E look anme like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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## THE DIALECT

197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

[194] [193] "The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left."[11]

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."[12] White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

[11] I, 377.

[12] J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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## SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism,[1] and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs,[2] shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition[3] and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made,[4] either by

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[1] "For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

[152] [113] "Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

[3] "At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 426, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

[113] "Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

[4] Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

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individuals[61] or by groups, spontaneously. The latter method is the more interesting because it is one of the rare contemporary situations where communal composition may be observed actually at work: An emotionally charged atmosphere (as religious worship regularly charges it among all but the most sophisticated Negroes) a striking, rhythmic phrase from preacher, leader, or worshiper, and the thing is done. One of the most beautiful of recent spirituals was a spontaneous outburst of petition to the great "Maussa" after the terrific cyclone of 1911 in South Carolina, built around the refrain-appeal, "Lord, don' let de win' blow here no mo'."[62] And during the World War a similarly tense situation produced a like result. As described by a Negro worshiper on that occasion: "Somebody shout out, 'O Lord, we gwine 't'row dat Kizer down,' an' den somebody else catch 'em an' t'row 'em back, an' befo' you know it de whole chu'ch was a-rockin' an' a-prayin'. It was a gran' hymn."[63]

Many of the simplest and most beautiful of the spirituals are cast in this form: that is, a striking leading line with choral repetition and variations. Frequently the words are crude, childish, and inconsequential, but usually both melody and harmony, especially harmony, are rhyth-

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[61]The same authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 189) describe individual authorship as follows: "Among the lowly Negro folk of the South the making of spirituals is still a reality. Every community has its 'composers'. Often they are supposed to possess some special gift of the 'spirit'. From sermon, prayer, and crude folk wisdom they draw ideas and inspiration for their compositions. Sometimes the results are pathetic, but not infrequently there springs up a song which would compare favorably with the old spirituals."

See, also, Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 21.

[62]See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, No. 39.

[63]Two similar instances are thus described by Odum and Johnson (*The Negro and His Songs*, p. 32): "A Negro preacher recently reached a climax in his discourse in the phrase, 'Oh, with the wings of the morning, I'd fly to that heavenly land.' He repeated this a number of times and made gestures with his arms suggestive of flying. His black robe added to the forcefulness of the suggestion and the impression became a part of the song of that church. . . . If a single personality dominates the whole in an expression that appeals to the present sense of fitness, he is the author of a new song. For example, a visiting minister once shouted out during such a scene: 'Oh, the hearse-wheel a-rollin' an' the graveyard opening—ha, ha,' but got no further, for his refrain was taken up by the chorus, and the next day saw a new version of the well-known song."

See, also, the origin of the song, "O, de ole nigger-driver!" as described by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1867, pp. 692, 693. It is from this article that the beautiful "Lay dis body down" spiritual is quoted on page 39.

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipation even to the present day, the same yearning note has
533 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
152 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
178 zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[113] On internal evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of 1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
(522) it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the complement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(522) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[113] "With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 11, 1928, p. 36.

"Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

(113) "See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers (101) 101 175 567

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113).

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101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 174

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
(114) succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
(19) duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

(576) [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

(113) [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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539 een one oxin cyaa't" weh 'e come f'um. All de time 'e binnuh box me, uh bin study 'bout how da' 'ooman' cawpse would'uh look ef uh had uh hit 'um like de time w'en uh nyuse to be uh Ben! En' uh study 'pun him husbun', my wife Sarah boy John, en' un study 'pun John' maamy, en' uh t'ink 'bout how dem will mo'n ef uh kill dis 'ooman, en' wid Gawd help us hab strengk 'nuf fuh hol' me han'. Gin'ul, w'enebbuh uh look 'puntop de' dead 'ooman een me mine', uh tengk Gawd eb'ry day fuh hol' me han'!" . . .

[1]either so, i.e. either, or, nor, etc. [2]and. [3]used, accustomed to. [4]manners. [5]don't care. [6]stick. [7]grab them (her). [8]like a, as if. [9]eye. [10]both. [11]ain't. [12]cart.

III[13]

"Wey[1] yo' is bun'? Tell me say."
"Down een[2] de 'za'b[3]."
"Wuh[4] yuh bun duh do down de-dey[5] een de 'za'b?"
"Bun duh fush[6]."
"Ketch um?"
"Sho'!"
"How many?"
"Too many[7]."
"Lemme shum[8]! Wey 'e dey[9]?"
" 'E de-dey[10]."
"Wey?"
"Dey de-dey, Opey do'[11]!"
"Yunt[12] opey do' twill me yiz shum[13]!"
"Yunt gwine shum twill opey do'!"

[1]where. [2]been. [3]in. [4]reserve, a compound of fresh water. [5]what. [6]there. [7]fish. [8]very many. [9]see them. [10]where are they (where he there)? [11]here they are (he right there). [12]open the door. [13]ain't. [14]till I see them.

IV[14]

Regardless of who might be fishing, "Dah Dannil" would always catch more fish than any other in the boat. If one should ask him how he accomplished that feat, he would invariably, should others be present, whisper the secret of his success: "Well, I tell yuh, son, but yuh ain'fuh tell *nubbody*, cuz I nebbuh tell

[13]From Bennett, "Gullah: a Negro Patois," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, VII, p. 334. [113]

[14]From Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, pp. 128-29.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[15]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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192 may be obtained by a statistical analysis of the largest published glossary available. Gonzales[93] has listed nearly 2,000 of the words most commonly used in the dialect in the Edisto Island region. If these words be divided arbitrarily into appropriate classes, the following distribution results:[94]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Standard English words pronounced in standard way or as in English dialect of 18th century | 92 per cent |
| II. | Corruptions and mutilations of standard English words (some of these corruptions are no doubt of English dialect origin) | 6 per cent |
| III. | Archaic and obsolescent English words | 2 per cent |
| IV. | African words | Less than 0.5 per cent |

### *A Partial List of Archaic and Provincial English Usages Surviving in the Dialect*[95]

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192 The following list includes the most common archaic and provincial English words found in the dialect. A prolonged study would reveal several others, perhaps, but these are the most common. Few, if any, of these, however, occur exclusively in the Gullah, for in various other parts of this country many of these words survive either among Negroes or white people or both. Some are not used on St. Helena, as far as I can ascertain. The list is composed of words not now in general use, and words in general use but having an archaic meaning in the Gullah.

[93] *The Black Border*, Glossary, pp. 287-340.

[94] This distribution also holds good for Whaley's glossary of 1,500 words. Jones' glossary is relatively short, and most of his words are found in Gonzales' list.

[113] [95] For tracing the paternity of various Gullah words, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and the *N. E. D. (New English Dictionary)* are invaluable.

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192 *Chance*, a quantity, a considerable amount. "I raised a right good chance o' potatoes," "I had a plenty to eat fuh suppuh, a good chance," etc.

*Coz, cuz, cuz'n*, etc., cousin, used as a form of address, as in Shakespeare's day.

*Find*, to supply with provisions, to keep one in victuals, etc.

*Fo'punce chicken* (also *seb'npunce chicken*), used to describe chickens of certain sizes.

*Foreigner*, anyone born outside St. Helena Island or whatever community the speaker lives in. Exactly the old Kent and Sussex usage: "In some parts of Kent all born in another parish are still called foreigners." *Prov. Dict.*, also *N. E. D.*

*Frail*, to beat, strike, whip. Also used elsewhere in the South by whites and Negroes. It originated in England from *flail* by the process of dissimilation.[96]

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to smear one's face with grease, victuals, etc.

*Gall* (*gaul* in some glossaries), swamp. The *E. D. D.* lists as one meaning of *gall*, "wet, spongy land." It also lists *gault*, "wet, boggy land."

*Gunjuh*, ginger or molasses cookie.

*Graff*, to grab, grasp, grapple, seize.

*Hippo*, ipecac. Until rather recently this was in common use for ipecac, the full name of which is hippocachuana or hippechachuana. In a medical book published in this country as late as 1848, *hippo* appeared as the ordinary term for ipecac.[97]

*Killick*, an anchor of stone.

*Larging*, swaggering, putting on airs, etc. This may be from *enlarging*, or from the same *larging* used in England to mean "spending the money given in largess." The Cumberland, "He's gone a-larging," is pretty close to the Gullah usage. See *E. D. D.*

*Limous* (in the expression *limous cooter*), mud, muddy.

*Make your manners*, used by the Negroes as it was in England:

[96] See *E. D. G.*, §252.

[97] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*, Charleston, S. C., 1848.

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pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

*Touch*, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

*To that*, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

*Uncle*, a term of respect for old men.

*Use*, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

*Yowe*, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

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[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canos ou Pirauges*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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alect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations. 194

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea*, with the *u* pitched high means *bone*.[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech

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[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée." (113).

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect.[5] 000

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness, and wonderfulness, and importance of divine and eternal things, and to be so passionately warning, inviting, and entreating others.[6]

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing in religious meetings. . . .[7]

. . . all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitation of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health.[8]

The following extracts from letters written to Edwards in 1741 are significant:[9]

. . . God has spoken to us in a more soft and calm Wind; and we have neither had those Outcries and Faintings in our Assem-

[5] Jonathan Edwards, *On Revivals, Containing a Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God . . . in Northampton, Massachusetts, A.D. 1735*, p. 249. 113

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 257. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 164.

[9] Jonathan Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, pp. 77, 78.

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other gatherings. The editors of some of these books made significant statements in their prefaces. The editor of *The Christian Lyre*, a book which was copyrighted in 1830 and had gone through eighteen editions by 1838, stated:[10]

> Every person conversant with revivals must have observed that whenever meetings for prayer and conference assume a special interest, there is a desire to use hymns and music of a different character from those ordinarily heard in church. . . . As the work is not designed to please scientific musicians, so much as to profit plain christians, reference will be had, chiefly, to the known popularity and good influence of what is selected. And it is intended to embrace the music that is most current among different denominations of Christians.

The editor of the *Millennial Harp* wrote:[11]

> We are aware of the difficulty of suiting the taste of all classes in musical and devotional compositions. . . . Some of our hymns, which might be objected to by the more grave and intellectual, and to which we ourselves, have never felt any great partiality, have been the means of reaching, for good, the hearts of those who, probably, would not otherwise have been affected.

The editor of *Village Hymns*, a book which was only a little less dignified than the hymns of Watts, to which, indeed, it was intended to be a sort of supplement, defended himself for omitting the revival hymns then in vogue:[12]

> There is a numerous class of hymns which have been sung with much pleasure and profit in seasons of revival, and yet are entirely destitute of poetic merit. Some of my brethren, acquainted with this fact, will probably be disappointed when they find, that so many have been omitted. Others, unacquainted with

[10] *Christian Lyre*, p. 3.
[11] *Millennial Harp, Designed for Meetings on the Second Coming of Christ*, p. 2.
[12] Asahel Nettleton, *Village Hymns*, p. vi. The preface is dated 1825.

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000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

533 177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

[113] [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

[113] [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

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taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

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[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

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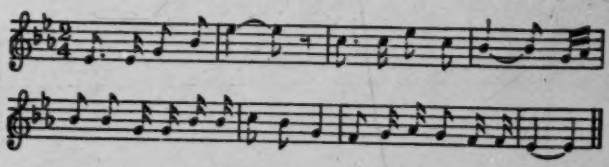
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81] 177 533



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent
538 book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
538 of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
•113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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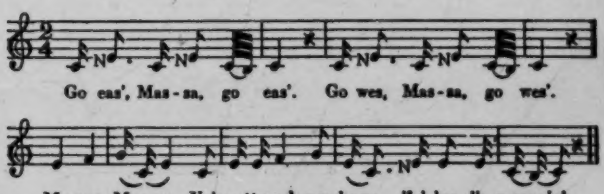


NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

## XV

## TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent history of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their money crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

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121 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the
.113 island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

127 In the preparation of this manuscript I have become
128 greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

June, 1930. G. G. J.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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175 was the first Protestant settlement in North America and the first white settlement near St. Helena Island.[5]

In 1566 Pedro Menendez de Avilés, adelantado and captain-general of Florida and its provinces, erected the presidio San Filipe near the site of Charlesfort, which had been destroyed by Hernando Maurique de Rojas in 1564. Here Spain maintained a garrison for ten years, when the Indians burned the fort after having forced the Spanish to evacuate it.[6] In 1577, however, the Spanish erected Fort San Marcos, a larger and more substantial building, and about it there grew a town of more than sixty houses, for here Spain maintained a garrison and a mission until 1587 when Santa Elena was again abandoned.[7] The activities of the Spanish after the abandonment are not clear, but by 1655 missions had been reopened.

175 797 These missionary efforts were carried on first by Jesuits and later by Franciscans. Spain's frontier policy, unlike that of England, was based upon the mission.[8] At Santa Elena, just as at every other Spanish frontier in North and South America, missionaries, under the protection of a guard and a fort, sought to instruct the Indians in religion, agriculture, and the arts. They settled the barbarous tribes in a village adjacent to the mission-fort, instructed them in the faith, and attempted to teach them the ways of civilized life.

[5] For an account of Ribaut's activities at Port Royal see Connor, *Jean Ribaut*.

[6] For a description of the three forts built on Parris Island in the sixteenth century see A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Site of Charlesfort," in Connor, *Jean Ribaut*, pp. 113-124.

[7] For a comprehensive account of Spanish activities in Georgia and South Carolina, see Herbert E. Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia: A Contribution to the History of One of the Spanish Borderlands*.

[8] H. E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, XXIII, 42-61.

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THE ANGLO-SPANISH CONFLICT

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When Captain William Hilton in 1663 explored the Carolina coast southward from Cape Fear under the auspices of a group of Barbadians, the Anglo-Spanish contest for Santa Elena began. Upon his arrival at Parris Island, Hilton found there a Spanish garrison from San Augustín, and he immediately withdrew to avoid capture.[9] Three years later when Robert Sandford explored this region he found signs of preparations for new buildings on Parris Island and "a faire wooden Crosse of the Spaniards erecc̄on" in the Plaza of the town. Sandford considered Santa Elena, or Port Royal, as he called the territory, the most favorable site for the settlement of a colony and recommended it highly to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina who sent him on the expedition.

Dr. Henry Woodward who went with Sandford remained with the cassique of Santa Elena who gave him "formall possession of the whole Country to hold as Tennant at Will of the right Hono^ble Lords Proprietors." But the English had to face twenty years of conflict before they could claim the possession of Santa Elena.[10] In this conflict Dr. Woodward played an important role, for his sojourn with the Indians and his subsequent capture by the Spaniards taught him not only the tongues of the natives, but the methods of the Spanish as well.[11]

[9] For the accounts of Hilton, Sandford, and Woodward in the Santa Elena, or Port Royal, territory, see Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, pp. 31-57, 75-107; "Shaftesbury Papers," *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, V, 18-28, 57-82. [113].

[10] Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia*, pp. 28-44.

[11] For a biography of Woodward see Joseph W. Barnwell, "Dr. Henry Woodward, The First English Settler in South Carolina and Some of His Descendants," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VIII, 29-41. [113]

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bly a hauling or drawing up the earth to the plants, they are gradually thinned until June, when careful hands are selected to give the final thinning. This is a nice point, on which nothing like uniformity of practice prevails. In high lands, whose fertility has been impaired by frequent cropping, as many as one hundred and twenty stalks may be left in a task row, (105 feet). In newer, stronger or lower lands, where the growth of the plants is increased, the number must be proportionably diminished.

The plants are hauled, whenever the growth is checked by drought or threatened by grass, *until the middle of July*, beyond which period, it is unsafe to haul the earth to any fields but such as have been planted late in the season. . . .

We gather it as soon as possible after it has burst the pods, that it may avoid injury as well from dirt, as from too much exposure to the sun. Women and boys prove the most efficient pickers. The greatest care is used by them to separate the Cotton, all dried leaves or other substances may impair or discolour the staple. It is then spread, if wet, on a scaffold and exposed to the sun; but, if gathered in dry weather, *on the floor in the house*, to suffer whatever moisture it has imbided to escape, before it is stowed away in bulk. It is then passed once through a patent whipper, (M'Birnie's,) and sorted in the seed, at the rate of one to two hundred pounds to the hand. It is now ready for the gin. Eave's was formerly in successful use; but that, as well as the barrel gin, has been superseded by the common foot or crank gin, whose extreme simplicity of structure has given it an advantage over others more efficient, but more complicated . . . thirty pounds of clean Cotton as a day's labour, are easily turned out to each gin. It is then moted, often, but not always, on frames of wire or latticed wood, at a rate varying from fifteen to thirty pounds to the hand, and is then packed and ready for market.[22]

The preparation of the staple for market was the most tedious part of the growth of sea-island cotton. Before 1820, however, this was not considered to be the case.

[22] William Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 152-154.

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CHAPTER III

# THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

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## PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

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[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-809.

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CHAPTER V

# PLANTATION MANAGEMENT

WHILE MOST sea-island planters were ready to agree upon the unsuccessfulness of growing long staple cotton, at least one of them was unwilling to attribute their failure to caterpillars, storms, and the Charleston factors. Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, writing on this subject in 1834 for the *Southern Agriculturist*, was of the opinion that it was due rather to the planter's mismanagement: to his absence from the plantation in the summer months, to his want of strict personal supervision when he was at home, to over-planting, and to ignorance.[1]

## THE OVERSEER

St. Helena planters quite generally employed overseers to supervise the detailed operations of their plantations, at the same time reserving the right to lay down the general rules of management.[2] When the planter had several large holdings, as for instance, Captain John Fripp and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, it was impossible for him to attend personally to all the affairs of his crops and his laborers. Had the planter been disposed to undertake so arduous a task, he likely would have done so at the risk of his health, for the whites were subject to the diseases of the summer months, especially malaria, or the "intermittent fevers." No planter, therefore, who could borrow the price of an overseer's wages would spent the "sickly season" on his

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[1] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "On the Causes of the General Unsuccessfulness of Sea-Island Planters," *Southern Agriculturist*, VII, 177-183.

[2] For a list of regulations made by a planter for his overseer, see Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 115-122.

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having assumed management in 1802, finding the gang good, but "very disorderly which is invariably the case when there is a frequent change of managers."[9] Later his son succeeded him. 000

Louis Manigault, after having made only half a crop due to his new overseer's inexperience, wrote, "He says 'he will do better another year, that now he sees into it,' and as is well known, 'Never change an Overseer if You can help it.' We try him once (but only once) more."[10] But he proved no better the second year than the first. "Elated by a strong and very false religious feeling he began to injure the plantation a vast deal, placing himself on a par with the Negroes, by even joining in with them at their prayer meetings, breaking down long established discipline, which in every Case is so difficult to preserve, favouring and siding in any difficulty with the people, against the Drivers, besides causing numerous grievances."[11] And so Manigault was forced to look for a new overseer. 466 567

ORGANIZATION OF SLAVE LABOR

Planters learned early in the use of slave labor that it was necessary to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over the others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations the seasoned Negroes trained the new ones and were responsible for their behaviour. In the early days of the plantation regime, when a gang of fresh Africans was purchased, they were assigned 466 464 567

[9] R. King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828. (113)

[10] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 143.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

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[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.

[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.

[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.

[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.

[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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[For information on the preparation and writing of this work by members of the Federal Writers' Project, see Category 121.]

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121 in which children walked miles to rickety schools and the elderly walked miles to rickety churches. It was a world in which farmers borrowed small sums at indefinite rates of interest and lost their lands at indefinite rates of foreclosure. The major impact of the Great Depression on this world of perpetual depression was to bring in fieldworkers from the Federal Writers' Project.[3]

•114 *Drums and Shadows* was sparsely reviewed at the time and did not enjoy large sales. The *New York Times Book Review* buried its notice on page 17, and the critic damned the book with faint praise. In a joint review of *Drums and Shadows* and Mason Crum's *Gullah*, C. McD. Puckette said that both books performed "a real service to folklore." He lamented that the "generation of Negroes raised under the tutelage of former slaves is thinning and sophistication is coming even to the last point of the outermost barrier island." And he praised the interviewers who "convince one that a faithful task has been done and Georgia can justly be gratified at this addition to the annals of the State." By comparison with Crum's book, he said that *Drums and Shadows* "covers the fresher ground only because fewer chronicles have recorded the stories of Sapelo, St. Simon's and St. Mary's."[4]

121 114 THE IMPORTANCE OF *Drums and Shadows* is much clearer in retrospect. It was the pioneering book in demonstrating the continuing, living influence of African folklore among Afro-Americans, not through bits and pieces of shadowy survivals gathered in small numbers over scattered wide areas, but through concrete examples gathered in massive quantities within a small area of the United States. In his foreword the sociologist Guy B. Johnson termed it "probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time."[5] The Savannah Unit was aware that the local folklore collected on the Georgia coast had implications extending far beyond the state of Georgia. The writers pre-

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121 (114) sented their material in the explicit hope that it might be "useful as an outline for further investigations in this and related fields."[6]

In choosing to focus on African survivals, *Drums and Shadows* was consciously departing from a generation of scholarly consensus in the fields of history, folklore, sociology, and anthropology. The leading university historian of the Afro-American experience in slavery was Yale's Georgia-born scholar Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. His *American Negro Slavery*, published in 1918, remained the standard work on the subject until the 1950s.[7] Studies of Georgia slavery by Ralph Betts Flanders and Albert H. Stoddard were written in the Phillips tradition.[8] In *American Negro Slavery*, Phillips revealed a certain ambivalence regarding the amount of African inheritance by Afro-Americans. Occasionally he seemed to believe in African cultural continuity among the slaves. "While produced only in America," he wrote, "the plantation slave was a product of old world forces. His nature was an African's profoundly modified but hardly transformed by the requirements of European civilization. The wrench from Africa and the subjection to the new discipline while uprooting his ancient language and customs had little more effect upon his temperament than upon his complexion." Yet only a few sentences later Phillips quoted with approval a saying of the slaveholders that "a negro was what a white man made him." On the slave plantation, the slave left Africa behind. "Ceasing to be Foulah, Coramantee, Ebo or Angola, he became instead the American negro."[9] In any event, Phillips's view of Africa was terribly negative. "No people is without its philosophy and religion," he admitted, but "of all regions of extensive habitation equatorial Africa is the worst." As for the Africans, "the climate in fact not only discourages but prohibits mental effort of severe or sustained character, and the negroes have submitted to that prohibition as to many others, through countless generations, with excellent grace." Such

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121 114 Herskovits and Johnson were not the only advisors chosen by the *Drums and Shadows* team. Among other outside consultants were the anthropologist William R. Bascom, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson, the folklorist Newbell Niles Puckett, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner, and the poet Sterling Brown. Three of the consultants—Johnson, Turner, and Brown—were black. Brown was perhaps the most influential upon the Savannah Unit. In his poetry he had already moved away from the pseudo-folk persona of the minstrel-show tradition to an authentic black folk voice. Perhaps the more literary orientation of the Savannah Unit gave Brown greater influence upon them than the social scientists could exert. The Georgia fieldworkers would have been familiar with a tradition in Afro-American literature that extolled—however equivocally—the African inheritance. Alain Locke had spoken ambivalently in 1925 of black Americans as "the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization." In the same year Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage" proposed that a black God would better understand the Afro-American's roots in Africa and anomalous position in America. Even earlier, in 1921, Langston Hughes had published a Whitmanesque identification with his African ancestors:

> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
> . . . . . .
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

(126) Muriel and Malcolm Bell, photographers for *Drums and Shadows*, were inspired by their literary reference point to see Robert Lucas, whom they photographed at St. Marys, in the context of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. And they saw Katie Brown in the context of William Faulkner's Dilsey.[*]

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
171 them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a
114 controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E.
177 Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of
178 *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial understanding and the alleviation of friction between the races in
114 the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
177 these two, since I believe that there are a few important
178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree of significance of these African heritages is questionable in view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the nature and importance of African heritages in our civilization, almost everyone would agree that the question is interesting and worthy of study. Such study may not only satisfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the scientific problem of the processes which go on when two
[128] different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no decision as to the African sources of particular traits. She has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
1940



[p. xxxvi is blank]

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# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the
461 river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb)A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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124 •114 When we arrived, it was just getting dark. Black masses of trees were outlined against the sky. To the south a shining river curved into shadows. A little wind blowing up from the marsh tasted of salt.

The party was in full swing. Small groups clustered about the open fire, chatting amiably and tending the juicy pork which was slowly roasting on a grill. The light of the fire lit up the shiny black faces and touched here and there on a bright blouse or turban.

115 Uncle Jack, tall, bony-framed and lanky, had worn his usual workaday clothes to the party. His kindly, near-sighted eyes shone with excitement. Uncle Robert, small and spry, had dressed up in honor of the occasion. He was conspicuously proud of his derby hat, neatly brushed and [291] cleaned. It was about two sizes too large and came down to Uncle Robert's ears at the sides and to his eyebrows in front, but, almost new, it gave the old man a certain air of assurance and seemed to make him forget that his brown suit was faded and well worn.

When the opening merriment had somewhat subsided, the crackling of pork fat and the smell of hot yams drew the party around the fire where Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert were exchanging reminiscences of old times. For the most part the others listened, occasionally interjecting a sentence or two.

We asked how long the old men had lived on the island and Uncle Jack answered, "All muh life I lib right yuh on Wilmington Ilun. Bawn yuh an nebuh want tuh lib no place else. I got ebryting I want right yuh."

Uncle Robert, who was eighty-one, about ten years older than Uncle Jack, said that he had come to the island from Clinch County just before the War between the States.

The long journey undertaken so many years ago had made a vivid impression on him. With a far-away expression in his eyes, the old man told us about that trip.

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128 description of the geography, demography, and economic and social history of the region, because only in an environment like that of the Sea Islands could the inhabitants have maintained the level of continuity with African culture that has been recorded (and that surely remains to be recorded).

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the greatest portion of the book. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the settings in which the tales are told and the telling techniques employed, and sketches of some of the most prolific storytellers. Chapter 3 is composed of Gullah prayers and tales, with translations of some African counterparts. This section may be particularly pleasing to those interested in seeing just how closely the Gullah tales compare with African narratives.

Chapter 4 provides a description of those linguistic features in contemporary Gullah speech which have African parallels. This chapter may be especially useful in helping to delineate features characteristic of Gullah and not characteristic of inland African-American speech or of other speech varieties in the United States. In addition to providing insights into the status of present-day Gullah on the Sea Islands, Chapter 4 is germane to the interested reader's understanding of certain linguistic features of the Gullah speech samples.

121 Most often we get only a retrospective look at a culture after many of its unique features have been lost. One of the great attractions of the Sea Islands for students of the humanities and social sciences is that the expected slow pace of change in remote areas will permit a look into the culture as it undergoes transition. As outside forces erode the traditional social structure of the islanders, every attempt should be made to maintain a record of changing language, attitudes, and oral traditions. And as I hope to show in this book, researchers who come with the right preparation and receptive minds can make their studies as rewarding for the islanders as for the investigators.

121 In my own case, I decided that given the wide field of untapped resources in the Sea Island area, it would be wise to undertake my • 114 investigation in collaboration with a colleague from a field other than linguistics. Behavioral data, whether dealing with folklore, language, cognition, or their interrelationships, have in the past tended to be rigidly segmented and compartmentalized into folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology. The needs for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior, however, and for ex-

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121 changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are
•114 becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea
114 Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to sev-
[178] eral families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

127 Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

121 One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

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# In Memoriam

•114 She was beautiful. That was the first thing most people noticed about Patricia Jones-Jackson. Those who knew her found her inner beauty—her charm and kindness and intelligence—even more striking than her appearance. Hers was a very special grace.

She was born on August 14, 1946, in Arkansas and died on June 29, 1986, from injuries received in an automobile accident the day before on Johns Island, South Carolina. She is survived by her husband, Sidney, and three children: fourteen-year-old Patricia Antonia, eleven-year-old Sidney, and four-year-old Brie Ann. An orphaned nephew, eighteen-year-old Benjie Jackson, is also part of her family.

Her death cut short an academic career of unusual promise. She graduated from the University of Detroit in 1970. She earned her Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of Michigan in 1978 with a dissertation entitled "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes." The excellence of her dissertation and of her articles in *Anthropological Linguistics* and *The Journal of Religious Thought* led to her appointment to the faculty of Howard University, where she was a member of the English department at the time of her death.

Patricia Jones-Jackson was a gifted scholar who was equally at home in the library or in the field. In fact, she was engaged in fieldwork—on assignment for the *National Geographic Magazine*—when she died. The ability to write rich, clear English prose is infrequent. The ability to perform truly interdisciplinary analysis is even less common. The ability to do both at the same time is rare. Patricia will be remembered best by the scholarly world not just for her analytical acumen or her writing style but for her great love and respect for the people whose language and culture she studied and wrote about. This book is her legacy to the scholarly world of which she was a part and to those Gullah-speaking people into whose lives she came.

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123 early twentieth century.[2] Thus they are quite naturally suspicious of
[609] anyone taking notes, carrying equipment, or wandering about unaccompanied by a resident. The islanders are a proud, perceptive people and can very soon sense insincerity and patronizing attitudes. It generally requires more than an offer of cash payment, gifts, or other remunerations to motivate them to assist a researcher's study. Though it was not my original plan to become indoctrinated into Sea Island
[461] culture through hard labor, I learned very quickly that most of the islanders are active, "going" people. Those who are not engaged in city jobs are likely to be fishermen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, basket weavers, market people, or laborers in the produce fields. Often workers allowed me to accompany and assist them, and I found that the rewards for becoming involved in daily life through hard work were great indeed. Returning home from a day in the fields in an open-bed truck, listening to the islanders laughing, joking, and planning for the weekend, made the tasks I had accomplished that day seem easier. Equally important, I obtained some of the most interesting speech data while learning to make baskets or working in an okra field.

• 114 After five years of gathering information on the Sea Islands, I went to Africa in 1978 to compare the Sea Islanders' language and culture with the patterns of some of their ancestors. The Nigerian villagers' welcome was far warmer on my first introduction to their communities than the Sea Islanders' had been. Many of the elderly Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio women had never seen an African-American woman and walked some distances to see the *Indocha*, or what was termed a "white-black woman." The label was used not out of disrespect but for lack of a better one to refer to a person born from African heritage but raised speaking a European tongue. After I explained my purpose for coming far "across the water," I was never in need of anyone to assist in any efforts. The villagers were as eager to hear what words, customs, and traditions the Gullah speakers retained as I was to tell them. Their eagerness was sharpened by their fervent hope that somehow some of the language, literary traditions, and social customs had derived from their particular culture, whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Ibebio. Life among these people was fascinating and amazingly similar in some ways to the life patterns of the Sea Islanders, even after the passage of centuries. It is about these similarities in language, literature, and culture that I promised to write this book.

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> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

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are among those names whose roots are traceable to West African languages. Some older island residents are named after the day of the week or month of the year when they were born. While it is very European to ask, with Shakespeare, "What's in a name?" it is very African to answer, "Everything is in a name." For example, the name Ada given to a girl child in Igbo means that the girl is the firstborn daughter. It is customary for Igbo children to be named after days of the week or given names that express sentiment: a woman who has long been unable to conceive might name a child finally born to her Ngozi, for instance, meaning "blessing" in Igbo. Some linguists have challenged Turner's work, claiming that most of the four thousand Africanisms that he listed were nicknames, or what the islanders call "basket" names.[11] Yet as DeCamp so aptly states, "Names are also a part of language and are no less capable of preserving an African heritage than are common nouns."[12]

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Many of the "old words"—Africanisms—known to the older island residents are, with the "new talk," fading from use. A number of idioms are still very much apparent in daily communication, however. Consider the following list:

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dark the light: the sun was set
out the light: turn the light out
hot the water: bring the water to a boil
ugly too much: very ugly
the old man bury: the old man is dead
this side: this island
do the fect to you: cause harm to come to you
can't bring the word right now: I can't remember at the moment, or I will not speak of it at this time
pull off my hat: I had to run
de fix for you: lie in wait for you
watchitsir!: watch your step!
day clean: daybreak
clean skin: a person with light skin color
one day mong all!: finally!
nothing for dead: nothing dying
the sun de red for down: sunset
knock em: hit
sweetmouth: flatter

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

127 113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

122 113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 123 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 609 113 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

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1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

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4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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128 sensitivity. Many thanks to Professor Velma Pollard of the University of the West Indies, for sharing with me her impressive knowledge of linguistic patterns in the black diaspora. Discussions with Joseph Holloway of California State University, Northridge, concerning African influences among the Gullahs were productive and stimulating. Although our opinions differ, I believe we learned from each other, and we concur in the belief that there is still much to be uncovered regarding the African impact on African-American life, thought and culture. A special note of thanks to Peter Wood of Duke University. He read two versions of the manuscript and offered his expertise on the African-Carolina experience during the colonial era. Professor Wood's penetrating insights and suggestions lead to fruitful rethinking in a number of areas.

This study began as a dissertation under the direction of Professors Daniel H. Calhoun and Daniel Crowley at the University of California, Davis, and Professor Leon F. Litwack at the University of California, Berkeley. I am particularly grateful for Professor Calhoun's advice and encouragement during my years as his student, and for his continued belief in the worthiness of this subject. Professor Crowley's anthropological input was invaluable. More significantly, whenever the vastness and controversial nature of this project seemed overwhelming, I recalled his comment to me when I first embarked on the project: "You're on to something."

114 The enthusiasm, intelligence and perception of many of my graduate students in the antebellum history and Afro-American history seminars at UCLA was inspiring. In those courses we raised probing questions about religion, culture, community and politics which I hope have made this a better volume. My right hand in the project was Jill Marie Watts. As my research assistant for three years, Ms. Watts' library detective work went well beyond my expectations. For typing and word processing assistance I wish to thank Alesia Barbour, and UCLA's Central Word Processing Center, especially Nancy Rahn. While I received valuable comments, suggestions, and advice, I have also been selective in adhering to recommentations regarding the book. Thus I am fully responsible for any limitations contained herein.

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000 Members of my family, as always, were a source of strength. My two children, James and Céleste Creel, never ceased to add color and zest to life. They accepted my preoccupation with unusual patience. My niece, Anita Louise Crawford, was a wonderful surrogate mother when needed,

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121 the African tradition and the "spiritual strivings" of African-Americans.
127 He was also a pioneer in expressing the historic role and significance of black religion as a means of political protest. And Sterling Brown, another sage of African-American cultural thought, observed over forty years ago, that much could be learned of black life-style and values through studying the folklore of slaves. Brown, one of the earliest interpreters of black thought, viewed folktales, spirituals and narratives as historical documents that spoke "with convincing finality against the legend of contented slavery." Thus more recent scholarship on the slave community, from which my own work draws directly, is part of a tradition begun with the exploratory works of African-American writers of previous generations. Among current scholars, perhaps the most extensive elabora-
121 tion of the importance of black culture as a means of delving into the
•114 black mind-set is provided by Lawrence Levine in *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine's seminal work provides an impressive continuum for probing black culture and black thought through analysis of slave folk beliefs, spirituals, and African-American fusion of the sacred and secular. Levine's general discussions of the significance of African traditions and behavior patterns among bondspeople is supported in the particular case of the Gullahs. He debates, as I do, the contention that slaves did not oppose bondage and he maintains that if historians cannot perceive the "sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders," it is perhaps the historians' problem and not the slaves'.[5]

My book is a regionally limited and more concentrated study involving only the period of enslavement. Levine's work permeates myriad areas of black thought, encompassing bondage *and* freedom, allowing for an emphasis somewhat different from mine and for a greater range of cultural and aesthetic treatment. Bondage takes up only two, albeit important, trend-setting chapters of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. My attention focuses on a full interpretation of one group's spiritual experience in a manner not previously explored. For instance, I see evidence of a strong New Testament ideology and outlook among the Gullahs as they embraced Christianity. Levine does not ignore this impact, but sees more Old Testament messages in general African-American consciousness.[6] Additionally, my work discusses the means by which slaves may have forged African sacred-secular traditions and offers explanations about *how* meanings of religious symbols and rituals related to social processes

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and community structure. Ultimately my study presents an amplification of rather than disagreement with most of Lawrence Levine's interpretations. Our methods are not always comparable yet our motivations seem to grow from similar concerns and lead to complementary conclusions—at least in terms of the bondage experience.

A pioneering and, for me, encouraging work on slave religion is Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Raboteau writes that one purpose of his book was to provide a "rough sketch for further, more exhaustive examination" of slave religion.[7] Nearly a decade has passed since his book was first published. Slave religion, though considered the pillar of African-American culture, remains largely unexplored through historical scholarship (even Raboteau's background was in religious studies).[8]

Thematically, Raboteau's book and mine run parallel: the African heritage, slave conversion, religious life in the slave community, and the relationship of religion to resistance. Yet we treat these issues differently. In his early chapter entitled "Death of the Gods," Raboteau summarily states that certain factors "tended to inhibit the survival of African culture and religion in the United States." Whatever African influences remained, says Raboteau, are found in "spirituals, ring shouts and folk beliefs." In the case of Gullahs, and perhaps other slave communities, his two contentions seem contradictory.[9] Spirituals, the ring shout, and folk beliefs tell us most of what we know (at least from the Gullahs themselves) about Gullah religion. These cultural traits move us as close, perhaps, as we can come to understanding a *black Weltanschauung*, and they were intrinsic to Gullah religion. If we probe folk religion and culture, it leads to some general insights, as Levine demonstrated, about slave religion. I examine the manifestations and meanings (as symbols and rituals) of various elements of Gullah folk belief. Then I compare my hypotheses with African spiritualism, cosmology, and other beliefs. I do not argue for "survivals," a somewhat lifeless term implying passive existence. But I do argue for the presence of dynamic, creative, cultural trends of African provenance among the Gullahs, which they adapted to their concept of Christianity and integrated into New World black collective consciousness.

Raboteau and I both expend much energy on the slave conversion process because it is crucial to the black religious experience in America. On this issue we are probably in closer, though not complete agreement.

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Christianity was capable, says Raboteau, of "producing a Christian social order based on the observance of mutual duty, slave to master and master to slave."[10] I found however, an abundance of literature on the "duty" of the former, but comparatively little on the "duty" of the latter. Certainly, a liberal attitude existed in the religious sector of the South—probably the only sector where such ideas could survive. Raboteau provides an excellent treatment of eighteenth-century religious activity. Early Methodism is the best, though not the only example of religious liberalism. The emergence of a few independent black churches is another. In the mid nineteenth-century Lowcountry, this tradition was to some extent epitomized by Methodist lay preachers who supplied the plantation missions.[11] As far as slaveholders and most regular clergy were concerned however, amelioration of bondage via religion was a minor consideration when compared to the influence of social control ideology. Raboteau seems to argue for balance between white conversion of slaves for moral and spiritual reasons and the use of Christianity to encourage docility and submission. That may have been true for the South in general. I do not ignore the white moral and spiritual imperative, but the weight of the argument in coastal South Carolina leans heavily toward the use of religion to encourage submissive personalities.

Raboteau understandably desires to "preserve the texture of slave testimony and to avoid forcing the experience reflected in that testimony into any preconceived theoretical framework."[12] I also try and conserve the historical reality of the black religious experience. However I saw important elements in the Gullah experience in need of interpretation and I sometimes practiced what some scholars have called imaginary reconstruction of historical facts.[13] When empirical data implied theoretical constructions or thematic conclusions I did not avoid hermeneutics. This is most obvious in the difference between Raboteau's and my treatment of two issues—religious life and rebellion. Our conclusions are, I think, somewhat similar. Our methodologies and discussions of operative, determining forces that explain these phenomena differ. Also (as is the case with Levine's work), our emphasis differs. One obvious explanation for this is that I am writing about a community, not the entire slave South. Yet contrasts go deeper than that. Raboteau sees a complex ambiguity in slave life and religious orientation which supports accommodation as well as rebelliousness, and which ultimately offered "freedom," and "transcendence" for the "individual."[14] Certainly among the Gullahs a range

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12 of responses to religion existed. But *particular* responses predominated and I emphasize these. Thus I structurally explore and interpret not only
•114 the spiritual experience, but religion as a *determining factor* in Gullah ideas of liberation, resistance-culture, and community organization. Although my book is primarily historical, it also addresses psychological, sociological, and anthropological issues. That apparently is not Raboteau's intention. Thus, thematic similarity between the two books is deceiving. Still, Raboteau's fruitful beginning furnished grounding for my study and hopefully, for others, in an area of black history worthy of and needing much more examination.

114 Two other scholars deserve mention here even though their major works are not directly on slave religion. My work has been influenced by Vincent Harding because he places the historical black experience in progressive-nationalistic, radical-protest, freedom-quest perspectives. His book, *There Is a River*,[15] is a poetic, apocalyptic historical message that *struggle*, more than "survival," permeated black motivations in the North and South, among slave and free. Harding's work is a statement that may ostensibly address a black popular audience.[16] Yet it is no less a significant contribution to the historical literature.

The late Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* explores black cultural beliefs and behavior as well as examines the black family. And if black religion is one key to the nature of black life and culture, the black "family," despite historical (and present-day) assaults, is the other. Gutman analyzes the adaptive nature of black culture, specifically patterns of family cohesion. Yet researching familial associations involved investigating origins of marrying practices and ceremonies, belief systems, kin obligations versus decisions to flee, child-rearing practices, sexuality, and collective organization. Gutman is exceptional in inquiring into the African past and relating this to the above deterministic features of black culture.[17] No historian has made such frontal attempts to integrate specific aspects of Africanity into the historical functioning of the black family.

Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* set the tone for a more conservative view of slave life: slaves "accommodated" their bondage, masters were "paternalists" who exercised their "hegemonic" power with a sense of "duty" and "burden."[18] *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is a culminating achievement based on years of research and writing centered around issues related to the above concepts, and despite its conservative conclusions, is part of

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114 the essentially progressive "community-and-culture" historiography of the 1970s.[19] Genovese presents a dramatic, panoramic view of slave life and culture, engulfed in a Christian motif. Through abundant documentary evidence, he offers an engrossing but challenging (not to mention disturbing) exploratory interpretation of the Old South. Within these frameworks, Genovese introduces an international comparative method, a hemispheric perspective, discussions of work ethics, social relations, and rebellion—to name only a few themes of the book. The author's work has revitalized scholarship and debate on race, culture, class, and labor arrangements. The book has engendered both negative and positive controversy since its publication,[20] and one hesitates to add to the plethora of comments. Through all of the pro and con discussions, the profundity and general excellence of Genovese's scholarship remains. Still, any historian writing on slave life and culture, especially religion, will necessarily take a position on Genovese's major and even some minor precepts. My disagreements with the author, implicitly discussed throughout this book, are briefly stated here in general terms. Both Genovese and I recognize value in slave culture, seeing the central role of religion and spirituality. And we observe a developing nationalism. On the major points of "paternalism," "hegemony," and "accommodation" as he uses the latter term, our views differ. Among the Gullahs, and especially in the Sea Islands, paternalism was not a determining factor in master-slave relationships. Nor did paternalism, as Genovese maintains, prevent slavery from evolving into that "closed" system discussed by Stanley Elkins.[21] To enforce my argument, and to provide a fuller presentation of Gullah society, I discuss master-slave relationships (especially as they affect the religious sector) throughout this volume. Rather than paternalism, I see *slave folk religion* as an important determining factor in precluding the development of a "closed" system. Gutman saw the slave family as another foil to white authority. Slave religion also represents black denial of white cultural authority in the slave quarters. One cannot debate the political power of master over slave, and hegemony is one kind of power. However, consider hegemony on a cultural level. Gullah religion was a congealing force in cultural creativity and a sense of community. The contours of black spiritual organization embodied certain African beliefs, an African world view and selective Christianity. In some respects, Genovese would probably not disagree with this[22] (in fact my reading of his work as a graduate student some years ago in-

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114 spired these considerations). Yet my examination of symbolic elements, behaviorisms, and rituals within Gullah culture lead to interpretations
114 and conclusions different from Génovese's. The socioreligious connec-
121 tion that encouraged and helped fashion black life did not, among the Gullahs, rest "on a politically dangerous kind of individualism."[23] What Genovese interprets as conservatism and individualism, I see as forged resistance culture and group consciousness.

121 Slave religion had its individualistic tendencies. Yet on the positive side these enhanced a sense of personal dignity and self-esteem. Of course some slaves were involved mainly for spiritual, otherworldly gratification. But more significantly, religion was a support for community-building processes, collective strength, and solidarity. Life represented more than "endurance," "accommodation," or "survival," but an effective means of resisting the hegemonic trappings Genovese writes about. Genovese also sees Christianity as binding "master and slave together in universal communion,"[24] though contributing to their separation. *Communion?* It is doubtful that slaves accepted this psychic bonding. My evidence points to the contrary—to a people defending their collective spiritual separation and independence.

121 Genovese is confusing when he acknowledges the African heritage in the slave work ethic, dancing, cooking, and even housing, but maintains
114 that "spiritual collectivism retreated before the advance of Christianity." In place of Africanity slaves "accepted Christianity's celebration of the individual soul," which became their "weapon of personal and community survival."[25] This "community" is a type of nationalism in its most conservative form—religious. It is a sort of knee-jerk reaction (this nationalism) that replaces true struggle or resistance and forces slaves into a Gordian knot with the planters pulling the strings. This nationalism confines slaves as willing social, psychological, and cultural dependents.[26] Without the input of resistance, this type of religious nationalism takes a conservative, nonprogressive emphasis. But among the Gullahs resistance to bondage on a number of levels remained a facet of black life. It is important to historical inquiry that the experiences of bondspeople be examined in terms they help define, as one does with other groups—slaveholders for instance. Otherwise one risks espousing a kind of retrospective cultural chauvinism. Why interpret the psyche of the slave through the ideology of the slave master? Or, how much can

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121 we learn about workers by studying them through management ideol-
114 ogy?

Professor Genovese describes the slave South in prebourgeois or precapitalist terms, a theory other historians have adopted. One can see the convenience and appeal of this definition as a means of explaining social and economic relations. Paternalism is a prebourgeois ideology for the most part. Paternalistic, feudalistic, or signorial relationships characterize societies where political and religious structures are inextricably tied to their economies. There is less class cohesion, or class consciousness in prebourgeois societies because of the simplicity of production organization and the "self-sufficiency" of communities. Within such an historical period, the oppressed group supposedly never become *conscious* of the *true* economic driving forces behind historical movement. Nor are the oppressed *conscious* of their own victimization because class relations in these societies remain complex and concealed. This is a contrast to the stark simplicity of class interest and exploitation under capitalism.[27] Not all of the South, especially that which provides Genovese's model, fits the economic pattern. Plantations were largely dependent upon an international market for profit. They were not "self-sufficient" since other areas of the country and world supplied them with provisions and commodities of life-style. But the social pattern in prebourgeois society raises more interesting questions if applied to the bondspeople—the oppressed. Can we say that slaves were not *conscious* of their *oppression* (that they had only *false consciousness*)?[28] Slave testimony indicates otherwise, though not in the Marxist-Leninist sense. The wealth of masters and impoverishment of slaves is evidence of the "alienation" (lack of ownership of or equitable return for labor) of the "producers" (slaves) from their "commodity" (fruits of labor). Oppression and victimization were realized on the conscious level, but slaves' reaction to these forces needs to be measured less from a twentieth-century perspective.

121 As far as class relations being concealed, in the slaves' case under a web of paternalism and hegemony, the polarization between master and slave, especially when the latter was a field hand, was real. And of course Marx (who developed this analysis) was not referring to bondage, but to feudalism. In the latter case, relations may be less obvious because, among other things, peasants have a claim to the land they cultivate, race is not a factor, cultural differences are not as divisive, and in some societies,

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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples. 101

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" trying to understand it, Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

114 174 101 175 174 197 174

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala* (*gola*, *gula*) which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

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114 174 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gisi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geecher* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11]

One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary:

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena:

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the

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114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet 771 no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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As discussed in the text, research indicates that the majority of slaves in Carolina by 1740 were chiefly from Kongo-Angola. This was also the largest group imported into South Carolina during the entire slave trade as illustrated in table A.3, which was taken from Philip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade*. However, Curtin's percentages may be misleading for purposes of examining African cultural influence in coastal Carolina because he lumps the entire slave trade period together. Up to 1740, the end of the first period of the Carolina trade, Kongo-Angolans were the majority. But as evident from tables A.1 and A.2, during the period of high economic growth and large-scale slave importation in the Sea Island region, these Africans composed a relatively small percentage of total cargoes with known coastal origins. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region do not again figure heavily in South Carolina trade until the nineteenth century. Curtin has no separate breakdown for these years (1804–1807), when many Kongo-Angola peoples were imported (see tables A.4 and A.5) chiefly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of up-country plantations and new territories. At the time, South Carolina was the only state importing slaves and supplied other states as well. In the nineteenth century, despite the emergence of Sea Island cotton as an export of growing significance, many coastal and Sea Island planters were well supplied with slaves and expressed strong hostility to reopening of the international trade in 1803. Concerned about the depreciation of their own slave property, as well as the prospect of slave revolts, these planters were instrumental in the near-defeat of the bill to reopen the African slave

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TABLE A.3
*Percentage of Slaves of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1733 to 1807*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Senegambia | 19.5 |
| Windward Coast (including Sierra Leone) | 23.1 |
| Gold Coast | 13.3 |
| Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3.7 |
| Angola | 39.6 |
| Mozambique, Madagascar | 0.7 |
| Total | 100.0 |

*Source:* Philip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison-University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 157, Table 45.

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TABLE A.4
*Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 11 | 7.5 |
| Windward Coast | 44.5 | 30.5 |
| Gold Coast | 23.5 | 16.0 |
| Bright of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3 | 2.0 |
| Angola | 55 | 37.7 |
| Others | 9 | 6.3 |
| Total | 90.0 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

TABLE A.5
*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
| Senegambia | 4 | 290 | 6 | 73 | 10 | 435 |
| Windward Coast | 33 | 4,374 | 16 | 2,096 | 49 | 6,470 |
| Gold Coast | 16 | 2,416 | 7 | 1,057 | 23 | 3,624 |
| Angola | 50 | 14,440 | 5 | 1,694 | 55 | 16,134 |
| Bight of Benin Biglt of Biafra | 6 | 1,809 | 1 | 301 | 7 | 2,412 |
| Others | 2 | 473 | — | — | 2 | 473 |
| Total | 111 | 23,802 | 40 | 5,221 | 151 | 29,023 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol v. 4, passim.

[114] trade in South Carolina. Thus, Philip Curtin's percentages, which cover the years 1733–1807, are too broad chronologically to adequately represent the pattern of the slave trade in regard to cultural geography.

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In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits provided what appeared to be a good source of ethnic information. Using raw material supplied by Elizabeth Donnan, Herskovits developed a numerical tabulation of slave imports into South Carolina for the years 1733–1785 in

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TABLE A.6
*Number of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1733 to 1785 (Middle Period)*

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| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. Imported* |
|---|---|
| Origin given as "Africa" | 4,146 |
| From the Gambia to Sierra Leone | 12,441 |
| Sierra Leone | 3,906 |
| Rice and Grain Coasts | 3,851 |
| "Guinea Coast" (Gold Coast to Calabar) | 18,240* |
| Angola | 11,485 |
| Congo | 10,924 |
| Mozambique | 243 |
| East Africa | 230 |
| Total Imported from Africa | 65,466 |
| Total Imported from the West Indies | 2,303 |
| Total Number of Imports | 67,796 |

*Herskovits notes that of this number only 1,168 slaves were brought in ships sailing from "Benin," "Bonny," "New Calabar," and "Old Calabar." Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 305 n.

*Source:* Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston-Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.) p. 48.

order to determine ethnic origin and influence among Africans imported into that state (see table A.6). However, Herskovits' computation somewhat confuses the issue of provenance in regard to the Sea Island region because it is based only on the available number of slaves from various regions rather than on the number of cargoes as well, and the percentage of cargoes from a particular area. In many cases, neither Donnan nor the Charleston newspapers (which were her main source) reported the number of slaves in a given cargo. Donnan's information on total yearly imports was not based on individual computation but derived from annual figures printed in newspapers that did not distribute imports on the basis of coastal origin. Thus, Herskovits apparently tabulated only cargoes which listed the African *coastal origin* and indicated the *size* of the cargo as well. This makes his numerical tabulation unreliable.

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Another problem with Herskovits' tabulation for this study is that his estimates partly cover the period in which the Sea Islands were only sparsely settled (the early period). Hence, we cannot obtain a clear indication of the ethnic origins of Sea Island Gullahs from Herskovits' information. It seems that a more reasonable estimated of sources of or-

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# Notes

### *Introduction*

1. C. J. Calhoun, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in Macfarlane's Proposal," *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 369, and his "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 109–16. For other views of community, see for instance Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); and Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). 121 113

2. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89; C. J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 159. While Calhoun's views on community are useful here, we strongly disagree on other issues, especially regarding his anti-E. P. Thompson view of how ideologies affect laboring classes. Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, passim. [114]

3. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90–105, 124.

4. Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 173–76, 179, 183–85; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old New* (London: James Clarke 1928), 187–88; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 2–16; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 85–93.

5. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965, first pub. 1903), 213–21, 337–49; Julius Lester, ed. *The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1971) I: 252–62, 277–82; Manning Marable "The Faith of W. E. B DuBois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1984): 15–33; Sterling Brown, et al., eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Dryden Press, 1941); 6, 412–21; Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 9, Pt. 2 (Summer, 1968) 417–37. Stuckey's newly completed work is an addition to the new scholarship. However it was unavailable when my book went to press. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3–135, 54.

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121 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.

113 7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

[114] 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

114 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion
113 and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–95, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35; E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–37; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

114 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave
56 was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

114 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.

113 23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

*Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
113 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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174 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

[101] 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

[567] 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy, "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

[113] 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

175 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

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114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

179 SKIN AND HAIR. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
553 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
[668] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
641 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segre-
563 gation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
[668] rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[669] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year work-
ing with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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545 [P ix-8]

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•114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for example, young civil rights workers from all over the region came together. There they exchanged (545) ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi. There they swapped songs and learned new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced to new areas in the South because of these freedom song gatherings.

114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

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177 178 MANY CHANGES have come to Johns Island since Guy and Candie first lived and worked there. Some of the changes—low-cost housing, a health care facility, and a home for the elderly—have been initiated by the islanders themselves. But rapid resort development on Kiawah and Seabrook islands have contributed in their own way to the transformation of Johns Island, bringing new pressures and new challenges to the islanders.

178 One part of Esau Jenkins's legacy is a dedication to progress, to building institutions that enable the people of Johns Island to control their own lives. But another part of his legacy is a dedication to preserving the cultural heritage from which the people of Johns Island draw their strength and their distinctiveness. Not all islanders share both parts of Esau Jenkins's legacy equally. There are some who believe that the cultural heritage created by the ancestors in the bitter days of slavery and segregation is best forgotten. They feel the past as a burden of shame rather than as a source of strength. But without a sense of where they came from, how can the younger generation understand their achievement or comprehend how far they have come?

Whether the next generation will recognize and value the power and beauty of the past is by no means certain. At least some members of the younger generation are drawing strength from the old traditions. They are at home in the present because they are oriented in time as well as in space. Without a sense of where they came from, how else can people know whether they are going forward or backward?

• 114 If Esau Jenkins were still alive, I believe he would like this new edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* In it Guy and Candie Carawan have preserved the magnificent heritage of the past in such a way that it can serve as a source of strength for the present. Johns Islanders—and all of us—can use that strength as Esau Jenkins did: to look to the future, to see what contribution we can make, to summon our friends to work together to do what still needs to be done.

*Charles Joyner*
December 1988

[P.X-B]

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# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 212 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, •114 that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived [101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

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•114 area. Visiting the islands year after year since then, we are still concerned with the survival of its culture.

We did not come as traditional academic researchers. We came to work with a literacy and citizenship program developed by the Highlander Folk School to empower people. We knew this program would bring needed change to the islands. In a sense we had to create a role for ourselves which would both encourage that change and nurture those cultural roots. Guy worked during the winters between 1959 and 1961 using his music as part of the literacy classes. He drove Mrs. Septima Clark, the supervisor of the program, throughout the islands. He was introduced to the community by Mrs. Clark and by Esau Jenkins, a long-time fighter for progress and change, and was therefore accepted as a friend.

114
123 In 1963 we moved with our small son into the middle of the community around Moving Star Hall, the praise house and gathering place for many of the people Guy had met in the literacy program. During the next two years we gradually got to know our neighbors until finally they were sharing with us many of their real treasures: their warmth, generosity, candor, and humor, their wisdom, their songs and stories, the good times in their homes and fellowship in their social and religious gatherings. We recorded many hours of interview material, life experiences, religious expression—particularly several all-night watch meetings in Moving Star Hall, folktales and remedies, children's game songs. We produced two albums and published the first edition of this book. During this period we worked with Esau Jenkins and others to put on a series of sea island folk festivals for island residents and for visitors from the lowcountry area and elsewhere. We also arranged for a group of singers from Moving

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same people attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
533 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 533 869 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

• 114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(P. xvi-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

533
539

CHORUS

Hold on mem-ber, hold on, um, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

VERSE

Some - time I up, some - time I down, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

CHORUS

Hold on, my dear sis - ter, hold on, Lord, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(ALTERNATE CHORUS)

Hold on, won't you hold on, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(CHORUS)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(VERSE)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(CHORUS)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement. [114] [668]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizneship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship (668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rpse to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 533 •114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field (P 235-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

668 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins,
533 brought some of us together and told us that a
white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I
•114 was also told that, though he might sound differ-
ent, we were not to laugh when he sang because he
was a true friend of the movement and had been
tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville.
Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immedi-
ately pulled out his guitar and began to play and
sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs
such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?,"
"Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of
Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experi-
encing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style
of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit
familiar territory. None of us had heard the song,
but we could feel the story. We requested it over
and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife,
529 Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from At-
533 lanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met
545 Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club
and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were
there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for
the first time. I had never heard or seen this song
style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin
Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shout-
ing and rhythms more complex than anything I had
ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweep-
ing into each response after a call by Benjie, or

(P. 235-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on top of, or driven by, this multirhythmic activity.

•114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. On the island it was sung in their traditional (533) song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." While working on the Bicentennial (529) Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1975.

185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

[P.236-A]

126 but such a range of language use would be highly desirable
124 for inclusion in any comprehensive analysis of language
(123) change.[2] Observations of such conversations were made, and
some anecdotal information will be included as a supplement
to the recorded data. The one recording made without the
114 researcher as a participant is an example of highly formal
126 register; the circumstances of this recording were that an
elementary school child took home a recorder at my request
and asked her grandmother to record memories of her youth on
the island. In effect, the recorder itself acted as a participant, and was the recipient of a carefully rehearsed
speech.

In addition to recordings of conversations with
126 island residents, conversations with selected mainland resi-
124 dents were also recorded. From observations made of language
used by school children and by some mainland residents encountered at various community activities, it had become
apparent that the lower socio-economic group on the mainland
retained more creole features in their speech than did island
residents. For comparative purposes, therefore, four conversations made with speakers from this sub-group of this black

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[2]Denison (1969, 1971) provides a description of the range of language used by a particular community, in his study of a plurilingual community in the Carnian Alps. His analysis was based on observations made during extended vacations in the community, not recorded electronically, and serves as a model for the allocation of language resources which a given community might show.

193

(2) well I do need the kitchen fE me-self, 'cause them ain't gon do nothing fE me (S2)

'well I do need the kitchen for myself, because they aren't going to do anything for me'

Intensifier: (3) and I had to get work then fE true (S8)

'and I really had to get work then'

COMPLEMENTIZER
Purposive: (4) my brother he jump on the big boat fE let the people know what happen (S1)

'my brother jumped onto the big boat to let the people know what happened'

Adjunctive/
Relative: (5) I think I was too old fE be 'long with them (S1)

'I think I was too old to be along with them'

Object: (6) and so my cousin she tell me fE come on play with her (S17)

'and so my cousin told me to come on and play with her'

CONDITIONAL[1]
Future: (7) tomorrow I fE clean the house

'tomorrow I will clean the house' (interpretation by S18)

---

[1]I am indebted to William A. Stewart for calling these uses of fE to my attention and for providing the sample sentence (7) for use in checking the two meanings of fE as a conditional marker. Some speakers interpreted this utterance as meaning a simple future as did S18, while others interpreted it as carrying a sense of obligation: 'tomorrow I have to clean the house.' Generally, speakers who had the greatest number of creole features in their speech gave the simple future interpretation. Conditional here is used in the sense of 'non-factual' or 'unreal.'

[114]

193 Obligative: (8) I do some everything what ee fE do in the world while I was coming up (S2)

'I did some of everything that should be done in the world while I was growing up'

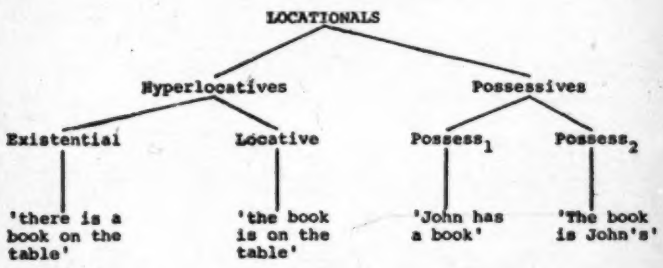
Fillmore (1968) and others have discussed the use of prepositions for case marking in English. As a preposition in Gullah, fE marks the benefactive case. In intention, it is associated with notions of possession. As a complementizer, the most frequent use of fE is for the introduction of clauses associated with notions of purpose and result as in (4). It is also used with adjunctive and relative clauses and with object clauses after certain verbs. The conditional use of fE has almost disappeared for present speakers of Gullah. The future use of (7) was obtained by direct elicitation, and all speakers did not agree with the gloss provided for the utterance. The use of fE as a conditional marker of obligation was retained by a few very old and by some children in spontaneous speech, but its occurrence in recorded texts was rare. In the same stretch of discourse in which (8) was recorded, speaker S2 indicated command of the standard English equivalent for the conditional with the following utterance:

(9) I done do everything in the world wey people should do (S2)

'I have done everything in the world that people should do'

[114] Washabaugh (1975) has recently argued that complementizers in creoles, and perhaps in other cases of language

193 elaboration, develop from locatives. To agree with his
114 analysis would mean identifying the preposition fE in Gullah
as a locative. I have argued elsewhere (Nichols, 1975) that
193 his claim is too strong. Benefactive prepositions in Gullah
and other creoles use morphemes identical to those for complementizers and cannot be considered true locatives. There does seem to be a close relationship between complementizers and markers for the benefactive and dative cases in many languages; some languages use homonymous morphemes to mark the conditional or subjunctive, as well as for complementizer and case. Gullah is one of these, having three uses for the morpheme fE. I have suggested that the abstract notion 'locational,' along lines discussed by E. Clark (1970), might be useful for examining relationships between these grammatical categories which often utilize the same morpheme. Clark schematizes locational constructions as follows:



6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

128 My chairman Dr. Ernest D. Washington really made this research possible. His guidance and patience ultimately underlie the completion of this dissertation. I valued the expertise and input of the other committee members, Drs. Johnnetta B. Cole and Gloria I. Joseph.

To the Sea Island families I offer my sincere indebtness. While I can not cite all the families who should be named, I must mention these families: Burns, Smith, Brown, Magwood, Gadsen, Blake, Seabrooke, Choice, and Washington.

It is the Godly wisdom and strength of my grandparents Martin and Carrie Burns that I relied on so heavily in conceptualizing the spirit of this effort. My mother Marie B. Smith, sister Theodosia, and brothers Theodore and William provided the reflective references I needed in completing this task.

• 114 I am indebted to my wife Dobra, and children Samantha and Nestor whom lived through the ordeals of this dissertation with me. Without the support of Ruth, Craig and Corey Washington this effort would have been immensely more difficult.

434 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio
592 for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the
464 families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 15,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey re-
464 ports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employ-
794 ment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

The discrepancies between these figures are apparent.
464 First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accu-
794 racy of the latter figures. However, the methodological
114 limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

464 794 •114 their time and energy in interviewing the leadership personnel of each island, and consequently relied quite heavily on the estimations they provided. The error possibilities which accompany this procedure as the basis for later projection statements are well noted.

HOUSING ON THE SEA ISLANDS

362 There are 11,557 housing units on the five Sea Islands. The median number of persons per unit is 4.01; 3,743 of these units are occupied by Black families. The median number of persons per Black occupied unit is 4.65.

The by island breakdown shows a total of 6,642 units on James Island. One thousand one hundred and twenty-eight of the total are units occupied by Black families. There are 4.63 Blacks and 3.64 Whites per units.

Johns Island has a total of 1,875 units, with 4.01 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 678 of these units and there are 4.58 Blacks per unit.

Wadmalaw Island has 477 units and 4.24 persons per unit. Three hundred and seventy-two of these units are Black occupied, with 4.62 persons per unit.

Yonges Island has 2,224 units and 4.15 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 1,326 of these units; there are 4.78 Blacks per unit.

There are 329 units on Edisto Island, and 4.18 perrons per unit. The persons per unit average for Black household

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
174 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections, that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

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[13]Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated
114 and where there was sufficient common understanding among
178 them to give significance to African survivals."[14]

In contrast to Frazier's assertion of the complete destruction of the African family organization among American blacks. Dubois[15] believed that careful research would reveal traces. While many aspects of the Sea Island experience have been studied, systematic investigations of the African family organization as proposed by Dubois has not been attempted among Sea Islanders. In this regard, Turner warns that Sea Islanders often exhibit African behavioral features only among the intimate circles of the family. However, if the essential role of the family in cultural transmission is understood, then systematic information on Sea Island child rearing may provide clues on the extent of the survival of African elements among Island families. Furthermore, such an investigation may provide a retrospective glimpse at the processes of de-Africanization of the American black family.

121 Parson's collection of Sea Island folklore identifies
178 attitudinal patterns and beliefs which are clearly of West

[14] Ibid.

[15] W. E. B. Dubois, The Negro Family (Atlanta: University Press, 1908), p. 21.

124 Consequently, this procedure was relaxed to some degree during the actual interviews.

123 Had not the researcher been a native of the Sea Islands this research effort would have been immensely more difficult. In part this difficulty could be attributable to the 114 workings of other researchers in this area. In particular, many of the islanders voiced deep concern over the book written by Carawan Ain't we Got a Right to the Tree of Life. These islanders felt this work was by no means an accurate representation of their life style or beliefs. But because 123 of the native heritage of the researcher many families agreed to participate in hopes of the writer being more able to accurately present the ethos of the Sea Island people.

128 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inference was the method of data analysis. The chi-square and the Fisher Exact Test were used to compute significance at either the .05, .01 or .001 level. The following analysis of relationship between the variables island, generation, and sex were conducted:

I Island (1,2,3,4,5) by questions one thru thirteen.

II Generation (1,2,3) by questions one thru thirteen.

III Sex (1,2) by questions one thru thirteen.

IV Island by generation by questions one thru thirteen.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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South Carolina



## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

771 •[114] Crum[22] claimed that the Gullah people have no interest in the future. This researcher found the case to be the opposite. The Gullahs, the elders in particular, are constantly looking ahead to the day on which their life patterns will be judged fitting to "keep eternal company in the Great Kingdom." Their life paths and worldly efforts are aimed at nothing else than at the day when their deeds will be reviewed. It is with the religious context, that the discipline behaviors of the Gullah people must be understood. Malicious acts of child abuse, and the heavy handed parent are frowned upon. Discipline acts for the Gullah, are aimed primarily at keeping the child "en d steppn of d Lord," meaning that the purpose of much of the discipline behavior is to prepare the child for demands of living the religious existence. Dr. Spock's notions of child rearing have no relevance in the Gullah household. Here the teachings contained in the Bible are the guide posts the parent follows. Discipline manifested as physical punishment appear to be no more frequent than the verbal

771 861 182

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[22] Crum, op. cit.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.
197
193 3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

121
197 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguis-
114 tically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

12 phrase or initiates a negative imperative sentence.

| *English* | *Freetown Krio* | *Bwondo Populaire* |
|---|---|---|
| I do | a du | me bo |
| I don't do | a nɔ du | me ke bo |
| do | du | boo |
| don't do | nɔ du | ke boo |
| I did | a bin du | me nga bo |
| I didn't do | a nɔ bin du | me ke nga bo |

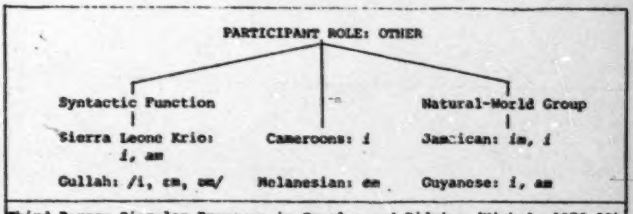
*Comparison of verb phrases (Todd 1974:41)*

121 The polygenetic theory attempts to explain similarities among creoles through a spontaneous generation process where creoles are thought to have developed independently with influences from their parent languages. Some
121 polygenesis proponents such as Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1966) sugges-
114 ted that pidgins and creoles resulted from 'baby talk' used by overseers to communicate with their servants. Consequently, the language which developed was simplified in grammatical and phonological structure. This theory is unsatisfactory for several reasons. (1) Early accounts indicate that the European overseers and their families were learning the creole from the servants and not vice versa (Dillard 1972:192); (2) if the European had improvised his own unique variety of baby talk to communicate with his servants, one would not be able to account for the fact that all French creoles are mutually intelligible and (3) the structural similarities shared by the Atlantic creoles of Spanish, French and English are too numerous for pure coincidence (DeCamp 1971:19).

193 sample indicates that /əm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /əm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position. [194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /əm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /əm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also. [197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers.[11]

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /əm/ is slight, and thus would make /əm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. The evidence indicates that /əm/ is [114] still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

193 supportative of Nichols' claim that the basic distinction
[114] between the forms of personal pronouns used in the creoles is related to participant roles within a given discourse whereby the third person category is used to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. The basic distinction between the forms of personal pronouns in Gullah (/i, em/) and Krio (*i*, *am*) is in the syntactic function of object and non-object. The basic distinction between forms used in Jamaican (*im*, *i*) and Guyanese (*i*, *am*) seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. Cameroon (*i*) and Melanesian (*em*) simply use a one form classification 'other' to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. She offers the following schema to show these groupings:




Third Person Singular Pronouns in Creoles and Pidgins (Nichols 1976:89)

Though it is not a universal that languages with a full range of functions must classify personal pronouns by both syntactic function and natural-world group, English

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

•114 197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[10] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[11] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[12] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[13]

114 533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[14] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[10]This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[11]In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[12]The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[13]Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[14]See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 138.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[10]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[11]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[12]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the
(197) negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk
of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely
a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and
African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
191 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech
(171) recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they
(178) must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[10]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the
(567) source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction,[9] a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced.[10] Within the last few years in South Caro-

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[9]See Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 62-94.

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[10]Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya: or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

*Slave Songs of the United States*. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 61 fables, 8 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 68 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

*With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

*The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 3 illustrations.

*Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 3 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

DuBose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 192 pp., 25 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 5 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

*Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 93 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are war-time pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 569 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-205 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 294 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amende*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shephard, 1893. 236 pp.

*Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War*, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

*Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884*, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumbling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 168, 175, 184, 190, 198, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1925. 133 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*. Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1926, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C." This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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"*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1872, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: 'E look asme like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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less inured to disappointment. As soon as the book was out—I had to give the proofs seventeen readings—I started to edit and bring out *In Darkest Cuba*. . . . . Realizing last January that my time was short, I promised myself that if I lived, I would publish three books this year and, thank the Lord, I've managed to do it.

"Of the thousand pages, more than nine hundred have been written since August of last year—written slowly and painfully, with a pencil on Sundays and at nights, while tired and worn out by my nine or ten hours at The State—duties I never miss.

"Now I'm through with dinkey for a while. Each of these four *Black Border* books has its place, and I think they will live because of their sincerity and simplicity—but time will show."

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[*]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much [567] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. [114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[**] They are products of slavery in the same sense though not in the same degree that they are products of Chris- 533 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 567 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 114 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native 178 racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished 177 a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas.[***] But back

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[*]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[**]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[***]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[****]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the [527]

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[113] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
(522) it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(529) rearcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

"With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
(113) Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

"Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

"See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
(113) Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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## *Acknowledgments*

122 In the twenty-five years of research represented in the collection of slave songs,
128 from which the comparatively few examples in this book have been culled, aid has been given me that words can never repay. Without the help of its many friends, this music of the Georgia Sea Islands could not have been preserved. Two of its admirers gave generous support in the four frightening years following 1930. One provided the funds needed to continue the work when the chastened Negroes would do for a quarter what they will not do today for a dollar; the other contributed her time, thought and general assistance.

114 I wish that the names of all who have shared in this work could be given, but
115 over a period of years I have become indebted to so many associates that it is inadvisable to mention more than those whose coöperation has produced far-reaching results.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parsons of Lakeville, Connecticut, and Wassaw Island, and the late Augustus Oemler of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, gave me in February, 1909, my first opportunity to hear the singing of primitive slave songs on the coast of Georgia.

In later years the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jones, of Sea Island, furnished an opportunity to hear similar songs on Sapelo Island.

The friendly interest of the late Mrs. Clifton of The Ridge, McIntosh County, made me acquainted with the "ring-shout," which is so rarely seen, even by Southerners, that few realize "shouting" is a religious dance of African origin, and not a loud cry.

The Misses Dent, of Hofwyl Plantation, on the mainland in Glynn County, generously shared their knowledge of the songs that descendants of their family's slaves have been encouraged to preserve.

In Camden County, Mr. Chacey Kuehn, of Satilla Pines and New York City, gave valuable help in locating the best singers in the neighborhood of Tompkins, Burnt Fort, and Jerusalem.

The late Howard E. Coffin never lost an opportunity to share with others his delight in the slave songs. The applause of the cosmopolitan audiences he assembled at

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•114 115 The Cloister, on Sea Island, did more for their prestige than years of single-handed effort.

On St. Simon's Island, Emma Postell Shadinan was an unfailing source of inspiration and information. Her death is an irreparable loss.

In the work of bolstering up the waning authority of the religious slave songs, it was necessary to take various steps that could never have been carried through without the assistance of the following friends and acquaintances. To them I wish to express my gratitude.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Franklin McElwain, of Sea Island and Boston;

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Lewis, of Hamilton Plantation, St. Simon's Island, and Grosse Pointe, Michigan;

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Kuehn, of Satilla Pines, Camden County, and Oak Park, Illinois;

Mrs. Henry Hodge, of Savannah;

Mrs. Burwell Atkinson and Mrs. Charles T. Nolan, of Incachee Plantation, Camden County, and St. Simon's Island;

Mrs. Kenneth Berrie, of Brunswick;

Mrs. George W. C. Drexel, of White Oak, Camden County, and Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania;

Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, of Colesburg, Camden County;

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pettigrew, of Dauphin Plantation, Fort Liberté, Haiti, gave the opportunity in a never-to-be-forgotten month to hear repeatedly the primitive drum rhythms of Haiti;

Thanks are due Mrs. W. K. Bunner, of St. Catherine's, Ontario, for first-hand information concerning the music of Africa's Gold Coast Negroes;

To Margaret Davis Cate, I give special thanks for help in uncovering certain particulars concerning life on Georgia's coastal plantations.

To Lucile Bruce Brown, of Sea Island, I am greatly indebted for constructive criticism of different sections of the manuscript.

The publishers of *Country Life* courteously permit me to include the article on slave songs which I wrote for the issue of December, 1935.

I owe much to the information given me by Melville J. Herskovits and Joseph Greenberg, of Northwestern University, and Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, of Fisk University. The results of their research in various aspects of Negro history have been most helpful.

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114 Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127] To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

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533 Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[491] When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

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114 115 533 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jacksonville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 178 199 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by religious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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## An Explanation

•114 There are certain matters connected with the singing of these slave songs that should be cleared up in the very beginning. First and foremost, however, it may be well to give my credentials. I am frequently asked: "How did you—a Northerner—come to interest yourself in this music?" The question is legitimate, and deserves an answer. In fact I have a fellow feeling for the Atlanta gentleman who said: "What right have you to know anything about it?" I always wish to put just these words to writers who grow authoritative on the subject—and, as we all know, what is sauce for the gander should be sauce for the goose.

I was born in a Quaker community, thirty miles south of Philadelphia,[1] where descendants of slaves—and some ex-slaves themselves—were the only singers. Theirs was the only music worthy of the name that I heard in my youth. In those days members of the Society of Friends were not the liberal people they are now. They had no "hireling ministers"; their meetings were silent until the Spirit moved one of the older—and approved—members to speak. All forms of art, including music, were taboo among the overseers of our meeting,[2] and none was heard in the Friends' Academy I attended up to the time I was sixteen. Paradoxically enough, their abolitionist views attracted a singing race into their midst.[3] Their tolerance was such, however, that as far as I could see they never attempted to curb its musical exuberance in the kitchen or in the fields. Perhaps, with them as with me, the Negro's music filled a real need.

For many generations prior to the War Between the States, colored people—mostly from tide-water Virginia—had secretly crossed the river from Delaware into

[1] One of my ancestors, John Pledger, was the first of the Salem Quakers to reach America. He arrived, via Maryland, in January, 1674–5. His wife and small son came with the founder of the colony, John Fenwick, in September, 1675.

[2] The stand taken by the Quakers represented a reaction from the frivolity of Charles II's day.

[3] Their opposition to war created still another anomalous situation: Lincoln emancipated the slaves, yet he did not keep the country out of war. In my family, the feeling against him was bitter on this account. My mother took the stand that killing was a far more serious offense than holding a race in bondage. In consequence I saw Lincoln in the same light as did the Southerners—but for a different reason.

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114 Salem County, New Jersey, where they found sanctuary among the Friends.[4] One of the stations of the underground railroad was located in our community, and the consideration shown the runaway and manumitted slaves caused them to settle there in such numbers that by 1840 they needed, and built, a large two-story church, and, after emancipation, still another. In my childhood they so greatly outnumbered the white voters that we had a colored overseer of the roads. At that time there was no lack of spontaneous music and laughter among them. However, in the late eighties, when a railroad was put through their village, the sophisticated Philadelphia Negroes were enabled to show the country cousins that they were hopelessly out-of-date. Then it was that the dull but stylish hymns of the white man supplanted those of the old régime, and standardized behaviour became the rule.

114 533 I did not hear the slave songs again until I visited the coast of Georgia in 1909. As we all know, opportunity rarely knocks more than once, and this time I took steps to insure that the songs should not escape me. Herein, I believe, rests my right to know something about them.

The Negroes frankly say that it was a good thing I arrived on St. Simon's when I did, and I know that if I had been there years earlier I could have saved many priceless songs which are now lost. These primitive songs—like the carvings of Africa—had been ridiculed, and the Negroes were ashamed to sing them in the presence of strangers. It took considerable brain-cudgeling to find a way to overcome their feeling that the traditional mode of expression was peculiar and old-fashioned, and to show the singers that many white people recognized its beauty.[5] As can be seen from the photographs illustrating this book, these colored people have regained faith in their birthright—and I hope it will last.

(128) Another question asked me is the reason for avoiding the term "spiritual." To-day it is applied to almost any religious song in Negro dialect, regardless of its age or

[4] *From the probated will of the Quaker, John Fenwick, it is evident that in 1683 there was one "Black" too many in our settlement. He disinherited his "grand childe Elizabeth Adams totally . . . except the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgrescen against him, me & her poore father, by giving her true repentance & forsakeing yt Black yt hath beene the ruine of her . . ." About 12 miles south-east of Salem is a town called Otheilo and a few miles farther east is Gouldtown where Elizabeth and her "blackamoor" are said to have located.*

[5] *For years I tried to think of a way to rekindle interest in the old songs. In the dark of a wintry four A. M., I awakened with the full-blown answer: form a society and admit only those who could sing in the old way. The plan was nothing but good common sense—and it has worked.*

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origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

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[6] Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.

[7] Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.

[8] Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro

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523 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

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One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

[12] A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.

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533 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later
114 songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original
177 song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with
178 American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

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## *Introduction*

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This book of Mrs. Parrish's is a singularly sincere and valuable contribution to the subject of Afro-American song. It is first-hand work with an excellent background. The data are the result of personal experience of Negro song at its sources. The approach is that of a writer who by fortunate circumstance was peculiarly equipped for her studies. Her first experience of the Negroes and their music was that of the girl in a Quaker community whose Abolitionist tendencies had made their locality first a station of the Underground Railroad in slave times, and later a haven where ex-slaves gathered and sang. The vitiating influence of the white teacher bent upon uplifting and de-racing the Negro was not to be felt where the blacks greatly outnumbered the whites, and where the whites, being Quakers, gave music a wide berth in their religious services, permitting the Negro to sing his songs in his own native and unashamed way. Nor, until the eighties, were these singers made self-conscious or musically corrupted by the sophisticated Negroes of the near-by city. They were heard by a young girl at the most impressionable period of her life. The quality of the original songs and the way they were sung left indelible memories.

Many years later, Mrs. Parrish found herself the chatelaine of a home on St. Simon's Island on the coast of Georgia, in a district which proved a veritable sanctuary of Afro-American music, and from which her investigations branched out into neighboring territories of the coasts and islands of Georgia and South Carolina, eventually reaching the Bahamas and Haiti. It is probable that the first slaves transported to America were landed near the place which became her Southern home. The beginnings of one of the most mysterious and fruitful amalgamations of racial musical elements that music knows may well have been here.

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How old are these folk songs? And are they still being produced? This last is a question of great importance, and not only where this one issue is concerned. The answer concerns the entire evolution of the musical art. Mrs. Parrish believes that the body of the American Negro's music accumulated within a period, roughly, of one hundred and fifty years. There are those who would dispute this statement,

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533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo* Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral, and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity, is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dis-
•114 pense with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

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533 man ears and the simplest intelligence. But it has stuck in various quarters, and
•114 been echoed by those willing to sit between library shelves—or not even in such learned quarters—and fit facts to prepossessions, or let others do their thinking for them.

Now if this were merely a doctrine and refuge for the narrow-minded, it would have done no particular harm to anyone but themselves. The unfortunate thing is the manner in which the doctrine is inculcated, in the name of education, in the mind of the Negro, and especially in the mind of the Negro teacher who must lead his own people to "enlightenment." What is to be said, not of that teacher, but of those who have taught him, or her, to say that, of course, if the Negro students in the class can't learn to sing their songs as they should—i.e., as ancestral tradition and spirit and style dictate—they must be "corrected." Anyone who has listened, first to the singing of Negroes naturally and inimitably expressing themselves in song, and then hearkened to the vitiated and Bowdlerized versions of these same songs, conventionally harmonized, rhythmed, and performed by a frocked Negro choir, will know without further inquiry the profound and inescapable difference between Negro folk music and the material it is supposed to emulate, and will say amen to the indignant words of Mrs. Parrish, to the effect that, while slavery of the body is terrible enough, slavery of the mind may be an even deeper wrong and a greater destruction.

533 One wonders, indeed, if the Negro composer can ever arrive who will reveal in an individual way the genius of his race, under these well-nigh insuperable obstacles to sound education and a liberating development. How is that composer to be freed, instead of inhibited, in the expression of what is within him? If such a development ever does occur, we as the American people will have evolved, for at least one phase of our expression, a music of new potencies and horizons, of which, as the author of this book observes, there is crying need in the whole world of sophisticated modern composition today. In the meantime, for the white musician as well as his darker colleague, it is of the utmost importance to realize the strength that there is in the product of Afro-American folk music, to conserve it in its original essence, and to understand its real values.

000 One can go farther. One can say that the principle involved has a vital bearing upon future cultural developments of the world after the present war. The optimists among us—and the writer is one of them—see in this conflagration, not only an end of at least some of the terrors which have held back the social development of

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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word swanga as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), benne[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
567 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
(192) whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance. . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
(824) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and
(961) give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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461 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in
517 mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this
[177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side
17 issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of re-
533 search employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be
• 114 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthro-
17 pologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

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### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[177] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 171 178 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A, [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 129--Analysis]

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13. *The Author and Sunyanna in Front of the School-House*

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## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[782]

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[794] [577]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

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795 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed
794 to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is
[788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tide-
178 water section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended
[783] upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide*
[114] *lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the*
[171] *ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
567 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(342) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
(243) a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
(162) there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
567 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
(164) for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
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[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
●114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation,
called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were
also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
522 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
533 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of water-
melons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had
mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small
farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal mem-
ber of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite
of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
179 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious
songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense
[177] tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region. 121 114 (122)

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal- 128 128 114

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lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128
[127]

I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
•[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh' spy Buh Goat duh leddown' topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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533 [178] tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spirituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

[55] Including the Allen collection.

[114] [56] *Too* high, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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533 171 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

[114]

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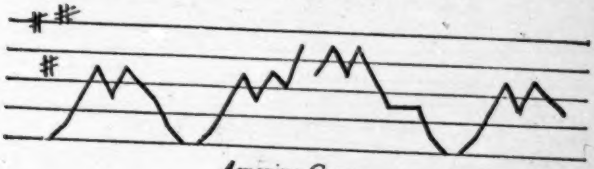
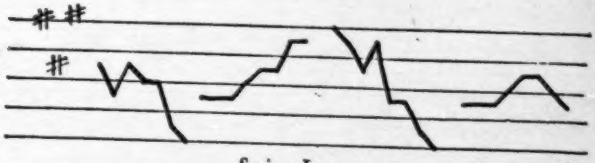
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



*Amazing Grace*



*Swing Low*

## Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low.* This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

[114]

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# III

# FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like. 538

In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina,* Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it. 114 538

Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
538 of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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IX

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

[191]
[114]

[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Souther Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114].

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[22]

| Value in dollars | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| None | 15 | 10.4 |
| 1-100 | 1 | 0.7 |
| 100-200 | 9 | 6.3 |
| 200-300 | 6 | 4.2 |
| 300-400 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 400-500 | 16 | 11.1 |
| 500-600 | 4 | 2.8 |
| 600-700 | 10 | 6.9 |
| 700-800 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 800-900 | 26 | 18.0 |
| 900-1,000 | 7 | 4.9 |
| 1,000-2,000 | 25 | 17.4 |
| 2,000 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Total | 144 | 100.0 |

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[23] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and

[22] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[23] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

[114]

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[For information on the reminiscences of older informants about the African people and/or their ancestors who were brought over to the New World as slaves before the American Civil War, see Category 829.]

2: Jones-Jackson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For additional information on informants, see Category 159.]

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Africa and became the driver on Thomas Spalding's Sapelo plantation. Belali Mohomet and his wife, Phoebe, prayed "wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set," she recalls. "Dey bow tuh duh sun and hab lill mat tuh kneel on." She also tells the visitors the story of her grandmother. "Belali he from Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds we didn know." On the same day, every year, her grandmother had made a strange, flat cake.

> She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tek dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. "Saraka" she call um.

Katie Brown has endured. She is one of the oldest dwellers on Sapelo. Her words gradually reveal to the visitors a portrait of Sapelo's black community, a culture in which the past still persists into the present, a culture shaped as much by remembered traditions from Africa as by encountered traditions from elsewhere.

Look at the pictures. Here is Tony William Delegal, the blind Ogeechee Town centenarian who toiled as a slave on Major John Thomas's Harris Neck plantation and who can still sing an African song for the Savannah visitors. Here is Henry Williams of St. Marys, born a slave of "William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation." Williams recalls Daddy Patty, an Ibo who "use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he came from. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im." Patty had told the men of life in Africa. "Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz." And here is Jim Myers of Mush Bluff Island, sitting on the oak logs that serve as front steps for his cabin in a hard-

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# *Introduction to the Brown Thrasher Edition*

CHARLES JOYNER

121 LOOK AT THE PICTURES. HERE ARE CABINS AND PRAISE-houses, oxcarts, banjos, and coiled baskets. Here are carved chains and masks, wooden figures and walking sticks. Here are the haunting faces of black coastal Georgians.

121 Here is Katie Brown, sitting on the sunny steps of her unpainted cabin, her head swathed in a white kerchief, her
• 115 body encased in a well-worn sweater. Her visitors have come down the coast more than fifty miles from Savannah, crossing over to Sapelo, one of the long chain of sea islands that stretch along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Passing the sawmill village in the center of the island, they have bounced through woods and underbrush over winding, tree-shaded oxcart paths to the tiny settlement on the lower end of the island. Here live the descendants of Sapelo's plantation slaves. Katie Brown is a gracious hostess to the visitors who ply her with pipe tobacco and questions about old-time customs and beliefs. They ask her about "sitting-up" with the dead, about conjures and spirits, about the use of drums in church services, and about animal trickster tales. "Yeah, we hab set-ups wid duh dead," she acknowledges, but maintains, "I ain know bout conjuh." As for drums in church, she recalls that they "use to hab um long time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um." Regarding Buh Rabbit stories, she says, "I heah um, but I fuhgits." But she has not forgotten Belali Mohomet, her great-grandfather who came from

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121 packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly
•115 stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around
[757] his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke"
[567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house, chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu-
[192] merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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VI. James Collier at Brownville

[following p. xxxii -E]

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VII. Tony Delegal at Ogeechee Town

[following p. xxxii-G]

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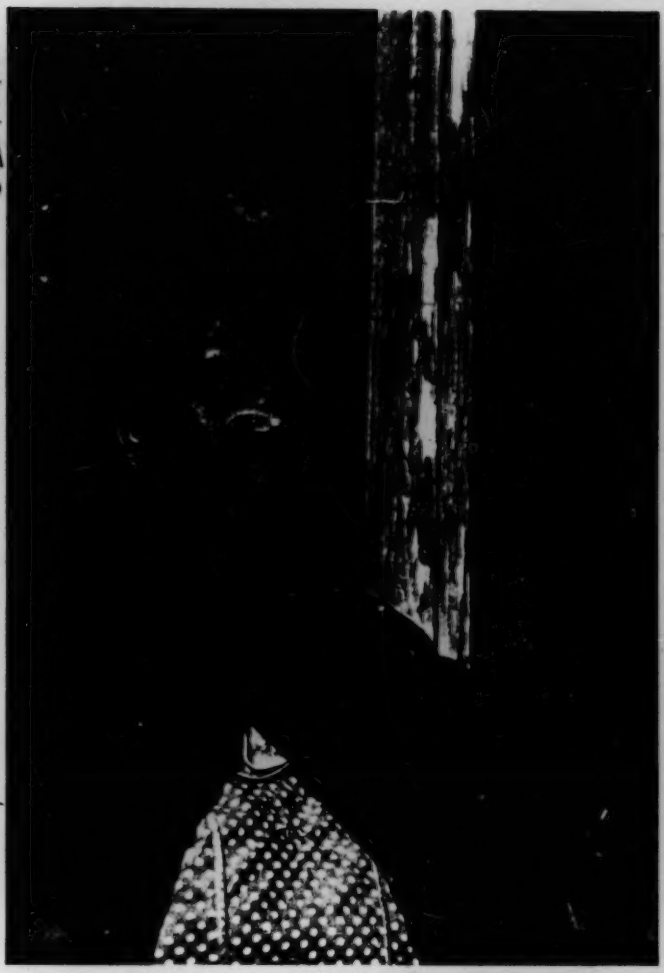

XIVa. Rachel Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii-N]

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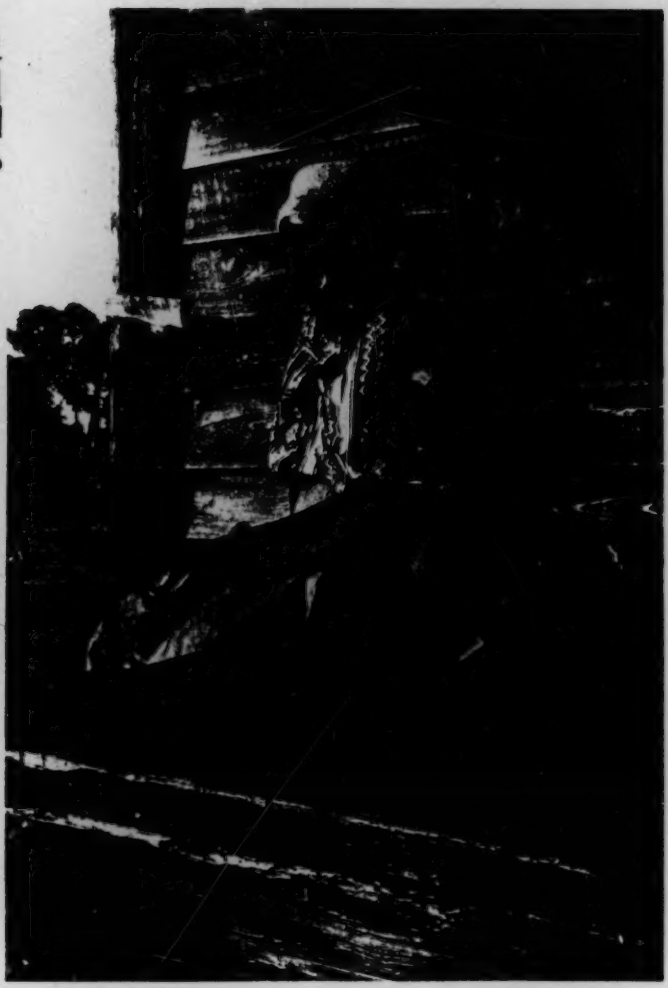

XIVb. The Andersons' granddaughter at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-O]

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XVa. Katie Brown with Flint

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XVb. Kafie Brown with pestle and mortar

[following p. xxxii - R]

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XVc. Cuffy Wilson and granddaughter at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-S]

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XVd. Nero Jones at Sapelo

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XVIIa. Shad Hall at Hog Hammock, Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-V]

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XVIIIb. Ryna Johnson, her daughter and son-in-law at Harrington, St. Simons Island

[following p. xxxii-Y]

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XVIIIc. Ben Sullivan at St. Simons Island

[following p. xxxii-Z]

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XIX. Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii- AA]

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XXII: Robert Lucas at St. Marys

[following p. xxxii-DD]

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XXIII. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[following p. xxxii-EE]

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XXIV. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[Following p. xxxii - FF]

771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east
(115) of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
(464) Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

775 "I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[59] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
(845) bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

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787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, *]

301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother
751 used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she
has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood.
•(115) Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
(845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

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754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well
[761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the
[574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will
787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115 pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness
[845] of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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775 duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh
787 cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

754 "Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt.
[775] Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

347 Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits
[754] and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a
[775] small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Ne-
[115] gro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

TIN CITY

361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One, through natural ability, has held the office almost from the
•115 founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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TIN CITY

342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a • 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly 775 off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh 787 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh comc roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by 787 witches [59] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but (845) dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double caul [4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. (775) A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

775 "No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [59] said an-
787 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
•(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
754 dat flied off tuh Africa.[59c] I blieb um bout flyin. Some folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

787 "One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
(826 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump, I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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TIN CITY

754 Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted
• (115) that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[22a, *] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die." [69b]

(115) The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den
754 long come a man we call Professuh.[48] He say ef we kin git
755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[8a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin
754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

780 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit
794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat
763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos [56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak
775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em [789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people 774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see 787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day [115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I 789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an struggling.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. 754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69c]

"Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin 754 somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two 115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were [301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms; * his [789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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115 632 [301] per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

777 "I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place."[15]

754 "Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I [301] weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other [789] charms, "keeps all deze tings f[illegible] huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm."[8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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•115 As we drove away, he stood there before his little house with the tall butterbean vine covered fence encircling it and the wild greenness of uncultivated fields growing all around. The last glimpse we had was of the fragments of mirror bound to his head glittering in the sun.

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•115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.' "

(226) (224) (533)

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, c, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

(845)

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

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754 among Yamacraw residents. Martha Major,* aged sixty,
789 related to us the time a witch had "worried" her.[69] She was alone in a basement in an empty house, as the landlady was out of the city. No sooner had she gone to bed than she heard "sumpm comin down duh steps."

"It jump on me," she declared, "an it choke me neah tuh det. But I knowd who it wuz. She come tuh see me duh bery nex day but she ain nebuh been back sence, cuz I put a bruhm by duh bed."

• 115 We noticed that as Martha Major had risen from her
754 chair in excitement over her story, she had exhibited a slight limp.

"Have you hurt your foot?" we asked.

"Oh, it mos well. Mos all duh wuhrums done crawl out now." [5, 5c]

"Worms?"

At our astonishment she was instantly on guard.

"Muh foot all right," she said crossly, but her brown face was a mask of brooding. Finally she volunteered the information that she had been conjured the previous October, almost six months past.[15]

754 "I dohn know who done it, but all ub a sudden muh leg begin tuh swell an swell. I call a regluh doctuh, but he didn seem tuh do no good; so tree weeks ago I went tuh a root man.[48] He gimme sumpm tuh take an sumpm tuh put in muh bed.[6] In a few days knots come out all obuh muh leg an wuhrums staht tuh crawl out. Only one knot lef. I guess I soon be well."

115 Out beyond Yamacraw, where the old brick and dirt streets of the community give way to the broad, paved Augusta road, an old Negro named James Cooper has for years conducted a miscellaneous business in a ramshackle push cart.** James sells lunches to the workers at the Savannah Sugar

* *Martha Major, 548 West York Street.*
** *James Cooper, Port Wentworth.*

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•115 Refinery; he also cobbles shoes and repairs anything from broken pots to roller skates. Because of his skill as a wood [322] carver, particularly of walking sticks, he has become known in the vicinity as "Stick Daddy." A decidedly original technique is evident in his carving, but he smiled when this was mentioned.

322 "I nevuh bin taught," he said. "I took up cahvin as paht time jis fuh the fun of it. Muh granfathuh, Pharo Cooper, he used tuh make things frum wood an straw, sech as baskets an cheahs an tables an othuh things fuh the home. I guess I sawt of inherited it frum him."

322 532 One of "Stick Daddy's" canes is a slender, snake-encircled rod with a handle made from a large black and white die. Another, slightly thicker, is carved with a single crocodile. The third, a heavy stick topped with a flashlight handle in which the snapshot of a young Negro girl has been inserted, is artfully decorated with a turtle, a large crocodile, and a small, sinuous snake (Plate IIIb).[A] The chief characteristic of "Stick Daddy's" work is the boldness with which the carved figures, dark-stained and highly polished, stand out against their unfinished natural wood background. Very different is another stick that was found abandoned in an office building in the city. This has a man's head for a handle but the stick proper is so covered with minute, unpatterned crisscrosses that the little figure of a man upside down, a horned head also upside down, and an undetermined object which may be either man or animal, are noticed only when the cane is carefully studied.

757 "Stick Daddy," besides being a general repair man and carver, knows a few "sho cuos" for illnesses.

"I kin make a sho cuo fuh chills an fevuh. Yuh take some cawn fodduh an boil it an make a tea. Yuh drink some an bathe in some an yuh'll git well soon. Fuh a cold yuh git some life-evuh-lastin and make a tea tuh drink, aw git some Jack-O."

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]

YAMACRAW

757 We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But
787 I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

•115 Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown
754 complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

754 "Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any sha[illegible] he got a mine tuh.[48] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru
[828] uh skin.[5c] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cunjuh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuhgit duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it happen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

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754 git tuh pinin way.[15] Duh doctuh he caahn hep me none. Finally I went tuh a root man.[48] He say right off somebody done gib me a dose. He say 'I'll be roun tuhnight. Git some money tuhgedduh cuz I caahn do yuh no good less yuh staht off wid some silbuh.'

754 755 "Wen he come dat night an git duh silbuh, he look all roun duh house an den dig a hole unduh duh doe step. Deah he fine a bottle. He tro it in duh fyuh an holluh, 'Git gone, yuh debil.' Attuh dat I git bettuh, but I ain nebuh bin tuh dat uhmun's house since. An I dohn lak tuh talk about it."

• 115 789 Another octogenarian, Thomas Smith,* told us that the same magic power that Moses had used when he turned his rod to a snake before Pharoah still exists today among Negroes.

789 "Dat happen in Africa duh Bible say. Ain dat show dat Africa wuz a lan uh magic powuh since duh beginnin uh histry? Well den, duh descendants ub Africans hab duh same gif tuh do unnatchul ting. Ise heahd duh story uh duh flyin Africans [69c] an I sho belieb it happen. I know doze wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh. Jis sit it anyweah on duh flo aw in duh yahd an bile deah meals. Dey could make a buzzud row a boat an hab a crow fuh pilot.

"Long yeahs ago deah wuz a cunjuh man wut could git yuh out uh jail by magic. A frien uh mine at Hilton Head git rested fuh stealin. He sen fuh duh cunjuh man [48] an duh man say, 'Dohn worry. Duh jedge gwine tun yuh loose.' Wen duh hour uh duh trial come, duh cunjuh man tell me, 'See dat bud on duh cote house? I sen im up deah. Deah wohn be no trial.' Sho nuff, wen duh case wuz call fuh, duh jedge git tuh suchin roun tuhnin up ebryting tuh fine duh chahge gense muh frien. Attuh wile he git disgusted an tell duh cote, 'Case dismissed. I caahn fine duh papuhs.' Wen we git outside duh bud done fly away."

(115) Thomas Smith's reference to flying Africans caused us to

* *Thomas Smith, 37 Ann Street.*

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789 mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next
(115) visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[59c]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz
(845) bawn wid a caul [4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now
775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[59a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us
(593) a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.
(115) "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh [48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh
754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell
755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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754 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an
755 wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

•115 Evans Brown * is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

"It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting.
775 Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh
787 groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

"I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh
754 wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

* *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

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# *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
(342) ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
(363) streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

•115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
• [115] nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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775 right at muh side.[50] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
[789] yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

• [115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh
787 kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[50]

776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree
787 times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock, he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed.
787 We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[56]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

•115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts [59]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[8b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 623 West Waldburg Lane.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah [10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men 787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

• [115] "An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he 789 smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh [825] han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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# *Spring field*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

•115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
[791] ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[759] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
ily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
[352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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754 Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in ap-
•115 pearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a
[291] turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass ear-
[301] rings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue
[291] overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She
754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days
[593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he
775 nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said.
776 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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SPRINGFIELD

787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe
• [115] superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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754 good luck han tuh weah [6, 12a, c, d] so no udduh root wukuh could
789 hahm uh. Attuh dis duh ebil spell went away an duh woman wuz cuod."

•115 One of the interesting characters of the section is Ellen Jones,* bette. known as "Pipe Ellen" because of a very evident liking for tobacco. The old woman, an ex-slave, claims to be almost one hundred and twenty-two years old and walks almost daily from Springfield to Savannah. Win-
[291] ter and summer, her frail figure is snugly buttoned into a heavy top coat, so long that the hem trails on the ground. On her white head she wears a dark wool skull cap.

754 "Pipe Ellen" told us that she firmly believed in conjure and in proof of this she related the following instance: "Right yuh in Savannah a uhmun wut claim tuh be muh frien root-mahk me.[15] I ain fraid tuh tell uh name, cuz she dead now. It wuz Flossie Hopkins.

"She fix me wid tuhbaccuh. Yuh see she knowed I lub tuhbaccuh. She wuk a root on me so strong dat she put a big snake in muh bed, an uh could feel tings moobin all tru muh body. I could feel duh snake runnin all tru me.[5, 50] Den I heah a noise an it keep on, so uh say tuh muhsef, 'A snake is in yuh.' I git up an set duh lamp in duh middle uh duh room. Duh snake show up. I close all duh cracks roun duh house, so nuttn couldn git out.

"Nex ting I know dat uhmun wuz knockin at muh doe. Wen I let uh in, she grab dat snake, tro it cross uh shoulduh an walk out.

754 "Ef uh hadduh kill dat snake, a man tole me, it sho would
755 uh bin Flossie Hopkins. He tole me tuh git a box uh Debil
789 Lye. Denne dug unduh muh doe step an took a bunle uh roots. Deah wuz red peppuh, an sulphuh, an salt, an some udduh kine uh powduh. He sprinkle dis all roun duh place an say I need nebuh be fraid cuz dis would kill any cunjuh put down fuh me."[8]

754 During the course of an interview, which was held later

* *Ellen Jones, rear 1304 Stiles Avenue.*

796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.

(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of
(152) each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
(533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate

000 * *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrices Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
[324] item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc).[A] The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
[789] ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv-[B]
532 ing.[70a-c] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb),[A] about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

•115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII),[C] well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
[539] following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeecheetown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeecheetown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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• 115
533
539

BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791
759
789

In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms who conduct flourishing businesses.[32a, c, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115
789
472

Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us that she does an active mail order business as representative of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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115 789 472 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs. On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

115 759 [463] A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Edwards * who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use [757] of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 [231] "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly. "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 825 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[15] [278]

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

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759 759 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a,*] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitiv aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5,15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b,69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Afri- (115) cans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 928 West 51st Street.*

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764 duh spirit an keep it frum followin yuh back tuh duh
775 house. I knowd a uhmun at Burroughs wut use tuh carry food tuh uh daughtuh grabe ebry day.[58] She would take a basket uh cooked food, cake, pies, an wine. Den she would carry dishes too an set out a regluh dinnuh fuh duh daughtuh an uhsef. She say duh daughtuh's spirit meet uh deah an dey dine tuhgedduh."

•(115) Another woman * told us that on holidays she carried food to her husband's grave and left it there for the spirit to come and get.[58] "I carry duh kine uh food we use tuh hab tuh eat on duh days he wuz off frum wuk," she said. "I take cooked chicken an cake an pie an cigahs—he like tuh smoke attuh eatin.[58a, b] I do dis cuz I know he will be lookin fuh me tuh bring it.

775 "Ebuh since I kin membuh I hab heahd bout spirits wanduhin roun at night,"[59] she continued. "Muh mothuh nebuh would let us go tuh bed at night widout leabin plenty uh watuh in duh pails fuh duh spirits tuh drink wile yuh sleep. Ef yuh dohn leab no watuh dey wohn leh yuh res good. I tink das wy hags ride some folks,[60] cuz dey dohn leab no
[754] watuh. I blieb witches is people dat's sole deah soul tuh duh debil. Dey hab duh powuh tuh change frum deah own shape tuh anyting dey wants tuh be,[68] so dey kin tawment udduh folks. Wen a ghos is roun I kin feel duh hot eah."

775 We found that belief in supernatural beings such as
754 witches and ghosts was widespread throughout the com-
184 munity.

"Witches is lak folks," one woman said.** "Dey done
754 sell demsefs tuh duh debil an he make em do anyting he
(115) wants tuh. Some git a grudge gense yuh an stahts tuh ride yuh.[69] No mattuh wut yuh do, dey kin git in yuh house. Sometime dey come lak a mouse, sometime a rabbit, an sometime eben a roach.[68] I membuh heahin bout a witch wut

* *Bessie Reese, 2407 Harden Street.*
** *Emma English, 628 West 36th Street.*

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754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

775 787 (115) A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[58, 59] "Once wuz jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 775 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me,"[59] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh."[15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh (757) Buzzud, a root doctuh.[48] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right."[6]

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 36th Street.*

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BROWNVILLE

754
.115

A more recent case of attempted conjure was told us by the woman * who had been the intended victim.[15] We found her living in new quarters where she had hurriedly moved to escape the evil influences directed towards her by the downstairs tenants in her former residence. Stout and middle-aged, she had not yet recovered from her fright at the time she was interviewed. As she talked, her dark eyes rolled wildly and her manner betrayed signs of extreme agitation.

754

"Dem folks wuz detuhmined tuh git muh spirit. Ef dey do dat, den I go crazy an nobody could hep me. Dey hab a dog trained wut would git unduh muh winduh an bahk twice tuh git me tuh look out. Ise on tuh em an uh stay shut in muh ruhm. Den dey would blow a automobile hawn twice. Sometime dey would beat on a sycamo tree in front uh duh house an call muh name, 'Tressie, Tressie, Tressie, wake up! Yuh gwine tuh sleep alluh time?'

"Dey bun all kine uh powduh unduh muh winduh.[8b] I moob muh bedruhm, but dey fine it out an somehow dey make holes unduh muh bed. Attuh twelve o'clock dey staht bunnin powduh an roots an callin muh name agen. Duh nex mawnin I fine all kines uh tings on muh poach, red peppuh an haiah an some kine uh powduh an some bus eggs.

"One night I see em bunnin some kine uh powduh unduh muh winduh. Dat sho sked me. I run upsteahs and git muh huzbun's gun. Den I stan in duh back uh duh house listenin.

"I heah a voice callin way off. It keep sayin 'Tressie, Tressie,' tryin tuh git me tuh ansuh. I didn say nuttn, cuz ef uh ansuh tuh muh name den muh spirit would be stole. I heah muh name obuh an obuh an it seems dat it go right tru me. I take duh gun an fyuh two shot tru duh flo. Duh voice stop right off. Den somebody call a pleeceman. Wen

* *Tressie Cook, 911 West 38th Street.*

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

• (115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), A said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us
764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral
533 ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave
(764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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# *Tatemville*

361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

• 115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[48a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody [755] done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid [789] yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[8]

715 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

•115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
775 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
(551) 'Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
(101) "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
(192) edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sizure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25g] and a hog *gulluh*.

(322) To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [704]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[33]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[36] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

• 115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [704] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

[533] " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh 777 825 sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

•115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum [759] root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[58a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
• (115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(759) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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115 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a
759 touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut
(787) a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuhchuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns
115 roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud
304 wuz a scah bout dis big."[14] She indicated the end of her forefinger.

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

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115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne
[252] an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

115 "I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said, her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been
[757] familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[48b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of which her eyes suddenly narrowed.
304 "Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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•115
304

"But did he tell you why he marked you?" we persisted.

"No'm, he ain say wy. He jis tell me he done it wen Ise lill. I dohn known wut he do it wid an Ise mos grown fo uh know wut it is an Ise duh onlies one he mahk. I duh tomboy uh duh fambly an folluh im roun askin wut duh ole country like."

"Rosanna," we ventured, "would you let us see the scar?"

She hesitated, then cautiously raised her hand to the fastening at the neck of her dress and, baring her chest, allowed us a glimpse of the scar. It appeared to be an irregular circle the size of a fifty-cent piece with faint lines which seemed to run toward the center.[14] Time, however, had obliterated any design or pattern which it might once have had.

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771 hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being
[162] "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were
[175] formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines
[361] Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

461 The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to
883 see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in
[789] the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

•115 Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

824 Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call
[777] Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made
[757] frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[43]

[757] We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
• 115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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•115 829 duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

787 When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

845 They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem [791] tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all [777] deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

824 "But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh 777 bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34c] said Susie.

764 In this community as in many others strangers are not al-609 lowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to 764 their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey [775] alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

115 "I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[27] When he laughed he bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, between chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

[30] [151] 115 754

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

[759]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

[758] [759]

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk un hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 • [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root [755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

•115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I
775 hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his spirit use tuh
(787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence." [58, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[68] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em' [15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den." [10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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674
682
[533]
[539]

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

•[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh dah city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

764

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
•[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh dea-
796 cons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh
[533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the
789 wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a, e] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

•115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died
[789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[69c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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•115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson* who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

[227] [286]

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 567

"Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh grandaddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

115

"Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use

533 534

* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

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GRIMBALL'S POINT

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

•115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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# *Wilmington Island*

•115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other
461 sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb) A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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124 114 When we arrived, it was just getting dark. Black masses of trees were outlined against the sky. To the south a shining river curved into shadows. A little wind blowing up from the marsh tasted of salt.

The party was in full swing. Small groups clustered about the open fire, chatting amiably and tending the juicy pork which was slowly roasting on a grill. The light of the fire lit up the shiny black faces and touched here and there on a bright blouse or turban.

•115 Uncle Jack, tall, bony-framed and lanky, had worn his usual workaday clothes to the party. His kindly, near-sighted eyes shone with excitement. Uncle Robert, small and spry, had dressed up in honor of the occasion. He was conspicuously proud of his derby hat, neatly brushed and [291] cleaned. It was about two sizes too large and came down to Uncle Robert's ears at the sides and to his eyebrows in front, but, almost new, it gave the old man a certain air of assurance and seemed to make him forget that his brown suit was faded and well worn.

When the opening merriment had somewhat subsided, the crackling of pork fat and the smell of hot yams drew the party around the fire where Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert were exchanging reminiscences of old times. For the most part the others listened, occasionally interjecting a sentence or two.

We asked how long the old men had lived on the island and Uncle Jack answered, "All muh life I lib right yuh on Wilmington Ilun. Bawn yuh an nebuh want tuh lib no place else. I got ebryting I want right yuh."

Uncle Robert, who was eighty-one, about ten years older than Uncle Jack, said that he had come to the island from Clinch County just before the War between the States.

The long journey undertaken so many years ago had made a vivid impression on him. With a far-away expression in his eyes, the old man told us about that trip.

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## WILMINGTON ISLAND

•115 492 484 "We come in a wagon hitch up tuh a double team uh hawse. We pile ebryting in duh wagon, all duh pots and pans an beddn. Duh women ride in duh wagon an duh men trudge longside.

115 484 "It take us days an days tuh come frum Clinch County tuh yuh. We cross tree ribbuhs. We git tuh one ribbuh wut take us a half day tuh git obuh. Wen night come, we sleep in duh houses long duh road wut duh folks desuhted. I membuh one time we stay at a house wut dohn hab no flo. Jis walls an a roof. We put duh beddn right down on duh groun an sleep deah.

115 567 829 "We done sell tuh Mistuh Barnard. Yuh know duh Barnards, missus? Mis Barnard come outn a Barstow. Dey lib yuh, too. Well, wen we git tuh Wilmington Ilun, deah wuz jis a few houses on duh ilun. Deah wuz still some folks yuh wut hab come frum Africa. I recollect dat one gang uh slabes wuz brung frum Liberia. Dat wuz fo I git yuh. Duh las gang wuz brung attuh I git yuh an dey come ovuh frum Africa an dey stop an add tuh um at Santo Domingo.

"Yuhs heahd bout dat lot, ain't yuh? Big boat try tuh creep up duh Savannah Ribbuh, but dey chase um out tuh open sea an dey keep chasin um till wen dat boat git way an kin lan dem slabes, it way down tuh Jekyll Ilun. Den attuh dey git um deah, dey steal some ub um back an carry um up yuh tuh Hutchinson Ilun. I tink dasso, missus.

"I membuh doze Africans wen dey fus come couldn walk on duh groun bery good. Dey hab lill clumpy feet an dey ain weah no shoes needuh."

We asked if Uncle Robert had ever heard the Africans say how they had been captured and he nodded. "Yes'm, I heahs um talk bout dat many times. Dey say duh wite mens git um tuh come on ship an dey fool um wid all kine uh pretty tings. Den dey lock um in duh hatch an wen dey git out, dey way out on duh open sea."

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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

•[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 567 829 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 [115] As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [69]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 776 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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539 way, Bruh Rabbit he steal duh hoe. He go tuh he own fiel an he stan duh hoe up an he say, 'Swish.' Duh hoe staht tuh wuk. It wuk and it wuk. Fo long duh crop is done finish. Den rabbit want hoe tuh stop, an he call out an he call out but hoe keep right on wukin. Bruh Rabbit dohn know wut wud tuh say tuh stop it. Pretty soon duh hoe cut down all Bruh Rabbit wintuh crop an still it keep on wukkin an wukkin. Bruh Rabbit wring he hans. Ebryting he hab is gone. Jis den Bruh Wolf come long an he laugh an he laugh out loud wen he see how Bruh Rabbit steal he hoe an how it done ruin all duh crop. Bruh Rabbit he keep callin out, 'Swish, swish,' an duh hoe go fastuhn fastuh. Wen he see Bruh Wolf, he ax um tuh make duh hoe stop. Bruh Wolf wohn say nuttn uhtall cuz he mad dat Bruh Rabbit steal he hoe. Den attuh a time he say, 'Slow, boy,' an duh hoe he stop wukkin. Den Bruh Wolf he pick up he hoe an carry um home."

.115 By this time it had grown late, and the figures about the fire were shadows. From the direction of the marshes the wind was blowing more sharply and it was time to go home. Uncle Jack came up to say goodbye to us and said that he was going to spend the night on the river, shrimping. When we expressed surprise, he laughed and said that this was his usual custom.

Uncle Robert nodded in agreement. "We's at home in duh ribbuh," he said. "Bin out deah so many yeahs. Ain nuttn tuh be feahed ub."

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## *Sunbury*

123 OUR CAR CAME TO AN ABRUPT STOP IN THE SANDY road before the board fence which enclosed a small group of weather-beaten clapboard houses. We called to a young Negro girl who lounged in a doorway and she came forward to see what we wanted. Almost simultaneously there appeared from the other houses scattered about the clearing a number of other persons.

Two women about thirty-five years old and nine or ten small children all approached the fence. At first they were rather wary, but their attitude gradually turned to friendliness and they hung over the high board fence, talking and laughing in great good humor. Elizabeth Roberts,* the (115) young girl whom we had first seen, appeared to be the leader of the group.

795 We were interested to know if these people had river baptisms any more. "Duh Sunbury Baptis Church an duh Palmyra Baptis Church both hab baptizins," Elizabeth told us. "Cose it depend on how many folks wants tuh leab duh Presbyterian Church an jine duh Baptis. Mos ub us is already baptize."

"Where do they hold the baptisms?" we inquired.

The group all pointed in the direction of the river. "Right obuh deah in duh Sunbury Ribbuh," they chorused.

(796) Elizabeth again took the initiative. "All duh candidates (292) is robed in wite," she explained. "Duh preachuh come frum

* *Elizabeth Roberts, Sunbury.*

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775 tuh be plenty keahful bout duh spirits. Duh spirit is hungry jis lak duh pusson. Yuh hab tuh put food in duh ruhm fuh duh spirit tuh come eat."[58]

"Dat is duh truth," agreed young Elizabeth. "Ef duh spirit is hungry, it will sho come back an hant yuh."[58f]

This talk of spirits started us on a new train of thought and we were curious to learn of the local theories regarding ghosts and witches.

"Duh spirit nebuh go in duh groun wid duh body,"[58] volunteered Emma. "It jis wanduh roun. Dey come out wen duh moon is noo."

• [115] Mary Stevens,* whose short, stocky figure was clad in bright pink and who wore a sailor hat perched rakishly on her head, stated, "Duh spirits is ebryweah. Dey peah mosly at duh fus dahk an in duh middle night."

Young Elizabeth, too, had something to say about spirits. "I sees em all duh time," she said. "Dey dohn hurt yuh none, jis walk long wid yuh an talk. Some hab duh head on an some hab duh head off."[59a]

754 From ghosts and shadows of the night the discussion followed its natural course to even darker powers, such as conjure, evil roots, and counter charms. The little group glanced slyly at one another. It was in lowered tones that they volunteered remarks on this subject.

"We do heah bout folks rootin each udduh all duh time.[15] Yuh sho hab tuh be keahful. Some folks weahs a dime aw a penny tied on duh ankle an wen it tun black, dey knows somebody is tryin tuh root em."[12a, c, d]

[789] [301]

"What are the conjures made of?" we wanted to know.

"Dey make em uh haiah an nails an frum lots uh tings," we were told.[10]

Elizabeth said, "Duh heabiest root I ebuh heard bout wuz a cunjuh made uh some funny oily stuff in a bottle. Duh enemy ketch duh pusson's spirit in dat bottle an dat wuz a

* *Mary Stevens, Sunbury.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," in-
789 terposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab
535 heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[33]

"We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big
[178] suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

•115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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•115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 322 764 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII)[A] set on graves
that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
322 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the
532 third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41a] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
(342) leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

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•115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told
115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a
262 settin-up."

"We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any
262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[85]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[86] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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# *Harris Neck*

361 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR
491 Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through
361 the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

•115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from
[351] the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

829 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remem-
173 bered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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HARRIS NECK

829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey [567] ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 754 [789] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69e] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

•115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[23] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[27b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[62]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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•115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

115 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task [787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face 787 and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

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759 aw sizzuhs tuh cut the pain. Once wen I wuz in pain a mid-
755 wife put a peah of sizzuhs unduh muh pilluh. All of a sudden the pain stop right quick. The pain wuz cut right off." 12b

• 115 Josephine Stephens,* one of the older residents of the island, lived a short distance from Liza Basden. Her house was set back several hundred yards from the highway in the midst of a large field. There was no pathway and in order to get to the house we had to cut directly through the field. As we neared the gate at the front of the house a tall gaunt woman, who we learned was Josephine's daughter, ran to meet us. It appeared that the mother had been ill for some time past and the younger woman had been caring for her.

As we talked with Josephine, the daughter stood in an adjoining room, ironing clothes. She stopped every now and then to take part in the conversation. The two women were utterly different types. Josephine, dressed becomingly in
(291) a blue and white checked gingham outfit, was the antebellum type of Negro. The daughter, tall, thin and dashing, and probably in her forties, represented a more modern era. She had on a blue checked sport shirt, a white skirt upon the surface of which was the dim outline of the trade name of a flour mill, and a pair of shiny black satin bedroom slippers. Her two front teeth were gold and shone and sparkled as she talked. Two large gold hoop earrings dangled beneath her
(301) close cropped straightened hair.

"I bin wukin ovuh at St. Simon," she explained to us. "Befo that I had a good job up Nawth. My mothuh git sick tho, an she need me tuh take keah of huh. That's why I come heah an stay. She gittin tuh be long in yeahs an caahn do so well by uhsef."

The mother did not know exactly how old she was but said she had been about fourteen at the close of the War between the States. We questioned her about her recollections of

* *Josephine Stephens, Harris Neck.*

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•115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

•115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed
759 and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument,
755 lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn
845 wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]
787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins."[63]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals[38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

• 115 Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
[554] Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

[763] "Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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115 763 Muh granmudduh jis refuse tuh die fo she seen me an duh baby. She say she hab tuh see us fo she die. Ebry day she ax fuhrus. She git weakuh an weakuh but she jis wohn die. Wen duh baby wuz a few days ole, I git dress an go tuh see uh. Fus I wuz fraid tuh bring duh baby intuh duh sick ruhm fuh dey say it bad luck fuh somebody bout tuh die tuh look at a baby. Sometime duh baby die too. I tell dis tuh muh gran an she laugh at me an tell me she ain gonuh take duh baby wid uh. Den I bring duh baby in an she sing tuh uh an hole uh in uh ahms. She tell me she wuz gonuh die now an dat I wuz tuh continue uh wuk wid duh folks yuh. Right attuh dat she die."

115 For a while longer the woman chatted on in a friendly manner, discussing various incidents that had taken place in the neighborhood. In parting they presented us graciously with some fresh figs from the garden and asked us to visit them again whenever we returned to the settlement. (123)

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# *Pine Barren Near Eulonia*

122 [491] AFTER THE MUDDY RUTS THROUGH THE PINE clearing had ended, there was no road, and the car jerked and bounded about among the pine trees. The soft brown needles made better traveling than the boggy wagon tracks that were behind us, but our method of procedure was rather bewildering, for there was no mark by which to retrace our tracks. As we went deeper into the pine woods there was no sign of habitation.

• [115] Our driver,* who had offered to help us when our car had stuck in the bog, was a six-foot, shiny black Negro, strong necked and lithe, with a twelve-inch hunting knife strapped to his hip. We had never seen him before, nor the smaller Negro beside him on the front seat. In the back seat we were concerned with our feet, which rested precariously among loose cartridge shells. We feared that a sudden jolt from a pine stump might make us stamp down on the shells and explode them.

361 Suddenly we came upon a reed and paling fence higher than the head of a tall man. There was nothing to be seen over the top of it, no sign of occupation. We drove around to the side where, protected by some feathery bushes, a small opening hardly distinguishable from the palings led into an enclosure. Scattered without plan about a smooth sand clearing were three or four small unpainted wooden cabins, two connected by a narrow board walk just above the ground. Other smaller structures, sheds, and work tables were placed

* *Reuben Taylor, Eulonia.*

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361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young (231) puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from 461 the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three 123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished (115) to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt (291) hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

(361) Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and (829) wondering how far from the main road this little settlement

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
** Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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•115 361 829 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town. He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

[759] "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[6]

[789] Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[8, 12a, c, d]

[789] The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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# *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these
(491) a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

•115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

•115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses
[416] did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witchcs come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

• 115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
797 udduh tings." [65]

•115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
[737] satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
[593] so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
[343] house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231 * *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
(533) There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

•115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
829 the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
782 I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
829 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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# *Darien*

361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

361 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from
[351] wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[415] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water
[824] dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
• 115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
[535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35c] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[58] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[44] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace
• 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in
[351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an
[567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us
[534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a
533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We
764

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1933.*

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567 829 789 gits tuhgedduh an stick duh hoe in duh fiel an den say 'quack, quack, quack,' an dey riz up in duh sky an tun hesef intuh buzzuds an fly right back tuh Africa." 68b, 69a

At this, we exclaimed and showed our astonishment.

"Wut, you ain heah bout um? Ebrybody know bout um. Dey sho lef duh hoe stannin in duh fiel an dey riz right up an fly right back tuh Africa."

Had Wallace actually seen this happen, we asked.

"No, ma'am, I ain seen um. I bin tuh Skidaway, but I knowd plenty wut did see um, plenty wut wuz right deah in duh fiel wid um an seen duh hoe wut dey lef stickin up attuh dey done fly way."

•115 This story of the flying Africans seemed to be a familiar one, for it was later repeated to us by William Rogers,* who [789] lived about a mile from Darien on the Cowhorn Road. We had been told that he had been a cabinet maker in his youth [322] and still spent much of his spare time in the carving of a variety of objects. The old man was evidently well known in the vicinity, for upon inquiry neighbors quickly directed us to his house.

Because a short time ago a fire had destroyed Rogers' home and most of his possessions, we found him living in an unfinished cottage which was as yet unpainted except for the bluish-green trimming on all the window facings. In spite of the apparent newness of the house, there was a pleasant homelike atmosphere about it. Proof of Rogers' skill was [322] demonstrated in scroll-work which decorated the porch and in a cupboard and fine square chimney in the dining room which the old man and his wife were building.

Rogers, who was seventy-two years old, was small of stature with copper-colored skin and alert black eyes. His manner was affable and friendly despite the fact that a recently suffered paralytic stroke had partially deprived him of the use of his hands. He told us that his grandmother had been

* *William Rogers, Cowhorn Road, Darien.*

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•115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us some of the wooden figures about which we had been told.
532 One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length
(412) and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[41c] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[41e] Another item was a frog [41i] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [70f, h] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

•115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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•115 Georgia but still retained many pleasant recollections of the days of her early youth. She had heard of many African customs and went on to tell us some of these.

829 "I heahd many time bout how in Africa wen a girl dohn ack jis lak dey should, dey drum uh out uh town. Dey jis beat duh drum, an call uh name on duh drum an duh drum say bout all duh tings she done.[36] Dey drum an mahch long an take duh girl right out uh town.

"Girls hab tuh be keahful den. Dey caahn be so triflin lak some ub em is now. In Africa dey gits punished. Sometime wen dey bin bad, dey put um on duh banjo. Dat wuz
626 in dis country."

This being "put on duh banjo" was unintelligible to us and we asked for an explanation.

"Wen dey play dat night, dey sing bout dat girl an dey tell all bout uh. Das puttin uh on duh banjo. Den ebrybody know an dat girl sho bettuh change uh ways."

829 The story of flying Africans was a familiar one to the old
789 woman and she said that her mother had often told her the
569 following incident which was supposed to have taken place on a plantation during slavery times.

"Duh slabes wuz out in duh fiel wukin. All ub a sudden dey git tuhgedduh an staht tuh moob roun in a ring. Roun dey go fastuhnfastuh. Den one by one dey riz up an take wing an fly lak a bud.[68b, 69c] Duh obuhseeuh heah duh noise an he come out an he see duh slabes riz up in duh eah an fly back tuh Africa. He run an he ketch duh las one by duh foot jis as he wuz bout tuh fly off. I dohn know ef he wuz neah nuff tuh pull um back down an keep um frum goin off."

115 As we left, Priscilla accompanied us down the walk to the gateway. She was reluctant to see us go and until the last minute regaled us with a variety of stories.

We had learned that an elderly Negro named Lawrence Baker * lived out on the Ridge Road near the Ridgeway Club.

* *Lawrence Baker, the Ridge Road, near Darien.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

•115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237] skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

•115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain 'leah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[33, 35] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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829 Hestuh she Shad's gran. Yuh knows Shad? Bentoo she duh younges. Magret she my gran."

We asked if Belali Mohomet had been related to Belali Sullivan on St. Simons.

"I ain know bout St. Simon but Cotto use tuh talk bout cousin Belali Sullivan.

"Yes'm, I membuh muh gran too. Belali he frum Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds
829 we didn know. She say 'mosojo' an sometime 'sojo' wen she
192 mean pot. Fuh watuh she say 'deloe' an fuh fyuh she say 'diffy.' She tell us, 'Tak sojo off diffy.'

"Wen sumpm done she say, 'Bim-boga-rum.' Yuh tell uh sumpm wut is a suhprise lak somebody die, den she say, 'Ma-foo-bey, ma-foo-bey.'

829 "She ain tie uh head up lak I does, but she weah a loose wite clawt da she trow obuh uh head lak veil an it hang loose on uh shoulduh. I ain know wy she weah it dataway, but I tink she ain lak a tight ting roun uh head.

829 "She make funny flat cake she call 'saraka.' She make
252 um same day ebry yeah, an it big day. Wen dey finish, she call us in, all duh chillun, an put in hans lill flat cake an we eats it. Yes'm, I membuh how she make it. She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tak dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. 'Saraka' she call um."

412 Before the cabin stood a crudely constructed wooden mortar made many years before by Katie's husband and used originally for the pounding of rice. A deep basin-like aperture had been hewn out of the center of a log which was about three feet long and from eighteen to twenty inches wide.[43]

• 115 Across the dusty road from Katie Brown's another nar-

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•115 row wooden gate opened into a field where a winding path led to the small cabin of Julia Grovernor,* called Juno by the island Negroes. Julia, very black, tall and gaunt, was slightly hostile and suspicious and disinclined to talk. Even [123] the pipe tobacco, potent in most cases, she indifferently dropped.

"No'm, I ain know nuttn. Ise feeble-minded. I bin weak in head sence I small chile. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout witches. I ain know nuttn bout root doctuhs. No'm, I ain nebuh heah uh cunjuh. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout spells. No'm, I ain kin tuh Katie Brown."

115 This refusal to answer except in the negative seemed to continue indefinitely. Finally, however, after innumerable 124 slow, quiet, good-humored questions that showed no resentment at her hostility, she became friendly in a reserved and superior way. It was soon evident that this sullen, reticent woman, though hostile to outside invasion, was not feeble-minded, but on the contrary sharp-witted, with a dry sense of humor.

"Muh gran, she Hannah. Uncle Calina muh gran too; 829 dey bote Ibos. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran Hannah. She marry Calina an hab twenny-one chillun. Yes'm, she tell us how she brung yuh.

"Hannah, she wid huh ahnt who wuz diggin peanuts in 829 duh fiel, wid uh baby strop on uh back. Out uh duh brush 567 two wite mens come an spit in huh ahnt eye. She blinded an wen she wipe uh eye, duh wite mens done loose duh baby frum huh back, an took Hannah too. Dey led um intuh duh woods, weah deah wuz udduh chillun dey done ketched an tie up in sacks. Duh baby an Hannah wuz tie up in sacks lak duh udduhs an Hannah nebuh saw huh ahnt agen an nebuh saw duh baby agen. Wen she wuz let out uh duh sack, she wuz on boat an nebuh saw Africa agen."

* *Julia Grovernor, Sapelo Island. Deceased winter, 1938.*

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•115 A back path from Julia's house led to the house of her sister, Katie,* who had a regal and impressive bearing. She, too, had a hostile and taciturn manner.

"No'm, Ise youngub dan Juno. I dohn membuh nuttn uh doze times. No'm, I ain heah tell uh cunjuh. I dohn know bout witch doctuhs. I dohn know spells. No'm, I dohn know none uh dis yuh askin. Yes'm, I nuss Hannah an Calina wen deys ole, but I young chile, an I dohn membuh nuttn bout um. No'm, I cahn unnuhstan um; dey talks a funny talk. I cahn unnuhstan um."

In the afternoon we went to see Phoebe Gilbert,** another descendant of the Ibos, Calina and Hannah. Phoebe, black, buxom, and comely, lived in a comfortable cottage in Shell Hammock. Obviously embarrassed at being the center of a rapidly increasing crowd of Negro listeners, she evaded most questions. Our visit did not prove entirely unsatisfactory, however, for after considerable humorous chatting Phoebe rewarded our efforts by giving a vivid description of how her grandfather, Calina, was captured and brought here from Africa.

829 "Belali Smith muh gran. I ain know bout Belali Mohomet. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran. She Hannah.
569 Yes'm, muh gran Calina, too. Dey's Ibos. Muh gran Calina tell me how he got heah. He say he playin on beach in Africa, an big boat neah duh beach. He say, duh mens on boat take down flag, an put up big piece uh red flannel, an all chillun dey git close tuh watuh edge tuh see flannel an see wut doin. Den duh mens comes off boat an ketch um, an wen duh ole folks come in frum duh fiels dey ain no chillun in village. Dey's all on boat. Den dey brings um yuh."

115 Cuffy [20a] Wilson,† sitting in the clean-swept yard which surrounded his whitewashed house, told us about the much-discussed experience of a neighbor of his. This dealt with

* *Katie Groverner, Sapelo Island.*
** *Phoebe Gilbert, Sapelo Island.*
† *Cuffy Wilson, Sapelo Island.*

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•115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[50] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut[54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[33] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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another Belali Mohomet descendant, who came to the door of his neat cottage clad in blue denim. Delighted to have visitors, Shad was eager for conversation. With a few polite words of thanks for the pipe tobacco, he began to talk of the old days.

"Muh gran wuz Hestuh, Belali's daughtuh. She tell me Belali wuz coal black, wid duh small feechuhs we hab, an he wuz bery tall. She say Belali an all he fambly come on same boat frum Africa. Belali hab plenty daughtuhs, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, Bentoo, Hestuh, Magret, and Chaalut.

"Ole Belali Smith wuz muh uncle. His son wuz George Smith's gran. He wuz muh gran Hestuh's son an muh mudduh Sally's brudduh. Hestuh an all ub um sho pray on duh bead. Dey weah duh string uh beads on duh wais. Sometime duh string on duh neck. Dey pray at sun-up and face duh sun on duh knees an bow tuh it tree times, kneelin on a lill mat."

We asked Shad if he had ever heard his grandmother say anything about Africa. Had she ever mentioned what sort of house they lived in or what food was generally eaten? Shad nodded eagerly, and from the steady flow of talk that followed it was evident that he had heard much of the land of his ancestors.

"Muh gran Hestuh say she kin membuh duh house she lib in in Africa. She say it wuz cubbuh wid palmettuh an grass fuh roof, an duh walls wuz made uh mud. Dey make duh walls by takin up hanfuls uh mud an puttin it on sumpm firm, sticks put crossways so. I membuh some pots and cups dat she hab made uh clay. She brung deze frum Africa. She membuh wut dey eat in Africa too. Dey eat yam an shuguh cane an peanut an bananas. Dey eat okra too. Yes'm, das right, dey calls it gumbo. Dey dohn hab tuh wuk hahd wid plantin deah. Jis go in woods an dig, an git big yam. Dey eat udduh roots too. Dey ain no flo tuh

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

•115 567 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 782 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 313 782 775 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us, "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at
•115 sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
(609) money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[2] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[38] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
(535) a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

"One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a
535 long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[36] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

•115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
[164] very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
567 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heavy set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum.
533 Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and
789 the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

• 115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 (351) the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

(165) "Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib until he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh (764) hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide (783) come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. (753) Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but 829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man, 789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He

(567) * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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789 say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muh-sef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

•115 During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby, seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that she was too young to remember much of the old times, she gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and African customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls Murray house."

(241) (761)

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the oldest men living on the island.

361 From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of houses and sheds.

115 A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan,"* he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

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•115 could really be so old. We asked him who his people were and what he remembered about the old times.

[567] "We belong tuh duh Coupers. Ise son tuh Belali. He wuz butluh tuh James Couper at Altama. I membuh we hab lots uh time tuh play wen we's chilluns." He smiled pleasantly at the memory.

829 This man, too, remembered native Africans he had known, for he told us, "I membuh lots uh Africans, but all ub em ain tame. But I knowd some ub em wut is tame an I knowd one tame Indian."

We asked again about old Alexander, the African root maker.

829 567 "Yes'm, I membuh him. He wuz a lill black man an he belong tuh duh Butlers but I ain know him well cuz we's diffunt people. Now ole man Okra an ole man Gibson an ole Israel, dey's African an dey belong tuh James Couper an das how I knows em. Dey tell us how dey lib in Africa. Dey laks tuh talk. It funny talk an it ain so easy tuh unnuhstan but yuh gits use tuh it. Dey say dey buil deah own camp deah an lib in it.

"Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat roof wut he make frum bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. But Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place.

829 782 567 "Ole Israel he pray a lot wid a book he hab wut he hide, an he take a lill mat an he say he prayuhs on it. He pray wen duh sun go up an wen duh sun go down. Dey ain none but ole Israel wut pray on a mat. He hab he own mat. Now ole man Israel he hab shahp feechuh an a long pointed beahd, an he wuz bery tall. He alluz tie he head up in a wite clawt an seem he keep a lot uh clawt on han, fuh I membuh, yuh could see em hangin roun duh stable dryin."

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829 an parakeet. An, too, he say nuttn ebuh die way. Duh crops jis come back ebry yeah widout habin tuh be planted.

"Das all I membuh Hettie tellin bout Africa. Muh fathuh's fathuh come frum Africa too but wen muh fathuh Belali wuz a small young lad, muh granfathuh wehn tuh Dungeness on Cumberland Ilun tuh trade in slabes an nebuh wuz seen agen. It wuz muh fathuh Belali dat made rice cakes."

When asked about his father's mother, Ben continued, "Muh fathuh's mothuh lib at Altama. Huh name wuz Luna, but muh fathuh's fathuh wuz a unmarried man. Deah's many tings I do not membuh, it wuz sech a long time ago. I know dat wen deah wuz tuh be a buryin, dey alluz bury duh dead at night at duh plantation. Dey alluz come in frum duh tas befo dahk.

"In doze days deah wuz no way tuh git tuh Savannah cep (505) by boat an wen Mr. Couper wannuh go, he use a boat bout fifty foot long an bout six foot wide. He take six strong oahsmen an dey would make it in ten aw twelve hours. I heahd tell ub a house buil by a man frum Africa, wid cawn stalks an mud an wid a straw filluh."

829 The flying story about old Alexander, the root maker, had interested us and we asked if Ben Sullivan had heard of it.
789 "I ain heahd specially bout him but Ise heahd plenty Africans talk bout flyin. Deah's plenty ub em wut could fly.[68c, 69b] I sho heahd em talk bout great doins an Ise heahd ole Israel say duh hoe could wuk by itsef ef yuh know wut tuh say tuh it.[29] It bin a long time sence Ise tought bout tings lak dat, but ef uh studies bout em, dey comes back tuh me."

•115 On the way back from Harrington to St. Simons village we stopped at Nora Peterson's * small cabin to talk with her. Nora, the daughter of Tom Floyd, an African who came to

* *Nora Peterson, St. Simons Island.*

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•115 this country on the *Wanderer* in 1858, is a nice looking, middle-aged woman, pleasant and up to date. She told us about her father.

"I wuz bery lill wen he died—not mone bout fo yeah ole, uh spec. I do know he come frum Africa. I membuhs dat an uh membuh muh Uncle Slaughtuh wuz his brothuh an he come frum Africa, too. I nebuh heahd him talk much bout it but maybe uh wuz too lill tuh membuh."

Although she had been so young at the time of her father's death, the woman still retained a vivid picture of him and she gave us the following description:

"He wuz shawt an dahk, an heaby buil. Yuh see, he wuzn but bout sixty yeah ole wen he died. Muh mothuh wuz Charity Lewis an uh got one brothuh, Caesar Prince, but he's younguh dan me an dohn membuh nothin."

From Nora's we went to the old tabby slave house of Floyd White * who was related to her. Floyd was of middle height, black, and of a powerful build. When we were uncertain and groping as to the right questions to ask, Floyd was clear and helpful.

829 "Ise nephew tuh Charity Lewis, so Nora is muh cousin, but Ise olduhn Nora an I membuh ole Tom Floyd well. I bout fifteen wen he die. He wuz shawt an tick set. I tinks he wuz Ibo. He used tuh whoop an holluh. He say dey do da way in Africa. He wuz doctuh too an he could cut yuh [759] wid a knife an cop yuh. I wish he wuz yuh right now tuh cop me. I sho needs it an it make yuh feel lots bettuh.[43] I heah him talk plenty bout Africa but I caahn membuh so much ub it cuz uh wuz young boy den. He say he lib in a hut on a ribbuh an dey eat coconut an bread wut grow on a tree. Dey plant yam ebry seben yeah an dey dohn hadduh wuk it. Dey hab peanut an banana. He call it by anudduh name but I caahn membuh it. I seen plenty ub African peo-

* *Floyd White, St. Simons Island.*

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## *St. Marys*

361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few •115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a (351) packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz 527 young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance (535) roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[25] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

• 115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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•115 Henry, who sat on his sunny porch, was strong and healthy looking for his eighty-seven years. The shabbiness of his clothes contrasted with the splendor of the naval cap on his head. Two little neighbors, Enoch and Artie Jones, were playing in the yard, (Plate XXI). A

When we told Henry that we wanted to know about old times, he launched into eager conversation.

"I belong tuh William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation but it wunt long befo the waw an then I wuz free an come tuh town. Wen I wuz bout twelve, I hep Daddy Patty in his tannin yahd ovuh theah on the watuh by the cimiterry. Patty wuz a shoemakuh too an use tuh make all kines uh things out uh hides an skins."

We asked him to tell us all he could remember about Uncle Patty and his wife.

829 "Well, they's both frum Africa an as I remumbuh they's
567 Ibos. They wuz bout middle height an heavy buil. I ain suttn bout Ahnt Rachel but Daddy Patty belong tuh ole man Arnow an I think he bought im at a sale an bring im down yuh. They use tuh talk tuh each othuh in a language wut we couldn unduhstan an Patty use tuh alluz be singin a song, 'a-shou-tu-goula.'

"Daddy Patty, he use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he come frum. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im. He say they ain hadduh plant but once a yeah cuz evrything grows wile. They buns gumbo fuh wood. He say they live in 'boo-boo-no' made out uh sticks an straw thas plastuhed with mud. Fus they digs a big flat celluh bout a foot deep an packs the earth down smooth an tight. Thas the flo. Then they leans the sticks tuh the centuh an they puts the straw an the mud on em an it come out lak a beehive an thas weah they lib.

"They buil a big 'boo-boo-no' fuh the chief. Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz.[14]



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii--CC--Analyst]

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
569 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [38] an we
569 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 Well yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [55]

• 115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

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•115 We went by to talk with Charity Lucas, a fine looking upstanding, middle-aged Negro woman. She told us she did not know much about her father's people,—they had come from around Carolina,—but her mother and her mother's people had come from around Waycross and she herself had been born in Waycross. She said that the coast Negroes were very different from the interior people. She had heard talk of conjure and spirits around St. Marys but she didn't believe much in it herself; she had not been brought up that way.

Her son Robert (Plate XXII), A a tall, lithe, powerful young Negro of about twenty-five, was rather taciturn. He had heard of these things but didn't care to speak of them and didn't believe in them much anyway.

Charity advised us to go to see old Jim Myers. "Now theah's one that's ole an'll be able tuh tell yuh plenty. He's neahly ninety and sho likes tuh talk."

We asked if his memory were good. "Yes'm, it's as good as mine. I guess it's bettuh."

We asked for directions and she told us how to go, ten miles deep into the woods off from the St. Marys-Kingsland highway.

491 Our road and what later turned out to be a pine needle wagon track carried us through Marianna, John Houstoun McIntosh's plantation, through Sweetwater Hammock and on through other settlements to Mush Bluff Island where old Jim Myers lived. The last mile we had to walk, owing
123 to some swampy patches in the wagon track. A Negro boy of about eleven sauntered around a bush, and his eyes popped open in frightened surprise at strangers appearing so suddenly in the woods.

"Does Jim Myers live near here?" we asked.

342 "Right theah roun the cawnuh of the path," he said, and we came suddenly upon the house, a three room unpainted, board cabin sitting about two feet off the ground on large,



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-DD--Analyst]

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342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[755] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[12b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

829 We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was a young man.

567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

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775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain
nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em.
(845) Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a
caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time
775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then
764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54]
—that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole
days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest
to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals
in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the
day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa
they have night fewnuls."

•115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grand-
mother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know
uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun
up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz
a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz
a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I
know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so
much I caahn remembuh all them things."

829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they
567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they
alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an
they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special
with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut
she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down
theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr.
Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to
keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin
about two hundud yahds out in the fivuh off Cumberland
tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

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829 and what kind of house they lived in. "She ain speak of wut kine uh house but she do speak of monkeys. They have monkeys all roun em and they dohn have tuh do no plantin cuz evrything is wile and they pick it off the trees."

We asked him if he could remember any African words he had heard his grandmother use. "They wuz funny wuds," he laughed, "I ought tuh be able to remembuh em but I caahn. She use tuh sing songs with African wuds. Ef I could study about em, I might remembuh some but now you ask me I jis caahn git em tuh mine. She did sing a chuch song wut have wuds we could unduhstand, an then in the middle of it she say 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by,' and looked like wen she come to the en of each stanza, she sing 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by.' It sho is a long time ago, them days."

491 Later we followed a deeply rutted sand road which led westward in the direction of Folkston. Few cars traveled
493 this way and once during our trip we encountered an old fashioned two-wheeled ox cart whose driver guided his oxen deftly to one side in order to let us pass.

• 115 About three or four miles out on the road we turned in a gate and drove to the side of Shadwick Rudolph's * house. The old man greeted us smilingly. At first glance he did not appear to be the eighty-six years he claimed, but on closer observation we noticed that his eyes were dimmed from
(567) age. He talked with us for some time, telling us among other things, "I belong tuh Mr. Dave Bailey. He own Woodbine Plantation. Muh granfathuh, his name wuz Jim. He come ovuh tuh this country frum Africa. He tell me that ovuh theah they have houses made of palmettuh.

829 "Then, ole Nanny Mammy, she live at the plantation too, and she come frum Africa. She alluz set down tuh wuk; no mattuh wut kine uh wuk, she set down tuh do it. Nanny Mammy use tuh set down in the middle of the flo of uh house

* *Shadwick Rudolph, Folkston Road, near Woodbine.*

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl[70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[34] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up[37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days."[15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked the old man for the information and took our leave. Look- •115 ing back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

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## *Informants*

•115 Anderson, Alec, *Possum Point*, Sterling.
Anderson, Rachel, *Possum Point*, Sterling.
Baker, Lawrence, *Darien*, Darien.
Baker, Ophelia, *Sandfly*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Basden, Isaac, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.
Basden, Liza, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.
Bates, Henry, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 1118 Waldburg Street, Savannah.
Baynes, Lee, *Sandfly*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Bivens, John, *Sandfly*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Blackshear, John, *Brownville*, 625 Grapevine Avenue, Savannah.
Boddison, George, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Branch, Susie, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Brown, Evans, *Yamacraw*, West Broad Street School, Savannah.
Brown, Katie, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Brown, William, *Brownville*, Florence Street, Savannah.
Butler, Bruurs, *Grimball's Point*, Grimball's Point.
Bryant, Ryna, *Springfield*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Bryant, Stephen, *Springfield*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Campbell, Horace, *St. Marys*, St. Marys.
Campbell, Hettie, *St. Marys*, St. Marys. (deceased)
Carter, Jerome, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 443 Jefferson Street, Savannah.
Cohen, Ozie, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Coleman, Preston, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 532 Charles Street, Savannah.
Collier, James, *Brownville*, 806 W. 39th Street, Savannah.

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•115 Cook, Tressie, *Brownville*, 911 W. 38th Street, Savannah.
Cooper, James, *Yamacraw*, Port Wentworth.
Davis, Ellie, *Sandfly*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Davis, Sophie, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Dawson, Minnie, *Pin Point*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Delegal, Tony, *Brownville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Dorsay, Ellen, *Yamacraw*, 515 W. Congress Street, Savannah.
Edwards, William, *Brownville*, West Broad and 32nd Streets, Savannah.
English, Emma, *Brownville*, 628 W. 36th Street, Savannah.
Gamble, Henry, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 519 West Broad Street, Savannah.
Gilbert, Phoebe, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Gibson, Mary Liza, *Grimball's Point*, Grimball's Point.
Grace, Bishop, *Brownville*, *House of Prayer*, 643 Bismark Street, Savannah.
Grant, Rosa, *Possum Point*, Sterling.
Grovernor, Julia, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo. (deceased)
Grovernor, Katie, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Grayson, London, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah. (deceased)
Hall, Serina, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Hall, Shad, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Hamilton, Carrie, *Yamacraw*, 530 West President Street, Savannah.
Haynes, Henry, *Brownville*, 41st and Harden Streets, Savannah.
Haynes, John, *Old Fort*, 933 Wheaton Street, Savannah.
Higgins, Harry, *Brownville*, 1810 West Broad Street, Savannah.
Holmes, S. B., *Old Fort*, 716 E. Perry Street, Savannah.
Houston, Tonie, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Hunter, Mary, *Old Fort*, 548 E. St. Julian Street, Savannah.
Hunter, Charles, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Hunter, Emma, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Jackson, F. J., *Grimball's Point*, Grimball's Point. (deceased)
Jackson, Della, *Grimball's Point*, Grimball's Point.
Jenkins, Albert, *Brownville*, 627 W. 36th Street, Savannah.
Jenkins, Lizzie, *Sandfly*, R. F. D., Savannah.

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INFORMANTS

•115 Johnson, Anna, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.
Johnson, Dorothy, *Springfield*, 1201 Murphy Avenue, Savannah.
Johnson, Ryna, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Jonah, Uncle, *Sunbury*, Sunbury.
Jones, Ellen, *Springfield*, near 1304 Stiles Avenue, Savannah.
Jones, Esther, *Tatemville*, 308 W. 46th Street, Savannah.
Jones, Fred, *Yamacraw*, 607 W. Congress Street, Savannah.
Jones, Nero, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Jones, Thursday, *Brownville*, 39th Street near Florence Street, Savannah.
Kelsey, D. C., *Frogtown and Currytown*, 521 West Gaston Street, Savannah.
Lewis, Nathaniel John, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Lewis, Jane, *Darien*, Darien.
Linder, Julian, *Brownville*, 612 W. 36th Street, Savannah.
Little, George W., *Brownville*, 737 W. 34th Street, Savannah.
Little, Preacher, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Major, Martha, *Yamacraw*, 542 W. York Street, Savannah.
Maxwell, Susan, *Possum Point*, Sterling.
McCarts, Katie, *Old Fort*, 744 Hull Street, Savannah.
McCullough, Priscilla, *Darien*, Darien.
McKen, Millie, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 409 W. Duffy Street, Savannah.
McNichols, Robert, *Brownville*, E. 39th Street, Savannah.
McQueen, Peter, *Wilmington Island*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Mikell, William, *Brownville*, 616 W. 32nd Street, Savannah.
Miller, Anna, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 1018 Cuyler Street, Savannah.
Miller, H. H., *Tatemville*, 46th and Pearl Streets, Savannah.
Moore, James, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Munroe, Emma, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Myers, Jim, *St. Marys*, Mush Bluff Island, R. F. D., St. Marys.
Nelson, Christine, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Newkirk, William, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Noah's Ark, *Old Fort*, Peace Mission, Joe and Harmon Streets, Savannah.
Page, Martha, *Yamacraw*, 606 Zubly Street, Savannah.

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Georgia



• 115 Parker, Allen, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Peace, Sister Patience, *Old Fort*, Peace Mission, Joe and Harmon Streets, Savannah.
Peterson, Nora, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Pinckney, Robert, *Wilmington Island*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Postell, Florence, *Brownville*, 928 W. 51st Street, Savannah.
Quarterman, Wallace, *Darien*, Darien. (deceased)
Ralph, Marion, *Brownville*, 2411 Harden Street, Savannah.
Redmond, Professor, *Frogtown and Currytown*, West Broad Street, Savannah.
Reese, Bessie, *Brownville*, 2408 Harden Street, Savannah.
Roberts, Elizabeth, *Sunbury*, Sunbury.
Rogers, William, *Darien*, Darien.
Ross, Lee, *Brownville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Royal, Bessie, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Rudolph, Shadwick, *St. Marys*, R. F. D., Woodbine. (Folkston Road)
Sallins, Rosa, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.
Sampson, Mattie W., *Brownville*, W. 32nd Street, Savannah.
Singleton, Charles, *Springfield*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Singleton, Justine, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Singleton, Paul, *Tin City*, Savannah.
Small, Celia, *Wilmington Island*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Smith, Clara, *Springfield*, 1139 W. Duffy Street, Savannah.
Smith, Crawford, *Brownville*, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue, Savannah.
Smith, George, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Smith, Thomas, *Yamacraw*, 37 Ann Street, Savannah.
Snead, Margaret, *Pin Point*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Sneed, Prince, *White Bluff*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Stephens, Josephine, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.
Stevens, Emma, *Sunbury*, Sunbury.
Stevens, Mary, *Sunbury*, Sunbury.
Sullivan, Ben, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Tattnall, Gene, *Wilmington Island*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Tattnall, Jack, *Wilmington Island*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Taylor, Reuben, *Eulonia*, Eulonia.
Thorpe, Ed, *Harris Neck*, Harris Neck.

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Georgia

INFORMANTS

•115 Triumphant Virgin, *Old Fort*, Peace Mission, Joe and Harmon Streets, Savannah.
Waldburg, Dick, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Ward, Beatrice, *Brownville*, 832 W. 35th Street, Savannah.
Washington, James, *Springfield*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Washington, Ben, *Eulonia*, Eulonia.
Washington, Sara, *Eulonia*, Eulonia.
West, Chloe, *Frogtown and Currytown*, 623 W. Waldburg Lane, Savannah.
White, Floyd, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Wilcher, Alfred, *Brownville*, 610 W. 31st Street, Savannah.
Williams, Dye, *Old Fort*, Peace Mission, Joe and Harmon Streets, Savannah.
Williams, Henry, *St. Marys*, St. Marys.
Williams, Rosanna, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.
Wilson, Cuffy, *Sapelo Island*, Sapelo.
Wilson, Jack, *Old Fort*, 272 McAlister Street, Savannah.
Wing, Catherine, *St. Simons Island*, St. Simons.
Wright, Richard, *Tatemville*, R. F. D., Savannah.



[p. 258 is blank]

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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this
[264] home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and
[262] other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

538 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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some tobacco juice on the ground and told them that they had better be back home before the juice dried. She seemed to delight in playing with the children, however. One evening she told a series of tales about "raw head and bloody bone" and then retired to her room, leaving the children and me sitting, gazing into the fire. Shortly afterward she appeared in the open doorway, down on all fours with a sheet covering her body, her arm and hand outstretched as if she were reaching for one of the children. Everyone, including me, jumped up and ran to the back door calling her name. She then unveiled herself, overjoyed that she had frightened the children but delirious with laughter that she had actually frightened me.

Miss Deeley's telling style differed from most of the men's in that she usually kept her voice low and rather sedate, as did most of the other women who told stories. She did not tell many tales in the animal tradition of trickster. As noted, her favorite topics were "hants," hags, and unusual murders (see "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones"). Her subject matter may have been inspired by the proximity of a graveyard to her home; her belief that she had seen spirits of people buried there perhaps added realism to her tales both in her mind and in her listeners' minds. She was not a master of facial gestures as Mr. Ted was, but rather captivated her listeners through vocal expressions and voice modulation. Characteristic of her speaking style were low mournful moans, of varying durations and intensities, and subtle exclamations at strategic intervals. The low intensity and monotony of her voice contributed significantly to her ability to create suspense through an aura of intense dread and to communicate fear and even terror to her listeners.

The nature of her topics made Miss Deeley's audience a somewhat captive group, and she knew well how to keep them that way. She had a mastery of narrative devices used to test her audience to see if they were indeed abreast of her tale. For example, during a very intense part of a tale, she would often stop, spit tobacco into the fire, and ask one of the children if she had remembered to bring the clothes in off the line, knowing full well that the chore had been done. The child would quickly answer yes and beg her to go on and tell what happened. Satisfied that she held her listeners' total attention, she continued with her narrative. Given the nature of her topics, her audience communicated with her on a nonverbal level; rarely would anyone dare to make a sound. She seemed to enjoy the spellbinding effect of her narratives

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or •115 staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[MM1] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[MM4] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and be-
[MM6] come as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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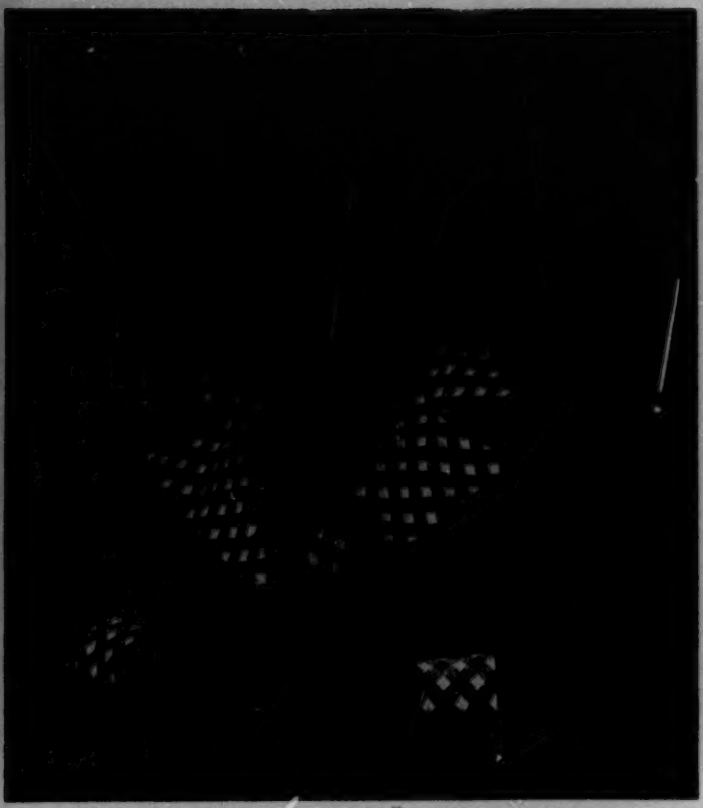

Miss Myma, who has lived her entire life on Wadmalaw Island, befriended the author and introduced her to the ways of the island and its people.

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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, [272] onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her [787] face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 787 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 757 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A, [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

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115 759 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures, for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return [782] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 538 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sundays as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 761 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

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589 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myma introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[533] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

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## The Lord's Prayer

539
[782] Most Revered Mr. Mike Simmons
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1976

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as was done in heaven.
Give us this day, O daily bread
And forgive those who art in trespass against thee
O heavenly Father!
We are meeting on worldly soil today
Calling on your name
And, heavenly Father, couldn't do nothing until you come
Come now, Jesus, if you please?
The revered thanks to you today, heavenly Father
O Lord, if you please!
Look upon me in the eyes of pity
In the heart of compassion
I be so please, heavenly Father
O Lord, from last August, the single
They told us at least
O heavenly Father, you know when fall down, get up
Ben calling on your name
And I couldn't do nothing until de come!
Come now, heavenly Father, please, if you please

Amen!

•115 782 533 Tom Mack is an active member of the Wadmalaw church community. He is a professional singer and is considered well on his way to perfecting the prayer-giving tradition. Though he is in his early forties, he is, according to the islanders, still experiencing the "scalding water" of life, one of the primary ingredients in learning to chant the words of the prayers with emotion. When he heard that I was writing a book, he came by to see me and offered the following prayer for me to complete.

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# Appendix 1

# An Interview: Catching Fish

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The ancient fishing methods explained in this interview are reminiscent of those found in Nigeria and other African countries near large bodies of water. I actually observed the drumming and spearing technique among the Igbo and Ibebio of northern Nigeria. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake also write of this continuing fishing practice on the Sea Islands.[1]

[115]

The informant was a retired tradesman and a very important member in the church community. He said that he learned these practices from his father, and his father had learned them from the "old people" before him.

The interview has been edited slightly for clarity.

Mr. Daniel Dent
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
1983

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INFORMANT: To catch mullet fish, we goes in the river. Everything still. The water still. Make a few throw with the cast net, and you haven't catch anything. So you get up on the side of boat and you beat on side with you oars, or paddle. And you just keep beating—[you] call em dolphin, we call em horsemen—then beat until the porpoise come around. After the porpoise come around, then the mullet fish will come to the shallow water. [Then] you cast for catch em. You don't catch much fish without the horseman. The porpoise have to be around. The only way to get the porpoise, man—[you] don't see them—you beat some, on the side of the boat, and they'll hear you miles for miles under the water.

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124 bogging?' The consultant would answer, 'Boots.' It often
126 took as long as a week to complete the word list for one consultant.

115 The Consultants

The consultants listed below were all born on Wadmalaw and had resided little or no time on shore.

1. Mrs. Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) is a very gracious widow of seventy-four years. Her assistance in eliciting natural responses from others for word list and syntactic
[122] structures was invaluable. I resided with her and am indebted to her for data recorded in familiar environments.

2. Mr. Henry Gibbs is a ninety-six-year-old gentleman. He remains still very active, loquacious, and alert. His recollections of ex-slave conditions and uninhibited speech was a major contribution to this work.

3. Mr. Ozzie Rivers (Mr. Happi) is a deeply religious seventy-year-old gentleman. He contributed much to my understanding of the phonology of Gullah. His vast store of religious experiences were reminiscent of similar ones dating back to West Africa.

4. Mrs. Annie Brown (Miss Missi) is a lighthearted widow of seventy-six, who leads a very private and secluded existence. I am grateful that she agreed to assist me with

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115 this study.

5. Mr. Arthor Ted Williams (Mr. Ted) is a very prosperous businessman and large landowner in his middle forties. He and his family were helpful in providing a place and creating a relaxed atmosphere for story-telling events. He is noted for having the most interesting repertory of animal tales of anyone on the island.

6 & 7. Mr. and Mrs. Mickells were friendly, warm, church-going people in their sixties who welcomed me into their home on my first visit, and taught me the names and geographical history of each part of the island.

8. Mr. Dauzy White (Mr. Doc), a very active gentleman who helped with the phonology and lexicon of the language. He is approximately seventy years old.

9. Mr. Oscar Simmons, a gracious gentleman of ninety-two, held in awe and high esteem by the community. He was very very helpful in the elicitation of minimal pairs.

10. Mrs. Loretta Mack (Miss Cutsey, deceased), a mild woman approximately seventy years old, was a primary source for songs and animal tales. She was helpful also in directing me to other consultants whom she felt had unusual speech patterns.

11. Miss Yvonne McCloud is a bright, religious, adolescent girl who was an excellent textual consultant and who could produce some of the purest Creole constructions of any person on the island.

•115 12. Mrs. Mazi, a respectable religious lady in her late sixties now residing in California.

13. Miss Ida Mae, a very 'sporty' young woman of thirty-two years renowned for her ability to play 'The Dozens'.

14. Mr. Sam, an active gentleman in his senior years, to whom I owe my thanks for playing 'The Dozens' with Ida Mae in order that I might record them.

15. Mr. Semour, a quiet gentleman in his mid thirties who often acted as a catalyst for conversations.

16. Mr. Jimmie, a young man in his mid twenties who is held in high social and economic esteem. He gave me invaluable assistance in my entire study by recording hunting tales, and midnight 'lies' with his peers.

17. Mr. Ed is a young man in his late twenties who gave freely of his time and speech during my visits. He believed in 'wine and woman'.

18. Mr. Murray, a young man in his early twenties who is now in the armed forces. He often aided in soliciting recordings from children.

19. Mr. Kiph, a very busy young gentleman in his early thirties, who informed me of the agricultural processes on the island. He is known for his eighteen-hour work days.

20. Mr. Oreo is a loquacious gentleman in his early thirties who aided in the collection of 'old words' thought to have African origins. He is considered to be

•115 a member of the rising social class of Wadmalaw.

21. Mr. Sam P., an elderly gentleman who could produce some of the purest Creole construction available. He is a relative of Prince Smith, who was one of Turner's (1949) consultants.

22. Mr. Brown, an active churchly gentleman in his middle years, who is held in high social and economic esteem.

23. Mrs. Mozi, a friendly lady in her late sixties. She is an avid church worker and has a vast store of childhood memories and animal tales. Her assistance was invaluable in collecting phonological data.

24. Mr. James Frazier is a retired gentleman and a highly respected landlord of the Wadmalaw community, who won third place at the Wadmalaw 'Story-telling' contest.

Black Dialect Consultants

The following are consultants who had no known affiliations with Gullah speakers:

25. Mrs. Beryl, a very active middle class lady in her early thirties, born and raised in Mineral Springs, Arkansas. She now resides in Detroit, where she tells me that the dialect of Black speakers differs from her own.

26. Ms. Louise, a very proud middle-class lady in her thirties, born and raised in Mississippi. Her assistance was invaluable in making phonological and syntactical distinction between Black dialect and Gullah.

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•115

27. Mr. Dave, a polite gentleman of thirty-three born and raised in Saginaw, Michigan. He was influential in helping me to see differences between Black dialect in the north and Black dialect in the South.

African Consultants

28. Mrs. Oyiba Oyemelokwe is a close friend from Nigeria, who is approximately thirty-four 'seasons' old. She was helpful in drawing parallels between the oral tradition of literature in Igbo and the tradition in Gullah.

29. Miss Chinare Iheotoh is twenty 'rainy seasons' old. She is my former student and friend from Nigeria. She gave me valuable insight into West African Pidgin English, as well as parallels between her native language —Igbo—and Gullah.

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiɔrɛ̃] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

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19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /o/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

•115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

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121 that is expected in creole communities, I now move to more specific investigations of the kind of variation involved in the analysis of the Creole preverbs and English correl-
121 ates. The corpus includes consultants selected from a
•115 total of forty speakers ranging in age from 10 to 96 years. Twenty-one were selected from the forty primarily on the length of their recorded speech samples, and their willingness to participate in the study. The speakers are discussed in the Appendix,[A] and numerals corresponding to each name are [illegible] when reference is made to particular constructions.

193 Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of the preverbal markers /da/, /bin/, /bina/, and /daa/ for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The preverbs are particles that function as members of the verbal auxiliary and may precede any type of main verb. The verbal categories are marked for aspect opposed to time (Cunningham 1970:63). According to Turner (1949:225) the unmarked form of the verb is used to refer to past, present, or future; and no particular form is used to indicate whether or not an action is continuous. Because Gullah employs a predominantly aspectual system, it is sometimes impossible to make one-to-one correlations with English. But, as with most languages, it is possible to make 'closest approximations'. In Table 2.1 the Creole preverbs and their closest approximation are counted and compared. Table 2.1 shows the diversity of the language situation on Wadmallow Island, and that there is considerable

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 31]

A. [See Category 115, pp. 148-152--Analyst]

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| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | bɪnə | bɪn | də | STEM |
| 12 | | | *6 | 4 | 10 | | | | 4 | 26 |
| 7 | 1 | | *10 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 13 | | | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 10 |
| 14 | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 12 |
| 17 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 15 |
| 18 | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 20 | | | *5 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | 29 | 7 | 30 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 5 | 85 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

-s = third person singular verb
-ed = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
-ing = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb to *be* excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.3
PRE-MESOLECTAL SPEAKERS

there is little data to indicate movement in the verbal suffix -s category. There are only two tokens for the whole group and each of these tokens is an example of faulty concord produced by a husband and wife. The other nineteen speakers adhere to the Creole pattern where there is no subject-verb concord at all.

128
193

Linguistic changes in other categories are obscured in the distribution. To normalize the findings and to give greater accountability to the data, Table 2.1 is divided in order to separate those speakers who show greater familiarity with English from those speakers who show greater retentions from the Creole. Of the twenty-one consultants, fourteen reveal features more characteristic of the basilect, and these fourteen are represented in Table

(115)

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| | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔg | bɪnə | bɪn | də | STEM |
| Basilectal | 2 | 0 | 60 | 6 | 48 | 24 | 48 | 79 | 102 | 440 |
| Pre-mesolectal | 3 | 0 | 87 | 21 | 90 | 33 | 9 | 51 | 15 | 225 |

TABLE 2.4
PROPORTIONATE OUTPUT OF TWENTY-ONE SPEAKERS

Values obtained by extrapolation of data in Tables 2.2 and 2.3

128
193
[115]

2.2. Though the division is not clearly defined, the remaining seven speakers are considered pre-mesolectal because their speech patterns indicate greater movement from the preverbs /də/, /bɪn/, bɪnə/ and /dɔg/. Equal useage of both English and Creole markers, suggesting a mesolectal speaker, was not apparent in the sample. The data from Tables 2.1 through 2.3 are summarized in Table 2.4. Here, the proportionate useage and frequency of occurrence of basilectal and pre-mesolectal forms in the total population are shown. For example, in proportion to the total population, the speakers in Table 2.2 use /bɪnə/ five times more frequently than those in Table 2.3. These data were obtained by extrapolation. The specific pattern of movement and direction of change in individual categories can only be revealed by discussing particular variants.

## 2.1. The Verb Stem

The numerals in the verb stem column represent the total number of times an uninflected verb is used by a

2.3. The -*s* morpheme

193 A final factor contributing to the high frequency of verb stems in the basilect and the pre-mesolect is absence of
193 suffixal -*s*. Suffixal -*s* is represented phonetically as [z],
194 [ɨz] and [s]. The pronunciation variant is dependant on the phonological makeup of the final segment of words to which -*s* is added. When heard as [z] the -*s* follows non-strident voiced segments as in [filz] *feels*; when heard as [ɨz] the -*s* follows a strident consonan as in [mɛtʃɨz] *matches*; and when heard as [s], -*s* follows nonstrident voiceless segments as in [laits] *lights* (Wolfram 1969:134). In English the suffix -*s* is the grammatical marker of third person singular present indicative, the marker of possessive, and the marker of noun plurals.

193 Historically, Gullah has not been marked for subject-verb concord and there is insufficient synchronic data to suppose that it is marked for it now. Only two of the
[115] twenty-one consultants in the study show any traces of concord and these two examples are faulty. The other nineteen reveal no number concord at all. Though the data for this study reveal little linguistic activity in the -*s* suffix category, a review of the quantitative analysis undertaken on the -*s* in Black dialect and Guyanese creole, languages thought to be genetically

193 in the manner they saw fit' (2). Considering that
197 the category is composed of English *be* verbs which were used in lieu of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/ the number is quite low, especially when compared to the total number of occurrences of /də/, /bɪn/ and /bɪnə/ in Table 2.2. As expected, Table 2.3 shows a higher occurrence of *be* forms beyond the basilect than occurrences of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/. Likewise, all the consultants in Table
[115] 2.3 showed some familiarity with English *be* verbs. As evidenced by their performance, five of the fourteen speakers in Table 2.2 show no familiarity with English *be* verbs at all.

193 The preverb /də/ performs a number of functions in addition to marking present continuative. The high frequency of /də/ in Table 2.2 is related to this as well as other functions:

/də/ *as present continuative aspect marker:*

/ɡɔᵊm ɹɛit ɡəndə dɛdɪ də stæn əp/ (3)
'See it right there daddy. Standing up.'

/i də ʃek totə/ 'She is shaking potatoes.' (23)

/də mɔŋki də hol/ 'The monkey is holding on.' (5)

/də/ *as past continuative aspect marker:*

Cunningham notes that the past continuative is marked by /bɪn/ + ɛ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing:*

*When you call me, I been ɛ cook my dinner.*
'When you called me, I was cooking my dinner.'

*I been driving one day* 'I was driving one day'
(Cunningham 1970:67-8)

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121 pronouns were tested because sex reference is generally
193 marked in English by these forms.

The corpus included twenty speakers selected from the Island, ranging in age from ten to ninety-six years. A quantitative survey was taken of the pronominal distribution for each speaker.[7] Nine were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and on the range of pronouns used. These nine consultants are among the ones who assisted in the verb study as well.

Though the concern of this chapter is third person singular pronouns, Table 3.1 is presented to show the distribution for a range of pronominal possibilities in Gullah.

All of the following variants are used by the nine
193 consultants, though all are seldom used by the same
(115) consultant:

GULLAH THIRD PERSON SINGULAR CASE PRONOUN VARIANTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Nominative*** | ***Variants*** | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i hi | 'he' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i hi ʃi | 'she' |
| *neuter* | ɪm i ɪt | 'it' |
| ***Objective*** | | |
| *masculine* | ɛm i hɪm | 'him' |
| *feminine* | ɛm i ʃi hɛr | 'her' |
| *neuter* | ɛm i ɪt | 'it' |
| ***Possessive*** | | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i ɪz hɪz | 'his' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i ʃi hɛr | 'her' |

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the distribution and
(128) percentage of occurrence of each variant. Nichols' study on pronominal variation in Gullah, undertaken on a neigh-

19 aspirated, /hiz/, to mark the possessive. The pronoun /ɪm/ occurred more frequently than its aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. /hɔz/ and /ɔz/ occurred too infrequently for comparison.

Similar to its performance in the subjective cases, /i/ has a frequency of occurrence of 62.1% which is higher than any other form marking the masculine possessive case:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i blɛŋk i ɜ̈ː | 'He blinked his eye.' | (17) |
| i du i teː lɛk dɛt | 'He did his tail like that.' | (23) |
| bərəɸɜ̈ː dʒɛs tɛk ɪm taɪm | 'The butterfly just took his time.' | (23) |

Though there are four variants marking the third person feminine possessive case, the forms appeared less often in the data than any of the other pronoun forms. This limitation may be due in part to the unwillingness of the consultants to discuss matters relating to female persons. All of the consultants used for the pronoun survey were male, with the exception of two. Consequently, the subject matter may not have been conducive to the appearance of the feminine possessive, or for some linguistic reason the form was avoided.

When a feminine possessive pronoun was selected, no extreme polar variety of basilectal /ɪm/ or acrolectal /hɔz/ was chosen. When the environment was conducive to the selection of a third person feminine possessive pronoun, /i/ had an 83.8% occurrence contrasted with /ʃi/ which occurred only 16.2% of the time.[19] The consultants interviewed appeared to avoid the use of the possessive form

[115]

19 in general by supplying extra linguistic data such as the
[115] demonstrative pronoun *that one* and the article *a*.
193 Cunningham (1970:22) writes that the definite article *the* may also mark possession, and it is not restricted to marking inalienable possession. Nichols (1976) excluded the possessive pronouns from her analysis because of the infrequency with which they occurred in her data. The following sentences exemplify one way that the consultants appear to avoid these forms:

so i kɪk ɐm wɔn, da ɸʊt ɸɛsɪn...
i tɛk' i ied, n bɛm, dä βɔn ɸɛsɪn
so i dɣɛs are tiel nɔ (8)

'So he kicked him one (and) his foot fastened.
He took his head and "bam"! His head fastened.
So he just had his tail (free) now.'

As with the nominative case pronouns, the same pattern emerges in the possessive case with /i/ as the general marker for both masculine and feminine pronouns: i i i / i i.

### 3.3. The Objective Forms

The third person singular objective pronouns show the least amount of change. The /ɐm/ form is dominant for masculine, feminine and neuter objects. It can be
[194] argued that /ɐm/ is an unaspirated, etymological allomorph of /hɪm/, just as /i/, /ɐɪ/, and /ɪɪ/ are unaspirated allomorphs of /hi/, /hɐɪ/ and /hɪɪ/. However, the data

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## *Acknowledgments*

122 In the twenty-five years of research represented in the collection of slave songs,
128 from which the comparatively few examples in this book have been culled, aid has been given me that words can never repay. Without the help of its many friends, this music of the Georgia Sea Islands could not have been preserved. Two of its admirers gave generous support in the four frightening years following 1930. One provided the funds needed to continue the work when the chastened Negroes would do for a quarter what they will not do today for a dollar; the other contributed her time, thought and general assistance.

I wish that the names of all who have shared in this work could be given, but
114 over a period of years I have become indebted to so many associates that it is inad-
● 115 visable to mention more than those whose coöperation has produced far-reaching results.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parsons of Lakeville, Connecticut, and Wassaw Island, and the late Augustus Oemler of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, gave me in February, 1909, my first opportunity to hear the singing of primitive slave songs on the coast of Georgia.

In later years the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jones, of Sea Island, furnished an opportunity to hear similar songs on Sapelo Island.

The friendly interest of the late Mrs. Clifton of The Ridge, McIntosh County, made me acquainted with the "ring-shout," which is so rarely seen, even by Southerners, that few realize "shouting" is a religious dance of African origin, and not a loud cry.

The Misses Dent, of Hofwyl Plantation, on the mainland in Glynn County, generously shared their knowledge of the songs that descendants of their family's slaves have been encouraged to preserve.

In Camden County, Mr. Chacey Kuehn, of Satilla Pines and New York City, gave valuable help in locating the best singers in the neighborhood of Tompkins, Burnt Fort, and Jerusalem.

The late Howard E. Coffin never lost an opportunity to share with others his delight in the slave songs. The applause of the cosmopolitan audiences he assembled at

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The Cloister, on Sea Island, did more for their prestige than years of single-handed effort.

On St. Simon's Island, Emma Postell Shadman was an unfailing source of inspiration and information. Her death is an irreparable loss.

In the work of bolstering up the waning authority of the religious slave songs, it was necessary to take various steps that could never have been carried through without the assistance of the following friends and acquaintances. To them I wish to express my gratitude.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Franklin McElwain, of Sea Island and Boston;

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene W. Lewis, of Hamilton Plantation, St. Simon's Island, and Grosse Pointe, Michigan;

Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Kuehn, of Satilla Pines, Camden County, and Oak Park, Illinois;

Mrs. Henry Hodge, of Savannah;

Mrs. Burwell Atkinson and Mrs. Charles T. Nolan, of Incachee Plantation, Camden County, and St. Simon's Island;

Mrs. Kenneth Berrie, of Brunswick;

Mrs. George W. C. Drexel, of White Oak, Camden County, and Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania;

Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, of Colesburg, Camden County;

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pettigrew, of Dauphin Plantation, Fort Liberté, Haiti, gave the opportunity in a never-to-be-forgotten month to hear repeatedly the primitive drum rhythms of Haiti;

Thanks are due Mrs. W. K. Bunner, of St. Catherine's, Ontario, for first-hand information concerning the music of Africa's Gold Coast Negroes;

To Margaret Davis Cate, I give special thanks for help in uncovering certain particulars concerning life on Georgia's coastal plantations.

To Lucile Bruce Brown, of Sea Island, I am greatly indebted for constructive criticism of different sections of the manuscript.

The publishers of *Country Life* courteously permit me to include the article on slave songs which I wrote for the issue of December, 1935.

I owe much to the information given me by Melville J. Herskovits and Joseph Greenberg, of Northwestern University, and Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, of Fisk University. The results of their research in various aspects of Negro history have been most helpful.

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Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127]

To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

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533

Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[491]

When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jackson-
•115 ville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee
533 River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by re-
178 ligious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these
197 strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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538 wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display
121 indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little
(522) man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the
race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to
538 state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his
[115] Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

*Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well*

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

[191] In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!
But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:
What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] *An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da fulafafa!" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say wulistapapa." The joke lies in the fact that "fulafafa" and "wulistapapa" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.*

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

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## STICKIT BALL A HACK

533 Like "Ham Bone," "Ball the Jack" and "Juba dis an' Juba dat," this curious song is half-spoken in a lively fashion, to rhythmical hand clapping. When the verse is finished "Then you kick it off":

[539]

Jack t' the rack back
Stickit ball a hack
Low ball high ball
Scallion jack.

## HAM BONE HAM BONE

533 524 As is obvious, twelve-year-old Maria's version of these rhythmical lines is modern. Luck was with me when I found George, another twelve-year-old, who could give the older verses which are recited in the same way—alternated with similar patting. The only difference is that Maria balances herself on one foot; with her left hand she holds her cotton skirt tight around the "ham bone" section of her anatomy, places her right foot on the other leg below the knee and with her right hand deftly smacks out the intricate rhythm on her "rusty butt." [10] George, however, takes the line of least resistance, and leans with his back against a wall. However, in that position he is able to lift his "ham bone" a little higher and do a rather more complicated bit of patting. His hand flies back and forth like a shuttle between his chest and his rump.

[115]

These are Maria's words:

[539]

Ham bone ham bone pat um on uh shoulder
.....[11]
Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t' hold her
.....
I went down town one day
.....
I went with my mother—too.
.....
My mother bought me a billy goat
.....
If my billy goat don't butt
.....
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt
.....

[10] The night she wore a corduroy skirt, the patting could not be heard and her performance missed fire.

[11] These dots represent patting.

1: Federal Writers' Project NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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3: Creel NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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4: Carawan & Carawan NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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organizers, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins. The work concludes with a discussion of the enormous changes that have taken place on Johns Island from the 1960s, (when the last edition of this book was published), to the present time, not only in civil rights and educational development, but in many other aspects of the culture as well.]

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Analyst: John Beierle Processed in 1990

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BULLETIN of the
University of South Carolina

# GULLAH

BY

REED SMITH

ISSUED SEMI-MONTHLY
BY THE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION DIVISION

No. 190

Nov. 1, 1926

COLUMBIA, S. C.
Second-Class Mail Matter

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UNIVERSITAS CAROLIN
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# GULLAH

Dedicated to the memory of Ambrose E. Gonzales

BY

REED SMITH

[p. 1]

BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA

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## PREFATORY NOTE

Considerable interest in Gullah dialect has developed, not only in South Carolina, but thruout the country, within the past few years. This interest is due largely to the masterly contribution of the late Ambrose Gonzales. It seems appropriate to the University of South Carolina committee on publications, therefore, to publish this study by Dr. Reed Smith, Professor of English in the University, presenting the technical details of the Gullah dialect.

B. L. PARKINSON, Director.

University Extension Division.

[p. 2]

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[p. 3]

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## FOREWORD

121 Gullah, that quaint linguistic mongrel of the black folk
197 of the Carolina-Georgia coast and sea-islands, an English dialect molded by the lips and genius of African slaves, was lifted into the rank of literary languages by Ambrose E. Gonzales by his masterpiece, "The Black Border." Some of the myths and lore of these Negroes had been set down before, but it was left to Gonzales to shape these tales and philosophy into artistic form and contribute them as a positive endowment to our literature. "The Black Border," with its Gullah Vocabulary, has placed this treasure within the easy enjoyment of all readers of English.

128 It was my pleasure and privilege to assist in the preparation of this Vocabulary and in the unification of Gullah words, which, up to that time, existed almost entirely as spoken and unordered vocables. It is now possible for any one, with these Gullah Stories and Vocabulary, to write any English word in a true Gullah form.

121 Dr. Reed Smith has added to these labors the true contribution of the scientist. He has worked out the laws and analogies that unconsciously wrought this quaintly beautiful transformation of English through the mentality and spirit of the slaves in Southern homes. He has placed Gullah upon the plane with our great dialects,—Irish, Scottish, and some of the English idioms.

An examination and reading of Gullah will convince any sincere mind that, in allurement, in sheer beauty of word and phrase, and in a certain winsomeness of its own, it is a permanent enrichment of our language and literature.

STANHOPE SAMS.

Asst. Editor *The State*.

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# GULLAH

## Historical Background

101 Even to those familiar with the American Negro through the medium of either life or literature, the term Gullah is a little-known word for a less-known people. It is applied to a special group-type of Negroes, limited historically and geographically to the sea-islands and the narrow tidewater strip bordering the coast counties of South Carolina and Georgia and a small section of north-east Florida. The
197 language spoken by these Negroes constitutes a patois unique among the dialects of the United States, and differs from the more familiar upland Negro dialects as written by Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, as markedly as those dialects differ from the French Creole of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta.

174 Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came
101 from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River.[1] A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year 1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly

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[1]This was the opinion of Mr. Ambrose E. Gonzales, a high authority on Gullah and author of the Black Border Series of Gullah stories. This was also the view of the Rev. John G. Williams. In the Preface to his *De Old Plantation*, Allendale, 1896, he wrote: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and a part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger'. In Appleton's 'New American Cyclopaedia' the Guinea negroes are described as 'black and having thick lips and flat noses', and the Angola, or 'Gulla' negroes as having 'few of the negro peculiarities of form and feature. They are brown in color'. These differences between negroes in the country have been often noticed and remarked upon frequently, the explanation of which differences is that the 'thick lips' and 'flat noses' point to Ashantee and Dahomey as the places from which their ancestors were brought and the 'brown color' and features more like the European in some negroes, very different from the Guinean, point to Angola or 'Gulla' as the country from which their ancestors came. So deeply fixed are the race and even tribal characteristics. There is history in the word 'Gullah', as it is improperly spelt."

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[174 [10] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [101] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

[174 [567] Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing [197] their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1]Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; [127] Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the sources of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Camni —or Coml Negroes called Gwalla.

[2]Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

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175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- [248] tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

'If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

175 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 567 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[8]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[9] in the broom-sedge

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[197] [8]Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[9]How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves [567] died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

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175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.' Living close to nature they are

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(567) case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognizing him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

'This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

(113) For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

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181 learned in woodcraft and the ways of animals and birds and fish, and in quaint similes and shrewd sayings use this knowledge to illustrate their dealings with their own kind, and their relations with the outside world.

177 In increasing measure, however, good roads, bridges, and free rural schools are bringing in outside influences and the processes of civilization. The numerous hunting clubs in winter and coast resorts in summer are likewise increasing their points of contact with the rest of the State. They are being slowly transformed and conformed, becom-

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181 present, the third looking toward the past: (1) William Pickens, himself a Negro, says: "Till this day the Negro is seldom frank to the white man in America. He says what he does not mean; he means what he does not say. . . . This is one reason for the great misconception in the white race respecting the desires, ambitions and sentiments of the black." *The New Negro, His Political and Civil Status and Related Essays*, p. 37.

(2) Mr. Gonzales says: "Of all the inscrutable peoples of the Eastern world, none is more secretive than the Negro, nor any so puzzling to the psychologist, for while it is easy to know that deceit lurks behind the mask of engaging frankness with which he seeks to disarm those who doubt him, the exact nature of the deceit can seldom be discerned." Review of Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.

(3) Dr. Stanhope Sams, literary editor of "The State", looks to the Negro's past: "There is a dark region beyond the mind and soul of the Negro of the slave plantations that may never be explored. No trained and well equipped psychologist, so far as I know, has ever attempted this magnificent research. Certainly none of the Negro students of the race has seemed to get even so near as white students have approached. So far as I have ever seen in their writings or heard in their speech, Dubois and Booker Washington did not enter that primeval jungle. And it is not possible now, perhaps, to 'restore' this primitive jungle race and lore. It would be a far more difficult task than the restoration of Kish or Ur, or to bring back to earth some semblance of the mysterious Sumerians. There we have at least a tablet or stele or monument to help; but we must decipher the Negro of the days of the Pharaohs and of Carthage and of the impenetrable backward and abysm of time that stretches like an uncharted sea behind the African Negro from the modern Negro in America or Africa.

"At all events, as it seems, the contact he must have had with cultured Egyptians and Carthaginians left no enduring record. It is possible—despite some vague beginnings of civilization in certain parts of Black Africa—that the only lasting betterment in conditions the Negro has yet known or held has been received during and since he became a slave in the Southern States.

"It remains an alluring, but a chimerical adventure—this attempt to learn what the Negro was before his contact with us.

"On their own part, the Negroes seem to have formed a conspiracy of silence. Possibly they suffered too profoundly, were hurt too bitterly, to tell us their own story. They preferred, doubtless, to leave it behind them in the engulfing and obliterating jungle. They must have known, must have remembered, those first slaves, and they have always had the genius for story-telling and singing. Yet they tell no stories that reveal their previous march, sing no songs—except with borrowed music, and fill their mythologies with the animals and beings of the world that bound and enslaved them."

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177 ing less like their forbears and more like their contemporaries. Under this slow but sure leveling process their local characteristics and regional traits are gradually fading into uniformity with the common average of their kind and color.

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## LITERARY BACKGROUND

000 It is a matter of common knowledge how frequently and sympathetically the short-story of local color and the dialect sketch have dealt with the Negro in the past as the white man saw him, particularly with the idealized family servant type of the old South. The climax of achievement came over a generation ago, in the eighties, with Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page first in time and first in the hearts of their countrymen. This is not the occasion for a survey of the Negro in fiction,[1] but no one could even glance in that direction and fail in passing to say a word of gratitude to the creators[2] of Uncle Remus and of Marse Chan. There should also be recalled the brilliant pioneer in Negro dialect poetry, Irwin Russell of Mississippi and Missouri. Though he died in 1879 at the age of 26, with his greatest work still to do, the power of his originality and influence were accorded generous recognition by both Harris and Page. These three, with Harry Stillwell Edwards of Georgia and F. Hopkinson Smith of Virginia, are still leaders in the traditional school.

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[1]For a comprehensive bibliographical survey of this kind, see Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Chapters II to IV, pp. 18-94, dealing with the development of the plantation conception and tradition in literature.

[2]The word "creators" is used advisedly. As Gaines observes: "The dawning light had brightened throughout a decade but the perfect day of plantation literature was ushered in by Uncle Remus. Harris, it seems, stumbled unconsciously upon a delightful field of folk-lore, and, incidentally, recorded with unusual accuracy of feeling a unique dialect; but what charmed the public was not a new expression of fables, not a new treasury of linguistic values, but the winsome figure of the old darky and the associations of his personality. Uncle Remus did more than tell stories; he reflected a regime; and in so doing, he opened a door widely, completely, to a spacious chamber of literary values. . . . Four years after Uncle Remus came the first of Page's stories, Marse Chan [*The Century*, April, 1884]; and in the next three or four years the Virginian brought out some of the most significant plantation fiction." *Ibid.*, p. 74.

On the same point Mr. Gonzales observes: "The genius of Joel Chandler Harris, who, with Judge Longstreet and his 'Georgia Scenes' fixed Georgia firmly upon the literary map of the world, embalmed the Negro myths and folk-tales of the South so subtly in the amber of his understanding that 'Uncle Remus' is known and loved by the children of half the civilized world. There was little creative work in 'Uncle Remus'. Mr. Harris claimed to record the stories only 'like hit wer' gun' ter me'. These myths were known and told by Negro nurses to the white children over all the Southern states, and in the West Indian Islands as well, but the artistry of Harris lay in the sympathetic understanding of children prompted by his kindly heart, and the human appeal of the tender relations of 'the little boy' and the old Negro family servant was irresistible, not only to the children, but to those happy grown-ups who loved them." *The Black Border*, Foreword, pp. 13, 14.

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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

114 197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[11] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[12] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[13] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[14]

114 533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[15] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[11]This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[12]In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[13]The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[14]Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[15]See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 138.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[11]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[12]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 18, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[13]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approximated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
538 dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk
(197) of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
538 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
171 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[22]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[21] "Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech
(171) recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on
(178) the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[22] See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the
(567) source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and wore asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting far go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on ho'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use far hab it for my task far mis' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction,[113] a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced.[114] Within the last few years in South Caro-

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[112]See Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 62-94.

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[113]Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya; or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

*Slave Songs of the United States*. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 61 fables, 3 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 68 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

*With Pump Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

*The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 3 illustrations.

*Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 3 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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114 538 lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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113 Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

DuBose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 192 pp., 25 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 6 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

*Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 90 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are wartime pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 560 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-206 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 291 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amends*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shepherd, 1893. 286 pp.

*Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War*, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

*Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884*, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rambling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 163, 175, 184, 190, 196, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1926. 186 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*. Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1926, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C." This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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[113] "*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mammy; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the moner as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: "'E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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less inured to disappointment. As soon as the book was out—I had to give the proofs seventeen readings—I started to edit and bring out *In Darkest Cuba*. . . . . Realizing last January that my time was short, I promised myself that if I lived, I would publish three books this year and, thank the Lord, I've managed to do it.

"Of the thousand pages, more than nine hundred have been written since August of last year—written slowly and painfully, with a pencil on Sundays and at nights, while tired and worn out by my nine or ten hours at The State—duties I never miss.

"Now I'm through with dinbet *for* a while. Each of these *four Black Border* books has its place, and I think they will live because of their sincerity and simplicity—but time will show."

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## THE DIALECT

197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

"The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not [194] always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are [193] strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left.""

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."" White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

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[13] "I, 377.

"J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account* of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

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"That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

"You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; too long buffo' me shum, me yerre um.**"

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh.***"

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah.****"

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?'"

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

*Bennett I, 240, 241.

**"I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); too long before I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

***"I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear me; ears hear yonder same as hear here."

****[illegible]

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on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[a]

To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[b] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[b] Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[a] Bennett I, 340.

[b] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean*, *man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainter* (South Carolina *enty*), *yeye* (eye), *titty*, (sister), and *oonuh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[c] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

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19 fied form of English," both in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, with elision of difficult sounds, shortening of words, modification of every difficult enunciation, and a minimum of forms for person, number, case, and tense.

Thus, simple to begin with and uniformly responsive to all possible leveling influences, Gullah is as nearly an uninflected tongue as it is possible to conceive.

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19 175 567 [1]George Philip Krapp in "The English of the Negro" (*American Mercury*, June, 1925) gives the following conjectural picture of its origins: "The assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once. Though the historical evidence is not as full as might be wished, the stages can be followed with some certainty. When the Negroes were first brought to America they could have known no English. Their usefulness as servants, however, required that some means of communication between master and slave should be developed. There is little likelihood that any masters exerted themselves to understand or to acquire the native language of the Negroes in order to communicate with them. On the contrary, from the very beginning the white overlords addressed themselves in English to their black vassals. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of English this would be. It would be a very much simplified English—the kind of English some people employ when they talk to babies. It would probably have no tenses of the verb, no distinctions of case in nouns or pronouns, no marks of singular or plural. Difficult sounds would be eliminated, as they are in baby talk. Its vocabulary would be reduced to the lowest possible elements. In short, it would be a language of very much the same kind as those which have developed elsewhere under similar circumstances. It would have resemblances to the Beach-la-Mar of the Western Pacific, the Pidgin English of China, and the Chinook jargon of western America. As the Negroes imported into America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another, they themselves were driven to the use of this infantile English in speaking to one another."

See also a similar account by James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1925, pp. 42, 43.

The actual historical picture is thus sketched by Mr. Bennett: "At the time of the arrival of these negroes in the American provinces a considerable proportion of the population was composed of white bond-men, indentured mechanics and 'redemptioners', the laborers of the colony, among whom the newly-arrived negroes learned their English. Their vocabularies were small and very markedly dialectal, in the majority of instances a dialect which had been handed down from father to son for several generations, preserving closely the peculiarities of earlier times, in many cases Elizabethan and Jacobean.

"The Africans, plastic as they are by nature, quickly lost their own language, and acquired imperfectly the dialects of the British peasantry among whom they worked, and by whom very generally they were directed. The main reason was, perhaps, that, at the height of the trade, owing to the danger of conspiracy, large groups of negroes upon great plantations and in any considerable establishments, were generally made up, by preference, of negroes of different tribes, speaking languages and dialects unknown to one another. They were mostly young, for youth retains no lasting memories and acquires a new language with greater ease.

"The new negroes were parcelled out among the early bond-servants, and, later, among the trained servants, preventing their congregating in a body, hastening their familiarity with their new duties, and more quickly learning the language of their monitors and wardens. This plan was operative from very early days in obliterating the many African dialects and tongues native to the Negro slaves." Personal letter to Professor Yates Snowden, of the University of South Carolina, Jan. 23, 1918.

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*Short Cuts*

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The simple form *run*, for example, does duty for "run, runs, is or are running, has or have run, ran, etc.", singular and plural of all tenses. *'Ee* serves interchangeably for "he, she or it"; *'e dead; 'e hab chile* (of a mother); *'e cry; 'e kick* (of a mule); *'e freeze; 'e hot; 'e rain; 'e gwine wedduh* (of an approaching storm). Similarly *'um* stands for all objective case forms of the third person pronoun: *'e tief 'um* (steals or stole it or them); *'e lick 'um* (of wife, child, or mule); *'e bu'n 'um; uh done 'um; uh shoot 'um.*

Distinctions of gender,[84] even in the pronoun, are likewise lacking. As Harris succinctly remarks: "It (Gullah) recognizes no gender, and scorns the use of the plural number except accidentally."[85] For example, a country darkey boarding the train near Georgetown handed the conductor two tickets, and was asked whom they were for. *"Dis one fuh him"* (pointing to his wife), *"and dis one fuh we,"* pointing to himself. A visitor to the office of a masculine attorney who had stepped out for a moment was told by the Georgetown darkey office boy: "She is out; 'e yent come back, not yit; him soon will."[86]

*'Ee see 'um* or the syncopated form *'Ee shum* may have any of the twenty-four possibilities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| He<br>She<br>It | sees<br>saw | her<br>him<br>it<br>them |

Depending upon its inflection and accent, *shum* by itself

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[84]Compare Mrs. Parsons' statement: "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic distinctions. The persistence of the indifference in Negro dialects, in English, French, and Portuguese, is an interesting fact in the psychology of language." *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Preface, XX.

[85]*Nights With Uncle Remus*, Intro., XXXIII.

[86]Mr. Bennett is likewise authority for the following uniquely practical explanation of sex and gender: "An old Negro was asked about the difference between the masculine and feminine genders and replied: 'O, yes; me yis know dat. W'en 'omans eat mahry (married) 'e a male; w'en 'e mahry 'im bun uh female."

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193 may mean "See it, him, them?" The height of laconicism is achieved in

*"Shum?"*
*"Shum!"*

*Uh yeddy 'um but 'uh ent shum* may have any of the sixty-four possible combinations:

$$\text{I} \begin{Bmatrix}\text{hear}\\ \text{heard}\end{Bmatrix} \begin{Bmatrix}\text{it}\\ \text{her}\\ \text{him}\\ \text{them}\end{Bmatrix} \text{ but I } \begin{Bmatrix}\text{didn't}\\ \text{don't}\end{Bmatrix} \text{ see } \begin{Bmatrix}\text{it}\\ \text{her}\\ \text{him}\\ \text{them}\end{Bmatrix}$$

One of the most convenient and expressive words in Gullah is the interrogative or affirmative exclamation *enty*, equivalent to the German *Nichtwahr* or the French *N'est-ce pas?* It means "isn't, aren't, didn't, doesn't, don't, you, she, it, they, we," etc., etc. *Enty you shum?* or *You shum, enty?*

*Gullah "A"*

194 To unaccustomed ears, the most characteristic and peculiar sound in Gullah is the prevalence of the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "at" "hat" "bat", drawled or prolonged to *"aa"*. This sound on Gullah tongue represents both the median and broad *a* sounds, and gives *paa't* for both path or part; *smaa't* for smart; *cyaa't* for cart; *haa't* for heart; and similarly *shaa'p, baa'n, maa'k, staa't, daa'k, yaa'd*, etc. As Mr. Bennett remarks: "To hear a small black girl, striving after the higher education but forever indelibly saturated with Gullah, recite the inspired line, 'Hark! hark! the lark!' as 'Haa'k! haa'k! de laa'k!' is inevitably to smile."[11]

Conversely the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "fat", "hat," "rat," etc., is broadened to *o* or *ah*,[12] giving *ha(h)t* for hat, *ca(h)t* for cat, *ba(h)g* for bag, and *ba(h)k, cra(h)k, fa(h)c'* and *ma(h)n* for back, crack, fact, and man. By this reversal of *a* sounds, curious results follow.

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[11]Bennett II, 42.
[12]Not exclusively Gullah, but also impeccable white low-country usage.

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Thus, a "smart man" becomes a *smaa't ma(h)n*, and a 194
'dark bag" becomes a *daa'k ba(h)g*.

*Consonant Shifts*

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Voiced *th* (as in *then*) > *d*

Aldo', anudduh, dat, den, dey dey (right there), bodduh, todduh (t'other), demself.

Voiceless *th* (as in *thin*) >t, either initial or final.

T'ick, t'in, t'ing, t'ink, t'ief, t'irty, t'istle, t'irteen, t'row, t'roat, t'ree, t'rough.

Eart' (or yut'), bre't', fait', trut', teet', lat' (lathe), pat', wut (worth).

*r* > *b*

Bittle (victuals), beabuh, bee-hibe, Benus (sometimes Wenus), behabe, berry (sometimes werry) 'ceebin (deceiving), grabe, hebby, driber, drobe, Ebe, ebenin', fabuh, leabe, lib', libe, febuh, fibe, flabuh, glub, moobe.

*v* > *w*

Wenus (sometimes Benus), werry (sometimes berry), Nowembuh, puhwidin', puhwiduh, puhwishun, puhwoke, puhwokin', waa'mint (varmint), wegetubble, westibule (of vestibule limited train), wictoria, wine, wineguh, wisit.

*z* > *dj*

Medjuh, pledjuh, pledjuhr'um (pleasure him or them), tredjuh, tredjuruh.

*R*, of course, drops* or softens to *h*, except intervocalically as in *tredjuruh*, and *fuhr'um*, for *fuh um* (for them).

Final *d* or *t* is dropped or slurred:* Bandon' (abandoned), Babtis', buss', fiel'-han'.

An initial *n* is added before *u* (with a vanishing *y* sound), as in Newinted States, Nyankee, nyung, nyounges', nyuse, nyuzen' (usen't).

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*As always in the best company, R's are seen and not heard.
*Likewise in general usage.

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193 Preceded by a vowel an initial *y* sound is added to *i*
194 and *e*. Thus *iz* and *ent* become *yiz* and *yent*. *Him iz*, but *'e yiz; him ent*, but *'e yent; 'e yeye red.*.

Initial *s* is dropped in the hard consonant combinations *sc, sp, sk, st*.

'Cratch, 'crape, 'kin, 'corch, 'tan, 'tink, 'take, 'tir, 'top, 'ting, 'tep, 'licky, 'traight, 'tring, 'tretch-out, 'tir, 'pin, 'pat, 'pit, 'plash, 'pend, 'tore.

*Prefixes*

193 Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped, as *at-, o-, ap-, e-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-*, etc.

'Ten, 'tenshun (for attend or intend, attention, intention), 'pinion (opinion), 'pint, 'pintment (appoint, appointment), 'pistle (epistle), 'jeck' (reject, object), 'tack, 'tagnhize (antagonize), 'mirashun (admiration), 'scusshun (excursion), 'spishun, 'spize, 'splain, 'spon', 'spose (suppose, expose), 'spute, 'stonish, 'stead'ub (instead of), 'stracted, 'struckshun (construction, destruction).

The prefix *re-* is the favorite, being sometimes retained when the others are dropped, and frequently being substituted for other less euphonious prefixes:

Recishun (for decision); refen' (defend), remonia (pneumonia), renite (unite), repeah (appear), repose (oppose), resplain (explain), refen ('fen', defend). "Anoint" becomes *'nint*, but the pastor is the *Lord's renointed*.

*Survivals (Archaisms)*

192 *Fo'punce* and *seb'npunce chickens*, to indicate the size of a chicken sold for those amounts before the Revolutionary War.

*Coz, cuz*, or *cuzn* as a form of address, like the Elizabethan "coz".

*Jook* in the sense of jab or jabbed.

*Tittie* or *tittuh* for sister.

*Toad* for a young female dog.

*Tosey*, as a diminutive of "toad," as a humorous nickname for man or woman.

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*Tetch*, for remnant. "T'engk Gawd, 'e lef' uh leetle tetch een de bottle."

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*Tas'* (*task*), one hundred and five feet square, one quarter of an acre, the daily task on sea-island cotton plantations.[a] Used now as either a measure of area or of distance. "My gun kin shoot two tas'," i.e. 210 feet or 70 yards.

*Use* in the sense of "frequent certain feeding grounds, be accustomed to go, linger habitually about."[b]

*Yowe* for ewe.

*Frail*, to strike, to beat.

*Ax* for ask.[c]

*Piggin*, a small cedar pail with one panel extended for a handle.

*Pyo'* for "pure," in the sense of "fully, absolutely"; modern slang, "nothing else but": *de pyo' nutt'n*.

*Staa't-naked*, instead of "stark-naked."[d]

*Quile* for coil.

*Find*, in the sense of "to supply with victuals." "Buh Sun promise Buh Fowl-hawk fuh fine um een bittle effn 'e ketch 'im een 'im baid."

*Quills*, still used for pipes of reed or cane.

*Shote*, for young hog.

*Killick*, for "killock," an anchor of stone.

*Gaul* for swamp.

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[a] Mr. Bennett explains a "task" as one-half an acre for a hoe hand; three-quarters of an acre for a cotton-field hand; one-quarter of an acre for a rice-field hand. Thus a man and his family can *cut a tass; tie a tass, an' carry a tass intuh de flat*. From this comes the phrase, a *done-tass niggah*, for a worn out laborer, too weak or too old to work; or lightly, for the laughing darkey, his day's work done and his hoe canted over his shoulder. I, 343.

[b] Widely employed throughout the South by both white and black, usually as a hunting term in connection with doves, partridges, and turkeys. Dignified Elizabethan. Compare Spenser's "Where never foot did use", and Milton's Lycidas,

"Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks."

Listed along with *quile* (coil) and *gaum* as colloquial white usage by Charles Foster Smith in "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," *The Southern Bivouac*, Nov., 1885.

[c] Good Chaucerian and Caxtonian; standard English till 1600; still used in the Midland and Southern Dialects in England; and in general much easier and pleasanter to say than "ask".

[d] It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *staa't* goes back to the older "start" (steert), tail.

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192 [278] *Hippo* for ipecac, probably from the dialect of the cockney English sailors who fetched it home from the Brazils. The British pharmacopoeia of 1725 calls it "hippocachuana, hippechachuana, hippo for short."

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to daub or smear with spilled victuals and grease; similarly *gaumandize* (*gormandize*) not to eat greedily, but to daub or to spatter oneself with food.

### *Proper Names (Onomatopeia)*

192 825 *Bloody noun*, the big swamp bull-frog.

*Fry-bakin' frog*, the small pond-frog, supposed to say "fry bacon," "tea-table."

*Higguhri-hee* and *Cuckatoo*, both being terms for the great horned owl.

192 *Nickuhdemus*, *Buhrabbus*, and *Polydo'*, all favorite, mouth-filling names, common in sermons and religious arguments: "Ent de Scriptuh say een de fo'teen chaptuh een Nickuhdemus, dat de lab'ruth wut' 'e hire?"

*Rebus* is of unknown origin, being coupled only with Revelation, meaning from Alpha to Omega: "Uh bin t'ru da' t'ing frum Rebus spang to Rebelashun."

(825) *Po'Jo*, the long-legged, long-necked Blue Heron.

### *Popular Etymologies*

*Consecrate lye* (*concentrated*);[a] *middle-night*, *middle-day*, *middle-blouse*, for mid-night, mid-day, middy-blouse; *inflummashun*, for information; *sparruhgrass* for asparagus;[a] *Sawlketchum* for Salkahatchie, a tide-water river of South Carolina, for which the commoner corruption among the whites is "Saltcatcher"; *preecher on de sukkus* (circuit); *locus preechuh* (local preacher); *petty-* or *patty-auguh* for piragua, pirogue; *Saa'bint Day* (Servant's day) confused with Sabbath Day; *muffle-dice* for hermaphrodite; *grin' salt*, said of a hawk or vulture circling aloft; *carryin'* for carrion; *peach omelet* for peach marmalade; *curly flower* for cauliflower;[a] *Florida lime* for chloride of lime; *sweet religion* for sweet alyssum;[a] *nutten-aigs* for nut-megs.

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[a]Not exclusively Gullah; commonly found elsewhere.

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192 538 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

### *Words*

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.* The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam*, *oona*, *swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du*, *goober*, *pinder*, *cooter*, *okra*, *geechy*, *cymbi*, *bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*. *Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.* Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.* Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye*. *Stepney* is

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*Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.

Bennett, I, 338.

George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *roodoo*, *hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[197] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

*Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] "Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'." [195] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";" also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance" of the primitive Negro Christians

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[539] Whoga, whoga, whogaler, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Coo me sormber sorty sundundilly Indelarun.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Olawia! Olawia!
Odatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

"'Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry bat-o home.'"
Bennett, II, 6.

[533] "For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.
Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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marked by ecstatic motion and hysterical physical rhythms.

*Too* in the sense of "very."

*Sometime*, inconstant, unsure: "Dem nyoung gal is a sometime t'ing."

*Nyam*, in the sense of eat."

*Lahgin'*, and *swongger*, to assume self importance, to put on airs. Both of these seem pure Negro, unless the first is from 'largin', enlarging (?); and the second from swagger, compare swank.

*Mongkey-nut* for cocoa-nut, probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head.

*Soon* for early, as a *soon brukwuss*, a *soon staa't*, a *soon man*. Thence, as noted by Mr. Bennett,[33] arises the first division of the Negro's day; *soon er mo'nin'*; after which follows *fus' fowl-crowin'*, *day-clean*, *sun-up*, *fus' an' las' ho'n blowin'*, *fo'noon res'*, *attanoon*, *de sun duh lean*, *de sun duh lean fuh down*, *sun-down*, *deep-dus'*, *ebenin'*, *can'le-lightin'*, *night-time*, *platt-eye prowl*, and *hag-hollerin'*."[34]

### *Phrases*

*Crack 'e bret'* (or *crack 'e teet'*), crack his breath or teeth, i.e., say something.

*Long-mout'*, surly or contemptuous pushing out of lips.

*Shut-mout'* (adj.) or *tie up 'e mout'* (verb), secretive, ill-natured, not saying anything.

*Onrabble 'e mout'*, unravel his mouth, i.e., loosen up in conversation.

*W'ich en' w'y talk*, which and why talk, i.e., contradictory, inconsistent talk.

*She-she talk*, used of feminine loquacity. This phrase looks, by the way, like a correct use of the feminine gender,

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[33] Mr. Williams' suggestion is that *nyam* comes from *yam tetter* (yam potato) with intrusive *n* before *y* sound. Williams, *De Ole Plantation, VI*. An improbable derivation. Professor W. A. Craigie derives it from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food, and compares Portuguese African *igname*—the yam.

[34] I, 342.

[35] Midnight. Hags are witches, and platt-eyes diabolical spirits of the mist. *Loc cit.*, 343.

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192 but Mr. Gonzales sees in it an onomatopoetic origin, deriving it from the whispering frou-frou of silken petticoats.[a]

*Gwinin' en' gwinin'*, goings-on and goings-on.

*Trus'-me-Gawd* (I trust my God), the appropriate name for the cranky, easily-overturned dugout canoe.

*Praise-meetin'*, prayer meeting.[b]

*Fuh sowl*, a strong phrase, for true, for truth: "'Ee fat fuh sowl."

*'Ent wut'* (isn't, aren't worth), in the general sense of worthless, of no account: "Him ent wut'."

*Mo' bettuh, mo' longuh*, double comparative for better and longer.

*Mores'*, most.

*To cut de green calabash*, to exaggerate, to draw the long bow (calabash is a gourd).

*To pull wool*, to grasp the small twisted forelock and to bow.

*Bline Gawd*, blind God, personal idol or fetich.

*Fin'lly at las'*, a full phrase for at last.

*Juntleman* (gentleman), used for the regular and lawful husband, and similarly, *lawfully lady*, for a Negro's legally-married wife, in both cases "Withouten oother compaignye in youth," as Chaucer said.

*Tek um an' tanky*, (Take it [or them] and thank you), I took it gladly and was (am) grateful.

*Dat buckra* (or *nigguh*) *eye bigger dan 'e belly*, (i.e., he wants more than he should, is greedy).

*Fuh gone hook-han'*, To walk arm in arm.

*Lay down yo' mammy haa't* (heart) *an' tek up yo' daddy*, have courage, be a man.

*Clap-hat-bitch*, a woman sudden and hasty in speech and deed, a virago.

*A swinge* (singed) *cat, an ash cat*, of wretched, ill-seeming, unprepossessing appearance.

Concerning a safety-match, which would strike nowhere except on the box, a darkey was heard to remark, "Mas

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[a] *The Black Border*, p. 284.

[b] Mrs. Parsons notes that on St. Helena Island, the little cabin churches are called "praise-houses." *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands*, etc., p. 205.

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192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time*, *three-time*, etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chuesday*, *two T'ursday*, *two place*, the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

*Proverbs*

538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care is better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Little axe cut down big tree."

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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554 "Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh *my own*."

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## SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism,[1] and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs,[2] shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition[3] and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made,[4] either by

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[1] "For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

[2] "Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

[3] "At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 426, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

[4] "Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 199): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

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533 individuals" or by groups, spontaneously. The latter method is the more interesting because it is one of the rare contemporary situations where communal composition may be observed actually at work: An emotionally charged atmosphere (as religious worship regularly charges it among all but the most sophisticated Negroes) a striking, rhythmic phrase from preacher, leader, or worshiper, and the thing is done. One of the most beautiful of recent spirituals was a spontaneous outburst of petition to the great "Maussa" after the terrific cyclone of 1911 in South Carolina, built around the refrain-appeal, "Lord, don' let de win' blow here no mo'."[66] And during the World War a similarly tense situation produced a like result. As described by a Negro worshiper on that occasion: "Somebody shout out, 'O Lord, we gwine 't'row dat Kizer down,' an' den somebody else catch 'em an' t'row 'em back, an' befo' you know it de whole chu'ch was a-rockin' an' a-prayin'. It was a gran' hymn."[67]

Many of the simplest and most beautiful of the spirituals are cast in this form: that is, a striking leading line with choral repetition and variations. Frequently the words are crude, childish, and inconsequential, but usually both melody and harmony, especially harmony, are rhyth-

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[66]The same authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 189) describe individual authorship as follows: "Among the lowly Negro folk of the South the making of spirituals is still a reality. Every community has its 'composers'. Often they are supposed to possess some special gift of the 'spirit'. From sermon, prayer, and crude folk wisdom they draw ideas and inspiration for their compositions. Sometimes the results are pathetic, but not infrequently there springs up a song which would compare favorably with the old spirituals."

See, also, Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 21.

[67]See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, No. 39.

[68]Two similar instances are thus described by Odum and Johnson (*The Negro and His Songs*, p. 32): "A Negro preacher recently reached a climax in his discourse in the phrase, 'Oh, with the wings of the morning, I'd fly to that heavenly land.' He repeated this a number of times and made gestures with his arms suggestive of flying. His black robe added to the forcefulness of the suggestion and the impression became a part of the song of that church. . . . If a single personality dominates the whole in an expression that appeals to the present sense of fitness, he is the author of a new song. For example, a visiting minister once shouted out during such a scene: 'Oh, the hearse-wheel a-rollin' an' the graveyard opening—ha, ha,' but got no further, for his refrain was taken up by the chorus, and the next day saw a new version of the well-known song."

(113) See, also, the origin of the song, "O, de ole nigger-driver!" as described by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1867, pp. 692, 693. It is from this article that the beautiful "Lay dis body down" spiritual is quoted on page 39.

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533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

533 539 Here are some of the most characteristic:

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 198 814 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been fortunate in having two distinctly preservative influences exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

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533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.[a] In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals.[b]

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[170] [a] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—*if* they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout a *full heart and a troubled spirrit*."

[162] [b] St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

[c] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[*]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much
[562] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T.
[114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery."[†]

They are products of slavery in the same sense though
533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris-
562 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share
114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the
178 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery
177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas.[‡] But back

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[*]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[†]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[‡]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

"For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from [illegible] interpretation into stone-throwing.
[527] This, for example, [illegible] 11, 18, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[113] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
[522] it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

---

[529] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

"With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
[113] Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," The *Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

"Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

"See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
[113] Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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Nor must it be forgotten that the Negro is both a splendid actor and a born dramatist: he dramatizes a situation concretely and vividly, and dramatizes himself and his own feelings with equal facility.

All of these factors are to be taken into consideration when dealing with the origin of the spirituals.

But however originated and compounded, spirituals constitute one of the most distinctive additions of the Negro to the culture of America. A leading Negro publicist[14] sums up his race's contributions somewhat as follows: the cakewalk, jazz music, the animal folk-tale, the Blues, and the spirituals. In the minds of many the greatest of all are the spirituals.

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[14]James Weldon Johnson.

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## CONCLUSION

178 538 (533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.""

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] [83] [171] "Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toas'" he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

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As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted in conclusion Mr. Gonzales' record of a colored husband's description of the way the woman manages the man. It is a fable in lighter vein. The devil acts as interlocutor.

"One time, Debble meet 'Ooman duh paat'. Debble is uh berry mannussuble man wid 'Ooman, so, w'en 'e shum 'e t'row 'e tail obuh 'e na'm, same lukkuh 'e bin cloak, en' mek'um uh berry stylish bow. De 'Ooman toss 'e head, 'e grin, 'e ketch 'e frock by de bottom wid alltwo 'e han', 'e hice'um up to 'e knee, en' 'e drap'um uh low cutchy, 'cause him en' Debble git 'long berry well, *berry* well!

"Attuh de time uh day done pass, de Debble ax de 'Ooman how 'e mek'out 'long de man; w'edduh 'e done l'aa'n how fuh manage de man, en' fetch'um to 'e han'. De 'Ooman laugh. 'Budduh,' 'e say. 'Hukkuh you kin ax me dat? Enty you l'aa'n me how fuh 'seitful? Enty you show me how fuh do 'um? Enty Uh folluh yo' exwice? Uh got de man gwine! 'E dunno w'ich way 'e duh gwine—but 'e gwine my way, enty?"

" 'Tell me how you do'um,' de Debble say.

" 'Uh got good ecknowledge how fuh fool de man. Uh got 'tring tie 'pun de man, en' w'en we git to de fawk uh de road, weh one de road lean one side, en' t'odduh road lean t'odduh side—w'en Uh git to da' place, ef Uh gwine one road, Uh pull de 'tring fuh lead de man een de t'odduh road. W'ichebbuh road Uh want, Uh pull de man een de road wuh Uh *yent* want, 'cause de stubbunt creetuh so cuntrady en' haa'dhead, ef him see me foot lean fuh one road, him foot fuh lean to de t'odduh one, 'cause him t'ink man fuh hab 'e own way. Him eegnunt to dat! So dat how Uh gitt-um fuh trabble my road, en' de man nebbuh know weh 'e duh gwine, but 'e ben' 'e neck en' pull de load, jiz' ez sattify ez ox wuh done bruk!' "[11]

[11] *The Captain*, pp. 380, 381.

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# FOLK CULTURE ON ST. HELENA ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

BY

GUY B. JOHNSON

*Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina*

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FOR
J. E. J.

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## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region. 121 114 (122)

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to Eng-~~lish and~~ American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal- 128 128 114

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128 lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a
114 note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128 I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena
[127] Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the study of St. Helena Island, for constant interest and advice in the work; and to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a summer at Triuna Island, Lake George, where the preparation of the manuscript was begun.

G. B. J.

Chapel Hill
July, 1930

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# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers (101) 101 175 569

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113)

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101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 194

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

### THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[6]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (248) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the (567) wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-(178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[6] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 177 567 191

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
567 who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
197 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505]
water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484]
towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

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000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

175 567 191 197 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

1[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [1] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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ketch um. Wen eh git close ter um eh notus um good. But Goat keep on chaw. Buh Lion try fuh fine out wuh Buh Goat duh eat. Eh yent[1] see nuttne[2] nigh um ceptin de nekked rock wuh eh duh leddown on. Buh Lion stonish. Eh wait topper Buh Goat. Buh Goat keep on chaw, an chaw, an chaw. Buh Lion cant mek de ting out, an eh come close, an eh say: "Hay! Buh Goat, wuh you duh eat?" Buh Goat skade[3] wen Buh Lion rise up befo um, but eh keep er bole harte, an eh mek ansur: "Me dun chaw dis rock, an ef you don leff, wen me done long um me guine eat you." Dis wud sabe Buh Goat. Bole man git outer diffikelty way[4] coward man lose eh life.

[1]be. [2]lie down. [3]ain't. [4]nothing. [5]scared. [6]where.

II[11]

"Ben, you are a big strong man, why did you let that woman beat you?"

"Gin'ul, lemme tell you de trute, Gawd bin wid me dat day. You know, all me life uh bin uh strong man. Uh nebbuh hab no man fuh outdo me fuh wu'k, eeduhso[1] fuh fight, en[2] uh bin nyuse[3] fuh lick 'ooman en' t'ing all me life. W'en 'ooman ent sattify me wid 'e wu'k, eeduhso 'e manus,[4] uh lick'um fuh mek'um mannusuble. W'en my wife Sarah' son John' wife come een my house dat day, 'en sassy 'tell 'e mek me bex. Uh nebbuh tek sassy f'um no 'ooman, uh dunkyuh[5] ef 'e big ez cow, en' da' gal big 'ooman fuh true. So uh cut one 'tick[6] en' uh graff'um[7] by 'e sleebe en' biggin fuh lick'um. Gin'ul, de 'ooman tu'n on me en' box me same lukkuh[8] him duh man. Blood bin een me yeye[9]! Uh 'membuh de time w'en uh could'uh box'um en' kick'um alltwo[10] one time, en' ef uh ebbuh leh de *foot* folluh de *han'*, uh would uh kill'um *dead*. But Gawd hol' me han' en' me foot, alltwo, Gawd tell me fuh peaceubble, en' spayre de 'ooman life. Gin'ul, me don' want no 'ooman life 'pun me han'. Enty[10] you know, suh, ef uh had uh kick dat 'ooman 'e would uh dead? Gawd tek' care uh ol' Ben dat day. Da' 'ooman t'ink suh him lick me, Gin'ul, but enty you know, suh, him oughtuh tengk Gawd fuh sabe'um? Ef uh didn' bin hab 'lij'un, da' 'ooman cawpse would'uh gone Jacksinburruh

[10] From Gonzales, *The Black Border*, pp. 168-69.

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539 een one oxin cyaa't" weh 'e come f'um. All de time 'e binnuh box me, uh bin study 'bout how da' 'ooman' cawpse would'uh look ef uh had uh hit 'um like de time w'en uh nyuse to be uh Ben! En' uh study 'pun him husbun', my wife Sarah boy John, en' un study 'pun John' maamy, en' uh t'ink 'bout how dem will mo'n ef uh kill dis 'ooman, en' wid Gawd help us hab strengk 'nuf fuh hol' me han'. Gin'ul, w'enebbuh uh look 'puntop de' dead 'ooman een me mine', uh tengk Gawd eb'ry day fuh hol' me han'!" . . .

[1]either so, i.e. either, or, nor, etc. [2]and. [3]used, accustomed to. [4]manners. [5]don't care. [6]stick. [7]grab them (her). [8]like a, as if. [9]eye. [10]both. [11]ain't. [12]cart.

III[13]

"Wey[1] yo' is bun'? Tell me say."
"Down een[2] de 'za'b[3]."
"Wuh[4] yuh bun duh do down de-dey[5] een de 'za'b?"
"Bun duh fush[6]."
"Ketch um?"
"Sho'!"
"How many?"
"Too many[7]."
"Lemme shum[8]! Wey 'e dey[9]?"
" 'E de-dey[10]."
"Wey?"
"Dey de-dey, Opey do'[11]!"
"Yunt[12] opey do' twill me yiz shum[13]!"
"Yunt gwine shum twill opey do'!"

[1]where. [2]been. [3]in. [4]reserve, a compound of fresh water. [5]what. [6]there. [7]fish. [8]very many. [9]see them. [10]where are they (where he there)? [11]here they are (he right there). [12]open the door. [13]ain't. [14]till I see them.

IV[13]

Regardless of who might be fishing, "Dah Dannil" would always catch more fish than any other in the boat. If one should ask him how he accomplished that feat, he would invariably, should others be present, whisper the secret of his success: "Well, I tell yuh, son, but yuh ain'fuh tell *nubbody*, cuz I nebbuh tell

[13]From Bennett, "Gullah: a Negro Patois," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, VII, p. 334.

[14]From Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, pp. 128-29.

[113]

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*nubbody* yet. You see yuh ain'fuh trow yuh line *way out* like you see dese odduh peepul like'fuh do; but droppum right by de boat, den tek you' finguh en lif' de sinkuh *lee-ee-tul* piece offuh de bottum en lem drop bac'. Do diss eb'ry wunce w'ile en dih fish notuss dih bait bettuh. Dat's de reazun I ket mo' fish den de torruh' wun."

Not only was he the prince of camp cooks, but after serving a magnificent supper on the beach of bass steak, grainy "griss'," flapjacks and hot coffee, not to mention delectable side-dishes, he would relate with great gusto and much gesticulation his war-camp experiences. An inveterate smoker, the boys would keep him supplied with cigars. Gathered around him in the moonlight, they would sit for hours, as much pleased to listen as the old mestizo was to relate.

"Yuh'see, son," he was telling them upon one occasion, "we binnuh camp tih Uhrange Hill pon John Ilun, en de Yankee bin tic" pontoppuh' Seabrook Bay sukkuh' ant, en we bin trow we picket out tuh Haulobuh' Cut. Now wun night de picket wuh' bin'fuh do jooty, bin wun kine'uh *skittesh* nyung man, en een dih night wen mos' eb'rybody een de camp bin fass uhsleep, yuh' we yeddy' dih hawss down dih road frum Haulobuh' Cut side. *Bliggity, bliggity, bliggity,* lay'out tuh 'e lenk, de hawss tayre eentih camp. De Yankee *exwancin'* de Yankee *exwancin!* Yuh de *debb'l tih'play*. De drum roll—de bugle en de fice" blow—de picket duh holluh fuh we *mekkase*". Den obuh all de nize", I yeddy de Majuh woice; "Fall'een mens, *fall'een*. Leh'dem cunmon en we gih dem HELL tinnight'. En de Majuh, 'e ain' bin faid" dih de debbul. Nuttin' suit 'im bettuh den fuh fight, 'e dinkyuh" ef deh duh t'ousun" Yankee en duh hunnud'uh we. Hin wann *fight*, but some'uh" dem odduh wun, dem binnuh kinduh skittesh. . . .

"Fo'yuh kin tun 'roun' I hab de waggin' hitch'up en all dih ting" eennum. Dem orduh 'mih fuh fall bac', cuz ef de Yankee bin obuhpow'r dem, I could sabe de bittle. I jump een dih waggin ennuh crac' mih wip ennuh nebbuh stop 'tell'uh git spam 'cross dih bridge at Chuch Flat—dah bin 'bout eight mile—en den I keep-

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539 pon 'tell I git'tuh Willtown road—*twenty mile mo'*—ennuh halt fuh'uh seazun. I ain' bindeh[31] long fo' day bruk en wun fass riduh obuhtek'mih, gih'mih metsidge seh fuh tun bac'. 'E seh ain'duh no Yankee *'tall;* seh binnuh stingry[32] duh tun'obuh een Haulobuh' Cut, en dih pickit binnuh *sway*[33] duh *Yankee* duh paddle boat *cummin'* 'cross."

[1] other. [2] grits. [3] thick. [4] on, on top of. [5] like, like a. [6] who, what. [7] duty. [8] here. [9] hear. [10] life. [11] make haste. [12] noise. [13] afraid. [14] don't care. [15] thousand. [16] things. [17] been there. [18] stingray (a fish).

V[14]

Ber Wolf had a pease-patch. An' every night somebody go in de pease-patch an' eat de pease. So Ber Wolf made a tar baby an' set him up in de yard. So Ber Rabbit went in de patch, an' he meet de tar baby standin' up. So Ber Rabbit said, "Good-mornin', gal!" Tar Baby ain't go no manners, say nothin'. Say, "Man, I slap you." His hand fasten. Ber Rabbit say, "I got anoder han'." So he hit him wid dat han! Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a head." Said he butt him wid de head. De head fasten. "Gal, you don't see I got a foot?" So he kick him wid de foot. De foot fasten. "I kick him wid de oder foot." Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a mout'.' De mout' fasten. Den Rabbit say, "Tu'n me loose!"

Next t'ing come along Wolf. Wolf say, "I ketch yer, t'ief! you eat all my pease. I putshyer head down on de choppin'-block an' chop em off."—"Oh, don't duh dat! Dat will kill me." Say, "I want ter kill you." Say, "I'll t'row you in de creek, drown you." "Ah, don't duh dat!" he say. "Yes, Ber Wolf, t'row me in de briar-patch! Den you'll kill me." When Ber Wolf t'row him in de briar-patch, Rabbit say, "Ping! Ping! Dat's de place my mammy done born me!" So dat ol' rabbit git away.

539 19 From these brief passages one can see that the outstanding characteristics of the dialect may be expressed as follows: (1) economy in vocalization, as evidenced by the short cuts in tenses, pronouns, number, gender, etc.; (2)

[14] From Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, pp. 26-7.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[15]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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194 comes *laak*, *spark* is *spaak*, and *palm* is *paam*. These flat *a* sounds are merely survivals of English dialect speech.[16] They are still found in England, and they are common among the low-country white people in South Carolina.[17] Their frequency gives a flat tinge to the whole Gullah dialect.

In words like *father*, *water*, *watch*, the *a*, not being affected by an *r* or an *l*, is pronounced practically the same as in standard English, although local and individual variations occur, ranging from the flat *a* of the type mentioned above to the broad *a* of *father*.

(*a*, as in *hat*)

Many words which in the standard language have this sound of *a* have in Gullah the broad *a*, as in *father*. Acoustically this sound is about the same as the *o* in *hot*, *pot*, etc. Thus we hear *mon*, *bock*, *plont*, *robbit*, *foctry*, for *man*, *back*, *plant*, *rabbit*, *factory*. This *a* sound gives some strange effects when used with words having the flat *a*. Thus *daak mon* for *dark man*, *maash lon* for *marsh land*. Occasionally *back* is pronounced *beck* [pet]. In England the prevailing sound of *a* in these words was broad, with a sprinkling of narrow *a* in the southern counties.

[128] In order that the general reader may not be disturbed over phonetic symbols which mean nothing to him, I have not used any symbols other than the conventional alphabet. However, by means of bracketed words I have tried to describe the various sounds accurately, so that any phoneticist may translate them into his system if he desires. A word inclosed in brackets indicates the vowel sound meant in a certain spelling. For example, the statement that "*cost* is pronounced *caust* [haul]" means that the vowel sound *au* is to be pronounced exactly like the *au* in *haul*.

[16] See *English Dialect Grammar*, Chap. i, also pp. 30-32, also index under various words having this *a* sound. Hereafter this work will be referred to in footnotes as *E. D. G.*

[17] *Pas* and *mas* for *pa* and *ma*, *maash* for *marsh*, and many others are frequent.

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(*a*, *ea*, *ai*, as in *take*, *great*, *wait*)

Words like *bake*, *take*, *wait*, *great*, etc., are pronounced as if the vowel were the *e* in *get*, *pet*, etc. Thus *bek*, *tek*, *wet*, *gret*. One hears in the spirituals that "heaven is a beautiful *pless*," and that "I'm on my *weh*, *prez* de Lawd, I'm on my *weh*." The source of these pronunciations is again the English dialects. For example, the *English Dialect Grammar* records fifteen pronunciations of *bake*, ten of which have the *e* [get] sound or a very close approximation to it. These occur chiefly in the midland, southern, and southwestern counties.

(*e*, *ea*, as in *bed*, *dead*)

A few words which have this sound in the standard language have almost the sound of *ai* as in *pail*, *nail*. Thus *baid*, *baig*, *daid*, *haid*, for *bed*, *beg*, *dead*, *head*. These pronunciations, according to the *English Dialect Grammar*, are still common in England. They are found in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Somerset, and Devonshire.

There are some interesting exceptions, however, in the pronunciation of this vowel sound. For example, for *instead*, some Negroes would say *instid* or *stid*, others would give the vowel the standard pronunciation. For *yellow* it would be difficult to find anything but *yalluh*; *get* is invariably *git*, and *deaf* is always *deef*. These variations are all rooted in English dialect pronunciations. *Stid* and *stead* were of about equal popularity in England.[18] *Yalluh* and *yawluh* were so common as to leave room for few other pronunciations of *yellow*.[19] As for *get*, Wright has

[18] *E. D. G.*, index, p. 618. [19] *E. D. G.*, pp. 692-93.

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194 not recorded a single instance of the *e* being changed to *ai* [*pail*], but *git* occurs in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Worcester, Buckingham, Bedford, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Isle of Wight, Somerset, Devonshire, Cornwall, and parts of Ireland.[20] *Deef* for *deaf* occurs in practically all of the above counties and in the following besides: Stratford, Derby, Northampton, Shropshire, Pembroke, Gloucester, Cambridge, Essex, Dorset.[21] With such an incidence the Negro could hardly have escaped saying *git* and *deef*.

(*e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, plus *r*, as in *certain*, *circle*, *word*, *church*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally pronounced in the Gullah with the sound of *uh*, like the *u* in *bud*. Thus *sutn* for *certain*, *sukkle* for *circle*, *wud* for *word*, *chuch* for *church*, etc. These are all English dialect pronunciations, arising from the effect of the *r* following these vowels. The *English Dialect Grammar* shows these pronunciations to be common at present in the south midland and southern English dialects. For example, *bird* is listed under seven pronunciations, three of which might be represented by *bahd*, *bawd*, and *brid*. The others are all *bud*, or very close approximations to it, and they are found in midland and southern England. Similarly, eighteen pronunciations of *word* are listed, eleven of which, found in all sections below Northumbria, are like the Gullah *wud*.

In a few words of this class we find alongside the *uh* sound other pronunciations which reflect the Negro's tend-

[20] *E. D. G.*, p. 460.

[21] *E. D. G.*, p. 400. *Git* and *Deef* are, of course, still widely used by uneducated white people in the United States.

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ency to take over exactly the pronunciation with which he came in contact. Thus besides *sutn* for *certain*, we also find *sartn*, *sairtn* (the *r* is actually pronounced!); besides *subbunt* for *servant*, also *sarbunt*, *sairbunt*, *saabunt*, etc.; besides *such* for *search*, also *sarch*, *saach*, etc. One thinks immediately of the Englishman's *Darby*, *Hartford*, *clark*, for *Derby*, *Hertford*, *clerk*, and of the pronunciation of *vermin* as *varmint*, so common among uneducated whites in this country. In fact, all of the pronunciations of this sort in the Gullah are also found in various parts of the country among illiterate whites.

(*i*, *y*, as in *hit*, *physic*)

Words having this vowel sound are ordinarily pronounced as in standard English. Such exceptions as exist are easily accounted for by English dialect. For instance, *feesh* and *fush* [push] for *fish* are sometimes heard, likewise *deesh* for *dish*, *sperit* [merit] for *spirit*, and *leetle* for *little*. Wright states that in England *i* has been lengthened to *ee* before *sh* in words like *fish* and *dish* in parts of Lancashire, Derby, Norfolk, Somerset, and Devon.[22] *Sperit* for *spirit* is common in parts of Lancashire, Lincoln, Worcester, Gloucester, and Oxford.[23]

(*o*, *oa*, as in *note*, *coat*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally given the standard pronunciation, except that occasionally there is a tinge of the sound of *u* as in *but*. Hence *goat* may sound like *guet* (*u* as in *but*, *e* unstressed).[24]

[22] *E. D. G.*, p. 71. [23] *E. D. G.*, p. 183.

[24] This pronunciation noted in the *E. D. G.*, p. 188, as found in several counties in words like *coat*, *coach*, *roam*, *pony*.

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(*o*, *a*, as in *not*, *was*)

194 This sound does not differ much from the standard. *Was* and *what* become *wus* and *whut*, but these are about as common among illiterate whites as among Negroes. Words like *cost*, *lost*, *coffin*, become *caust* [h*au*l], *laust*, *caufin*. These are such good white pronunciations that many people would not understand why any distinction is made between *cost* and *caust*. In this connection it is interesting to note that Wright says that this short *o* sound has been lengthened into the *au* sound in the south midland, southern, eastern, and southwestern English dialects.[25]

(*ou*, *ow*, as in *out*, *cow*)

Most words having this vowel sound are given the standard pronunciation. However, *cow* is usually pronounced *coe* [to*e*] and *sow* is usually *soe*. These pronunciations were common in midland and southern England.[26]

(*oi*, *oy*, as in *oil*, *oyster*)

This vowel becomes *i* [p*i*le]. Thus *oil* is *ile*, *boil* is *bile*,[27] *poison* is *pizen*, *oyster* is *eister* [h*ei*ght]. These pronunciations were and are common in England and are still so frequently heard in this country as to need no comment on their occurrence in the Gullah. An exception here is *boy*, which is usually given the standard vowel sound. This is probably due to the fact that in England the *i* sound in this word was not nearly as widely used as in the other *oi* and *oy* words.[28]

[25] *E. D. G.*, p. 184.

[26] See *E. D. G.*, index, under *sow*, etc.

[27] Samuel Johnson wrote: "*Bile*: this is generally spelt *boil*, but, I think, less properly."

[28] *E. D. G.*, index, under *boy*, *oil*, etc.

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(*u, o, oo, ou,* as in *rule, who, food, you*)

This vowel is the same in the Gullah as in literary English, except that *to* is pronounced *toe* [hoe] and *you* is sometimes *yoe*. This pronunciation also survives among many of the old white families of the low country.

(*u, ou,* as in *brush, touch*)

When this sound occurs in initial *un*, it becomes *on*. Thus *oncommon, onbutton, onlock*, etc. This pattern came from the English dialects. In various dialect glossaries and in *The English Dialect Dictionary* are found *un*-words spelled with *on*, as *onaccountable, onchoke, onderground, oncouth*, and numerous others.

In words where this vowel follows a consonant it usually becomes *e* [met][29]. The chief examples of this kind are *brush, judge, just, touch*, which are pronounced *bresh, jedge, jest* (also *jist*), *tetch*. These are all of English dialect descent[30] and are common among illiterate whites in the South.

With insignificant exceptions, the remaining vowel sounds are the same in Gullah as in standard English. It is little short of remarkable how the vowel pronunciations in the Gullah correlate with the deviations of English dialect from the standard language. I have yet to find an example of a pronunciation, other than an individual idiosyncrasy, which is not easily explicable on the basis of midland and southern English dialect.

[29] And in a few words *i* [*sit*]. Thus *jist* for *just*, *kiver* for *cover*. These pronunciations are general in the dialects of England, Scotland, and Ireland. See *E. D. G.*, p. 192.

[30] *E. D. G.*, index, under the various words having this vowel sound, also p. 192.

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*Consonants*

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The points wherein the consonants in the dialect differ from the standard language will now be indicated. For simplicity I am taking the consonants in alphabetical order rather than classifying them as liquids, labials, gutturals, etc., as is sometimes done.

*b.* This consonant is sometimes omitted in the medial position in words such as *nummuh*, number, *rammle*, ramble, *grumlin*, grumbling, etc. Similar pronunciations are found among uncultivated whites, who inherited them from England. Wright says, *b* "hardly ever occurs in any of the dialects between *m-l* or *m-r* in such words as *bramble*, *thimble*, *chamber*, *number*."[31]

In some words medial *b* is changed to *v*. Thus *navuh*, neighbor, *lavuh*, labor.[32] A *b* is nearly always found in chimney: *chimbly*.[33]

*c.* This consonant has generally remained the same as in standard English.

*d.* In a few words *d* has become *j*: *ijuh*, idea, *jew*, dew, *jues*, dues, *Injun*, Indian, etc.[34] Medial *d* is omitted in some words, e. g., *bunnle*, bundle, *cannle*, candle, *chillun*, children, etc.[35] Final *d* is omitted in a great many words where *d* follows *n* or *l*, as in band, bind, blind, fold, bold, hand, land, wind, etc. This is common among American white people and was brought over from the

[31] Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 135.

[32] Gonzales reports these in his glossary in *The Black Border*. They are not at all common on St. Helena. A parallel is found in the widespread English dialect pronunciation, *marvel* for *marble*. See Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 135.

[33] Very common in England.

[34] *Cf.* Wright, *Dialect Grammar*, p. 231, for identical tendency in English dialect.

[35] The same is true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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southern and midland English dialects.[36] In a few words final *d* becomes *t*, as *islant*, island, *rappit*, rapid, *sallet*, salad, *ballet*, ballad. This is also an English dialect characteristic.

*f*. This consonant is generally the same as in literary English. In *after*, however, it is omitted: *atter*.[37] Because of the close kinship of *f* and *v*, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a speaker has said *afford* or *avord*, *before* or *bevore*, *if* or *iv*.[38] However, I am fairly certain that I occasionally heard the *v* sound in such combinations as these where the vowel of a preceding word made the transition to *v* easy: "de vamous mahn," "Uh veed muh oxen," " 'e veel bahd," etc.

*g*. This consonant is the same in all positions in the dialect as it is in standard English, except for the occurrence of an unnecessary *g* in a few words, e. g., *reinge*, reins; *mange*, mane.

*h*. This consonant follows the standard English habit: in the initial *wh* position it is dropped in many words, but is sometimes prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel, especially when the speaker wants to be emphatic. Thus *halligatuh*, alligator, *w'ite*, white, *w'en*, when.

*j*. and *k*. Both of these consonants are the same in all positions as in standard English, except that *k* sometimes sounds more like *g* than *k*. Thus *teng Gawd*, thank God.

*l*. Medial *l* is dropped in a few words, e. g., *a'ways* (sometimes *allus*), *a'most*, *a'ready* (sometimes *'ready*),

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[37] Wright, *ibid.*, p. 227, says that in England "*f* has disappeared before *t* in *after* in the eastern, midland, southern, and south-western counties." *After* and *water* in *Jack and Jill* were supposed to rhyme.

[38] The use of *v* for initial *f* was quite common in England at the time of the settlement of South Carolina. It is now obsolescent.

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194 *se'f, he'p.* All these forms are English dialect forms and are still widely used by white people. *Frail*, meaning to whip or lash, survives in the Gullah. It originated in England through a change of *l* to *r* in the word *flail*. It is also common among Southern white people. An *l* occurs in chimney: *chimbly*.

*m*. This does not differ from the use of *m* in the standard language.

*n*. An *n* is prefixed to some words, especially words beginning with a *u* or *yu* sound: *Nyankee*, Yankee, *nyoung*, young, *nyam*, yam,[39] *nused*, used, *nignore*, ignore, etc. English dialect contains numerous words like *namble*, amble, *narrow*, arrow, *naunt*, aunt, *nuncle*,[40] uncle, *noration*, oration, *nidiot*, idiot, but practically all such words arose from the *n* of a preceding *an* being carried over. It is doubtful if this tendency can account for all the intrusive *n*'s in Gullah. It may be that here we have a survival of an African language trait.

An initial *n* sound often precedes a consonant in West African words. *However, the Gullah exhibits no instance of intrusive n preceding a true consonant.* Furthermore, the number of words having this intrusive *n* is relatively small. It may be, then, that, after all, the instances noted above either came from English dialect or arose in the Negro's English learning process.

Medial *n* is pronounced as *m* in a few words: *grampa* or *grumpuh*, grandpa, *gramma*, grandma. These were English dialect pronunciations in the south midland and southeastern counties. They are also common among American white people.

[39] *Yam*, to eat. See below for a discussion of this word, which is commonly supposed to be of African origin. [40] *Cf.* Shakespeare: "Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear."

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*n(g)*. [ha*ng*, morni*ng*][41] This sound, when final and unstressed, as in *evening*, *running*, etc., is always *n* in the dialect. This is so thoroughly in accord with uncultivated white usage in this country that I mention it only to illustrate the point that the Negro pronunciation is not the cause of the white pronunciation. Both are of English origin. Wright says, "Final unstressed *ng* has generally become *n* in all the dialects, *evenin*(g), *farthin*(g), *mornin*(g), *sendin*(g), and similarly in all present participles and verbal nouns in *ing*."[42] Wright lists eleven pronunciations of *morning*, all ending in *n*; thirteen of *evening*, all ending in *n*; etc.

*p*, *q*. These consonants are the same in Gullah as in the standard language.[43]

*r*. No consonant shows better the effect of English dialect speech upon the Negro than *r*. In the Gullah country, as in many other parts of this nation, the general rule is that *r* is seen and not heard. Initially, or following initial consonants, it is pronounced, of course, as in *race*, *rice*, *rock*, *crane*, *train*, *scratch*, etc.; it is admitted to some extent in words where it is surrounded by vowels and cannot very well be ignored, as in *very*, *weary*, etc.; it crops out as an excrescence here and there in some individual's speech, as in *calicro*, calico, *grano*, guano; otherwise it is heard only occasionally.[44]

[41] This sound is not merely *n* + *g*, but is an elemental sound. When one says *evenin'*, he has not "dropped a final g" but has substituted one sound for another: *n* for *ng*.

[42] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 224.

[43] An exception for *p* is *Babtist* for Baptist, but this is common Southern pronunciation derived from English dialects. I recall that when I first saw the word *Baptist* printed, I was surprised to see a *p* in it.

[44] We usually think of *r* as being omitted by Southern whites and Negroes in words like *part*, *hurt*, *bird*, etc., but it would probably be more accurate to say that

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194 The use of *r* in the dialect correlates remarkably well with its use in southern English dialects. It is interesting to note here that, after speaking of the trilled *r* of Scotland, Ireland and Northumberland, Wright goes on to say:

In south Pembroke, Gloucester, and parts of Hereford, Oxford, and in all the south and south-western dialects it is a reverted or retracted *r* formed by the under surface of the tip of the tongue being turned to the hard palate, and the trill being indistinct and less sharp than for the Scotch *r*. This *r* exercises a great influence upon a preceding vowel and causes a following *t, d, l, n* to become reverted, especially in the southwestern dialects. . . . With the exception of [Shetland and Orkney Islands, Scotland, Ireland, Northumberland, and small parts of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland], medial *r* has entirely disappeared before a following consonant, generally with lengthening or diphthongization of the preceding vowel. . . . In the south midland, eastern, southern, and south-western dialects [final *r*] has become a mere voice-glide.[45]

*s*. A few words beginning with a consonant occasionally have an *s* prefixed, e. g., *squestion*, *squizzit* (*quizzit*, to question), *strance*. These forms were undoubtedly taken over from the English settlers, for this excrescent *s* was very common in England, according to Wright.[46]

Gonzales[47] reported several words (presumably from Edisto Island) in which initial *s* followed by a hard con-

the *r* is formed in a different way from the trilled or burred *r*, for a little reflection will show any one who is familiar with the suppressed *r* that there is enough of the sound left to have a strong influence on the preceding vowel. For example, *bl(r)d* is not simply *bud*, *bu(r)t* is not simply *but*. The difference is subtle and can hardly be represented without recourse to some phonetic scheme.

[45] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 218-19.

[46] See *E. D. G.*, p. 242. *Squeach*, *squench*, *squizzit*, and others are listed in the *E. D. D. (English Dialect Dictionary)*.

[47] See glossary in *The Black Border*, also Reed Smith, *Gullah*, p. 29.

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sonant is dropped, as in (s)cratch, (s)corch, (s)tan', (s)tretch, (s)plash, etc. Such pronunciations are rare on St. Helena. There seems to be some tendency in English dialect to omit *s* in such words.[48] It might have been intensified, however, by the "baby talk" used by the English settlers in addressing slaves. The omission of *s* in words of this kind does not make them unintelligible, and, finding it unnecessary to pronounce the *s*, the Negro would tend to omit it.

In other positions *s* is the same as in standard English.[49] *Shr* in words like *shrimp*, *shrivel*, *shrub*, becomes *sr* (sometimes *sw*: *swimp*), but this is too common among whites to need comment.

*t*. Initial and medial *t* are generally the same as in standard English, although, in common with rustic white speech in England and America, the *t* in a few words, as *tune*, *Tuesday*, becomes *ch*: *chune*, *Chuesday*; the *tt* in *little* sometimes disappears; in a few other words, such as *bottle*, *bottom*, etc., it is sometimes heard as *d*; and the *tch* sound in creature is *t*: *critter* or *creatter*.

Final *t* after voiceless consonants is never heard. Thus *fas'*, *las'*, *trus'*, *fac'*, *temp'*, *kep'*, *nex'*, etc.[50] An excrescent *t* is sometimes heard,[51] e. g., *suhmunt*, sermon, *suddent*, sudden, *giraft*, giraffe, *varmint*, vermin.[52]

[48] See, e.g., *cramble*, scramble, *plash*, splash, etc., in *E. D. D. Cf.* Longfellow: "Far below him plashed the water."

[49] Exceptions: the final *s* sound in *chemise* is omitted (*shimmy*), but this is characteristic of nine-tenths of Americans; the final *s* in *shoes* is sometimes *sh*, likewise *licorish* for *licorice*, both of these being of direct English descent; the *s* in *mouse* is often softened to *z* (*mouz*), of southwestern English dialect descent. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 245.

[50] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 230, mentions this identical tendency in English dialects. Most of these are still found in rustic white speech.

[51] Same true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 231.

[52] This is a very common corruption in both England and America.

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194 *th.* Voiced *th* [*th*en, *th*ere, ra*th*er], whether initial, medial, or final, is always *d* in the dialect. Thus *den*, then, *dere*, there, *dem*, them, *oddub*, other, *wid*, with.

Voiceless *th* [*th*in, *th*under, pa*th*] *becomes t.* Thus *t'under*, thunder, *paht*, path, *t'ick*, thick, *t'ief*, thief, *trute*, truth. While there is a possible African influence[83] in this refusal of the Negro to pronounce the English *th* sounds, it is not at all impossible that he took over this habit from the Englishmen with whom he came in contact in America. Wright records that *this*, *that*, *them*, etc., were called *dis*, *dat*, *dem*, in Shetland and Orkney Islands, Pembroke, Kent, and Sussex.[84] *Bother* was pronounced *bodder* in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Sussex; *three* was either *dree* or *t'ree* in parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Hereford, Gloucester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wright, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Shetland and Orkney Islands; and so on for various other words.

*v.* This consonant is rarely heard where it belongs. Jones listed only two words[85] with initial *v* in his glossary, Whaley listed two,[86] and Gonzales none. In most words *v* becomes *w*: *wine*, vine, *woice*, voice, *wisitor*, visitor, *puhwide*, provide, etc. In certain other words, it becomes *b*: *fibe*, *grabe*, *hebben*, for five, grave, heaven. In some cases, both the *b* and *w* forms exist: *bery* and *wery*, very, *Benus* and *Wenus*, Venus, *billage* and *willage*, village, etc. The change of *v* to *w* was common in England.

[83] This will be discussed further in the section, "African Influence."

[84] *E. D. G.*, p. 237. These pronunciations are obsolescent now in Pembroke and Kent; two hundred years ago they probably had a wider diffusion than at present.

[85] *Vise*, advise; *vive*, revive.

[86] *Vestment*, vest, clothes; *vibration*, vibration.

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Wright says, "Initial and medial *v* has become *w* in middle Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, east Sussex. . . ."[57] The low-country Negro, therefore, probably rarely heard a *v* sound, and he adopted the *w* as he heard it used by the white people.

As for the change of *v* to *b*, it may appear at first glance that there is some African influence operating, or some psychological law of language working. The explanation is simple, however. In a few words, the English did not change *v* to *w*, but changed *v* to *b* "through the influence of a following *l* or *n*."[58] The chief words of this kind were *navel*, *eleven*, *seven*, *even*, *evening*, *heaven*, *oven*.[59] This change was common throughout the midland, southern, and southwestern dialects.

*w*. As in the English dialects, initial *w* is omitted in a few words, e. g., *'oman*, woman, *'ood*, wood, etc. In a few instances I heard a distinct *v* for initial *w* or *wh*: *Villie*, Willie, *vink*, wink, *v'eel*, wheel,[60] and in other cases there was a sort of hybrid *v-w* sound.[61] Medial and final *w* are the same as in standard English, except that medial *w* is

[57] *E. D. G.*, p. 227.

[58] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 226.

[59] *Rebel*, revel, *ribbit*, rivet, and other examples may be found in the *E. D. D.*

[60] Bennett recorded *vax* for *wax*. Mrs. Parsons recorded several instances of *v* for *w*. This brings up the question as to whether *v* for *w* ever occurred in England. Was Dickens merely using literary license when he wrote "Sam Veller," etc? Wright says, "There are no examples in the dialect of initial *w* being changed to *v* before a following vowel." *E. D. G.*, p. 207. Halliwell (*Provincial Dialects*, p. 66) says of Middlesex, however, "The language of the lower orders of the metropolis is pictured very faithfully in the works of Mr. Dickens. The interchange of *v* and *w* is a leading characteristic." Of Kent: "The interchange of *v* and *w* is common here as well as in the metropolis." P. 53. Such an interchange probably did exist in the London district.

[61] This sound may be produced by attempting to say *v* with the lips and tongue in the *w* position. The upper teeth must not quite touch the lower lip. The sound is practically a bi-labial *v*. It is relatively rare, and when it occurs it probably represents a transition from the *v* to the *w* form.

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missing in such words as *backwards*, *always*, *towards*.[62] A *w* has been inserted in a few words, e. g., *gwine*, going, *quile*, coil, *swinge*, singe, sometimes *bwile*, boil, etc. This evidently was taken over from English dialect, as this tendency was found in the south midland, south, and southwest dialects.[63]

Initial *wh* [voiceless, as in *wh*ether, *wh*ite] is *w* in the Gullah, as it is in English dialect and in some parts of the United States among whites. Thus *w'ile*, while, *w'ite*, white, *w'eat*, wheat, etc.[64]

*x*. This consonant does not differ from *x* in the standard language.

*y*. [German and Old English *j*]. An initial *y* occurs in the dialect pronunciation of many words beginning with a vowel, as *yahm* for arm, *yeah* for ear, *yeye* for eye, *yent* for ent or ain't, etc.[65]

A medial *y* occurs after a consonant in many words: *cyaa't*, cart, *gyaa'den*, garden, *gyap*, gap, etc. This tendency was, and still is, very strong in England,[66] and is one of the ear-marks of the Charleston and other South Carolina low-country aristocratic speech today.

*z*. This consonant is the same as in standard English, except that in words like *measure* and *pleasure*, the *z* sound is sometimes pronounced like the *dg* in bridge.

[62] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 211. [63] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 210-11.

[64] *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 209, also index under various *wh* words.

[65] The same tendency was very common in England. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 212-13, also index. For example, *arm* had an initial *y* in Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset; *ear* in Lancashire, Oxford, Sussex, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, etc.

[66] For example, Wright (*E. D. G.*, p. 214), records *cart* with *y* in Lancashire, Stafford, Derby, Gloucester, Oxford, and Hertford; *care* with *y* in Caithness, Westmoorland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Stafford, Derby, Lincoln, Oxford, Norfolk, etc.

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Thus *medguh*, *pledguh*, *treadguh*, etc., pronunciations which are not uncommon among illiterate white people. 194

*Loss of Syllables*

As Professor Smith says, "Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped as *at-*, *o-*, *ap-*, *re-*, *op-*, *ad-*, *ex-*, *dis-*, *as-*, *con-*, etc." Thus *'ten'* (attend, intend), *'pinion* (opinion), *'spose* (suppose, expose), *'spise* (despise), *'stonish* (astonish), and so on through dozens of words. In addition, medial syllables are often lost, as in *diffunce* (difference), *eb'ry* (every), *gen'ly* (generally), etc.[67] Now it is easy to assume that the Negro dropped such syllables because of some natural tendency toward economy of vocalization, but it is doubtful whether this is the true explanation. According to Wright, such pronunciations as *'bout* (about), *'quaint* (acquaint), *'gree* (agree), *'low* (allow), *'cause* (because), *'sturb* (disturb), *'lev'n*, *'leb'm* (eleven), *'cept* (except), *'casion* (occasion), *'tice* (entice), *comp'ny* (company), *diff'ent* (different), *gen'ral* (general), etc., were very frequent in the English dialects.[68] The Negro probably omits little that was not omitted in the patterns set by his English associates in the early days in the South Carolina low-country. 194 194

*Combinations*

The phonology of the dialect is further affected by the combinational process, by which the Negro utters several words as a single vocable, thus making it inevitable 194

[67] There are of course many vocalic *m's* and *n's*, as in *bott'm* (bottom), *heav'n* (heaven), *bac'n* (bacon), *happ'n* (happen), etc., but these are so common among white people that I do not mention them as Gullah characteristics.

[68] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 204-5. Such pronunciations as *monsus* (monstrous), *sartuny* (certainly), *sum'dy* (somebody) etc., will be found in specimens of English dialect in the works of Halliwell, Wright, Barnes, Skeat, and others.

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194 that many syllables do not receive their proper stress. A few examples are: *deseyuh* (these here), *dizyuh* (this here), *debbilubuh* (devil of a), *dunkyuh* (don't care), *sump'n'nurruh* (something or other), *swaytogawd* (swear to God), *tummuch* (too much), *wuffuh* (what for), *wus'n ebbuh* (worse than ever), *sukka* (such a), *lukka* (like a), etc. It may be put down as a general rule that any short vocable, especially a pronoun or a preposition, in an unemphatic position, will be slurred over and connected with the preceding or the following word. Thus *here* is often *yuh*, *too* or *to* is *tuh*, *of* is *uh* or *ub*, *them* is *'um*. The latter, being used for *them*, *him*, *her*, *it*, etc., is glued to the verb of which it is the object. Thus *do-um* (do it, etc.), *see-um* or *shum* (see it, them, etc.), *gittum*, (get them, etc.), *t'ief-um* (thieve them, etc.).

This tendency is of course not peculiar to Gullah, but it is more pronounced in that dialect than in any other American dialect. It is found in the speech of uneducated white people and to some extent among well educated people. It is likely that two hundred years ago the English peasantry in the low-country ran their words together to about the same extent as the Gullah speakers do now. Such forms as *wunna* (was not), *nammit* (noon meat), *adunnamany* (I don't know how many), etc., were and still are used in southern England.[99]

### *Other Phonological Deviations*

In addition to the more or less regular deviations from the standard phonology which have been pointed out, there are instances of pronunciations which might be called corruptions or mutilations. Such pronunciations

[99] See Skeat, *English Dialects*, pp. 128, 130, 131, etc.

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

### GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177] [128]

#### *Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox*, *t'ree*

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*ox*, etc. Sometimes a plural creeps in unexpectedly, as in a "five-dolluhs" hat, a "two-bits" collar, etc.[70]

The sign of the genitive is nearly always omitted. Thus "'e fadduh house" means "his (or her) father's house;" "dem brudduh wife" is "their brother's wife;" "Buh Wolf pig" is "Buh Wolf's pig," etc.[71] The thing possessed is sometimes widely separated from the possessor. "Is that your goat?" I asked a man. "No suh, dat de man what lib obuh dere een dat nex' house goat."[72]

Judging from the pronouns used, most inanimate objects are personified[73] and are masculine, being referred to as *he*.

### *Adjectives and Adverbs*

Most adjectives are the same as in the standard language. Occasionally an ending is corrupted, as *brinly* (brindled), *speckly* (speckled), *cackly* (cackling), etc.

A few irregular forms, such as *worser*, *worsest*, *more better*, *morest*, *more longer*, and the like, occur in the comparison of adjectives.[74]

### *Pronouns*

The nominative and objective forms of the personal pronouns are often reversed. "Him sent dis to we," "me said to he," "him an' me went," "dem got a long way to go to ketch up wid he," etc. *Um* is a sort of catch-all,

[70] For double plurals and use of singular for plural in English dialects, see Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 263-64.

[71] *Cf.* English dialect: "The Queen Cousin," "My father boots," etc., Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265. A Lancashire magistrate is said to have asked a witness, "Was it your brother dog?" Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 144.

[72] This form, with the genitival *s*, of course, is still common in this country. *Cf.*, also English dialect, "I've just seen Tim Dutton him as went to America's wife," etc. Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[73] Same widely true in English dialects. *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[74] *Cf. E. D. G.*, pp. 267-69.

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serving for *her, it, him, them,* except in emphatic positions. Thus, "'e got 'um" may mean that he, she, or it got or gets it, him, her or them. This confusion of pronouns is not a Negro invention, nor does it reflect an inability on his part to master English pronouns. He simply copied the pattern which was set for him.[75]

*You*, singular and plural, is nearly always *oona, woona,* or *yoona:* "oona gwine?" "oona help we," "I tell oona duh trut'," etc. The origin of *oona* is not clear. There seems to be no record of any such pronunciation of *you* in English dialect. It may be of African origin.[76]

The masculine pronouns are used almost exclusively. "'E go wid 'e 'usban'" means "she goes (is going, went) with her husband." "My wife, 'e yent feel so well," "My daughtuh, 'e los' 'e (or him) pig," etc. If the feminine is used, it is usually in the wrong place, as when a Negro refers to his nephew, his ox, or his bull as *she*. This confusion of genders had its basis in the peasant English speech. *He* was widely used in England for inanimate objects and feminine animals.[77] It used to be a common saying that in Hampshire "everything is called *he* except a tom-cat which is called *she*."[78]

[75] *Cf. E. D. G.*, pp. 270-73. "In all the dialects of Scotland and England the objective form of the personal pronoun is used for the nominative. . . . In all the dialects of the south-midland, eastern, southern, and south-western counties the nominative of the personal pronoun is used as the emphatic form of the objective case." Thus, "it was her that did it," "him and me did it," "Jack and us went together." See also Halliwell's *Historical Sketch of the Provincial Dialects of England* for numerous examples. In Worcestershire, for example, they said, "her's going for a walk with she." The unstressed form of *him* was *un* or *'im*, of *her*, *ah* or *uh*, of *them*, *um* or *'em*, in many of the dialects.

[76] See below, under African words.

[77] *E. D. G.*, p. 272. In Thomas Wright's *Dict. of Obsolete and Provincial English*, the meanings *they* and *she* are listed under *he*.

[78] Halliwell, *Prov. Dial.*, p. 43.

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193 It will have been noticed already that the possessive pronouns are not common in Gullah. "His boat" is represented by "'e boat" or "him boat." "Our house" is "we house" or "us house." Disjunctively we have *him-own, we-own, you-own, dem-own*, etc. This way of expressing the possessive by means of the nominative or objective personal pronouns was widespread in the English dialects.[79]

The usual forms of the reflexive pronouns are *'ese'f, deyse'f* (sometimes *demse'f*), *myse'f* and *wese'f*. These correspond to the reflexives used in many of the midland and southern counties in England.[80]

The demonstratives besides *dis, dat*, and *dese*, are *disyuh*[81] (this here), *da' deh*[82] (that there), *dese* (these), *dese yuh*[83] (these here), *dem* (them, used for those), *dem deh*[84] (them there). *Those* is never heard among the dialect speakers. As in the English dialects, *that* is used adverbially with the meaning *to such an extent*,[85] as "'e dat 'fraid him oxin gwine die, 'e sell 'um cheap."

*Wuh* (what, that) is the relative pronoun most used. *Who*, as a relative, is seldom used, *whom* is never used. *Which* is sometimes heard, but is usually in a clumsy construction, as "de nine kitten, which all dem eye ent open yet."

[79] *E. D. G.*, p. 274. [80] *E. D. G.*, p. 276.

[81] "*This here* . . . general in England." *E. D. G.*, p. 277.

[82] "*That there*, general in England; a second *there* is often added." *E. D. G.*, p. 277.

[83] *These here*, common in Midland and Southern England. *E. D. G.*, p. 279.

[84] "*Those* is seldom or never heard in genuine dialect speech. Its place is supplied by: (1) *Them* . . . (2) *Them there*." *E. D. G.*, p. 279.

[85] *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 278.

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### *Verbs*

Verbal endings are cut to the minimum in Gullah. With scarcely any exception one form of a verb serves for all tenses. "'E run" means that he, she, or it *ran, has run, runs, is running,* and sometimes *will run.* The last, however, would as a rule be expressed by "'e gwine run." An air of finality is lent by "'e done run,"[86] and sometimes the present action of running is "'e duh run" (he does run).

When compound forms for the past are used, the verb stem remains the same, but it is preceded by *uh,* a survival from English dialects still commonly heard among white Americans. Thus the Negro would say, "if I had *uh hit* um," "'e been *uh laugh* at me," etc.[87]

There are a few remnants of the old *th* ending in the third person singular, as in "w'en de win' blowet' " (blow-eth), owing their perpetuation largely to Biblical usage. *Fuh* (for) is sometimes used as the sign of the infinitive: "'E haffuh hab wife fuh cook fuhr'um, enty?"[88]

Adjectives and nouns are freely converted into verbs. "'E want a mortgage on sometin' what won't *dead.*" "De young gal *pledjuh* (pleasure) heself," "Look out! De plank gwine uh *broke.*" Him gwine uh *foolish* aroun'." "Me *happy* mese'f wid um." This trait survives in Eng-

[86] An old man to whom ideas of time were vague was trying to tell how long his daughter had been away from St. Helena: "Oh, 'e *been been* gone."

[87] These simplified verb forms were due in part to the fact that the white settlers simplified their speech as much as possible in dealing with the slaves. Some of these characteristics, however, were regularly found in English dialects. See *E. D. G.,* pp. 281-98. For example, the endings *s* and *es* in the third person singular were often omitted in the south midland, eastern, and southern dialects. The use of the form with *do (he does love* for *he loves)* was common in the southwestern dialects.

[88] *Cf. E. D. G.,* p. 298.

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land, and it has been observed especially among the whites of our Appalachians and Ozarks.

There are two or three unusual verb forms used in the dialect. *Hear* is *yerry* or *yeddy*. *See*, plus its object, has become *shum*, meaning see (sees, saw), it, him, her, them, etc. The former is probably derived with little change from the English dialect pronunciation of *hear*, *heard*, as *year*, *yeard*.[89] Likewise *see*, being nearly always followed by its object, which was usually *um*, was transformed in the rapid Gullah speech to *shum*.

Several English dialect forms like *pit* (put) and *remoan* (remove) survive in the Gullah, besides a number of archaic meanings of certain verbs.[90]

### *Conjunctions*

In addition to the standard uses, the following peculiarities occur. *Than* is often expressed by *nuh* (nor), as it was, in fact still is, in England. Thus "Tek care mo' bettuh nuh be sorry" (to take care is better than to be sorry). *And* is also sometimes *nuh*, as in "you nuh me" (you and I).

### *Numerals, Etc.*

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*Twice*, *second*, *third*, etc., are rarely heard among the older dialect speakers, who prefer *two*, *two-time*, etc. "De t'ree (third) Sunday in November," "Now, in de two place" (second place), "Uh tol' 'um two-time" (twice), "Muh wife 'e been sick now strike de two mont'." *Both* is always *all-two*.[91] "Buh Rabbit en Buh Wolf all-

[89] Some verbs had an *l* or *y* ending in England, e. g., *look* was sometimes *looky*, a form surviving in America.

[90] See the list of archaic and provincial usages given below.

[91] A rare English usage, heard nowhere in this country now except in the Gullah dialect. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc. 802

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92] 193

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch. 177 19

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

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192 may be obtained by a statistical analysis of the largest published glossary available. Gonzales[93] has listed nearly 2,000 of the words most commonly used in the dialect in the Edisto Island region. If these words be divided arbitrarily into appropriate classes, the following distribution results:[94]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Standard English words pronounced in standard way or as in English dialect of 18th century | 92 per cent |
| II. | Corruptions and mutilations of standard English words (some of these corruptions are no doubt of English dialect origin) | 6 per cent |
| III. | Archaic and obsolescent English words | 2 per cent |
| IV. | African words | Less than 0.5 per cent |

### *A Partial List of Archaic and Provincial English Usages Surviving in the Dialect*[95]

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192 The following list includes the most common archaic and provincial English words found in the dialect. A prolonged study would reveal several others, perhaps, but these are the most common. Few, if any, of these, however, occur exclusively in the Gullah, for in various other parts of this country many of these words survive either among Negroes or white people or both. Some are not used on St. Helena, as far as I can ascertain. The list is composed of words not now in general use, and words in general use but having an archaic meaning in the Gullah.

[93] *The Black Border*, Glossary, pp. 287-340.

[94] This distribution also holds good for Whaley's glossary of 1,500 words. Jones' glossary is relatively short, and most of his words are found in Gonzales' list.

(113) [95] For tracing the paternity of various Gullah words, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and the *N. E. D. (New English Dictionary)* are invaluable.

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*All two*, both. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

*Arey*, either (*Nary*, neither). Also used extensively by illiterate Negroes and whites elsewhere.

*Aunt*, a term of respect for old people, as in English dialect. Usually pronounced *ant*. See *Unele*.

*Aw*, used as a sort of exclamation meaning "for true," similar to the meaning "yes," which it had in English dialect.

*Ax*, ask. Not a Negroism, but used elsewhere, especially by the Southern white mountain people. Chaucer used *ax*, and it is still used in some of the English dialects. *Cf.* Old English, *acsian*, *axian*, etc.

*Balmoral skirt*, a kind of petticoat worn during Queen Victoria's reign.

*Blan*, a corruption of *belong*. *Belong*, in the sense of *ought*, is quite common among white people in the South Atlantic States. "I belong to be there by this time," "That costs more than it belongs to," etc. In the Gullah *belong* has this meaning but it also retains another meaning from English dialect, namely, to be accustomed to. In the past tense this is like "used to": "Him an' me blan go huntin' togedder."

*Brawtus* (sometimes spelled *broadus* or *brotus*), something extra, thrown in for good measure. "Take dat fuh brawtus," says a Negro mother as she applies a final and extra lick of the switch to her child's legs. It is strange that there should still be doubt as to the English paternity of *brawtus*, but there are still some who consider it African. The archaic English *brotts*, fragments, leavings, etc., seems to offer an explanation, although some are not satisfied with this.[98] If this is insufficient, there is the related word, *brotta*, a Lancashire word which many students have overlooked in *The English Dialect Dictionary*, meaning "a few drops, a small quantity, a little in addition." Add the dialect tendency to pluralize words of this kind and we have *brottas*, having the same meaning as *brawtus* used by the Gullah and other American Negroes.

[98] Professor Robert A. Law, of the University of Texas, wrote in *Texas and Southwestern Folklore*, 1927, p. 120: "I . . . consider it much more likely . . . that here we have another African word."

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192 *Chance*, a quantity, a considerable amount. "I raised a right good chance o' potatoes," "I had a plenty to eat fuh suppuh, a good chance," etc.

*Coz, cuz, cuz'n*, etc., cousin, used as a form of address, as in Shakespeare's day.

*Find*, to supply with provisions, to keep one in victuals, etc.

*Fo'punce chicken* (also *seb'npunce chicken*), used to describe chickens of certain sizes.

*Foreigner*, anyone born outside St. Helena Island or whatever community the speaker lives in. Exactly the old Kent and Sussex usage: "In some parts of Kent all born in another parish are still called foreigners." *Prov. Dict.*, also *N. E. D.*

*Frail*, to beat, strike, whip. Also used elsewhere in the South by whites and Negroes. It originated in England from *flail* by the process of dissimilation.[96]

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to smear one's face with grease, victuals, etc.

*Gall* (*gaul* in some glossaries), swamp. The *E. D. D.* lists as one meaning of *gall*, "wet, spongy land." It also lists *gault*, "wet, boggy land."

*Gunjuh*, ginger or molasses cookie.

*Graff*, to grab, grasp, grapple, seize.

*Hippo*, ipecac. Until rather recently this was in common use for ipecac, the full name of which is hippocachuana or hippechachuana. In a medical book published in this country as late as 1848, *hippo* appeared as the ordinary term for ipecac.[97]

*Killick*, an anchor of stone.

*Larging*, swaggering, putting on airs, etc. This may be from *enlarging*, or from the same *larging* used in England to mean "spending the money given in largess." The Cumberland, "He's gone a-larging," is pretty close to the Gullah usage. See *E. D. D.*

*Limous* (in the expression *limous cooter*), mud, muddy.

*Make your manners*, used by the Negroes as it was in England:

[96] See *E. D. G.*, §252.

[97] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*, Charleston, S. C., 1848.

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"A command to a child to touch his hat or curtsey in the presence of superiors." Wright, *Prov. Dict.*

*Meet*, to find, to experience, to observe the existence of, etc. "Did oona meet a good time?" "I ain't meet dem t'ings w'en I been a boy." Also used by some of the white people of the low country.

*Mought*, may, might. Still heard also in the South among white people.

*Nor*, than. "Bettuh nuh" means "better than."

*Nyam*, to eat. Possibly an African word, but it has long been known in England. See below under *African Words*.

*One*, in the sense of alone, singly: "Me one, Lawd," means "I alone, Lord." Also used in place of the indefinite article. "Once deh been one mahn what had one fine cow."

*Peruse*, to saunter, walk leisurely; also to examine. The *E. D. D.* records a Herefordshire usage, meaning "to explore the fields or woods."

*Piggin*, a small wooden pail with one stave extended to serve as a handle.

*Pit*, put, all tenses.

*Poke*, sack, bag.

*Pure*, in the sense of fully, exceedingly, absolutely. "De pyo' nuttin'" is "absolutely nothing." "He pyo' love de gal."

*Quills*, pipes or stalks of reed, cane, etc.

*Quizzett* (sometimes *squizzet*), to quiz, to question closely. From the English dialectic *quiset* or *quisit*, "to ask prying questions," which is derived from the old verb *inquisite*, to inquire into.

*Remoan*, to remove. A good English dialect usage.

*Shote*, or *shoat*, a pig. Widely used in the South.

*Soon*, early, quick, etc. "A soon boat" is an early boat, "a soon man" is an alert, quick, man.

*Sparrowgrass*, asparagus. Sometimes thought to be a Negro corruption, but it is a well-known instance of popular etymology which came from England and is still to be found among illiterate Americans.

*Start-naked*, stark-naked. Professor Smith listed this with the

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192 comment, "It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *stae't* goes back to the older 'start' (steort), tail." But the *N. E. D.* states that *stark-naked* is an alteration of the older *start-naked*, i. e., *tail-naked*, and lists various usages from the 13th century down to recent times. *Start-naked* would then seem to be a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon *steort* after all.

*Stepney*, poverty, privation. "To keep ol' stepney from de do'," is to keep the wolf from the door. Not heard on St. Helena. Smith lists this word as possibly African, which is doubtful. *Stepney* is used in a restricted area,[97a] and it might represent an English usage which has never been noted in any dialect collection. The following is ventured as a possible explanation of the origin of the usage. *Stepney* is the name of an east London parish in which squalor and poverty prevail. *(Ency. Brit.)* *Stepney* or *stipone*, "a kind of sweet compound liquor drunk in some ill places in London in the summer time," (See Grose, *Classical Dict.*, and Wright, *Prov. Dict.*) probably took its name from the parish (See *N. E. D.*). It appears from this that *stepney* was associated with a low condition. Add to this the fact that it is used synonymously with *wolf* in "keep the wolf from de do'," and its English derivation seems fairly certain.

*Swinge*, to singe. Widely used by Negroes and by the white mountain people. Still in use in various parts of England.

*Swanga* (or *swonga*), noun: swagger, a dashing air; adj.: swaggering, boastful, etc. This word has been considered African by certain writers, but it is quite possibly a dinlect pronunciation of English *swank* or *swanky*, the latter being used as both noun and adjective with meanings that correspond to those of *swanga*, namely, "a strapping fellow" and "swaggering." (*Prov. Dict.* or *E. D. D.*). A parallel is found in the Gullah *teng* or *tang* for *thank*.

[804] *Task*, a survival of the plantation daily task of a quarter of an acre for each hand. It is also used as a linear measure (105 feet).

[97a] Since this was written Arthur Palmer Hudson has informed me that *stepney* is known in Mississippi.

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The Negro speaks of planting two *tas'* of potatoes, or judges that the river is about a *tas'* wide.

*Titty* (or tittuh), sister.

*Toad*, a young female dog.

*Too*, very. "I *too* sorry you gwine." "Lawd, dat gatuh *too* beeg!" exclaimed a Negro who was rowing me across the Edisto when he saw a large alligator near the boat. Also used in this sense by white people in the low country.

*Tote*, to carry.[98] This word, which is still widely used in the United States, has been the cause of much controversy. Some have attributed it to the Negro, others to the Indian. The English derivation seems so simple that it is not necessary to look elsewhere. In the South, where this word seems to have been used first in this country, *tote* means not merely to carry, but it implies "hefting," supporting or carrying something heavy. When *tote* began to get spread about by newspapers and periodicals, it was taken up by many people who did not appreciate its correct usage, and soon we were *toting* such light objects as books, papers, pistols, etc. This extension of the meaning of *tote* explains the reluctance of some scholars to accept an English derivation.

*Totian*, an Anglo-Saxon verb, has survived in England in various shades of meaning, the most common of which is to peep, to look out. Hence *tot hill*, a lookout place. *Tolt*, from Latin *tolle*,[99] to lift or remove, is probably the immediate precursor of our *tote* if not identical with it. The *E. D. D.* lists as one of the meanings of *tolt*, "to tilt, to raise up," cites a Warwickshire example, "Tolt it up a bit," and states that *tolt* is also

[98] The earliest written use of *tote* found in the U. S. is in a Virginia manuscript, 1677: "They were by Beverly comanded to go to work, fall trees and mawl and tote railes." Quoted in R. W. Green's *Virginia Word-Book*, also in *New English Dictionary*.

It is interesting to observe that in a grammar written by Rev. Brantley York (3rd ed., 1862) and used locally in North Carolina, "tote the wood" was listed as an Irish inaccuracy for "carry the wood" in a list of New England, Dutch, Irish, and general colloquial inaccuracies.

[99] *Tolt* is the name of a writ by which proceedings were removed or "lifted" [illegible] Courts. See any good law dictionary.

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pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

*Touch*, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

*To that*, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

*Uncle*, a term of respect for old men.

*Use*, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

*Yowe*, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

[194]

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[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canos* où *Piraugues*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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## THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

### *Pronunciation and Syntax*

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 32. [105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . .
177 and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to
178 the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [*bite*][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [*meet*] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plaw-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

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tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

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In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.
[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
178 would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

### *Speed and Pitch Inflection*

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

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alect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations. 194

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea*, with the *u* pitched high means *bone*.[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech 000 194 194 191

[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée." (113)

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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194 [191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

*African Words*

174 192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-

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sible (1) the borrowing of European words by the Africans and (2) the adoption of African words by the sailors and traders, the former process naturally being the more active of the two.

The history of a specific word will illustrate the difficulties involved. On St. Helena Island the word *malafee*,[117] meaning whiskey, is known to a few persons. It is supposedly of African origin. In fact, one dictionary[118] lists *malafu*, banana wine, and states that the word is African. Now, in medieval times there was a famous wine, malvesie, so named from Napoli di Malvasia, a town on the south coast of the Morea in Greece. It was sold in many ports, and its name was known in dozens of languages. In Dutch it was called *malvezy*, and this form came into English as *malvesie*. Chaucer mentioned "A Iubbe of Malveyse" in the *Canterbury Tales*.

The close relation between *f* and *v* made it easy for *malvesie* to become *malfesie*, and this form is very close to the St. Helena *malafee*. The name of the wine, however, was later changed in English from *malvesie* to *malmsey*, so that the old form was perpetuated only in oral language. It is certain that the old name was known to some of the English who colonized America. The word had also probably penetrated various African languages. The form *malafu*, attributed to Africa, has already been cited. In the Swahili (Zanzibar region) *m'lava* for drunk or intoxicated was reported in Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, 1846, p. 578.

[117] Noted by Mrs. Parsons in her *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands*, p. xxi. For a possible West Indian parallel, see her *Folk Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas*, p. 20: *Malantra*.

[118] Funk and Wagnalls. No specific African language is mentioned, however, and nothing said as to the extent of the use of the word in America.

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Here, then, is a word known in England in Chaucer's day cropping out in various places centuries later. Its appearance among the Negroes of the Sea Islands has given rise to the supposition that it is of African origin, which was certainly not the case. The question then arises, might it not at least be of African provenience? Perhaps so, since the African forms are different from the English form: *m'la'va*, *mal'afee*, *malafu'* (sometimes *mala'fu*) as compared to *mal'vesie*. Still *mal'afee* could be an English dialectal pronunciation of *malvesie* and might have entered this country with the English. At any rate, this word affords an excellent illustration of the need for caution in the study of strange words found in American Negro speech.[119]

No better evidence of the almost complete assimilation of English language habits by the Negro can be found than the scarcity of English words of African origin. Various words have been thought to be of African extraction, but many of them have turned out to be archaic English[120] or to be derived from Spanish or Portuguese.[121] There have been, of course, numerous individual survivals, that is, instances in which one person would continue to use a word or two of his native African language, but these have not obtained any diffusion and have about disappeared.

[119] The dictionaries and grammars of various African languages have nearly all been compiled since 1800, and there had been plenty of time for the assimilation of European words by African tongues. I sometimes wonder if *buckra*, white man, said to be derived from the Efik of Old Calabar, where it meant a spirit or powerful being, might not have come from English *booger*, or a related word from English or some other European language.

[120] E.g., *brawtus*, meaning something extra, something in addition, thought by some to be African, is from English *brotts* or *brotts*. *Tote*, to carry, is also English. See list of archaisms above.

[121] E.g., *pickaniny* is from Portuguese, *pequenião*.

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For an African word to gain a regional diffusion in this country, it either had to designate some object which was familiar to a large proportion of the slaves but was new to the English settlers, or it had to be an expressive substitute for the name of some object already known to the white people. Words for certain plants like *okra*, *gumbo*, *yam*, *goober*, are examples of the first type. *Buckra*, for white man, and *cooter*, for terrapin, are examples of the second type. 192 174

Several words now generally conceded to be of African origin were introduced to the white people in this country during slavery. The vegetable name, *okra*, is familiar to most people, its synonym, *gumbo*, a little less widely known; *yam* (potato) is in general use; *goober* (peanut) is common throughout the South, but its synonym, *pinda* or *pindar*, is less popular; *cooter* is known to the whites in most of the Southern states. All of these words are in use in the Gullah area today. In addition there are several which are practically confined to this area although occasionally found elsewhere in the lower South. *Buckra* is used in the low country, but the works of Gonzales and others have increased its literary diffusion of late. *Ki* as an exclamation is heard among the Negroes in most parts of the Gullah area. *Oona*[122] (*thou* or *you*) thought to be African, is common in the Gullah region.[123] 192

[122] Sometimes *yunnah*, *hunnah*, *wunnah*.

[123] Possible sources exist in several West African languages. In the Kuka or Yaw language, *thou* is *yini*. In the Sonray *thou* is *yungar*. See Benton, *Notes on Some Languages of the Western Sudan*, p. 122. *Thou* is *yi*, *ye*, *yu*, *ue*, *we*, *ew*, etc., in several languages of Guinea and the Sudan. In Koi and in Gbaragba the second person plural is *wun*, in Kparabon it is *wuna*, in Bo it is *wu*, in Trouphon it is *wuwo*. See Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*, section on "Langues de Soudan et de la Guinée." In Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, a vocabulary of Sowheli (or Swahili), the language of Zanzibar, is printed.

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192 *Malafee* (whiskey) is used by a few people on St. Helena Island. As shown above, it is not of African origin, but may be of African provenience. In the Georgetown section *plat-eye* is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area. It is not known on St. Helena Island; in fact it seems to be limited to a section around Georgetown.[124] *Yam* or *nyam* (to eat) is common in the Gullah. It is thought by some to be of African origin. It has been suggested that it comes from the noun *yam* (potato),[125] but this etymology is hardly satisfactory. James Platt, an English writer, derived it from the Fulah (or Ful) *nyami*, to eat.[126] It is interesting to note here that *yam*, meaning to eat heartily, has long been used in England. It is found in several English dialect glossaries,[127] as well as among the obsolete words in several unabridged English dictionaries, and nothing is said of its African origin. In the form *yam*, or *yum-yum*,[128] it is not at all rare among American white people today. Whether *yam*, or *nyam*, was passed from the Eng-

*Oona* means *you have*; *boona* means *are you?* or *have not you?* It is doubtful however, if many of our slaves came from the Zanzibar section. It is strange, I think, that no one has claimed that *me*, as used by the Negroes for the nominative of the first person singular, is of African descent. As a matter of fact, *me*, *mi*, etc., are much more common in the nominative of the first person singular in West African languages than are *oona*, *yunnah*, etc., in the second person. See *Les Langues du Monde*, various lists of pronouns in African languages.

[124] Since this was written, *plat-eye* has made its appearance in Roark Bradford's *This Side of Jordan*, a novel of Negro life on the lower Mississippi.

[125] Williams, *De Ole Plantation*, p. vi.

[126] "The Negro Element in English," *Athenaeum*, Sept. 1, 1900, p. 283.

[127] For example, in Grose, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, London, 3rd ed., 1796, also in the *E. D. D.* (under *yam*, *nyam*, *nyum*, *nyum-nyum*).

[128] In the Gullah, it is sometimes *nyam-nyam* for emphasis. Did the Negro get this usage from English, or did we get ours from him? In this connection, there is a group of tribes in Central Africa noted for their cannibalism, known as the Niam-Niam.

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lish to the Negro or from the Negro to the English is not known at present, but there is evidence that its ultimate derivation will prove to be African.[129] 192

These words include all which are used throughout or in large sections of the Gullah area which have been shown to be of African derivation. The word *Gullah* itself might be added. In the Savannah section the word *Geechy* is similarly used to designate the Negroes of that region, and it seems likely that it came from the name of a river near Savannah, the Ogeechee.[130] Negroes in the vicinity of this river were called 'Geechy River Negroes, which was finally shortened to Geechy.[131]

It is probable that in this country the white man has been the medium of conservation and diffusion of these African words more than the Negro has. Some of the words were adopted by planters in the West Indies and were brought to South Carolina by those who migrated 174 192

[129] Smith states that Professor W. A. Craigie derives it "from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food." This is not specific enough. I have examined vocabularies of about thirty West African languages, and only one has any word for eat which resembles *nyam*, viz., the Somray, *yamam*.

[130] Pronounced *Ogeechy*. Of Indian origin.

[131] Professor Smith lists *geechy* as *African*, but he refers to a different usage, namely, as an adjective in the sense of "goosey." I have never encountered *geechy* used in this sense. Smith lists several other words as possibly African (*Gullah*, pp. 32-3). These are *cymbi*, *bakalingo*, *swanga*, *guffer*, *geechy*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*, *du-du*, and Stepney. I have seen no specific African derivations for any of these. None of these is used on St. Helena, as far as our research staff can ascertain, except *swanga*, meaning swaggering, boastful, etc. I think this is too close to our *swank*, *swankum*, *swagger*, etc., to need any other explanation. Words like *think* and *thank* are often pronounced in Gullah with more of a *g* sound than a *k* sound. This tendency would change the English dialectic *swanky* to *swangy* or *swanga*. Swanky has the same meaning as Gullah *swanga*, namely "swaggering" (adj.) and "a strapping fellow" (noun). See Wright, *Provincial Dictionary*, also *English Dialect Dictionary*. *Da* and *da-da* are possibly dialect pronunciations of *there*, *that there*. Smith's list was compiled from various sources, and it was not always possible for him to get definite information as to meanings, pronunciations, etc.

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174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

19 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and
177 the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[122]

[122] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[133]

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

[133] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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[875]

to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

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## II

## FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

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THE FIRST collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*.

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

### FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

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#### *Secular Songs*

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

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sung on the island. The possession of banjos, guitars, and the like is not quite proper, so these aids to song are not frequently heard. Occasionally a quartet of young men will get together for an evening of "close harmony," while parties, ice cream suppers, picnics and other frolics afford opportunities for singing secular songs.

### *Religious Songs*

Three kinds of religious songs are sung: (1) the old standard church hymns, (2) new choir songs, and (3) spirituals. The hymns are known by most of the old people, who sing them in the same way their masters used to sing them. The leader announces, "number ninety-two, long meter," and reads out a line or two; the congregation sings this in double slow tempo, the leader reads again, and so on through stanza after stanza of Watts or Wesley. To one who is not accustomed to it, this manner of singing is little short of painful. In the old days the Negroes necessarily sang thus, but they retain the pattern now even when most of them know the hymns by heart and could sing them through in regular tempo if they wanted to. Each syllable, each tone, is prolonged to the breaking point, and when four or five words in succession fall on the same pitch, the effect is maddening to the uninitiated. Whereas it would take the ordinary church singer about fifteen seconds to sing the lines,

> Jesus, lover of my soul
> Let me to thy bosom fly,

it takes these people forty or more. As a rule, the hymns are sung in unison, although an occasional bit of bass, tenor, or alto is attempted. Whatever else may be said of

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the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals. 533

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression. [214]

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later. [177]

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533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun- from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

533 191 3. There is apparently very little invention or improvisation going on among the island singers. Practically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

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to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent investigation has shown that these island songs are found among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places. 533 171

Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston. 533

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

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533 lowing were sung in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

(539)

See dat man gwine 'cross de fiel'
Kickin' up dus' like a automobile.

Oh, if I die in Tennessee,
Don' wan' my friends to grieve attah me.

That the line between religious and secular songs is not always clear was evidenced by the fact that a call for spirituals in the little island schools often brought forth such responses as *The Green Grass Grew All Around* and *Johnny's So Long at the Fair*. This sort of thing is, of course, not peculiar to St. Helena, but it is more apparent on the Sea Islands than elsewhere because of the relatively retarded cultural status there.

5. Several variations of the same song occur side by side. For example, *Mary Had a Baby* is sung in three ways, *You Better Run* in three ways, *Wrastlin' Jacob* in two, *Jacob's Ladder* in two, and so on. Of course, this trait is not peculiar to the Sea Islands. In fact the variants of this sort probably originated elsewhere, but they are more apparent on St. Helena because of their convergence and survival there. One rare instance of the origin of a local variant was observed on St. Helena during the past year. In one of the churches a spiritual entitled *You Better Live So Jesus Can Use You* was among the favorites. It was sung rather fast, with pronounced swing and syncopation, the tune being as follows:

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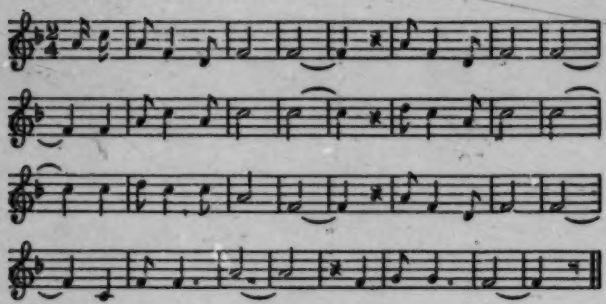
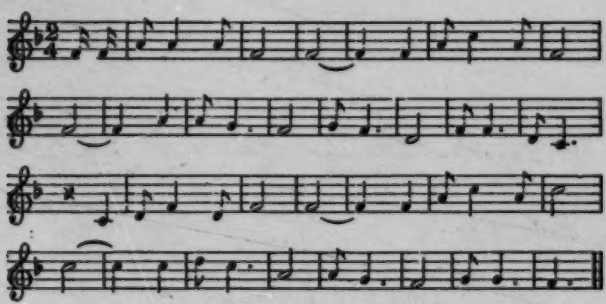


The pastor of another church liked the song, but considered it slightly undignified, so he set to work and revised it to suit his own church. He taught his people to sing it as follows:



6. The same *motif* is found in different tunes, regardless of words, to an unusual extent. This tendency is found in all music, whether it is folk music or art music, but it seems to be especially strong in the spirituals. The writer is convinced that a careful analysis of Negro spirituals will show that less than a hundred separate *motifs* have given rise to over five hundred tunes. The tendency

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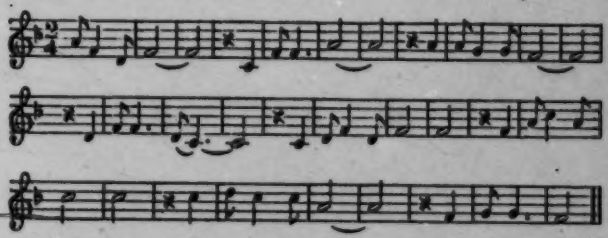
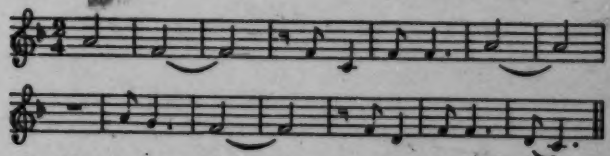
533 is especially observable on St. Helena because of the convergence and survival of so many types there. A thorough demonstration of this trait of the spirituals would require much space, but a few examples will show what is meant. Take, for example, the instance just cited, where a man consciously varied a tune. He probably realized that the derived tune was very much like the pattern, but it is doubtful if he saw that his revision is as much like the following tune, *Who's Gwine-a Lay Dis Body Down*, as it is the pattern:



And, to show how complicated this sort of thing may become, the same *motif* crops out again in a spiritual, *Cry Holy Unto de Lawd*, recently introduced from the upcountry. Its opening measures are as follows:



To cite one more instance, there is a similarity of *motif* in *Eagle's Wings* and in *My Mother Is Gone an' Lef' Me Behin'*, the opening strains of which are, in the order named:

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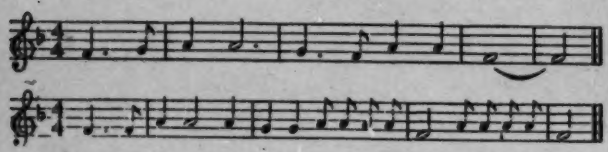

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The relationship does not end here, for many readers will at once see the same *motif* in an old white mountain song, *Careless Love*, and some may be able to trace it in still other songs. Anyone familiar with spiritual tunes can trace another striking sameness of *motif* in the choruses of the following spirituals: *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; *Ride on, Jesus*; *Lord, Remember Me*; and *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray*.

A certain St. Helena song leader, at the writer's request, sang a spiritual which the leader had composed. The tune was identical with another St. Helena tune, yet the composer was unaware of the similarity until it had been pointed out to him. Thus musical imagination works and thus new songs arise in old clothes.

7. There is a constant process of change going on among the spirituals. No song has a permanent lease on life, even in isolation. It may be passed on as a "new" song elsewhere, but in its old home it is an "old" song and must compete with newcomers. The collection made by Allen and others and published as *Slave Songs* just after the Civil War contained fifty-five songs from St. Helena. Of these, less than a dozen are commonly heard on the island today. The present writer returned to St. Helena a year after making his first collection of spirituals there and found several songs in vogue which he never heard once during his first visit. One of these was an old song

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533 [178] revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

## SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

### *The Problem Stated*

[2] 533 The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music*,[8] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

[8] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

### *The Comparison of Musics*[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music.*

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

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The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

I. Words of Songs
   A. General subject matter
   B. Specific lines
   C. Forms or patterns
II. Tunes
   A. Modes and scales
   B. Modulations
   C. Intervals
   D. Endings on other than keynote
   E. Melodic patterns
III. Rhythm
   A. Metre
   B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

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121 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying
177 the relation of African music to American Negro music
533 would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

### *The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual*

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

. . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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forth to them that are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it much more than merely in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that because when there have been those outcries, I have found from time to time a much greater and more excellent effect.[5]

Another thing that gives great disgust to many, is the disposition that persons show, under great affections, to speak so much, and with such earnestness and vehemence, to be setting forth the greatness, and wonderfulness, and importance of divine and eternal things, and to be so passionately warning, inviting, and entreating others.[6]

Another thing that some have found fault with, is abounding so much in singing in religious meetings. . . .[7]

. . . all that is pleasant and glorious, and all that is terrible in this world, seemed perfectly to vanish into nothing, and nothing to be left but God, in whom the soul was perfectly swallowed up, as in an infinite ocean of blessedness: since which time there have often been great agitation of body, and an unavoidable leaping for joy; and the soul as it were dwelling almost without interruption, in a kind of paradise; and very often, in high transports, disposed to speak of those great and glorious things of God and Christ, and the eternal world, that are in view, to others that are present, in a most earnest manner, and with a loud voice, so that it is next to impossible to avoid it: these effects on the body not arising from any bodily distemper or weakness, because the greatest of all have been in a good state of health.[8]

The following extracts from letters written to Edwards in 1741 are significant:[9]

. . . God has spoken to us in a more soft and calm Wind; and we have neither had those Outcries and Faintings in our Assem-

[5] Jonathan Edwards, *On Revivals, Containing a Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God . . . in Northampton, Massachusetts, A.D. 1735*, p. 249.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 252. [7] *Ibid.*, p. 257. [8] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[9] Jonathan Edwards, *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, pp. 77, 78.

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blies which have disturbed the Worship in many Places; nor yet those Manifestations of Joy inexpressible, which now fill some of our Eastern Parts.

On the memorable Fourteenth Day of May *last*, there was a Sermon preached to a considerable Auditory in our Meetinghouse, when the Preacher was much carried out in Desire, Zeal and Expectation. . . . The heart of almost every Sinner was pricked, and the Children of God greatly affected with Compassion towards them. The Arrows of Conviction were so sharp, and stuck so fast in the Hearts of many, that they were forced to cry out aloud with the Anguish in their Souls. About Fifty or Sixty Persons, chiefly grown to the Age of Men and Women, were crying out, and praying with loud Voices under a Sense of their Sins, and the Wrath of God under which they felt themselves bound down.

On and on through the efforts of Wesley, Whitefield, Tennent, Asbury, Dow, and scores of lesser lights, the movement swept until it covered practically every part of the nation. In the early nineteenth century it appeared in the South with great vigor. Extreme manifestations such as the jerks, barking, incessant shouting, fainting, etc., became common.

Now, can anyone conceive of the worshippers singing only the stately and solemn tunes of the church in meetings of this kind? No, they sang songs more adapted to the common people and to the emotional turmoil of the meetings. Between 1800 and the Civil War, there were more than fifty revival songsters published, each one going through from one to twenty-five editions. These books are now difficult to obtain, but in various libraries and individual collections there are enough of them preserved to give a picture of the religious songs of the common white people in their revivals, prayer meetings, and

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other gatherings. The editors of some of these books made significant statements in their prefaces. The editor of *The Christian Lyre*, a book which was copyrighted in 1830 and had gone through eighteen editions by 1838, stated:[10]

> Every person conversant with revivals must have observed that whenever meetings for prayer and conference assume a special interest, there is a desire to use hymns and music of a different character from those ordinarily heard in church. . . . As the work is not designed to please scientific musicians, so much as to profit plain christians, reference will be had, chiefly, to the known popularity and good influence of what is selected. And it is intended to embrace the music that is most current among different denominations of Christians.

The editor of the *Millennial Harp* wrote:[11]

> We are aware of the difficulty of suiting the taste of all classes in musical and devotional compositions. . . . Some of our hymns, which might be objected to by the more grave and intellectual, and to which we ourselves, have never felt any great partiality, have been the means of reaching, for good, the hearts of those who, probably, would not otherwise have been affected.

The editor of *Village Hymns*, a book which was only a little less dignified than the hymns of Watts, to which, indeed, it was intended to be a sort of supplement, defended himself for omitting the revival hymns then in vogue:[12]

> There is a numerous class of hymns which have been sung with much pleasure and profit in seasons of revival, and yet are entirely destitute of poetic merit. Some of my brethren, acquainted with this fact, will probably be disappointed when they find, that so many have been omitted. Others, unacquainted with

[10] *Christian Lyre*, p. 3.
[11] *Millennial Harp, Designed for Meetings on the Second Coming of Christ*, p. 2.
[12] Asahel Nettleton, *Village Hymns*, p. vi. The preface is dated 1825.

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000 their beneficial effects at such seasons, would exclude the whole of this class. I am satisfied from observation, as well as from the nature itself of such hymns, that they must be ephemeral. They should be confined to seasons of revival: and even here, they ought to be introduced with discretion; for on this, their principal utility must depend. A book, consisting chiefly of hymns for revivals, however important in its place, would be utterly unfit for the ordinary purposes of devotion—as prescriptions, salutary in sickness, are laid aside on the restoration of health.

From such remarks one gathers that the editors of revival hymn books were selective, that there were songs which were so undignified as to make them afraid to include them. As White says, "The most folksy of all the religious folk-songs of white people in the early nineteenth century were seldom written at all. They were . . . perfectly well-known by all true professors; and, besides, why print songs for congregations the majority of whom cannot read?"[18]

It is almost impossible to find any published accounts describing the actual singing of the less sophisticated white people in the South during the camp meetings. The best records I have found are those left by Lucius Bellinger in his autobiographical *Stray Leaves*. Bellinger was accounted an unusually powerful revivalist in his day. He was born in the South Carolina low-country, and conducted revivals in the Carolinas from about 1825 until after the Civil War. He was known locally as "The War Preacher," "The Strange Preacher," etc., and was typical of the vigorous, emotional, self-made revivalist. The following remarks from his writings are pertinent here:

[18] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 44.

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. . . Brothers Howell, Eason, Smith, Steadly, Barton, R. Stephens, and Curry were there, singing as the old-time Methodists used to sing. . . .

---

Some one then, Brother Holman, I think, sung a few lines of a beautiful hymn; and there was then a shout in the camp. . . .

---

Another beautiful hymn was sung by Brother H., and we had another shout in the camp.

---

There was another shout and clapping of hands, in which the preachers joined heartily.

---

He was a man with a sharp, strong, piercing voice. We now have old-time singing—clear, loud, and ringing.

---

Departed brother, safe home in glory, I often think and speak of you, having a strong desire to see you once more, and hear you preach and sing again,

"Trouble's over, trouble's over;
A few more rounds of circuits here,
Then all our troubles will be over."

---

And then a crowd of mourners rushed up as if for their lives; and then Brother Postell came down from the pulpit, singing—

"Trouble's over, trouble's over;
A few more rounds of circuits here,
Then all our troubles will be over."

---

The Holy Spirit came down, and the friends of Jesus sung the sweet songs I loved so much—"There is a happy land, far, far away;" "Our bondage here will end by and bye;" "I would not live alway;" and many others.

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000 And then the good man clapped his trembling hands together, and passed through the throng, singing, with a voice that trembled too,

"O' brethren, will you meet me, In Canaan's happy land?"

---

And then Brothers Lawton, Martin, Davis, Solomons, Blunt, Allen, Roberts, and others, all sung together,

"Yes by the grace of God, we'll meet you, In Canaan's happy land."

---

At the 3 o'clock service, the Strange Preacher occupied the pulpit, and the friends, by his request, were singing a song he loved very much—hundreds were singing—

"I've listed, and I mean to fight
Till the warfare is over."

---

Then Dr. B. gave Brother McPhail the sign, and the war-worn veteran passed through that crowd, . . . singing at the top of his trembling voice, as he clapped his hands together—

"I feel the work reviving, I feel the work reviving
Reviving in my soul.
O' brethern, will you meet me, In Canaan's happy land?"

And hundreds of happy souls replied—

"By the grace of God, we'll meet you,
In Canaan's happy land."

---

Whenever I heard Brother F. clapping his hands, and singing, "The warfare is over," or "I want my friends to go with me," or "I will join the army, by and bye," I knew that all was right, and that the work of the Lord was reviving.

---

How happy I felt, while listening to these heavenly songs; one of which I remembered having heard once before. The chorus was,

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000

"We have but one more river to cross,
And then we'll sing Hosannah!"

---

A good brother told me, that not long before he left us, he was with him at a prayer-meeting—that he was very happy, and left singing that old song—

"Here we go rejoicing home
From the banquet of perfume."

---

I knew Brother Box Robinson would be there, and would sing his old song, beginning—

"The richest man I ever saw,
Was one that begged the most.
And a-begging I will go."

---

You must think much of me while there, particularly if you hear one of my favorite hymns sung—

"Where now are the Hebrew children?
Away over in the promised land."

These quotations show the revival song in action among the whites. Note that there were frequently clapping of hands, moving about, and shouting during the singing. It should also be pointed out that some of the song stanzas quoted by Bellinger are not to be found in any of the revival songsters. This is striking evidence that there existed songs which were either too well known or were considered too undignified to be printed in the song books.

In addition to these published and unpublished songs, there must have existed various cheap paper-bound song books, broadsides, "ballets," children's religious songs, special choir and quartet songs, and the like, many

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000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

533 177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

[113] [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

[113] [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

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taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

(113)

[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

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To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

### *The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs*

#### Words

*General Subject Matter.* The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the

[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.
[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

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song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

*Specific Lines.* A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

---

O, there will be mourning.

---

O, Lord, remember me.

---

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

---

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

---

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

---

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

---

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

---

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

---

Come to Jesus just now.

---

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

---

I want to wear the crown.

[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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King Jesus is my captain.

Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

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Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

———

And Sabbaths never end.

———

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

———

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

———

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

———

Angels, roll the rock away.

———

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

———

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion,* and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

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533 177 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes. 000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon 533 177 memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 171 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low,* for example. Every line is followed by the

[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times,* April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals;* J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro;* James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals.*

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refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

STANZA: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

CHORUS: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 58. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

> I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
> Ye followers of the lamb.[32]

> There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
> When we all shall meet above.[33]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father*, *mother*, *preacher*, *deacon*, etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well*, a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister*, *mother*, *neighbors*, *pastor*, *poor sinner*, etc.[34]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evi-

[32] *Ibid.*, II, 11. [33] *Ibid.*, I, 34. [34] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

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dently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify. 533 171

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following: 533

*Solo:* Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
*All:* Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
*Solo:* Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
*All:* Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[35] Finally, there is the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to some extent in the white songs.[36] The extent of its use can 533 171

[35] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[36] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

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533 171 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how* the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 171 177 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least, a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

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## Tunes

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[87] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[88] is as follows:

| | Negro Songs per cent | White Songs per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Major | 83.8 | 78.9 |
| Minor | 11.7 | 18.6 |
| Mixed or vague | 4.4 | 2.4 |

533 171 ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[87] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[88] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

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There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[39] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters. 533

*Deviations from the Conventional Scale.* Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises 533 171

[39] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

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all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

| Deviations in White Songs | Rank of Same in Negro Songs |
|---|---|
| 1. Absence of seventh tone | 2 |
| 2. Absence of fourth and seventh | 1 |
| 3. Absence of fourth | 3 |
| 4. Absence of sixth | 4 |
| 5. Flat seventh | 5 |
| 6. Absence of sixth and seventh | 6 |
| 7. Flat third | 7 |

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[40] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

[40] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

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Taking up now more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

| | Number | | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro‡ | White | Negro |
| Pentatonic | 23 | 111 | 9.6 | 25.1 |
| No seventh | 39 | 78 | 16.2 | 17.6 |
| No fourth | 10 | 45 | 4.2 | 10.2 |
| Flat seventh | 8 | 20 | 3.3 | 4.5 |
| No sixth | 12 | * | 5.0 | * |
| No sixth and seventh | 5 | * | 2.1 | * |
| Other major | 143 | 188 | 59.6 | 42.6 |
| Total | 240 | 442 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

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fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

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Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

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for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 40 per cent of the total white population.[42]

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But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

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In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

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pentatonic tunes among the three classes of songs in the book are:[45]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional ballads | 27 per cent | pentatonic |
| Nursery songs | 47 per cent | " |
| Other songs | 18 per cent | " |
| *All songs together* | 25 per cent | " |

Now, in these mountains, where the English and Scottish folk culture is best preserved in this country and where there are practically no Negroes, there are places where one can hear the old-time spirituals, such as *Old Ship of Zion, Canaan, Safe in the Promised Land*, etc. Some will claim at once that these songs were borrowed from Negroes by the ancestors of the present generation of mountain white people. But, in view of what has already been shown of the history of white revival songs, this claim becomes preposterous. Every one of them can be found in the old white revival songsters, and practically every one of them exists in one or more versions as a Negro spiritual. In a recent book,[46] a section was devoted to these religious songs. Of ten major tunes, three are pentatonic, four have no seventh, and two have no fourth.[47] I submit that here we have a class of songs which were originated by the English- and Scotch-Americans during the great revivals in the early nineteenth century—songs cast in the same gapped scale, especially the pentatonic, which characterizes the traditional folk songs

[45] I have sampled other similar mountain collections, and find the proportion of pentatonic tunes to run between 20 and 30 per cent. Curiously enough, 25 per cent is the proportion found in Negro spirituals by Krehbiel.

[46] Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*.

[47] Counting all the songs in the book (ballads, love songs, and nonsense songs are the other divisions) the number of major tunes is 45, of which 13, or 29 per cent, are pentatonic.

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which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

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scale. In fact, the insertion of the seventh may be regarded as a step in the evolution of the full seven-tone scale from the five-tone scale.[48] Exactly the same applies to the missing fourth tone.

This leaves the flat seventh as a possible distinctive trait in the spirituals. But this, too, turns out to be anything but distinctive. First, it is not frequent enough—4.5 per cent—to be significant. Figured on the most favorable basis,[49] it occurs in 8 per cent of the spirituals. Second, it is actually as frequent in the English folk music surviving in America as in the spirituals.[49a] Third, it was a regular tonal element in some of the old modes of the church and has always been a perfectly normal tone in real English folk singing. Conventional music adopted a different major scale, one having a semi-tone between the seventh and eighth tones, and, being trained in that system, the average musician looks upon a flat seventh as an unusual deviation or even an expression of abnormal musical sense. The following remarks from Sharp, England's best folk-song authority, are relevant here.

> Cultivated people, who have been brought up on modern music, will only acquire the art of modal singing with difficulty; and, to many of them, the Gregorian tones, with their flattened sevenths and unexpected intervals, will never sound natural or convincing. . . . The flattened seventh possesses no terrors for the country singer. The leading note [the conventional seventh] is much more likely to cause him difficulty. Who has not heard

[48] For discussion of this point, see Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*, chs. 5 and 6; also Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*, etc., Introduction, XV, XVI.

[49] That is, a total which omits pentatonic and no-seventh tunes, since a flat seventh could not occur in tunes where there is no seventh tone.

[49a] A count of the flat sevenths in Campbell and Sharp's book and a sampling of songs in other books, shows the flat seventh to occur in about 6 per cent of all majors.

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the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[50] 000

This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[51]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[52] 533 171 With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa. [177]

[50] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.
[52] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[83] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

[83] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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533 tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spir-
(178) ituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

[55] Including the Allen collection.

(114) [56] *Too* high, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The 533
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs origi- 174
nated further north than St. Helena, probably in the piedmont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors will look into the matter they will find in other communities on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number of these St. Helena spirituals.[58] Thus the percentage of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration of songs from the area which had felt strongly the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These con- [114]
siderations are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African traits.

*Modulations.* Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

[58] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184]

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"It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

*Intervals.* The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

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A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

| Keynote Intervals | Frequency of Interval: White Songs | Frequency of Interval: Negro Songs |
|---|---|---|
| 1. P1 (keynote) | 396 | 413 |
| 2. Major 3rd above keynote | 388 | 358 |
| 3. Perfect 5th above keynote | 346 | 268 |
| 4. Major 2nd above keynote | 324 | 254 |
| 5. Perfect 4th above keynote | 194 | 117 |
| 6. Perfect 4th below keynote | 86 | 101 |

[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Major 6th above keynote | 100 | 98 |
| 8. | Minor 3rd below keynote | 59 | 63 |
| 9. | Octave above keynote | 79 | 51 |
| 10. | Minor 2nd below keynote | 52 | 37 |
| 11. | Minor 3rd above keynote | 39 | 36 |
| 12. | Minor 7th above keynote | 9 | 24 |
| 13. | Major 7th above keynote | 31 | 6 |
| | Total number of intervals | 2,103 | 1,826 |

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

| | Percentage Distribution | |
|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro |
| Keynote | 19 | 23 |
| Major 3rd | 18 | 19 |
| Perfect 5th | 17 | 15 |
| | 54 | 57 |
| All others | 46 | 43 |
| | 100 | 100 |

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The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

*Endings on other than the keynote.* It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

*Melodic patterns.* Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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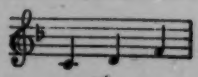
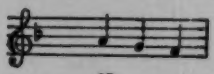
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[84]

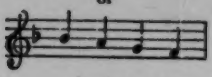


White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[85]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus



or



This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

[84] See, for example, *'Rastin' Jacob; Old Ship of Zion; He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'; Oh, Freedom; I've Got a Mother in de Heaven; I'm a-Rolling; Old Time Religion; I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home; Go Round; Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler; You Can't Find a New Hiding Place; I Am Hunting for a City; When I Lay My Burden Down; O Lord, Have Mercy on Me; I'm Going Down to de River Jordan; Fix Me, Jesus; Angel Rolled de Stone Away;* and others.

[85] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

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533 171 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

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except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[68] 533

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

## Tempo and Rhythm

*Metre.* Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[69] 533
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> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

[68] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series*.

[69] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

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| | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|
| | Negro Songs | White Songs |
| Duple Time | 96 | 70 |
| Triple Time | 4 | 30 |

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

533 *Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*

There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story*, Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp*, I, 40 and 47, respectively.

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns.

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### *Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes*

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Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion.

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The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate

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177 533 white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus*, *Climb Jacob's Ladder*, and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning*, which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

*The Old Ship of Zion* is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

[72] *Slave Songs*, p. vi.
[73] *Millennial Harp*, Supplement, p. 4.

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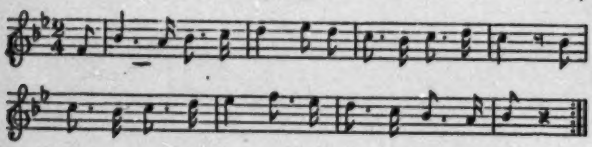
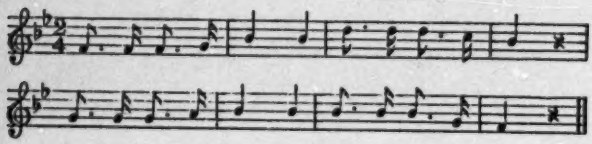
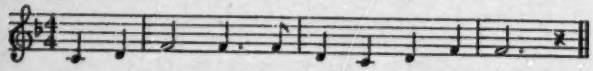


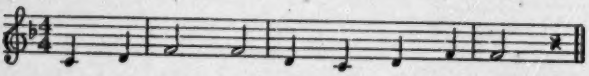
and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah*,[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,



is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island*,[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come*,[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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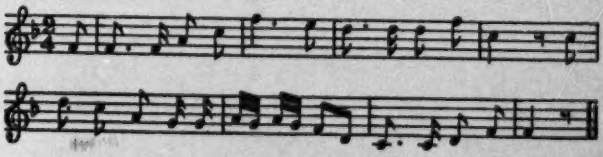
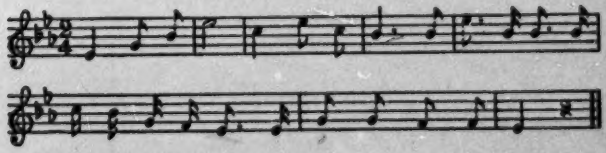
spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion, Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness, I Want to be Ready (Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John)*, and *Safe in the Promised Land (Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel)*.

*Lord, Remember Me*,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is

The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*,[80]



[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.
[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.
[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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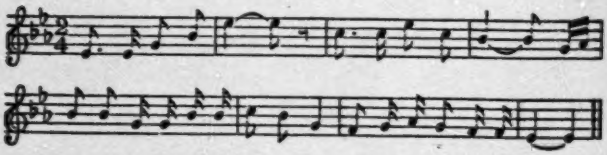
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81] 177 533



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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*Who'll Jine de Union*[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,

and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:

The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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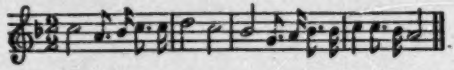
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

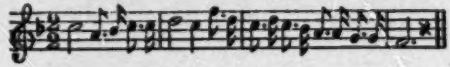
Hymn:

Spiritual:



Hymn:

Spiritual:



The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment*, although the final phrase,

is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn*,[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:

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[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp*, II, 39.

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Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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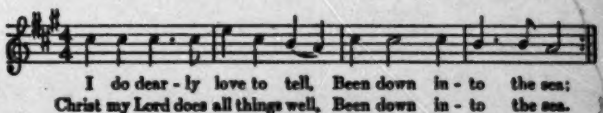


which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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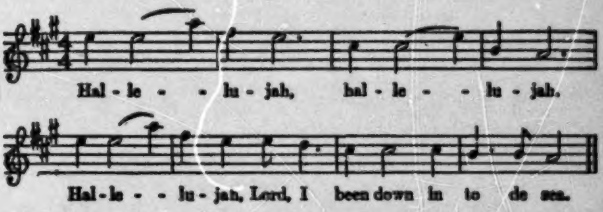


may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 62; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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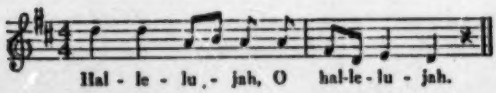
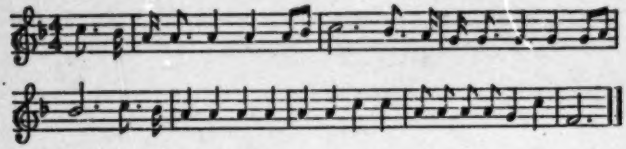
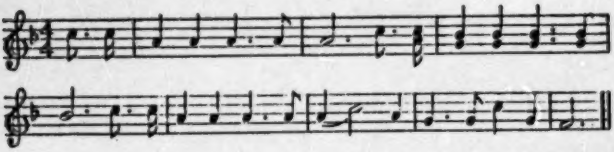



The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now*,[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus*,[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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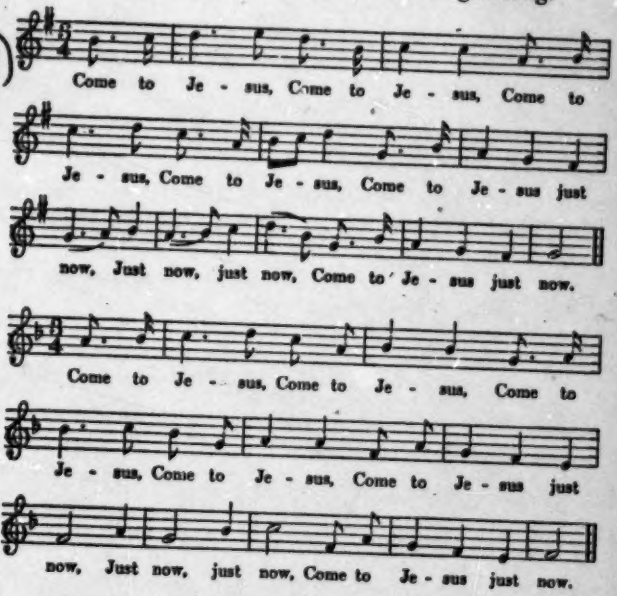
ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[97]




The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

[97] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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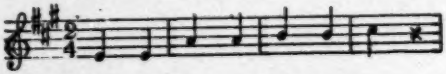
words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away*.[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is



The spiritual begins in a very similar way:

and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]

The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]

[98] P. 117.
[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.
[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.
[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.
[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

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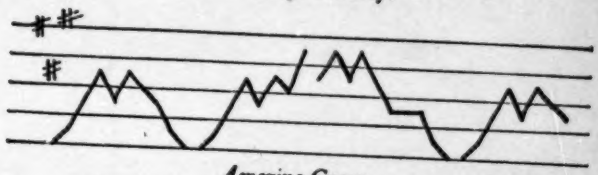
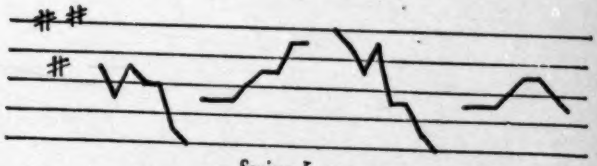
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,* is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



*Amazing Grace*



*Swing Low*

## Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low.* This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

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with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll, I'm a-Rolling, I've Been Down Into de Sea*, etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp*, ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green*; and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell*.

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177 533 songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning [178] the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

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based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two. 177 178 533

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it 533

[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

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533 is found today among Negroes, it is indeed as unique, as distinctive as if it were unreservedly the creation of these people. As White has well said, "The white man would be both stupid and prejudiced if he failed to see that the Negro has long since made it his own."[108]

[108] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 57.

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# III

## FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

### INTRODUCTION

In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like. 538

In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina,* Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it. 114
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Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
538 of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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## FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175 567

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them.

An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with

> Once upon a time, a very good time,
> Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

> Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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The charm of the stories told by the Negroes lies as much in the way they are told as in the stories themselves. As Mrs. Parsons has said, "The characteristic emphasis of Negro tales, the drawl, and the tricks of speeding up, are difficult to indicate on paper. Italics and exclamation points are but feeble indicators; and how can one express by printers' signs the significance of what is not said?—a significance conveyed by manner or by quietness of intonation, of which a good story-teller is past master." Stripped of the tricks of the story-teller and of the dialect in which they are told, and written down in good English, these tales make slow reading.

To the student of folklore, this vast body of stories is something to be collected, preserved, studied, compared, analyzed, something which it would be a shame to let die out. But to the Negroes these stories are like any other stories. They lie tucked away in memory most of the time. Occasionally they are called forth to do their bit toward entertaining the teller and his listeners. New stories, perhaps cheap stories, are constantly crowding in upon them, and if some of the old-time ones which go back almost to Adam slip out of memory through disuse, no tears are shed. Finding a rare tale may thrill the collector, but the islanders may think something else is far more valuable. To them a story of a stuttering slave's being beaten up by a stuttering Irish patrol because the Irishman thought the Negro was mocking him may be much more attractive than Buh Rabbit's victory over Buh Lion.

The folklorist may complain that the art of story-telling is dying, but he must admit that the old stories

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538 are safe for some time yet among the Negroes of the Sea Islands. The older people rarely tell the stories to white people, it is true, but the children tell them naïvely and with plenty of skill. On the way to school, at recess time, at parties, at home around the fireside, or at work, the young folk tell stories and riddles. They may deviate from the traditional version of a tale, but they are good at supplying new incidents and at combining several stories to make a new one. If part of a story is supposed to be sung, they sing it rather than recite it as many adults would do. If Buh Rabbit is supposed to make a funny noise as he runs down the road, this is supplied with an ingenuity which attempts to outdo the other fellow.

In the following tales the language is, as a rule, that of a person who speaks a somewhat modified sea-island dialect. It happens that none of the stories given here was told me by the old-time mushy-mouthed type of speaker. This is fortunate for the average reader, for the pure dialect is quite difficult to read. Since different speakers have different peculiarities, the reader must not be surprised at the apparent lack of consistency in dialect.

I

539 DOG AND DOG HEAD[1]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Frog all-two go fo' hunt deah. Dey need some dog, an' a dog cost twelve biscuit. Buh

[1] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. This is one of the most popular stories in the Sea Islands. For other variants, see Parsons' *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, pp. 1-5. The following is the most common variant: Rabbit sees Frog's "t'roat gwine up an' down," and thinks Frog is eating his biscuits, so Rabbit decides to eat some of his. Frog arrives with all of his biscuits, but Rabbit has only a few left and has to be content with a dog head. Sometimes, Frog uses the mock plea and tricks Rabbit into admitting that his dog head did not catch the deer.

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Frog got plenty biscuit, so 'e buy one dog, but Buh Rabbit been uh eat some o' his an' ain' got but six lef', so 'e buy one dog haid. So dey go fo' hunt deah, an' dey ain' gone too long 'fo' Buh Frog dog run attah a deah and ketch um. Buh Rabbit run ahaid an' knock off Buh Frog dog an' put e' dog haid on de deah. W'en Buh Frog come up, Buh Rabbit say, "Look, Buh Frog, my dog haid done kill a deah." Buh Frog say, "Now, Buh Rabbit, you know dog haid cyan' kill deah. Tek a dog fo' kill deah." Buh Rabbit say, "O, man, course a dog haid can ketch a deah. Yunnah shum deh on de deah, enty? Tek a dog haid fo' ketch deah. If yunnah want to ketch deah, yunnah have to cut yo' dog haid off." Buh Frog say, I guess you right, Buh Rabbit." So Buh Frog cut 'e dog haid off, an' dog haid ain' never ketch no mo' deah since dat.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

II

### THE FALSE MESSAGE: TAKE MY PLACE[2]

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de cat drink wine.

'Bout de man, de lee' gal, and Buh Rabbit. Man have a pease patch an' lef' lee' gal fuh watch um. Buh Rabbit come up an' say, 'Mornin', lee' gal. Yo' paa say tu'n me in pease patch at twelve an' tu'n me out at five." Lee' gal say, "All right, Buh Rabbit," so she tu'n Buh Rabbit in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' when five come 'e

[2] See also Parsons, pp. 40-2.

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539 say to lee' gal, "Time to tu'n me out." She tu'n 'im out. When 'e paa come home 'e say, "Who been in my pease patch?" Lee' gal say, "Buh Rabbit say you sen' word fuh me to tu'n 'im in de pease patch." 'E paa say, "Well, if Buh Rabbit come tomorrow, you tu'n 'im in an' don' let 'im out till I come."

So nex' day Buh Rabbit come, an' de lee' gal tu'n 'im in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' den 'e say, "Lee gal, time to tu'n me out." Lee' gal say, "I busy now." Buh Rabbit wait awhile. Says, "Please let me out now." Lee' gal say, "Wait a minute, I too busy now." Den 'e paa come home. 'E ketch Buh Rabbit in de pease patch an' tek an' lock 'im up in a cyage, den 'e gwine off fuh git a cyaa't-load o' switch fuh beat Buh Rabbit. Buh Wolf come along an' see Buh Rabbit in de cyage an' ax 'im, "What you do deh, Buh Rabbit?" Buh Rabbit say, "Oh, man, dey gwine be beeg time tonight—beeg party, singin' an' dancin' an' eatin'. Don' you wanna help?" Buh Wolf say, "Sho', man, let me in." "All right, onlock dat do' an' come in." Buh Wolf onlock de do' an' come in de cyage. Buh Rabbit jump out and lock 'im up. Man come back, say, "Buh Wolf, what you do in deh?" "Oh, Buh Rabbit say we gwine have beeg time." Man say, "Yes, we sho' is gwine have beeg time," an' 'e tek de cyaa't-load o' switch an' beat Buh Wolf mos' to deat'.

III

PLAYING GODFATHER: TUB OF BUTTER[3]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been frien'. Day hab tub o' buttah fuh eat w'en wintah come. Dey wukkin' een de

[3] From a student in Penn School. See Parsons, pp. 5-8. Sometimes the names of the children are varied, as, for example, Begin-um, Buh Quartah-um, T'ree-fourt' Gone-um, Mos' Done-um, etc.

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fiel' w'en Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Wolf, me yeddy my sistah duh call me. I gwine see w'at 'e want." So 'e went off. Attah w'ile 'e come back. Buh Wolf say, "W'at yo' sistah want?" "Oh, my sistah hab a fine baby an' 'e want me fuh name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "I name um Buh Start-um."

Dey wuk a lee' wile, den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen to dat! My sistah duh call me ag'in. I wish 'e leave me 'lone." Buh Wolf say, "Man, you bettah go see w'at 'e want." So Buh Rabbit go off again. Fin'ly 'e come back, say, "Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah baby an' want me to name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "Oh, I name um Buh Half-um."

Dey wuk a lee' w'ile mo' an' den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen, Buh Wolf, my sistah duh call me again. I t'ink I not go dis time." Buh Wolf say, "Oh, man, I t'ink you bettah go." "All right, I be back in a lee' w'ile." Fin'ly Buh Rabbit come back, say, "Law, Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah chile." "W'at you name um dis time?" "Oh, I name um Buh Done-um." Dat mean 'e done eat all de buttah.

Dey wuk on till Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, le's go see 'bout dat tub o' buttah." So dey go fuh git buttah an' de buttah all gone. Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, you been uh eat de buttah, enty?" "No, 'fo' Gawd, Buh Wolf, I yent eat um." Buh Wolf say, "I t'ink we fin' out who eat 'um. We gwine een de sun an' lay down, an' de one de sun melt de buttah out ob, 'e de one wuh eat um." Buh Rabbit agree, so dey go een de hot sun an' lay down. Buh Wolf go to sleep. De butter melt out o' Buh Rabbit, an' 'e take an' smear um on Buh Wolf. Den 'e wake up Buh

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539 Wolf an' say, "Look, Buh Wolf, de buttah melt out on you. Dat prove you eat um." Buh Wolf say, "Yeah, Buh Rabbit, I guess you been right. I eat um fo' trute."

IV

WHO STOLE BUH KINLAW'S GOAT?[4]

Once upon a time de cat drink wine,
De monkey chaw tobacco on de street-car line.

Deh been a man name Buh Kinlaw. Buh Rabbit t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat, an' Buh Kinlaw gwine hab court fuh fin' who t'ief um. So Buh Rabbit see Buh Wolf an' say, "Buh Wolf, deh's t'irty dollahs on a song, t'irty dollahs on a song. Big time on court day. You bass me on de song an' we make a heap o' money. Now, w'en I sing,

[Chanted] Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,

you sing,

Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So Buh Wolf agree, an' dey try out de song till dey can sing um good.

W'en de court day come, Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf come in to town. W'en dey come close to de court place, Buh Rabbit say, "All right, Buh Wolf, time to staa't singin'"; an' 'e begin:

"Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,"

an' Buh Wolf come in strong on

"Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So de jedge yeddy um an' say, "So dat's de man wuh stole Buh Kinlaw goat." An 'e gib Buh Wolf t'irty days 'stead o' t'irty dollahs.

[4] *Cf.* Parsons, p. 145.

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V

## THE PARSON'S SHEEP

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Once dere was a li'l boy, an' 'e paa stole de paa'son sheep, so de boy sing,

"My paa steal de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

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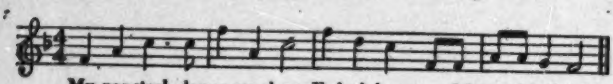

My paa steal de paa-son sheep, Ve had sheep soup fo' suppah las' night.

De paa'son yea'd um singin'. Say, "What dat you sing, son?" "Oh, nuttin', suh." "Well, you come heah tomorrow dis same time an' sing dat same song, an' I give you ten dollahs." "All right, suh."

So dat night de boy tell his paa, say, "Paa, man gwine give me ten dollah fuh sing tomorrow." Paa say, "Le' me hear you sing um, son." De boy sing:

"My paa stole de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa knock 'im down, *Bam!* Den 'e say, "Son, sing um ag'in." Boy sing um dat same way ag'in. 'E paa knock 'im down ag'in. "Sing um ag'in, son." So dis time de boy sing:

"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa say, "Now dat's de way to sing um, son. Anybody ax you fuh sing, you sing um same like dat."

Nex' day de boy go to de place whuh paa'son say come. Paa'son deh wid lots o' oddah mens. De paa'son say, "All right, son, sing dat song." So de boy sing:

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"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

Paa'son say, "Dat's not de song you sing d' oddah time." Boy say, "Yes, suh, dat him." Paa'son say, "Try um ag'in." An de' boy sing um dat same way ag'in. Paa'son ax him, "Don' you know anoddah song!" "No, suh, dat de only song I evah sung, suh." So de people made paa'son give de boy ten dollah like 'e promise.

## VI

## RABBIT SEEKS A WIFE[5]

De king had a fine daughtah. Buh Rabbit ax king fo' 'e daughtah. King say, "If you git me one bag o' blackbird, one rattlesnake tush an' one alligator tush, you will hab my daughtah."

So Buh Rabbit go down de road singin',

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding-a ding, ding, ding."

He see some blackbird een a fiel' singin', so he take a bag an' say, "Heh, you blackbird, up deh singin' so big, I bet you cyan' full dis bag." De blackbird fly een de bag, an' Buh Rabbit tie de string an' take de bag to de king. King tell 'im, "You a smaa't man, Buh Rabbit. Now git me de rattlesnake tush."

Buh Rabbit meet Buh Rattlesnake. Say, "Good mornin', Buh Rattlesnake. You sho' is growin' mighty big. Le' me meadger you wid dis stick to see how long you is." Buh Rattlesnake lay down 'side de stick and Buh Rabbit tie 'e tail to de stick. "Wha' fuh you tie my tail, Buh Rabbit?" "Oh, man, I haffuh tie you' tail to straight

[5] Told by James Henderson, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, p. 14.

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you out so 's I can meadger you good." Den he tie Buh Rattlesnake haid an' pull de string tight an' choke 'im to deat'. He take out de tush an' take um to de king. King say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* smaa't. Now bring me de alligatuh tush." 539

Buh Rabbit go down to de pon' an' fin' Buh 'Gatuh an' call out, "Oh, Buh 'Gatuh, come up hyuh on de sho'. Gwine hab beeg time up hyuh." 'Gatuh come up. Buh Rabbit say, "Now we play a lee' game." An' 'e sing:

"Go t'rough my legs swif'ly, O,
An' come back slowly, O."

Buh 'Gatuh go t'rough swif'ly, an' w'en he come back slowly, Buh Rabbit knock 'im wid a stick. 'Gatuh pitch een to de pon', say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* mean." Buh Rabbit study 'bout how he could git Buh 'Gatuh to come out again. Fin'ly he go off an' kill a squirrel an' dress up in de squirrel clo'es. He come back to de pon' an' sing,

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding, a-ding, ding, ding."

Buh 'Gatuh say, "I t'ink I hear Buh Rabbit woice." Buh Rabbit say, "Come on up, Buh 'Gatuh. It's me, Buh Squirrel." 'Gatuh wife tell 'im, "Don' go up deh. You might get hurt." 'Gatuh call out, "Dat you, Buh Squirrel?" "Yeah, come on up." Buh 'Gatuh come up on sho'. He say, "Dat Buh Rabbit a *mean* man. He knocked me wid a stick. But I glad he yent hit me on dis side, 'caze I would-a daid." So Buh Rabbit take a stick an' knock 'im on dat side and kill 'im daid. Den he take out de tush an' take um to de king. De king tell 'im, "Man, you *too* smaa't." Buh Rabbit say, "Eider gib me yo'

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539 daughtah or gib me trouble." De king say, "I'll gib you trouble." So he gib Buh Rabbit a bag an' tell 'im, "Don' open um till you come to a wide fiel'." So Buh Rabbit go off to a wide open fiel' an' open de bag. An' w'en he loose um, out jump t'ree houn' dog right attah Buh Rabbit. One o' de dog bit Buh Rabbit tail smack off, an' his tail been short to dis day.

VII

LION SEES HIS SHADOW

Buh Lion been king o' de beas'. D' oddah animals 'fraid to walk, 'caze Buh Lion eat um if 'e ketch um. So one day dey hol' a council an' 'cide to mek a 'greement wid Buh Lion to sen' 'im one of um fuh eb'ry meal if 'e leabe um alone 'tween meal.

W'en it come Buh Rabbit time to go fuh let Buh Lion eat 'im, ' e staa't off sad an' slow-like. 'E tek two step frontwa'd, one step backwa'd, an' 'e been a-study all de time. Buh Lion gittin' mighty hungry, 'caze Buh Rabbit due at twelve o'clock an' it already 'bout t'ree. Fin'ly Buh Lion see li'l cloud o' dus' way down de road. Say, "Dat mus' be Buh Rabbit comin'." Buh Rabbit tek two step frontwa'd an' one step backwa'd. Buh Lion bex. 'E call out, "Hurry up, Buh Rabbit. Why you so late?" "Oh, man, I been a-study 'bout dat oddah lion. I shum [saw him] down een a well back deh on de road. Him say him can beat you all to pieces." Buh Lion too mad. Say, "Dey ain' no body can beat me." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat w'at I tol' 'im, but 'e look mighty fierce an' say 'e can tear you up." "Tek me to 'im, Buh Rabbit. I wan' a-shum." So Buh Rabbit tek 'im to de well, an' Buh Lion look down een de watah an' see 'eself. 'E give a roah an'

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shake 'e haid, an' de lion een de well done de same. Eb'y- 539
t'ing 'e do, de lion een de well do likewise. Buh Lion git so mad, 'e jump at 'e shadow een de well, an' 'e got drownded.

VIII

LION LOOKS FOR MAN

'Bout Buh Elephan', Buh Lion, an' Man. Buh Elephan' sleep undah tree, an' Man cut de tree, an' it fall on Buh Elephan' an' hu't 'im. Buh Lion come along an' say, "What de mattah, Buh Elephan'?" "Man cut de tree on me." "Man? W'at Man look like?" "Well, 'e got two t'ing long down, call um laig; two t'ing long out, call um han'." "You t'ink I c'n ketch um?" "Yah, you c'n ketch um."

So Buh Lion go hunt fuh Man. Fin'ly 'e shum. Say, "You de t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah, I de t'ing dey call Man." "Well, w'at I mus' do to make you fight me?" Man tell um, "Tu'n yo' back an' tu'n yo' shu't-tail ovah yo' haid, an' I fight you." So Buh Lion t'un 'e back an' tu'n 'e shu't-tail ovah 'e haid, an' Man take 'e gun an' shoot Buh Lion.

Finally Buh Lion got up an' went to fin' Buh Elephan'. Say, "Oh, Buh Elephan', you know dat t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah." "Well, Man ruled by God. I ax um w'at I must do to make um fight me, an' 'e tu'n my back an' tu'n my shu't-tail ovah my haid, an' 'e t'row a t'ousan' poun' o' grabbel on me, den 'e jerk out my rib an' cut me till I fall."

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

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[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.
[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

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at home! How come you do dat?" "Well," say Buh Pa'tridge, "I jes' leabe um deh so my wife can comb um w'ile I been gone." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat soun's mighty good, Buh Pa'tridge. Tell me how you do it." "Well, you jes' ax yo' wife fo' cut yo' haid off, den you can leabe yo' haid at home an' go widout it like me."

So Buh Rabbit run home an' say to 'e wife, "Wife, I see Buh Pa'tridge run roun' widout 'e haid, an' 'e say you mus' cut my haid off so I can do dat way myse'f." Wife say, "Now, I 'fraid Buh Pa'tridge been try fo' fool you." "Oh, no. You mus' tek de ax an' chop my haid off like Buh Pa'tridge say." So dey argue an' argue till fin'ly Buh Rabbit have 'e way, and 'e put 'e haid down on de block and 'e wife tek de ax an' bam! off come 'e haid. An' Buh Rabbit been jes' as daid as 'e can be.

## XI

### RABBIT MAKES WOLF HIS SADDLE HORSE[8]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been great frien'. Dey git ready to go to big party to dance an' play wid all de gal. Buh Rabbit been tellin' de gal dat Buh Wolf been his saddle horse. W'en de time come to go, Buh Rabbit say, "Lawd, Buh Wolf, I feel so bad I t'ink I cyan' go." Buh Wolf say, "You got to go, Buh Rabbit. Le' me carry you paart o' de way." Buh Rabbit say, "All right, if you let me put de saddle on you so 's I can hold on." Buh Wolf say he agree p'vidin' he take de saddle off befo' dey git to de party. So Buh Rabbit git his saddle an' spurs, an' off dey go. Attah w'ile w'en dey git up close to de place weh de party gwine be, Buh Wolf say, "Time to git off, Buh

[8] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. Cf. Parsons, pp. 53-4.

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Rabbit." But Buh Rabbit dig de spurs in Buh Wolf, and Buh Wolf howl an' run right up to de house befo' all de gal. Buh Rabbit call out, "See! See! Ain' I tol' you Buh Wolf been my saddle horse?"

XII

THE RACE BETWEEN SNAIL AND DEER

Buh Deah been a-boas' dat he de fastes' runnah een de worl'. Buh Snail say, "Buh Deah, I t'ink I run a race wid you." Dey all laugh at Buh Snail, but he say he want to try to beat Buh Deah, so dey 'p'inted de day fo' de race. Buh Deah come to de place weh dey gwine staart, but he not see Buh Snail. But Buh Snail, he deh, an' he crawl up easy-like undah Buh Deah tail. Fin'ly Buh Deah say, "Well, I wondah weh is dat Snail. I guess he don' wan' a-run no race." Buh Snail speak up an' say, "I'm hyuh, let de race staart." Buh Deah went sailin' off down de road, an' soon he come to de finish place. Big crowd deh. Buh Deah say, "Hab anybody seen dat Snail?" Dey all laugh an' say dey ain' shum. So Buh Deah staart to set down, an' Buh Snail cry out, "Man, git up off-a me. I been hyuh long befo' you." So dey give de race to Buh Snail.

XIII

THE MERMAID[9]

De King wife dead an' King marry 'nodder woman. King had daughter an' dis woman had daughter, an' dey treat her daughter good, but not treat de King daughter good. She have to do hard work, an' de odder gal do nuttin'. So de po' gal go down to de water an' cry. Mer-

[9] From Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 137-39.

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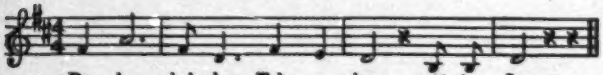
maid rise up an' say, "What you cry for, li'l gal?" "My 539
mudder die an' my fadder marry ag'in an' my step-mudder have daughter. Dey treat me bad an' won' give me 'nough t' eat." De mermaid say, "Come down wid me." She take her down under de water to de purties' place. Give her all kin' o' good t'ing t' eat. Den she bring her back up. Dat night, de gal not want a bite t' eat after de odders done eat, but she feel so glad.

Nex' day she go back to de water an' sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe."



[533]

An' de mermaid rise up an' take her down an' give her plenty good t'ings t' eat, den bring her back up. So dat night, dey keep wonderin' why she not eat. Fin'ly de step-mudder daughter say she gwine fin' out. Nex' day she follow de gal to de river an' hear her sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe,"

an' she see de mermaid rise up an' take de gal down. She run home an' tell her mudder an' de King what she see. So nex' day dey all t'ree went down to de river widout de King daughter knowin' it. De King sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. Den de step-daughter try it:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

an' up rise de mermaid. King shot de mermaid daid.

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539 When de King daughter come down to de river, she sing like she always sing, but no mermaid. She step down in de water an' sing again:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. She went on deeper an' deeper, singin' dat song all de time, till she drown. Dat's end o' my story.

XIV

THE CHOSEN SUITOR: ESCAPE FROM THE DEVIL[10]

Once upon a time King had wife an' daughtah. Debbil court de daughtah an' she marry 'im, but she not know 'e been debbil. 'E take de gal home an' 'gin to cut wood fuh burn 'er up. Ole 'oman come an 'tell gal she mus' run away. Give 'er t'ree needles an' tell 'er to t'row one down when she need help.

So de gal take de debbil fastes' hoss an' ride 'im off. De Roostah see 'er an' 'e sing:

"Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

Debbil say, "I t'ink I yeah my roostah woice." Roostah sing ag'in:

"Go eas', massa, go eas'.
Go wes,' massa, go wes'.
Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

[10] From Helen Brown, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 45-6.

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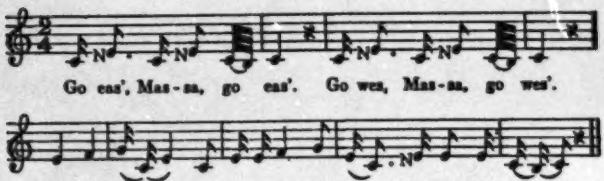


Note: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh ober-take de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

## XV

## TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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539 it for him. Then he wanted somebody to bake the bread. When the bread was ready he wanted to know if somebody wouldn't feed him. His master said, "Any man that's too lazy to eat is too lazy to live. We'll just bury him."

They made a box and put the man in it and started to the graveyard. The man sang:

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Master sang,

"Car' [carry] 'im along, car' 'im along,"

Then the man,

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Then the Master,

"Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

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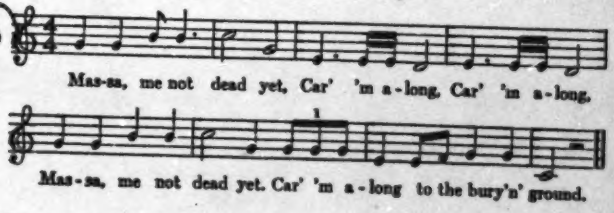


They carried the man on and on toward the graveyard.

"Massa, me not dead yet."
"Car' 'im along, car' 'im along.
Got more money to buy more slaves,
Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

They took him on to the graveyard and put him in the grave and covered him up and let him die.

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XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

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There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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come riding." The white man said, "I will attend to that. I will get down and ride you half the way, and you must ride me the other half." With this the colored man agreed, and he rode upon the white man's back half the way. Then he got down and let the white man get on his back. When they got to the gate the white man knocked. St. Peter ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding. White man said, "Yes." St. Peter said, "Left your beast on the outside and come in." The white man went into heaven and the poor colored man was left outside.

## XVIII

## A TALL TALE[14]

Gentlemen, I tell you de trut'. Once I was on a pleasure trip, me an' my employah. I was standin' in de bow of my yacht, I saw two pompers [porpoises] standin' in middle o' river, an' deh was a ole oak tree to Stoad [Stuart's] P'int—dat 'bout twenty mile away—wid a big bee-hive in it. I shoot my rifle an' bus' dat ole oak tree into de river. De pompers ent die from de shot, so I pull off my coat an' leap overboard an' catch de pompers an' pat um on de side. I say, "Whoa, whoa!" I was thirsty fo' a drink, so I tas'e de water an fin' dat de whole river sweet from de bee-hive. De pompers pullin' fas', never stop till 'e get on St. Helena Sound to egg bank. He was drunk from de sweetness of de water. I roll 'im on de sho' an' start back to meet de yacht. When de cap'n reach me I have bass an' trout enough to loaded to yacht, an' den I quit.

[14] Told by Sarah Holmes, Lee-Rosenwald School, Coffin's Point.

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XIX

FAMILY AFFECTION[16]

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Once upon a time there was an old lady and a old man and they were man and wife. The old man was at dinner and his wife and children were on the outside. It was a windy day and the wind blew the house down. The children cried out, "The house fell on popper." The old lady called, "I hope it ain't broke my pipe." The children said, "Wait till I done eat, then you will hear me cry." The end of the story.

XX

OPENING VERSES[16]

1.

Once upon a time, a wery good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco on de railroad line.[17]

2.

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de man drink wine.[18]

3.

Beef in de market ten cents a poun',
You never git a poun' till you lay yo' money down.

[16] Written by Lawrence Mingin, Lee-Rosenwald School.

[16] After hearing one of these at the beginning of a story, I began to ask each narrator if he knew any opening verses. Thereafter I found them to be quite frequent, although they tend to drop out of use as unnecessary embellishments unless something reminds the narrator of them. [538]

[17] Sometimes "on de street cyaar line," sometimes "an' spit white lime."

[18] Sometimes "cat drink wine." Other variations are made by interchanging the names and varying the combinations of the two lines.

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XXI

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524 179 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

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is also a figurative type of riddle which is scarcely a riddle from the white child's point of view but which is very much like the African figurative questions. For example, the riddle, 524 177

A rose in de gyaa'den an' a rose outside, what one you take? *Ans.* Rose in de gyaa'den is married gal, rose outside single gal,

is the same sort of thing as the following African riddle:

The tree in our yard gives shade only to our neighbors. *Ans.* A virgin. She is not of use to men of her own family.

Many of the riddles are of rather recent origin and have been brought in by visitors and immigrants, by joke books, advertising booklets, and the like.

All of the riddles collected on St. Helena cannot be reproduced here, but enough may be given to show the range and variety of this type of folklore. 524

1. Horse in de stable an' mange (mane) outside, or Horse in de stable an' reinge (reins) outside. *Ans.* 'Tatuh in de bed an' de wine (vine) outside.

2. Chip cherry up, chip cherry down; no man can climb chip cherry tree. *Ans.* Smoke.

3. Black hen set on de red hen's nes'. *Ans.* Pot on de fiah.

4. White man on a red horse back. *Ans.* Teet' on de gums.

5. Somet'in' holler all day an' holler all night. *Ans.* Tree holler.

6. Grumble all day an' grumble all night. *Ans.* Grummle (i.e., groundmole).

7. Go t'rough a tree an' leave e' guts behin'. *Ans.* Needle an' t'read t'rough de cloth.

8. One hun'ed windows an' no do'. *Ans.* Fish net.

9. If deh a hun'ed room, 'e go t'rough 'em all. *Ans.* Broom

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524 10. Somet'in' you plant one an' a whole lot get up. *Ans.* Peanuts.

11. Barks here and bites yonder. *Ans.* Gun.

12. Go up green an' come down ripe. *Ans.* Watermelon.

13. Fattes' t'ing in de worl'. *Ans.* Light'od (Lightwood, or fat pine, used by the Negroes to kindle fires.)

14. Hard all aroun' an' sof' in middle. *Ans.* Bed.

15. I went to London Bridge an' meet a man a-standin'. I shake 'e han' an' suck e' blood an' lef 'um still a-standin'. *Ans.* Pump.

16. Once I was walking along I meet a man a-standin', I cut 'e t'roat an' suck 'e blood an' leave 'im still a-standin'. *Ans.* Bottle o' soda water.

17. What come up to de do' but don' come in? *Ans.* De pat' (path.)

18. A crowd of little mans livin' in a flat-top house. *Ans.* Matches in a box.

19. Somet'in' live on two en', dead in middle. *Ans.* Man plowing wid oxen.

20. My fadder had a house, an' nobody cyan' count de windows in it. *Ans.* A net.

21. If ship stern wort' t'ousan' dollahs, what de head come to. *Ans.* De wharf.

22. Roun' as a dollar, busy as a bee. *Ans.* A watch.

23. Big at bottom, small at top.
In de middle go flippety flop. *Ans.* Churn.

24. Whitey sen' whitey to run whitey out o' whitey. *Ans.* White man sen' white boy run white cow out o' cotton fiel'.

25. If my ring drop in middle o' ocean, how I git it out? Ans. By love.

26. I meet a man, ax his name. He tell me look his walkin' rod. *Ans.* Rattlesnake.

27. What got two look-about, one lick-about, fo' run-about, two stiff-stander? *Ans.* Cow.

28. Wood
John
Mass.

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Can you make out the name and address? *Ans.* John Underwood, Andover, Mass.

29. Black man sets on white man's head. *Ans.* Black hen on nest o' aigs.

30. Once I was going up the hipple steeple,
I met a crowd of little people.
Some was white and some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps. *Ans.* Ants.

31. I went upon my father's grave, I ate his meat and suck his blood and threw his bones away. *Ans.* Watermelon.

32. A man rode across a bridge and Yet he walked. *Ans.* Yet is dog's name.

33. Two sisters in upstairs window and they can't see each other. *Ans.* Your eyes.

34. I am here alone. I have one leg, one hand, and one eye. They left me here by myself because I cannot walk, but sometimes they will come and shake my hand, and out of my mouth I will spit. Some of my sisters and brothers spit so slow, people hate to shake their hand. I am very swift. I will spit a bucketfull so quick that some people don't believe it. The longer you shake my hand the cooler I get. Can you guess my name? *Ans.* A pump.

35. Me riddle, me riddle, me ree go right,
Guess where I sleep las' Friday night.
Up in an ol' oak my hea't was ache
To see what a hole de ol' folks make.

*Ans.* Woman had date to meet man under tree. She come early an' go up in tree. Man come an' dig hole—he meant to kill her an' bury her. When he lef', she gone home an' made dis riddle.

36. Man got t'irty-one cow to carry 'cross bridge two time a day to water. How much foot go t'rough de gate? *Ans.* Two, cause man got feet, but cow got hoof.

37. Flower of Virginia, fruit of Spain,
Two meet together in shower of rain.
Put it in a bag and tie it wid a string,
If you guess dat riddle I'll give you a pin.

*Ans.* Dat's a man and woman, married. Dey kissin'.

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524 38. Somethin' open like a barn door an' shut like a trap. You guess every riddle but you never will guess this. *Ans.* An umbrella.

39. What is las' t'ing you take off 'fo' you go to bed? *Ans.* Take foot off o' flo'.

40. Black within, red without,
Four corners round about.

*Ans.* Chimney.

41. Scrooked as an arrow, busy as a bee. *Ans.* Creek.

42. As I was goin' 'cross a fiel' o' wheat
I pick up some'tin' good to eat.
It was neither fish, flesh, nor bone,
But I kept it till it walked alone.

*Ans.* Egg.

43. What goes up white an' comes down yellow? *Ans.* Egg.

44. Constantinople is a hard word to spell. Can you spell it in two letters? *Ans.* I-t, it.

45. Crooked as a rainbow, t'iefin' (thieving) as a cat. *Ans.* Snake.

46. Once I was going to London Bridge, I met a man and a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and I couldn't tell the ladies from the gentlemen. *Ans.* Ants.

47. Who always sit with his hat on before the queen. *Ans.* The coachman.

538 PROVERBS

1. Take cyare mo' bettah nor be sorry.
2. 'Mos' kill bird don' make soup.
3. Singin' in the mornin', hawk catch you befo' night.
4. Young folks listen what old folks say when danger keep out of the way.
5. Everything good to hear is not good to talk.
6. Ev'ry grin-teet' don' mean laugh.
7. Ev'ry shut-eye don' mean sleep.
8. A good run is better than a bad stand.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

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III

273 Thou art my love, and I am thine,
574 I drew thee for my valentine.
576
539

IV

The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

*Other Verses*

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de veek I vear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
*Did he preach it!*

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

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X

273
574
576
539

Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
They give me this jolly red nose.

XI[22]

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

[22] This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

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Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

273
574
576
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*Play Rhymes and Games*[23]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

539
524

II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

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VI

539
524

Once I went up the heeple, steeple,
Met a crowd of little people.
Some was white, some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps.
O-U-T spells *out*, and you are clean out,
With your mother dirty dish rag in your mout'.

VII

Mother ketch a flea,
Flea die,
Mother cry,
Out go *she*.

VIII

Three little horses in de stable,
One fell down an' skinned his nable.
All ready?
Not yet.
All ready?
Not yet.
Ready, ready?
I'm comin', I'm comin'.

IX[24]

Little gal? Yes, mam!
Won't you go wid me? Yes, mam!
To Tennessee? Yes, mam!
For to hoe some cotton? Yes, mam!
Will you hoe it good? Yes, mam!
Did you went to de barn? Yes, mam!
Did you get any eggs? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it to de cook? Yes, mam!

[24] In this and the one following, the children move in a circle around the leader who puts the questions, the circle making the responses. Sometimes they go through the words without forming the ring. All come in loud on the last line of No. X. For other ring games, see Parsons, pp. 199-203.

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To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

539
524

x

What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
*An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!*

*Game Songs*[25]

I[26]

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533
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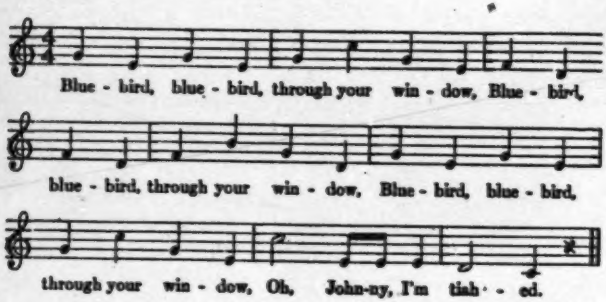


Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
   Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

[25] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[26] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

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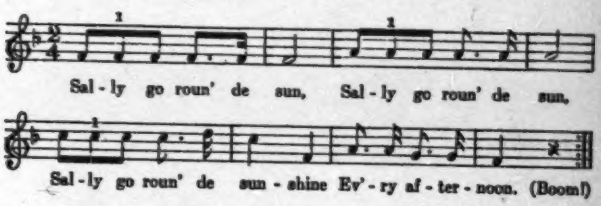
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

II[27]




1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'ry afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell*.

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III[28]

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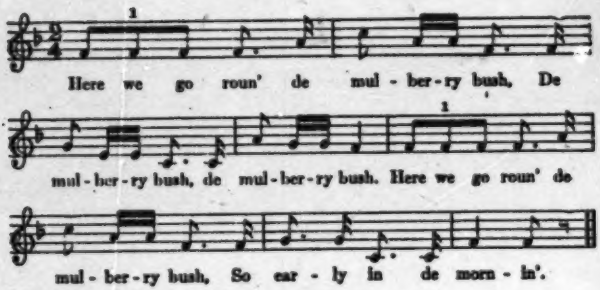


Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
   Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

[28] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

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IV[29]

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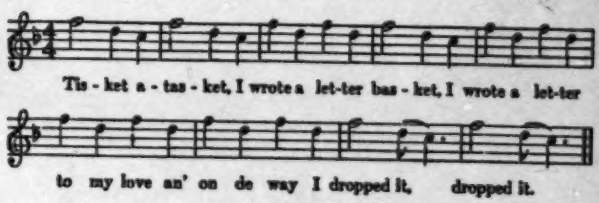
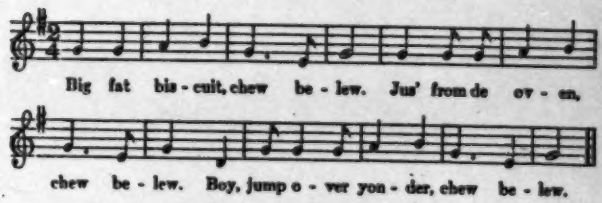
539




1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

771
171

In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Mid-wives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[764] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[789] over the coffin from one person to another in order to prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Souther Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114]

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[For information on the size of various St. Helena plantations under White ownership, see Category 116, pp. 41-45; for information on the historical background of the planters themselves, see Category 116, pp. 103-123.]

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[For information on the care of the Negro slaves by the Federal government following the capture of the Sea Islands from Confederate forces in the American Civil War, see Categories 175 and 657, pp. 159-215 passim.]

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133
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COLLETON
WILLIAMS
Coosawhatchie River
Broad River
Chowan River
St Helena Sound
Helena Island
Port Royal Sound
Port Royal Island
Hilton Head Island
Bay Point
Bull Island
Tybee Island
Wassaw Sound
Ossabaw Sound
Sapelo Island
Sapelo Sound
Doboy Sound
Altamaha River
Altamaha Sound
Jekyll Island
Cumberland Island
Cumberland Sound
Amelia Island
Fernandina
Nassau River
Nassau Sound
Fernandina Harbor
Amelia River
Amelia Sound
Fernandina Harbor

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# A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE SEA ISLANDS

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ST. HELENA ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

BY

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*Research Associate*
*Institute for Research in Social Science*
*University of North Carolina*

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1930

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## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent history of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their money crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

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121 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the
113 island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

127 In the preparation of this manuscript I have become
128 greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

G. G. J.

June, 1930.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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SPRING PLOWING

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CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully [137]
wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 175
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune 103
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen 131
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, [175]
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

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131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
504 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
175

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
175 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
[491] makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
[489] bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as
[484] they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.

[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

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arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

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THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

175

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

[103]

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

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175 was the first Protestant settlement in North America and the first white settlement near St. Helena Island.[6]

In 1566 Pedro Menendez de Avilés, adelantado and captain-general of Florida and its provinces, erected the presidio San Filipe near the site of Charlesfort, which had been destroyed by Hernando Maurique de Rojas in 1564. Here Spain maintained a garrison for ten years, when the Indians burned the fort after having forced the Spanish to evacuate it.[6] In 1577, however, the Spanish erected Fort San Marcos, a larger and more substantial building, and about it there grew a town of more than sixty houses, for here Spain maintained a garrison and a mission until 1587 when Santa Elena was again abandoned.[7] The activities of the Spanish after the abandonment are not clear, but by 1655 missions had been reopened.

175 797 These missionary efforts were carried on first by Jesuits and later by Franciscans. Spain's frontier policy, unlike that of England, was based upon the mission.[8] At Santa Elena, just as at every other Spanish frontier in North and South America, missionaries, under the protection of a guard and a fort, sought to instruct the Indians in religion, agriculture, and the arts. They settled the barbarous tribes in a village adjacent to the mission-fort, instructed them in the faith, and attempted to teach them the ways of civilized life.

[6] For an account of Ribaut's activities at Port Royal see Connor, *Jean Ribaut*.

[6] For a description of the three forts built on Parris Island in the sixteenth century see A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Site of Charlesfort," in Connor, *Jean Ribaut*, pp. 113-124.

[7] For a comprehensive account of Spanish activities in Georgia and South Carolina, see Herbert E. Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia: A Contribution to the History of One of the Spanish Borderlands*.

[8] H. E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, XXIII, 42-61.

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## THE ANGLO-SPANISH CONFLICT

175

When Captain William Hilton in 1663 explored the Carolina coast southward from Cape Fear under the auspices of a group of Barbadians, the Anglo-Spanish contest for Santa Elena began. Upon his arrival at Parris Island, Hilton found there a Spanish garrison from San Augustín, and he immediately withdrew to avoid capture.[9] Three years later when Robert Sandford explored this region he found signs of preparations for new buildings on Parris Island and "a faire wooden Crosse of the Spaniards erecc̄on" in the Plaza of the town. Sandford considered Santa Elena, or Port Royal, as he called the territory, the most favorable site for the settlement of a colony and recommended it highly to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina who sent him on the expedition.

Dr. Henry Woodward who went with Sandford remained with the cassique of Santa Elena who gave him "formall possession of the whole Country to hold as Tennant at Will of the right Hono^ble Lords Proprietors." But the English had to face twenty years of conflict before they could claim the possession of Santa Elena.[10] In this conflict Dr. Woodward played an important role, for his sojourn with the Indians and his subsequent capture by the Spaniards taught him not only the tongues of the natives, but the methods of the Spanish as well.[11]

[9] For the accounts of Hilton, Sandford, and Woodward in the Santa Elena, or Port Royal, territory, see Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, pp. 31-57, 75-107; "Shaftesbury Papers," *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, V, 18-28, 57-82. [113]

[10] Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia*, pp. 28-44.

[11] For a biography of Woodward see Joseph W. Barnwell, "Dr. Henry Woodward, The First English Settler in South Carolina and Some of His Descendants," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VIII, 29-41. [113]

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175 The impetus for the settlement of Carolina came from Barbados where there was a clamor for more and cheaper lands. Sir John Colleton, a Barbadian planter, interested seven other English noblemen[12] in the Carolina country, and they joined him in a petition to King Charles II for a grant of the region. In 1663 the King issued a charter to these eight Lords Proprietors for all the region from 36° to 31° north latitude and two years later he extended the boundaries north to 36° 30′ and south to 29°.

Following Sandford's recommendation of Port Royal, the Proprietors chose this place as the site for the first settlement of their province.[13] In August, 1669, they sent from England three vessels under the command of Joseph West with about one hundred and fifty settlers. After many hardships and misfortunes, including the wreck of one ship at Barbados and of another at Nevis, the adventurers finally reached Port Royal in March, 1670. Here they learned that the Westoes, a war-like tribe of Indians, had scourged Santa Elena and the northward country as far as Kiawah (Ashley River). Fearful of planting in a region under such conditions, they examined the land and found on St. Helena Island "that the land was good land supplyed with many Peach trees and a competence of timber, a few figg trees and some cedar here and there and

[12] The Earl of Clarendon; the Duke of Albemarle; William, Lord Craven; John, Lord Berkeley; Anthony, Lord Ashley (later Earl of Shaftesbury); Sir George Carteret; Sir William Berkeley.

[13] An earlier settlement had been attempted in 1665 when a company "of adventurers for Carolina," organized at Barbados, located on the Cape Fear River, calling their settlement Charles Town. The settlers abandoned this region in 1667, some going to Albemarle settlement, some to Nansemond County, and some to Boston. See Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719*, pp. 75-93; and *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 148-151, 157-159, 177-208.

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that there was a mile and a half of cleare land fitt and ready to plant."[14] The governor, William Sayle, sent, however, one of the vessels to Kiawah "to viewe that land soe much commended by the Caseeka" of that region. Those waiting at St. Helena soon received word that the land on the Ashley River was "more fit to plant in," and they at once took up anchor for that place, landing at "Albemarle Point," which was soon renamed Charles Town, the first high point on the western bank of the Ashley, where they settled.[15] A few weeks later Spain made this settlement legal by recognizing in the treaty of 1670 all English occupations then actually established.[16]

While Spain conceded Charles Town to England, she did not admit that Santa Elena was English territory. Accordingly, in 1686, the Spanish wiped out the colony of Scots which Lord Cardross had established at Port Royal two years earlier.[17] Coming in three galleys, the Spaniards, aided by a force of Indians, assaulted the Scotch colony of Stuart's Town "where there was not above 25 men in health to oppose them."[18] They burned the settlers' houses and "destroyed and carried away all that they had because (as the Span[ds] pretended) they were settled

[14] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 119.

[15] In 1672 another Charles Town (Charleston) was laid out on the east side of the Ashley and soon became the heart of the settlement.

[16] For the treaty see Chalmers, *A Collection of Treaties*, II, 35.

[17] Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732*, pp. 28-30; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 195-196.

[18] "Edward Randolph to the Board of Trade," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 205. For a list of settlers see *ibid.*, p. 292. For an account of the attack see Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof*, pp. 41-43; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, 1685-1690*; Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, p. 31; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 216-217; "Introduction to the Report on General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in B. R. Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 350-351.

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upon their land." The settlers, except several who were killed in action, escaped to Charles Town. Then the Spaniards proceeded to Edisto Island where they sacked the plantations of Governor Morton and Paul Grimball, secretary of the province.

### THE COMING OF THE HOME-SEEKER

The Spanish threat was effective in preventing the establishment of a colony at Port Royal, but it was not sufficient to frighten away the lone settler in search of land and timber. The provincial officials and others settled at Charles Town encouraged the movement southward. Governor John Archdale, in his *Description of Carolina*, expressed himself as being eager to see "the principal place in Carolina, call'd Port-Royal . . . seated with English and Scots in a considerable Body, because 't is a bold Port, and also a Frontier upon the Spaniard at Augustine."[19]

The first person daring enough to take out land on St. Helena Island seems to have been Thomas Nairne who was "imployed by the Generall Assembly of this Province [Carolina] in the quality of an Agent, and itenerary Justice Among the Indians, subject to our Government,"[20] but the warrant for his tract does not appear among the records of this period. The first warrant on record was issued in 1698 and ordered that the surveyor lay out "unto M.r John Steuart a Plantation Containing One Thous.d Acres of Land on y.e Island of St. Helena, being a

[19] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 292.

[20] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*, XXIV, 632; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Journal of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, 1710-1715*. For the subsequent history of Thomas Nairne and his death at the hands of the Yamassees, see Crane, *Southern Frontier, passim*.

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Neck of Land formerly Inhabited by the Pocatalagoes, Lying North West of y.e Lands Settled by M.r Thomas Niern[e]."[21]

Other warrants[22] were issued from time to time, one in 1699, two in 1700, four in 1701, until by 1711 twenty-five warrants for 11,085 acres of land on the Island had been issued.[23] The acreage authorized by these warrants varied in size from 70 to 1,018 acres with half of the settlers taking out from 200 to 500 acres.[24] In a few instances one person obtained several warrants over a period of two or three years. For example, John Stewart, after having received a warrant for 1,000 acres in 1698, obtained in 1701 three other warrants for a total of 2,590 additional acres. In the meantime land was being taken up slowly on the adjoining islands, and in 1700 the birth of the first white child was recorded.[25] In this year it was reported "that the River of Port Royal becomes every Day better known and more inhabited."[26]

As early as 1706 the settlement around Port Royal was important enough for the provincial officials to recommend the establishment of a garrison there.[27] The earliest mention of the town of Beaufort seems to have been in

[21] A. S. Salley, Jr., *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina, 1692-1711*, p. 152.

[22] The issuance of a warrant for land was the preliminary step in obtaining the land. It did not necessarily follow that a person who obtained a warrant for a given tract of land also obtained the grant, or legal title, for it; nor did it mean that he actually settled there.

[23] Those who had obtained warrants by 1711 were John Stewart, John Watt, Thomas Nairne, John Cowan, John Norton, William Meggett, James Cockran, William Kimball, Daniel Dicks, Arthur Dicks, Randolph Evans, Richard Capers, William Capers, Sarah Norton, John Cowan, Jr., and Edward and Hugh Hext.

[24] Salley, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

[25] Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 366.

[26] Crane, *Southern Frontier*, p. 61n.

[27] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIII, 286.

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175 1710 when the Lords Proprietors in a meeting on December 20 agreed that a seaport town should be erected at Port Royal in Granville County to be called Beaufort Town.[28] The charter was issued January 17, 1710/11. In 1712 St. Helena's Parish was established by an act of the General Assembly. This act states that "several persons are settled to the southward of Colleton County on Port Royal Island, St. Helena Island, and several adjacent islands in Granville County.[29]

The Yamasee War suddenly interrupted the growth of settlement.[30] The Yamasees, once the friends of the English and Carolina's chief means of destroying Spanish Guale, having been ill treated by some of the traders among them, without warning opened war upon the English in May, 1715, at the Yamasee town of Pocotaligo. The inhabitants of Port Royal and adjoining islands, with a few exceptions, received word of the attack in time to escape to Charles Town in a ship which had been seized for smuggling and lay in Port Royal River. But two hundred Carolinians were slain in the revolt.

The war, however, opened the Yamasee lands to settlement, for the Indians were forced across the Savannah to San Augustín. The following spring, the General Assembly of the province, at the suggestion of the Proprietors, passed an act granting certain privileges and exemp-

[28] *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, I, 181. For the early history of Beaufort see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort—The Original Plan and the Earliest Settlers," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 141-160.

[29] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

[30] See Crane, *Southern Frontier*, pp. 162-186; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 531-536; "Introduction to the Report of General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 354-355.

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tions to those taking up land in the region which in 1707 had been set aside for the sole use of the Yamasees. The land, however, was to be opened only to actual settlers, "New Comers," from Great Britain, Ireland, or any of His Majesty's plantations in America, who were not to be permitted to convey their tracts for seven years. Each person was to be allowed 300 acres of river land and 400 acres of back land at a quit-rent of 12 pence a hundred acres and £3 purchase money for every hundred acres, to be paid within four and a half years.[31]

The settlement around Port Royal grew more rapidly after the opening of the Yamasee lands, but at best the increase in population was slow. The date of the earliest grant to a lot in Beaufort found on record is July 25, 1717, but before the middle of August more than seventy lots had been granted. Yet in 1722 the General Assembly of the province was found passing an act stating that "the fort at Beaufort is so much out of repair and the great gun carriages so rotten that the same is defenceless and of no service, whereby the inhabitants have no place of security for their families in time of alarm, which so much dispirits them that it may occasion a desertion of those frontiers."[32] In 1728/29 Thomas Lowndes of Charles Town, in a letter to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, stressed the necessity of their encouraging "a good settlement" at Port Royal for the purpose of "obstructing . . . the Spanish navigation" from that port.[33] About 1730 the population

[31] The quit-rent at which lands had been taken up previous to this act was one shilling per hundred acres. See Grant Books in the office of Secretary of State, Columbia, S. C., and Memorial Books in the office of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, Columbia.

[32] *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, 180.

[33] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, III, 11.

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175 of St. Helena's Parish was estimated at seventy families,[84] and the parish at that time included the large territory bounded on the east by St. Helena Sound and Combahee River, on the north by a line from the head of Combahee River to the Savannah River, and on the south by the ocean.

The growth of Beaufort may be taken as an index to the growth of St. Helena Island. Various acts passed by the General Assembly in behalf of Beaufort indicate that the town was small and had but little commercial business even to the time of the American Revolution.[85] An act of 1740 sought "to encourage the better settling and improvement of Beaufort Town," and one of 1748 mentions that "the small number of vessels trading to Beaufort Port Royal are not sufficient to encourage a pilot or pilots to furnish themselves with boats for the use of the harbour." Acts of 1752 and 1762 indicate that the town was still small and its commerce unimportant.

### TYPES OF SETTLERS

The inhabitants of St. Helena's Parish, like those of Charles Town, were "persons of all sorts" coming "from the more Northern English Collonys, and the Sugar Islands, England, and Ireland."[86] They came, seasoned planters from Barbados with a knowledge of the slave regime which was well established there as early as 1643,[87]

[84] David Humphreys, "An Account of Missionaries Sent to South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 551.

[85] For a review of these acts see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 142-150. For the acts see *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, IV, *passim*.

[86] Samuel Wilson's statement concerning Charles Town in his "Account of Carolina" found in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 167.

[87] Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 46-47.

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merchants from England with white indentured servants, adventuresome tradesmen who had scarcely more than enough to pay their passage money, indigent persons who sold themselves into servitude for seven years that they might have the opportunity of making their fortunes in the new world. The Proprietors at first encouraged only those to settle in Carolina who had capital with which to begin planting. The reason for this attitude is indicated in one of Lord Ashley's letters to Sir John Yeamans, written when the Ashley River colony was only a year old:

> I am glad to heare soe many considerable men come from y^e Barbados for wee finde by deare experience y^t noe other are able to make a Plantacon but such as are in condition to stock & furnish themselves y^e rest serve only to fill up numbers & live upon us & therefor now we have a competent number untill we are better stocked with provisions I am not very fond of more company unless they be substantial men.[38]

Soon, however, the Proprietors were not so choice in regard to the type of person settling in Carolina and advertised the new country to rich and poor alike.

The register of St. Helena's Parish, which was begun in 1752 but which gives information of the inhabitants as early as 1710, indicates the various places from which came the settlers of St. Helena Island as well as of the entire parish. The places mentioned as the former homes of inhabitants are Bridgenorth and Ludlow in Shropshire, Bristol, Canterbury in Kent, Dorchester, Liverpool, London, and Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Barbados, and Bermuda.[39]

[38] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 210.

[39] Joseph W. Barnwell and Mabel L. Webber (eds.), "St. Helena's Parish Register," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXIII, 8-25, 47-71, 102-151, 171-204, *passim*.

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The register also gives some information as to the life of the settlers, for in some instances a person's occupation is recorded after his name. The register indicates that the following types of settlers were to be found among the inhabitants from 1752 to 1785: barber, boatman, carpenter, cooper, cordwainer, Indian trader, leather dresser and breeches maker, labourer, mariner, master of a piragua, merchant, overseer,[40] painter, planter,[41] pump maker, sailor, schoolmaster, ship carpenter, shipwright, shoemaker, soldier, surgeon, tailor, and weaver.

These early invaders of the southern frontier were adventurers from many sections and from many stations in life. Very few had any previous experience in wresting a livelihood from virgin land or building a home in the wilderness. Yet they were the men who laid the foundation for the prosperity which made possible one of the highest types of ante-bellum culture.

[40] "Overseer of Ireland" is also mentioned.
[41] "Planter of England" is also mentioned.

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CHAPTER II

# THE STAPLE CROPS

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ALTHOUGH the Lords Proprietors of Carolina encouraged the settlers of their province to grow tropical and semi-tropical plants, such as indigo, cotton, and ginger,[1] these were not the products to which the people turned their chief attention. Thomas Ashe, in mentioning the occupations of the settlers in 1682, described conditions which prevailed in the province for the first half century. Of the planters he wrote:

> Their Provision which grows in the Field is chiefly Indian Corn . . . they do not much regard or encourage its [tobacco] planting, having already before them better and more profitable Designs in Action. Tarr made of the resinous Juice of the Pine (which boyl'd to a thicker Consistence is Pitch) they make great quantities yearly, transporting several Tuns to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the Caribbe Islands.[2]

## NAVAL STORES AND PROVISION CROPS

The settlers on St. Helena Island followed the example of those about Charles Town and turned their attention to the manufacture of naval stores. They converted their fine live oaks into ships beams and masts; the pines, into pitch and tar. In 1712 the charter of Beaufort points to the chief occupation of the inhabitants, stating that "a port upon the River called Port Royal in Granville County" would be "the most proper place in that part of the province for ships of Great Britain to take in masts, pitch, Tar, Turpentine, & other naval stores."[3]

[1] McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 115-116.
[2] "Thomas Ashe's Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.
[3] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

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175 While thus exploiting the natural resources of the Island, the settlers raised only provision crops and hogs.

175 243 Although rice culture[4] was begun in South Carolina before 1690 and had become one of the staple commodities by 1724, rice was never raised to any extent on St. Helena Island. Rice culture during the colonial period was confined for the most part to the inland swamps which could be flooded from fresh-water ponds and rivers, as, for example, Combahee River. Salt water is poisonous to the rice plant,[5] and St. Helena Island has only a few small fresh-water ponds. In these few ponds some rice was raised of a different variety from the famous Madagascar rice, but the amount was necessarily small.

### INDIGO CULTURE

175 249 Almost from the first settlement of South Carolina, indigo was grown in the province and at intervals a bounty was allowed for its production, but it was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century that it became an important article for exportation.[6] In it St. Helena Island found a staple which supplemented and to some extent supplanted the provision crops and the export of naval stores. As early as 1748 the dye was exported to Eng-

[4] See A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Introduction of Rice Culture into South Carolina," *Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South Carolina*, no. 6. For a discussion of rice culture during the ante-bellum period see Edmund Ruffin, *Report of the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina for 1843*, and R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, which appears also in *De-Bow's Review*, XVI, 589-615.

[5] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 469.

[6] In a letter written by Elizabeth (usually abbreviated to Eliza:) Lucas in 1739 she refers to her efforts to produce indigo on her father's plantation in South Carolina. This has led some writers to assert that she first planted indigo in South Carolina and that from her experiments the great indigo industry in the province developed. The records of the province show that some indigo was produced in South Carolina before Miss Lucas was born.

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land and attracted immediate attention, for Great Britain was at that time importing annually 600,000 pounds of indigo from France at the rate of about £150,000 sterling. The following year Parliament allowed a bounty of 6 pence a pound on indigo from the British colonies, and indigo culture at once grew in the favor of South Carolina planters. By 1754 the export from Charles Town had reached 216,924 pounds, and on the eve of the Revolution it had mounted to more than a million and a half pounds.[7]

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Indigo had become, next to rice, the most important source of wealth in the province. Moses Lindo, a London Jew and expert indigo sorter, had done more to stimulate the growth and the excellence of the dye than any other man in South Carolina.[8] As surveyor and inspector-general of indigo for South Carolina, he taught the planters to distinguish the grades and to improve the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the dye. The prices were usually excellent, ranging generally from 4 to 6 shillings a pound.

A light, dry soil was best suited to indigo culture; hence it was cultivated in considerable quantities on the Sea Islands. During the colonial period both the annual and perennial plants were grown. About 1760 Governor Glen wrote that the plant most frequently used in South Carolina was the annual, the sort generally cultivated in the West Indies.[9] The perennial, however, was less trouble

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[7] *Year Book*, City of Charleston, 1883, pp. 402-403.

[8] B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, chap. III.

[9] "A Description of South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 203. George Milligan, writing in 1763, quotes "an ingenious planter" as saying that there was in the province a great variety of seed, "and from every sort good indigo may be made but none answers so well in this colony as the true Guatimala." Carroll, *op. cit.*, II, 533.

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to grow and thrived on poorer land, provided the soil was dry and loose.

Planting began about the first of April. The soil, after having been well prepared, was furrowed with a drill-plough, or more often with a hoe, two inches deep, and the seed sown thinly in these trenches. A South Carolina planter estimated in 1763 that a bushel of seed would sow four acres.[10] In ten or fifteen days the young plants appeared and were immediately hoed to loosen the earth about them. When the plant was in full bloom, in June or July,[11] it was cut regardless of its height, for at that time the leaves were thick and full of juice.

With the cutting of the weed, the planter was ready to begin the process of manufacturing the dye. The plants were cut off near the ground and placed under water to ferment in a shallow vat, or steeper, as it was called. This process, which usually required some twelve hours, took the dye stuff out of the leaves. The fermenting solution was then drawn from the steeper into another vat, known as the battery, where it was violently agitated with paddles for fifteen or twenty minutes to complete the fermentation and to collect the particles of dye.

As soon as the solution acquired a blue tinge, lime water from the lime vat was carefully stirred into it until a cloudy hue appeared. The indigo water was then beaten again until granulation began and the dye stuff left to precipitate to the bottom of the vat for four or five hours. The water was drawn off and the paste which had settled in the bottom carefully strained through a horse-hair sieve

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

[11] Milligan's authority states that the blooms usually appeared four months from the time of planting.

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to clean it and then hung up in bags for several hours to drain out the water. Afterwards the bags were put through a press to free the indigo from any remaining water and the stiff paste spread on a plank, cut into small pieces about two inches square, and placed in a drying-house so that it might have a free circulation of air without being exposed to the sun which might burn it to a cinder in a few hours. While in the drying-house, the indigo had to be turned carefully three or four times a day until it was sufficiently dried to prevent its being spoiled, and it had to be kept as much as possible from flies. When thoroughly dry, the dye was packed in barrels for market.

The indigo raised in Beaufort District commanded the top price in market,[12] and it was still grown in large quantities even after the Revolution. In 1791, Mrs. Charles Capers, the wife of a St. Helena planter, stated that the planters of the Island were "wholly attentive to the Cultivation of Indigo."[13]

In some sections of the coastal region, especially in Orangeburgh District, indigo was grown throughout the ante-bellum period, and small quantities even after the Civil War. In 1828 William Elliott, of Beaufort District, wrote to the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, to encourage a more widespread growth of the plant.[14] In defense of his position, he cited the case of Donald B. Jones, of Orangeburgh, a member of the House of Representatives, who, in 1827, employed five hands in the production of cotton and five hands in the production of

[12] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 368.

[13] Mrs. Capers to Mrs. Russell, March 25, 1791. Copy of original in possession of Penn School, St. Helena Island, S. C.

[14] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828, pp. 64-66.

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indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton. In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[16] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions besides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and be otherwise employed in."[18] Thus the production of

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[16] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[18] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

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### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

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The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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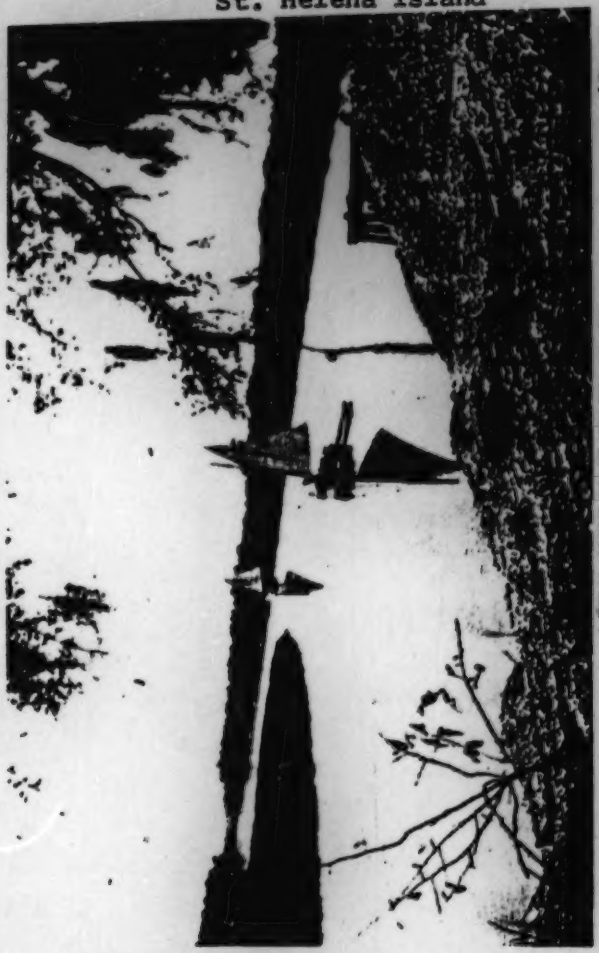

A TIDAL CREEK ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

[facing p. 24]

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the Bahamas. The plant was tall; the seed black; and the fiber, long, strong, and silky. Richard Leake, one of those who had first received the seed, at once began production on a large scale. In 1788 he wrote, "I shall raise about 5,000 pounds in the seed from about eighty acres of land and the next year I expect to plant from fifty to one hundred acres."[19]

Seed of the new product was soon obtained in South Carolina, where William Elliott, of Hilton Head Island, near Beaufort and St. Helena, seems in 1790 to have been the first to raise a successful crop.[20] He had bought five and a half bushels of seed at 14 shillings a bushel in Charleston, and he sold his crop at 10½ pence a pound. The following year John Screven, of St. Luke's Parish, planted thirty or forty acres on his plantation on May River and sold the cotton in Georgia at from 1 shilling, 2 pence to 1 shilling, 6 pence sterling a pound. The next year John Rose planted a small field on Oakatee Creek and sold the 600 pounds which he raised at 2 shillings a pound. By this time many other planters on the Sea Islands and the mainland were experimenting with the long staple cotton, and in 1793 such prominent planters as James King, of St. Paul's Parish, Colonel Edward Barnwell and Captain John Joyner, of St. Helena's Parish, and General William Moultrie, of St. John's Parish, Berkeley,

[19] E. J. Donnell, *Chronological and Statistical History of Cotton*, p. 43; Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 152.

[20] The best account of the history of the introduction of sea-island cotton and its culture is to be found in Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*. The account in *DeBow's Review*, I, 304-315, is based upon Seabrook's history. J. A. Turner (ed.), *The Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 280-286, also contains some information concerning the development of the culture of sea-island cotton.

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were growing the cotton. The struggle between indigo and sea-island cotton had already begun. By 1798 the latter had clearly won.

The spread of sea-island cotton planting was largely hastened by the excellent prices which the long-staple brought. The English market welcomed the new staple. In 1799 the cotton sold readily in Liverpool at 5 shillings a pound. In South Carolina, the price ranged from 9 pence to 1 shilling during the early days of the production; then it rose to 2 shillings and upwards and there remained until 1806 when the Franco-English hostilities caused the price to slump. But large fortunes had already been made. Captain James Sinkler received 3 shillings a pound for a crop of 300 acres which produced 216 pounds to the acre. Peter Gaillard, of St. John's, Berkeley, made an average of $340 a hand, and William Brisbane, of St. Paul's, was so wealthy after two years of growing sea-island cotton that he retired and sold his plantation to William Seabrook at an exorbitant price, but Seabrook paid for it in two years.

Not all, however, who planted sea-island cotton realized so great profits as these planters. The longest and silkiest fibers commanded the highest prices. For many years Kinsey Burden, Sr., of St. John's Parish, Colleton, occupied first place in the production of a fine staple, and for many years he carefully guarded the secret of his success. In 1805 he produced cotton worth 25 cents a pound more than that of his neighbors. William Elliott was among the first to guess that the secret of Burden's success lay in the quality of the seed used, and soon sea-island cotton planters everywhere were experimenting

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with seed in the attempt to obtain a silky staple. In 1828 Hugh Wilson sold two bags of extra fine cotton at $2 a pound, probably the highest price ever obtained for sea-island cotton.

The growth of sea-island cotton was limited to a small area along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, for the plant would prosper only in a light, sandy soil, known as the salt-water lands. The sea-island cotton area in the ante-bellum period was a belt of coastal land from twenty to thirty miles wide, extending from Santee River, including St. John's Parish, Berkeley, to the everglades of Florida.[21] Eutaw Springs in St. John's, Berkeley, was the extreme northern point at which the plant was cultivated.

### EARLY METHOD OF CULTIVATION

The planters of the crop quickly systematized the method of cultivation so that, by 1802, the general routine in South Carolina and Georgia was about the same. The seed was planted in early spring as soon as the weather would permit. At first it was planted in separate holes, but soon came to be drilled and the plants grown at intervals of two or three feet on ridges five or six feet apart. Instead of being hoed only four times with the last hoeing about the middle of July, the crop was now hoed at more frequent intervals, all work ceasing when the plant began freely to put out fruit, which was usually early in July. The crop was harvested from September until December. The fiber was quickly damaged by bad weather and the fields, accordingly, had to be picked frequently to save the staple. The bolls opened but slightly and picking was dif-

[21] R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, reprinted in *DeBow's Review*, XVI, 593; Seabrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.

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ficult so that a hand seldom averaged more than seventy-five or a hundred pounds a day, whereas on the upland cotton fields a hand often picked two hundred pounds or more in a day.

The method of culture in practice in St. Helena's Parish in 1828 has been described by William Elliott, the son of the first planter to raise a successful crop of sea-island cotton in South Carolina:

The judicious Planter, whose plantation affords him the opportunity of choice, will select for his Cotton field, such high lands of a light brown or yellow complexion, as were covered by an original growth of hickory, laurel, red bay, interspersed with the live and white oaks, and the towering palmetto. He lays out his field into squares, of one-fourth of an acre, (105 feet,) and in the winter months, proceeds to list in the sward, with its cover of fennel or grass. On this *list*, the *bed* is subsequently raised; and, if the ground has lain fallow for some years, or if the soil be naturally close, the plough is sometimes run through the intervals, to pulverize it, and facilitate the process of bedding which is always performed by the hoe and usually commences about the middle of March. The beds are commonly five feet apart from centre to centre. The planting begins about the 20th of March, and extends to the 20th of April, and is thus performed:—A number of holes, four inches deep and twelve inches long, are cut by the hoe on the top of the bed, leaving the space of one foot between each hole. The seed which is changed every second year, is . . . carefully cleansed of such as are *coated* or *tufted with green* (that being considered *an indication of degeneracy*,) and then plentifully dropped and carefully covered. When the plant has attained its fourth or sixth leaf, if no grass should threaten it sooner, it is *hoed down*, which is effected by cutting the bed nicely down, and drawing the earth into the centre of the alley, in the shape of a small list. A fortnight before, or sooner, if the plants show the want of it, the earth is drawn to their roots, and they are slightly thinned.

At every subsequent working, which after the first, is invaria-

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bly a hauling or drawing up the earth to the plants, they are gradually thinned until June, when careful hands are selected to give the final thinning. This is a nice point, on which nothing like uniformity of practice prevails. In high lands, whose fertility has been impaired by frequent cropping, as many as one hundred and twenty stalks may be left in a task row, (105 feet). In newer, stronger or lower lands, where the growth of the plants is increased, the number must be proportionably diminished.

The plants are hauled, whenever the growth is checked by drought or threatened by grass, *until the middle of July*, beyond which period, it is unsafe to haul the earth to any fields but such as have been planted late in the season. . . .

We gather it as soon as possible after it has burst the pods, that it may avoid injury as well from dirt, as from too much exposure to the sun. Women and boys prove the most efficient pickers. The greatest care is used by them to separate the Cotton, all dried leaves or other substances may impair or discolour the staple. It is then spread, if wet, on a scaffold and exposed to the sun; but, if gathered in dry weather, *on the floor in the house*, to suffer whatever moisture it has imbided to escape, before it is stowed away in bulk. It is then passed once through a patent whipper, (M'Birnie's,) and sorted in the seed, at the rate of one to two hundred pounds to the hand. It is now ready for the gin. Eave's was formerly in successful use; but that, as well as the barrel gin, has been superseded by the common foot or crank gin, whose extreme simplicity of structure has given it an advantage over others more efficient, but more complicated . . . thirty pounds of clean Cotton as a day's labour, are easily turned out to each gin. It is then moted, often, but not always, on frames of wire or latticed wood, at a rate varying from fifteen to thirty pounds to the hand, and is then packed and ready for market.[22]

The preparation of the staple for market was the most tedious part of the growth of sea-island cotton. Before 1820, however, this was not considered to be the case.

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[22] William Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 152-154.

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The pickers made no effort to remove the dead leaves from the lint; the ginners allowed stained and unstained cotton to go alike into the gin; moting was accomplished by women who sat upon the floor and beat the cotton with twigs; many planters ginned, moted, and packed the cotton in the same room; and the spinner frequently on opening a bag of cotton would find, in addition to the staple, crushed seeds, potato skins, and parts of old clothing. 175 248

Sea-island cotton prepared in this manner was suited only for coarse fabrics. As the demand for the long staple became greater for making fine laces and muslins and as the high prices went to those who carefully handled their cotton, planters were forced to use more painstaking methods. The gin house, although only a simple barn, had separate rooms for the different processes. The cotton on being gathered was never exposed to the sun as formerly, but dried on a scaffold inside. Upon being dried, it was taken to the whipper which extracted the sand and imperfect fibers, and then sent to the assorters each of whom, provided with boxes for clean cotton, worked before a long table covered with wire or wooden slats, sorting the cotton according to color and fineness. From the sorters the staple went to the gins, and from there to the moting tables where women picked out the broken seeds and stained fibres. The lint was then packed into round bags of about three hundred pounds each, 1,500 pounds of seed cotton being required for a bale of this size.

Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, of Edisto Island, estimated in 1844 that fifty-four laborers[23] were required to prepare (464)

[23] This estimate was based upon the use of the foot-gin which was ordinarily employed in 1860 as well as in 1844. When a steam gin was used the number of ginners was reduced to six; when an Eave's improved steam gin, to three.

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175 464 248 the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters, grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector. Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day, Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

175 464 (567) In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger labor supply than the sparsely settled province could afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave market.

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

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CHAPTER III

# THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

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## PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

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[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-809.

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by forty or fifty planters from so great a distance as seventy miles from Charles Town.[4]

The price of slaves depended in general upon the economic conditions of the province, although other factors contributed to the general fluctuation of prices which characterized the pre-revolutionary slave market. In 1756 Laurens wrote: "The price of Slaves here while they are imported in moderate numbers is wholly influenced by the values of our Staples, Rice and Indigo, and these have been depreciated much below the prices of last Year, so have the Planters slacked in the purchase of Slaves, lowered the prices and lengthened out the Credit."[5] The price of slaves was so unstable that it seldom remained the same for many months during the year. For instance, in the spring of 1755, Negro men were bringing £260 to £270; in the fall, as high as £350. From 1751 to 1773 the price of prime men varied from £245 to £350. During a frenzied purchase in 1764, *The South-Carolina Gazette* estimated that planters had spent for new Negroes £177,870 sterling, or £1,250,090 currency.[6]

Many planters bought their slaves with cash or with produce but many more bought on credit. The terms of purchase varied as widely as the purchase price. In 1755 Laurens suggested to a correspondent that he ignore "the measure lately adopted in Charles Town, for the sale of Negroes . . . three Months Credit, to Purchasers with Interest from the Date," but instead to "deal with each

[4] Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 816, citing Laurens Letter Book, July 31, 1755. In possession of South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 819 n, citing Laurens to Capt. Samuel Linnecar, May 8, 1756.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 822, citing *The South-Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1765.

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Man who shall require Credit" separately.[7] Merchants encouraged payment in cash or in produce by offering a discount, sometimes as much as 5 per cent, "on all Sums paid down," although to induce a ready sale they advertised occasionally that they would give as much as twelve months credit without interest.

The favorite Negroes of the South Carolina planters were those from Gambia and the Gold Coast, although Negroes from other parts of the African coast were imported and, to encourage their acceptance, were sold at lower prices than the Gambia Negroes. Into the Charles Town market there came cargoes advertised as being from the "winward Coast of Guiney," "the Masse-Congo country," "Cape Mount on the Grain Coast"; there came Negroes from Bassa on the Winward Coast, from Bance Island, from Angola, and "Calabars from Bight," Coromantines, and "healthy young Fantees."

Although merchants, in selling new Negroes, invariably advertised the tribe or the geographic section from which the Negroes came, it is interesting to note that none of these facts was mentioned in selling seasoned slaves. It would seem that tribal differences tended to disappear as the slave became seasoned.[8]

By 1708 the number of slaves almost equalled the number of the whites in the province of South Carolina;[9]

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 814, citing Laurens to Smith and Clifton, May 26, 1755; to Satterthwaite, Inman, and Company, Nov. 22, 1755; to John Lewis Gervais, Feb. 28, 1772.

[8] In this connection see *ibid.*, p. 817n. The writer has noticed the same tendency in advertisements of seasoned slaves in North Carolina and Virginia as well as in South Carolina.

[9] "Sir Nathaniel Johnson's Report to the Council of Trade and Plantations," *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIV, 739; also in McCrady, *South Carolina under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 477-481, 723. The estimates of

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by the close of the colonial period the proportion of blacks to whites was almost two to one.[10] The closing of the African slave trade[11] in 1808 by provision of the Constitution in 1787 shut off the supply of new Negroes, but before that time most of the sea-island plantations had become well stocked with slaves. In most cases the internal slave trade and the natural increase of the plantation stock were sufficient to take care of the demand for more laborers in instances of expansion on the sea-island plantations.

### THE SLAVE MARKET FOR ST. HELENA ISLAND

The planters on St. Helena Island bought their slaves at the Charleston market in common with other planters in that vicinity, for it was at Charleston that they transacted most of their business. Like other planters, too, they undoubtedly stocked their plantations with slaves from various tribes and various African localities,[12] pre-

Rev. Samuel Thomas, made in 1706 and based on the number of families connected with the Church of England and the Dissenter meetings in each of the six existing parishes outside of Charles Town, show 3,000 whites and 1,000 Negro Slaves. *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, V, 1131-34.

[10] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776*, p. 807.

[11] In 1787 South Carolina, following the example of other states, passed an act to close the African slave trade in her ports, and by similar acts kept her ports closed for sixteen years, although it was hinted that the inhabitants on the coast and the border smuggled in slaves occasionally. In 1803 the State Legislature reopened the African slave trade, but continued to exclude West Indian Negroes and required that slaves brought in from other states have official certificates of good character.

[12] Frank Moore, (ed.), *Rebellion Record*, III, 309. The reporter for the *New York World* who accompanied the Union troops in the capture of Port Royal, November 7, 1861, said of the slaves on Hilton Head, "Every variety of negro and slave was represented. . . . Darkies of genuine congo physiques, and darkies of the genuine Uncle Tom pattern, darkies young and jubilant, darkies middle-aged, and eager, and gray-haired, solemn-looking fellows. Some appeared mystified and some intelligent."

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ferring, perhaps, as did other South Carolina planters, the Gambia and Guiney Negroes. In 1791 a St. Helena planter's wife thought that the consuming interest of the Islanders was to raise more indigo to buy more slaves. The profits of the crop, she said, are "mostly expended in the purchase of Negroes, & nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves.—These singularities are inherited from their Fore-Fathers—& many follow so closely in the path thru which their Ancestors trod as to deny themselves the Comforts & conveniences of life."[13]

There are local traditions that St. Helena planters, as well as those of Edisto and other Sea Islands, received fresh supplies of African slaves at their own private wharves after the closing of the slave trade, but no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate these traditions.

The plantation records which have been preserved for the sea-island districts show that planters tended to retain their slaves, sometimes even at great financial sacrifice, selling one only because of repeated insubordination or because of economic distress. In 1867 William Jervey, of Charleston, in attempting to settle the accounts of a plantation on Ladies Island, wrote to a member of the family that "the old gentleman several times had to sell negroes to pay . . . debts."[14]

When it was necessary to sell several Negroes, the planter usually attempted to dispose of them in family groups.[15] Negroes worked better and were more satisfied

[13] MS letter of Mrs. Gabriel Capers, March 25, 1791.

[14] MS in Sarah W. Ellis Papers, April 20, 1867.

[15] MS, A. F. Gregorie Account Book. A deed of sale dated Jan. 9, 1840, shows that A. F. Gregorie, of Greenwood Plantation, "Delivered to M.r J. E. Moore Mitchell the following Twenty five Negroes viz—

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to make a change of masters when the whole or a part of their families went with them. When Sir Charles Lyell visited Beaufort in 1845, he observed the general unwillingness of planters to sell to Negro traders. If planters are "forced to part with slaves," he wrote, "they usually sell one to another, and are unwilling to dispose of them to a stranger. It is reckoned, indeed, quite a disgrace to a Negro to be discarded. When the former master bids for one of his 'own people,' at a sale of property forced on by debt, the public are unwilling to bid against him."[18] This tendency to retain a slave as long as it was possible to do so often led a planter into inefficiency and oversupply.

### EXTENT OF SLAVEHOLDING

The average number of slaves per owner for Beaufort District in 1790 was twenty-four; in 1860, thirty. The average for the district in 1860 was twice as great as the average for the state as a whole. The following table shows the size of slaveholdings in the district in 1790 and in 1860:

Jan. 13th 1840
Sambo & Jenny his wife and their children
Ned
Tyrah
Rhynah
Pilot
Grace
Penny & her son Isaac & Jack
Island George & Bynah his wife
William & Nancy his Sister and her child Bess
Honor Elizabeths Maid
Charles and his Wife Hagar and their son Allen
Robert & his wife Caty & their children Peter
Dunbee, and Caty's sister Dinah & her child
Bess brought back to stay with her Grand Mother Lucy."

[18] Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 233.

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SIZE OF SLAVEHOLDINGS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[11]

| Number of Slaves | Slaveowners | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | | Per Cent | |
| | 1790 | 1860 | 1790 | 1860 |
| 1 slave | 73 | 78 | 12.5 | 7.3 |
| 2 and under 5 | 88 | 173 | 15.1 | 16.1 |
| 5 and under 10 | 95 | 204 | 16.2 | 19.0 |
| 10 and under 20 | 86 | 188 | 14.7 | 17.6 |
| 20 and under 50 | 150 | 216 | 25.6 | 20.2 |
| 50 and under 100 | 69 | 142 | 11.8 | 13.2 |
| 100 and under 200 | 20 | 51 | 3.4 | 4.8 |
| 200 and under 300 | 3 | 13 | 0.5 | 1.3 |
| 300 and under 500 | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| 500 and under 1,000 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Total | 585 | 1,070 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Although the number of slaveholders in 1860 had increased 83.9 per cent over that of 1790, the distribution in the two periods, according to the size of holdings, did not vary appreciably. In 1790 some 58.5 per cent of the slaveowners had less than twenty slaves and in 1860 only 60 per cent had less than that number, a difference of less than two per cent. In 1790 those owning more than one hundred slaves were 4.1 per cent of the total, while in 1860 they were 6.6 per cent, a difference of 2.5 per cent. The only significant change in the distribution of the size of holdings occurred in the class possessing from twenty to fifty slaves. In 1790 this group was a fourth of the total, but in 1860 it had been reduced to a fifth.

While the general average for the district in 1860 would place every owner in the rank of a planter, it is significant that three-fifths of the slaveholders in the district owned less than twenty slaves. With less than this number a man engaged in the cultivation of sea-island

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[11] *Agricultural Census, 1860*, p. 237; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, 1790: State of South Carolina*, pp. 10-13.

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cotton, the staple crop in 1860, could not hope to engage in large scale production. Only 19.8 per cent owned more than fifty slaves and only one planter owned more than five hundred. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the majority of those engaged in agriculture in this district, one of the most densely populated slave counties in the entire South, belonged to the small planter class.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of slaves owned by St. Helena planters at any given time.[13] The first census of the United States shows that only four men in Beaufort District, none of whom lived on St. Helena Island, owned more than two hundred slaves in 1790. Frederick Witsell had 607; Thomas Heyward, 265; General Stephen Bull, 233; and John Rutledge (who lived in Charleston), 217. Of those living on St. Helena, the plantation of William Fripp with 153 slaves had the largest number; that of John Jenkins with 136 slaves, the next largest. The other holdings were considerably less. Thomas Chaplin had 65 slaves; William Chaplin, 50; John Chaplin, 30; Paul Fripp, 37; Thomas Fripp, 33; John Fripp, 38; Charles Capers, 45; William Capers, 15; John Cowen, 13; Peter Perry, 45; George Pope, 39.

Early in 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Treasury Department, estimated that there was an average of forty slaves to a plantation on St.

[13] The courthouse at Gillisonville, the seat of Beaufort District, was destroyed by Sherman's Army in 1864. Later the county seat was changed to Beaufort, and in 1883 the courthouse there was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the antebellum county records have, therefore, been destroyed. The MS, "Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860" (in possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.), does not contain a list of slaves. This MS is a duplicate of the original which Congressman William Elliott said in a written statement that he deposited in the Court of Claims. A search through some of the files of the Court has failed to reveal the original.

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Helena. With the blockade of the coast and the capture of St. Helena Island on November 7, 1861, the planters on the Island left in great haste, in some cases not having time to take even a house servant along. After the hasty departure of their masters, the slaves on Ladies and St. Helena islands quite generally remained on their respective plantations so that Mr. Pierce's estimate included in his "Report to the Secretary of Treasury" of February 3, 1863,[19] closely approximates the number of slaves on the St. Helena plantations during the latter part of the plantation regime.

Mr. Pierce found 260 slaves at Coffin's Point, the plantation of Thomas Aston Coffin, who was generally conceded to have the best managed and the most prosperous plantation on St. Helena. On Dr. William J. Jenkins' plantation he found 130 slaves; on the Eustis plantation on Ladies Island, 120; on the others from 38 to 80 slaves.[20] On the "best peopled" plantations he found an average of eighty-one slaves but a general average, on all plantations, of about fifty-two. This estimate is much higher than the size of slaveholdings of the majority of planters in Beaufort District, for, as the foregoing table indicates, 60 per cent of the owners in the district possessed less than twenty slaves in 1860.

The price of slaves increased with the advancing years of the ante-bellum period until in 1859 the average price of prime field hands reached about $1,900.[21] In some instances prime men sold for almost three thousand dollars.

[19] *Rebellion Record*, I, 302-315.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[21] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 374. For the advance in prices and an explanation of the causes see *ibid.*, pp. 359-401.

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The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[22]

| Value in dollars | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| None | 15 | 10.4 |
| 1-100 | 1 | 0.7 |
| 100-200 | 9 | 6.3 |
| 200-300 | 6 | 4.2 |
| 300-400 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 400-500 | 16 | 11.1 |
| 500-600 | 4 | 2.8 |
| 600-700 | 10 | 6.9 |
| 700-800 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 800-900 | 26 | 18.0 |
| 900-1,000 | 7 | 4.9 |
| 1,000-2,000 | 25 | 17.4 |
| 2,000 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Total | 144 | 100.0 |

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[23] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and

[22] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[23] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

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were merely a liability to the owner. All slaves listed as worth more than a thousand dollars were men. Besides Solomon whose value was estimated at $2,000, there were Andrew at $1,500; Dublin, Israel, Sampson, Ben, Solomon, and Cato, at $1,200; John Cox, Phil, Toney, Quamina, and Buff, at $1,100; and John, Chester, Joseph, Jupiter, Paris, Frank, Pompey, Daniel, Hector, Richard, Jacob, Sam, and Abraham, at an even $1,000. Prime women who could go to the field and turn out as much work as a man were most often listed at $800, although a few, Beck, Sally, and Nanny, would bring $900. Thus, out of 144 slaves, the Greenwood plantation had about fifty-nine prime hands in 1860.

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### SIZE OF ST. HELENA PLANTATIONS

The exact number of plantations on St. Helena Island at the close of the plantation regime is difficult to determine, because the planters themselves were not always consistent in designating the same tracts as separate plantations. It sometimes happened, as in the cases of Captain John Fripp and Dr. William J. Jenkins, that a planter owned several tracts at various places on the Island which he operated as distinct plantations, but in paying his taxes he grouped all of his tracts as one large holding. The number of separate tracts was about fifty-four[24] as far as can be determined by statements made by the owners themselves, or their heirs, some thirty years after the close of the plantation regime; and the number of landholders,

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[24] Petitions filed in the Court of Claims under the Compensation Act of 1891. Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Government, listed the number of plantations at fifty. *Rebellion Record*, I, 303. This number includes Morgan, Coosaw, Datha, Wassaw, Pine, and Polowana islands, small islands separated from St. Helena Island by creeks.

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000 forty. The size of individual landholdings is summarized in the following table:

SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND IN 1860[28]

| Size | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 100 acres | 4 | 10.0 |
| 100-300 | 14 | 35.0 |
| 300-500 | 7 | 17.5 |
| 500-800 | 8 | 20.0 |
| 800-1,000 | 1 | 2.5 |
| More than 1,000 | 6 | 15.0 |
| Total | 40 | 100.0 |

In two instances, that of Captain John Fripp and the estate of Mrs. Mary Coffin, holdings amounted to more than two thousand acres,[28] while in one instance the holding was only twenty-seven acres. The average holding, however, was 573 acres. In some cases, persons owning plantations on St. Helena also had plantations elsewhere. Marion T. Chaplin, for example, owned not only the Marion Chaplin place of 303 acres on St. Helena Island but three other plantations on Ladies Island amounting to 861 additional acres.

A comparison of the size of the landholdings on St. Helena Island with the size elsewhere in the parish shows that the average holding for the Island was slightly less than the average holding for the parish. The following table indicates the size of landholdings in St. Helena's Parish:

[28] Petitions filed in the Court of Claims under the Compensation Act of 1891.

[28] William Fripp, Sr., died before 1860 and his estate, although not divided prior to the payment of taxes for that year, was soon distributed among his heirs. His land in the foregoing table is listed under the names of his children.

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SIZE OF LANDHOLDINGS IN ST. HELENA'S PARISH IN 1860[27] 000

| Size | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 100 acres | 10 | 7.3 |
| 100-300 | 39 | 28.5 |
| 300-500 | 33 | 24.1 |
| 500-800 | 24 | 17.5 |
| 800-1,000 | 8 | 5.8 |
| More than 1,000 | 23 | 16.8 |
| Total | 137 | 100.0 |

Almost half, or 45 per cent, of the landowners on St. Helena Island had less than three hundred acres, while only 36 per cent in the parish as a whole owned a plantation that small. The average plantation on St. Helena, however, corresponded closely with the average for the parish, both containing almost six hundred acres.[28] A plantation of this size was larger than the average landholding for the state, the general average for the state being 488 acres.[29]

As has already been indicated, planters on St. Helena seldom operated their holdings as one large plantation, for in many instances the holdings were not contiguous. The actual size of the plantation unit was, therefore, in most cases smaller than the size of landholdings in 1860 would indicate. Although Captain John Fripp owned more than two thousand acres, the largest of his seven plantations contained only 460 acres. The following table, therefore, gives an indication of the working size of the plantation on St. Helena:

[27] MS, Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860.

[28] The average for St. Helena Island was 573 acres, and for the parish as a whole, 587 acres.

[29] *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Agriculture*, p. 222.

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SIZE OF SEPARATE TRACTS ON ST. HELENA IN 1860[30]

| Size | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 100 acres | 5 | 11.9 |
| 100-300 | 18 | 42.9 |
| 300-500 | 8 | 19.1 |
| 500-800 | 7 | 16.5 |
| 800-1,000 | 2 | 4.8 |
| More than 1,000 | 2 | 4.8 |
| Total | 42 | 100.0 |

More than half of the plantations on St. Helena were operated in tracts of less than 300 acres, and only two, those belonging to the Coffins, were managed in tracts of more than a thousand acres each. Five plantations actually contained less than a hundred acres, and only eleven contained more than five hundred acres.

These lands were useful only for agricultural purposes and had no speculative value. Robert Mills in his *Statistics of South Carolina* estimated the price of land in 1826 in Beaufort District to vary from $60 an acre to twenty-five cents.[31] The best land brought from $50 to $60 an acre; the second quality, from $20 to $30; and the lowest grade, from 25 cents to $1. In 1860 Dr. Thomas Fuller's four plantations of 2,550 acres were valued at an aggregate of $63,750, or $25 an acre. The William Fripp estate of more than three thousand acres had the same valuation. William Elliott, congressman from South Carolina, estimated in a hearing before the Judiciary Committee in 1888 that the lands in St. Helena's Parish generally sold at $20 to $40 an acre in 1860.[32]

[30] This number does not include six of Captain John Fripp's plantations or five of Dr. William J. Jenkins' plantations, because the exact size of these plantations cannot be ascertained.

[31] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 372.

[32] MS, Before the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, 1888. In possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.

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Here, as in the rest of the sea-island area, large land-holdings and large slaveholdings were concentrated in the hands of a few planters, some of them as wealthy as any to be found in the coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia. Here was the quintessence of large scale plantation economy, the characteristic features of which were evolved out of the production of sea-island cotton.

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CHAPTER IV

# SEA-ISLAND COTTON CULTURE

## THE PLANTING ROUTINE

248 THE CULTIVATION of sea-island cotton produced a characteristic system of agriculture. The average sea-island planter cultivated a little less than six acres to the hand. Had the plough been substituted for the hoe, the acreage per hand would have been twice as much. In addition to cotton, the planter raised corn and sweet potatoes as provision crops in the proportion of about seven-twelfths cotton, three-twelfths corn, and two-twelfths sweet potatoes. The average yield of cotton was about 135 pounds to the acre; of corn, fifteen to twenty-five bushels of the southern white-flint variety; and of potatoes, about 150 bushels to the acre.[1]

Since cotton was the main crop of the sea-island planter, he tended to consider that acres planted in provision crops were somewhat of a loss. It was seldom, therefore, that a planter raised enough corn and potatoes to furnish his plantation throughout the year, for the acreage in provision crops was determined not so much by the amount of provisions required as by the number of acres which the hands could attend while working the cotton crop. Factors' statements and the plantation books available indicate that sea-island cotton planters made frequent purchases of corn, rice, and bacon for provisions.

The planting season began about the middle of March, although the preparation of the soil started much earlier in

[1] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 133. With reference to the crops of St. Helena see Pierce, "Report of the Government Agent," in *Rebellion Records*, ser. I, 306.

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the year. Cotton was planted from about March 20 to April 10; corn about April 1; and sweet potatoes the latter part of March. The routine of labor on a sea-island cotton plantation from planting time until the crops were laid by is illustrated by that on John Fripp's Bluff plantation of 560 acres as recorded in his plantation book for 1856. The spring of this year was cold and wet so that Fripp was late in putting in his crops. 248

He did his first planting on March 20 and 21 when he banked and planted four acres of potatoes. The weather prevented his planting again until April 7 when he put in the rest of his potatoes, two more acres. On the tenth he commenced banking and planting cotton, and by the sixteenth he had put in thirty-eight acres which he recorded were doing "fine." Three days later he began putting in the corn crop and planted that day eighteen acres in the "Savannah swamp field." On the twenty-second he planted twenty-three acres of cotton in the "Marsh field." A week later he commenced the regular corn crop and by the first of May had planted in all sixty-three acres. The next day he planted twelve more acres of cotton in the swamp field and on May 3 put in three-fourths of an acre of rice in the small fresh water ponds by "Point field." On the twelfth and thirteenth he finished planting cotton, making a total of 121 acres.

The hands were busy hoeing cotton from that time until the twenty-second of May when they stopped to put in fifteen acres of "Shinney Peas." Two days later Fripp detailed a few hands to put in an acre of rice near the swamp field. All hands resumed cotton hoeing until July 5 when Fripp began to plant the first of his potato slips. 248 464 567

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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of
[412] the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
175 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
248 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

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used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

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Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

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> These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

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248 407 a small turning lathe, the operator standing at one end of the gin, feeding the cotton very slowly through the rollers, leaving the smooth black seeds behind. . . . Twenty or thirty of these little machines stand in one room; and, strange to say, none of those who have attempted to propel them by other power have succeeded. One very intelligent gentleman told me that he had spent $5,000 in trying experiments in machinery to gin this kind of cotton.[7]

### BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENTAL AGRICULTURE

248 Although sea-island cotton in the early days of its introduction was one of the most profitable crops ever raised in the South, the increase of its production and the varying fineness of the fiber caused a wide fluctuation in the price. Thus while some planters ~~realized considerable~~ profits, others were hard put to make expenses. As early as 1826 the most progressive planters in nearly every parish which grew "sea-islands" began to inquire into the causes of this condition. They organized agricultural societies[8] in the attempt to improve the general methods of culture and to standardize the prices; they subscribed to agricultural magazines; they wrote articles; they sent out questionnaires.

[175] In 1828 William Elliott, of St. Helena's Parish, writing in the *Southern Agriculturist*, expressed the general sentiment of sea-island planters on this important subject. He said:

I shall turn to the consideration of a question, which it is of a paramount importance that a Sea-Island Planter should examine and

[7] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 135.

[8] The St. Helena Agricultural Society was organized prior to February, 1843. *The Southern Agriculturist* of that date contains a letter from Daniel Jenkins, the secretary, on the unsuccessful experiment of some St. Helena planters in packing sea-island cotton in square bales.

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understand; viz. "What is the cause of the difference of price given for Cotton, grown even on adjoining plantations?" . . . latterly, the range of price has baffled all calculation, and has extended to such a pitch, that a favoured Planter has been known to obtain for his crop, *five times the price* obtained by his immediate neighbour. . . . Yet it must be confessed, that this unsettled state of things accompanied by its apparent system of favoritism, has a most discouraging effect on Planters. When they who enjoy equal advantages, as to salt exposure, practice equal assiduity in the application of salt manures, bestow equal care on the preparation of their staple, find that all these advantages and this care go for nothing—that the extra expense incurred by their superior preparation was equal to ten or twelve cents per pound—while one or two cents advance on the average price, was all their compensation; that the money thus profitably expended by the majority of growers, went to the exclusive profit of the foreign agent or manufacturer; while here and there some solitary, envied Planter, received a disproportionate reward for his labours. When these things are considered, it is not to be wondered at, that they are discouraged, and that they are ready to substitute any other culture which may offer to industry and skill, a competent and an equal remuneration. For, if the high rate of valuation, at which their lands and negroes have been acquired, whether inherited or purchased, be taken into the account, it will be confessed, that few investments of capital have yielded for the last ten years so trifling a return, as that of the Sea-Island Planters. The prices have never been high, and, whenever a full crop has crowned the wishes of the Planter, the price was sure to fall by anticipation.

. . . To the Vanderhorsts', the Seabrooks', Matthews', Coffins', and Popes', and others of that fortunate class, whose names give title to the highest prices in the agricultural lottery, I offer no advice. But, to the majority of Planters cultivating the Sea-Islands, or points of the mainland, inclosed by the arms of the sea, the debatable lands, as it were, of the culture, I would say, persevere yet a while in your efforts to approach the standard of these favoured names;—if that be, from physical causes impossible, hope

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yet longer, that, what happens in all other pursuits, will eventually happen in yours; viz. that a *gradation of prices may be established*, and that your cotton may meet the common justice, to be rated according to its fineness and cleanness, and not continue to be classed, as heretofore, with cotton the meanest, if it did not happen to equal the best.[9]

The Coffins and Popes, whose cotton Elliott mentioned as invariably receiving the top prices in market, were St. Helena Island planters.[10] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, another successful planter, was one of the first to spread knowledge of the improved methods of cultivation. In 1826 he sent a questionnaire to several planters who were considered the most efficient growers of the staple. Thomas Aston Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, St. Helena Island, received one of these questionnaires.[11]

[9] Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 154-161.

[10] The Coffin trademark was a "pinch-toe" coffin.

[11] W. B. Seabrook, *A Report Accompanied with Sundry Letters*, pp. 25-27; Coffin's letter dated Dec. 26, 1826. His reply was as follows:

"1. Is all your cotton equally fine?

I think not, but I have never heard purchasers remark any difference . . .

"2. What manure do you esteem best?

I have generally used the marsh mud taken from the creeks; sometimes green marsh.

"3. Is your cotton so distinguished for one quality, remarkable for others, &c?

My cotton derives its character from its silkiness, strength and evenness of fibre.

"4. What has been your average crop for the last seven years? and what quantity do you plant to the hand?

Caterpillars and storms have destroyed some of my most promising crops; but I think 450 lbs. per hand are about the average. I generally plant nearly three and a half acres to the hand.

"5. Are you particular in the selection of your seed? . . .

I have generally preserved the seed from my earliest pickings; sometimes I have planted seed, exchanged with my friends, both North and South. I think the cotton produced from the seed, with a green tuft, the finest and most silky, though not the most productive.

"6. . . .

"7. Do you preserve your seed, &c?

I am not particular, so that it is kept dry.

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The result of the wide differences in prices paid for sea-island cotton and the planters' subsequent attempt to remedy this situation led to improvements in the methods of agriculture, such as, the careful selection of seed, fertilization of the soil, soil analysis, and the rotation of crops. Instead of planting seed without regard to its origin, planters sought to obtain improved and tested strains. From 1826 to 1830 the Kinsey Burden seed was considered the most superior on the market; in 1854 "Owen's Selection," named for George C. Owens, was in highest favor.[12] At least three St. Helena Island planters gave their names to seed which was of high repute: Coffin, Pope, and Fripp. In 1868, when good sea-island cotton seed was extremely difficult to obtain, James Gregorie's factor in Charleston wrote to him, "I understand from

"8. Do you in gathering your crop pick those pods, which, from their immaturity, are imperfectly open, &c?

My orders are to pass over defective pods, to save the trouble of selecting them, when assorting; but, from the difficulty of seeing these executed, I presume they are much neglected, especially after frost.

"9. Do you dry your cotton in the sun or shade, and how long?

Generally one day on a scaffold, unless the cotton has been wet.

"10. What is your mode of preparation?

. . . I handle it as little as possible after it comes from the gin.

"11. Are you in the habit of using the whipper?

Before cotton goes to the gin, but not after.

"12. What is the character of your soil and situation?

High and low; mostly high; a yellow mixed sand on the hills, and black or grey in the narrow vallies which run N.E. and S.W. through the extent of the Island. I am on a neck of land, two sides are bounded by creeks, and one side by the ocean.

"I have *once* used a *machine gin* from St. Simons' Island, to the rollers of which, made of hickory, I gave as many as six hundred revolutions in a minute. I ginned about twenty bales of cotton with this gin, and heard no complaint about the staple being injured; but my negroes were continually putting it out of order, and my impelling power proving defective, I laid it aside. I introduced this remark, hoping the want of a gin, as well adapted to the Sea-Island Cotton as Whitney's saw gin is to the upland, may stimulate some of our planters, in this exertion, to produce one."

[12] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 13.

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Isaac his seed is the genuine old Fripp seed, if so take care & don't get it mixed with other seed so that you can furnish your friends with it next year."[13]

In the attempt to raise a staple with a fine, long fiber, sea-island cotton planters, while achieving this goal through a careful selection of seed, at the same time acquired a plant of small fruitage and consequently of slender yield, sacrificing quantity for the quality of the product. By force of circumstances, therefore, they were compelled to resort to every possible means of keeping the yield up to the maximum.

In the early days of the plantation regime when planters used any fertilizer at all it was for their potato fields, for they used only virgin land for their cotton. When the fields first selected for cotton became exhausted, as they invariably did in a few years, they again resorted to virgin land, clearing the land by girdling the trees, without taking the trouble to remove them, so that a cotton field was often a cemetery of dead oaks and palmettos which made the use of the plow impossible. In 1826 Robert Mills wrote, "The bulk of the planters, relying on the fertility of the soil, seldom plant any land but what is good, and change the same when it begins to fail for what is fresh, giving themselves little trouble to keep their fields in heart."[14] Even late in the ante-bellum period this expedient was still the most popular one.[15]

In some cases necessity forced the planter to drain the swamps and marshes and convert them into cotton fields.

[13] MS, John Colcock to James Gregorie, Charleston, April 9, 1868. In possession of Dr. M. G. Elliott, Beaufort, S. C.

[14] *Statistics of South Carolina*, pp. 155, 156.

[15] Seabrook, *Memoir on Cotton*, p. 24.

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These reclaimed tracts often proved very fertile so that in the later ante-bellum period, a few sea-coast planters quite generally engaged in draining and embanking marshes and swamps. In 1844 Mr. Seabrook, of Edisto, thought that the immense tracts of unreclaimed swamps "which lie along the line where the salt and fresh water meet . . . are capable of yielding an amount of cotton wool equal to the yearly exports of the State."[16] 248

### MARSH MUD AND SEA-ISLAND COTTON

A few planters fertilized their cotton fields soon after the introduction of the new staple; in fact, all the materials used as manure in the later ante-bellum period were employed as early as 1805 in a limited way by some sea-island planters, but it was not until 1825 that the methods of manuring became generally known.

Planters found that salt-marsh[17] mud which was within easy reach of most of the cotton fields, was the cheapest and one of the most profitable manures that they could obtain. It was usually applied to the soil at the rate of about forty-one cart loads to the acre. Planters employed various methods of adding it to their fields. On Edisto Island most of them preferred to use it as soon as dug. The Whaley plantation on Little Edisto was divided into halves, each half being planted in alternate years. Slaves went out in boats on the creeks and rivers to the nearby marshes, loaded their boats with the mud, and returned to empty it in ox-carts or hand-woven baskets [567]

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[17] The term "saltmarsh" was used on the coast to apply to the mud and other matters of which the marsh is composed.

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to be "toted" to the fields by other slaves.[18] The mud was then listed in. On the John F. Townsend plantation it was plowed in, but Mr. Townsend was the only man on the island who used plows to any extent.

Some planters dried the mud before spreading it upon the land. Tuomey's *Geological Survey of South Carolina* of 1848 recommends charring the mud to diminish its weight so that it might be transported profitably some distance up the rivers and so that it would fix the volatile products of decomposition on being added to a barn-yard manure heap.[19] Other planters made a compost[20] of the mud. R. F. W. Allston, writing in 1854 on the sea-coast crops, stated that the usual compost was prepared in summer "by mixing with farm-yard, cowpen and stable litter, salt marsh, marsh mud, and even salt."[21] It was applied to the land in winter at the rate of forty, fifty, and seventy cart loads. He considered that the best method of using this compost was, first, to prepare the land in the autumn by listing in the remaining growth as soon as the crop had been picked, even before the cotton had been prepared for market, and then in the spring to make a bed on the autumn listing by drawing up with a hoe the earth which had been well manured in the winter with the marsh-mud compost.

The proportion of marsh mud to barnyard manure used in this compost was based upon the character of the

[18] J. Swinton Whaley, "The History of Sea-Island Cotton." Unpublished manuscript.

[19] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, p. 232.

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[20] For a discussion of composts see F. A. Procher, "Report on Manures," in *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. I, 1-131 Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 70-80, 85-93.

[21] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 13.

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land and the experience of the planter. Colonel Edward Barnwell, of St. Helena's Parish, considered his success in sea-island cotton planting to be due entirely to his method of preparing compost. He descanted so much on compost that one of his friends once remarked that Edward Barnwell would put compost into his will. He did. He left a certain Negro to a son who intended to be a planter "because he knows all about making compost, without which a plantation is of no value."

While some planters brought the marsh mud to the manure heaps, still others mixed the mud and the manure on the fields themselves by "running a cowpen." The plantation cattle, which numbered as many as could be pastured upon the "field at rest" and the woodland, usually twenty to every five hands,[22] were penned on succeeding nights in movable yards on the resting field, which was littered with fine straw and marsh grass. The tramping of the cattle excellently prepared the field for a top dressing of marsh mud. Sometimes marsh grass was laid between the old rows after running the cowpen but before the mud was applied. Then, the sod of one year's growth was hoed down into the alleys and the bed formed upon it.[23]

Some planters used as a fertilizer only the marsh grass, often called simply "saltmarsh." "St. Helena," writing in 1837 for the *Southern Agriculturist* on the cultivation of sea-island cotton, explained his method of applying marsh grass as follows:

It may . . . be gathered in the summer, and put up in heaps, for use in the following spring. Where the planter alternates his

[22] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 87.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

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fields, the marsh may be spread out in the alleys of the vacant field, and immediately listed in. This mode is decidedly preferable; because, putting in the marsh at so early a period, gives it abundant time to rot, by the ensuing spring. But where the same field is planted for any number of consecutive years, the marsh must be put up in heaps to rot during the summer; for the field is then occupied with the cotton. With a good scythe, it may be fairly estimated, that one fellow will do six times as much at cutting marsh, as in digging mud: and when it is considered that six cart-loads of marsh, will manure a task better than 21 loads of mud, the balance is greatly in favor of marsh. Rushes do as well as marsh, where the land does not require salt. . . . Some planters object to marsh, and say that it produces "blue" in cotton; but no one need apprehend this, if the marsh has been put into the land so as to give it sufficient time to rot, before the cotton-plant reaches it.[24]

The value of the marsh mud as a manure for sea-island cotton land depended not only upon its effect in promoting retention of moisture but also upon the saline, organic, and calcareous matter which it contained. Most of the marsh mud, however, has a very low content of carbonate of lime and is not a sufficient fertilizer for soils deficient in calcareous matter. Some planters met this deficiency by the addition of crushed oyster shells which everywhere appear in great abundance along the banks of the rivers and creeks of the Sea Islands. John Couper, even before 1800, spread crushed oyster shells on his cotton lands on St. Simon's Island every other year and in the alternate years gave them a top dressing of marsh mud.[25] Yet the benefits of shells, or marl, to sea-island cotton land was so little known in the late ante-bellum period that Professor

[24] *Southern Agriculturist*, X, 175.
[25] MS in Couper-Wylly Papers.

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Charles U. Shepard, in reporting on the nature of the soils of Edisto Island to St. John's, Colleton, Agricultural Society, suggested that "the peculiar fertility of new sea-island cotton land" may be "owing to the proportion of comminuted shells natural to such soils, and the deterioration of these lands under long cultivation, ascribable to the exhaustion of carbonate of lime."[26] He strongly urged, therefore, that planters add pulverized oyster shells to their cotton fields or be careful to use a marsh mud which abounded in a gravel of feldspar and hornblende.[27] The old indigo heaps, the refuse of the vats, offered the planter another source of lime for his cotton fields. The lime used in the preparation of the dye had become mixed with earthy matters and was especially beneficial to the cotton fields.

A few planters experimented with the commercial fertilizers, especially guano and its substitutes. The *American Agriculturist*, writing in the late ante-bellum period on the crops of Edisto Island, earnestly recommended planters to use guano, which contains "the same fertilizing properties of muck, in an hundredfold degree," and suggested that they apply about 200 pounds to the acre, plowed in deep, or buried in the bottom of the cotton beds, making sure, however, to use "none but the best Peruvian, and purchase it from a reliable merchant, so as to be sure it is genuine."[28] By the close of the ante-bellum period planters in the sea-island cotton belt quite generally used some kind of fertilizer.

[26] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, p. xlii.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 234. Edmund Ruffin examined a specimen from a shell bank on Distant Island near Beaufort and found it contained 47 per cent of carbonate of lime.

[28] Printed in Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 132-133.

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ROTATION OF CROPS

242 Planters came much later to realize the importance of soil analysis as a means of determining what fertilizers were necessary to make their fields yield the maximum quantity of cotton. The first public organization to stress the importance of soil analysis was the Agricultural Society of St. John's, Colleton. In 1840 the Society asked Professor Shepard to analyze ten specimens of the soils of Edisto Island.[29] His report received considerable attention and helped to stimulate interest in improved methods of agriculture. Edmund Ruffin's geological survey and analysis of the mineral deposits of the state and Professor Tuomey's geological survey further contributed to the planters' increasing desire to know the exact nature of their soil so that they might succeed better in cultivating their plantations.

A few enterprising planters learned at an early date that a rotation of crops improved the quality of the land. For instance, John Couper, of Cannon's Point plantation, St. Simon's Island, a native of Scotland, practised rotation of crops before 1800, and his son, James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, carried his father's work still further.

James Hamilton Couper, an honor graduate of Yale, later visited his uncle in Glasgow and from there went to

[29] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxxviii-xliii. The soils analyzed were as follows: (1) virgin wet mud, (2) deposit wet mud, (3) close sandy soil from high land, (4) dark gray soil from land rather flat for cotton, (5) very light sandy soil (very high land), (6) dark gray soil from land rather low, (7) close yellow sandy soil (high land), (8) close yellow soil from the most productive part of Professor Shepard's tract, (9) mud that had been exposed to the sun for nearly two months, (10) mud taken from the cotton field in which it was buried the previous year.

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Holland to study reclamation so that he might drain the fertile swamps and deltas of the Georgia coast. With slave labor he cleared the cypress brakes of the Altamaha delta, grubbing, diking, and ditching the land, sometimes at a cost of a thousand dollars an acre, until in 1826, when he bought a half interest in Hopeton plantation, he was cultivating at a profit 641 acres of improved swamp land. In 1832 J. D. Legare, editor of the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, said of Hopeton plantation:

> We hesitate not to say Hopeton is decidedly the best plantation we have ever visited, and we doubt whether it can be equalled in the Southern states. And when we consider the extent of the crops, the variety of the same, and the number of operatives who have to be directed and managed, it will not be presumptive to say that it may fairly challenge comparison with any establishment of the United States, for the systematic arrangement of the whole, the regularity and precision with which each and all of the operations are carried out, and the perfect and daily accountability established in every department.
>
> The proportions of the crop, at the time of my visit, were 500 acres in rice, 170 in cotton, and 333 in cane.[30]

Mr. Couper attracted attention as a scientific planter not only on the seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina, but in Europe as well. Sir Charles Lyell, Miss Frederika Bremer, and the Honorable Amelia M. Murray, distinguished European visitors who spent several days at Hopeton at different times during the late plantation regime,[31] also praised his plantation management and experimentation with crops.

[30] MS in Couper-Wylly Papers.

[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 261-273; Hon. Amelia M. Murray, *Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada*, pp. 220-225; Frederika Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, pp. 485-491.

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242 Mr. Couper seldom allowed any of his fields to rest, a method of improving the fertility of the land followed by most sea-island planters. Instead, he fertilized the land and rotated the crops in order to replace the minerals extracted by growing plants. The following table, made from Couper's Hopeton Plantation Book, indicates for ten years the crops planted on West Old Field of eighty-five and a half acres, one of the most fertile of the seventeen fields which he annually cultivated, and at the same time illustrates his experimentation with crops:

ROTATION OF CROPS ON HOPETON PLANTATION, 1820-1829[21]

| | Crops In Acres | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Cotton | Corn | Cotton and corn mixed | Potatoes | Sugar cane | Pumpkins |
| 1820 | 79½ | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 1821 | 55 | 23¼ | 0 | 7¼ | 0 | 0 |
| 1822 | 78½ | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1823 | 78½ | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1824 | 36¾ | 4 | 33 | 4¾ | 0 | 0 |
| 1825 | 81 | 0 | 0 | 3½ | 1 | 0 |
| 1826 | 66 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 3½ | 0 |
| 1827 | 26¼ | 33 | 14½ | 8½ | 0 | 1¼ |
| 1828 | 75¾ | 0 | 0 | 8½ | 0 | 1¾ |
| 1829 | 36¼ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 0 |

On other fields Couper rotated peas, cotton, corn, cotton and corn mixed, potatoes, and occasionally pumpkins.

Although Couper had mixed cotton with corn as early as 1824, in 1844 Seabrook spoke of this method of rotation as having been lately adopted by a few planters in Georgia.[22] They planted cotton on alternate ridges with corn, and the next year substituted the cotton rows for the corn.

[21] MS, Hopeton Plantation Book, 1818-1831. In possession of Mrs. W. S. Lovell, Birmingham, Ala. Hopeton Plantation, on the Altamaha River, in Glynn County, Ga., contained about eleven thousand acres and in 1826 was valued at $80,412. The map on page 63 was reproduced from a map in colors in Hopeton Plantation Book.

[22] Seabrook, *Memoir on Cotton*, p. 28.

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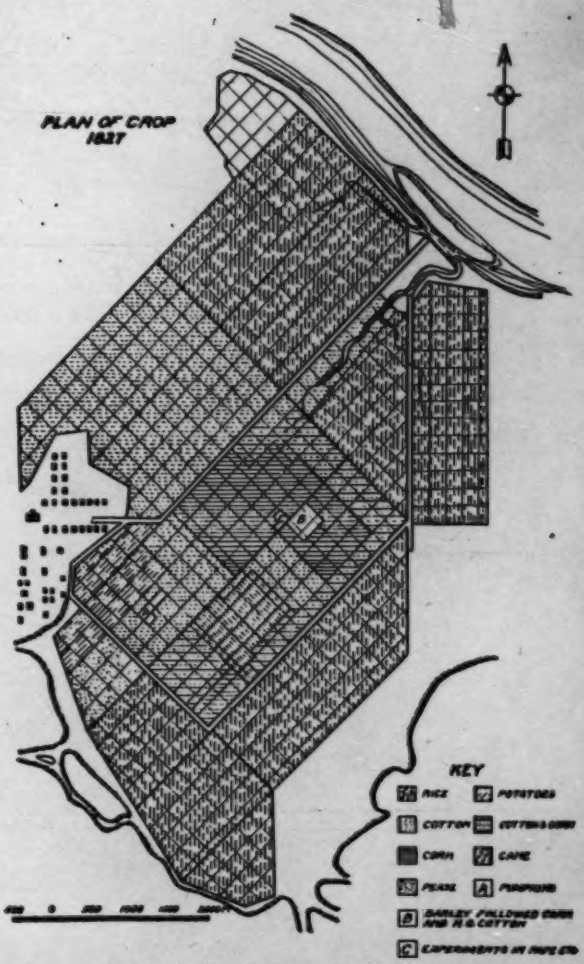


HOPETON PLANTATION ON THE ALTAMAHA

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242 Seabrook, however, thought this rotation unfitted for the South Carolina Sea Islands "where the high lands, which are limited in quantity, and unfit for corn, are alone considered safe for cotton." Instead, he recommended as a good rotation to be followed " in a small way," potatoes, or spring peas, rest, and cotton.[34]

"Rest" was the common practice of "rotation" on the Sea Islands. When the land had become exhausted by repeated cropping, its fertility was restored not only by the application of manures, but by resting the field for a certain length of time. The time necessary for restoration was dependent, of course, upon the nature of the subsoil. Enterprising planters hastened the process by thoroughly breaking up the soil, thereby exposing fresh surfaces to the atmosphere and turning the grass and weeds under to enrich the soil.

### THE AGRICULTURAL LOTTERY

248 Despite these efforts at scientific farming, which resulted in methods that are generally considered as belonging to present day agricultural development, sea-island cotton was an uncertain crop. In 1808 David Ramsay, writing the history of South Carolina, spoke of planting as an annual lottery, in which on an average of several years there were many blanks and many prizes. "A few of the latter," he wrote, "are very large, but the greatest number do not much exceed the price of the ticket."[35] In successful seasons, profits were large. One crop might purchase the land which raised it; two or three more, the Negroes who cultivated it. But in unsuccessful years,

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[35] David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina*, II, 396.

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planters felt the pinch of hard times. A late, wet spring might defer planting until there could be no hope of maturing an average yield before frost. Had the spring been propitious, an unseasonable frost might blight the plant and decrease the crop. Excess of rain or drought might retard the crop or the plant might develop a disease. When the crop was made and ready to be gathered, a storm or hurricane might blast the labor of a year. When the crop was gathered and baled ready for market, economic conditions at home or abroad might reduce the price so low as to plunge the planter into debt.

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The diseases to which sea-island cotton were subject, blight, rust, and "blue," were generally considered as arising from some defect in the soil.[36] They could be removed, or at least considerably remedied, by thoroughly draining the land and applying the proper fertilizer at the proper season. But the plant louse, cut worm, and the leaf worm, or caterpillar, as it was commonly known, could not be so easily combated. The plant louse was practically a yearly pest which planters fought by cultivation, attempting to raise a plant hardy enough to withstand the attacks of the insect. The cut worm often appeared in wet seasons and on low lands insufficiently drained. James Hamilton Couper recorded in his plantation book when commenting on the crop for 1818:

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> The cut-worm was so destructive, until the 18th. of May, as to have killed the cotton, as soon up, with the exception of the high parts of the old & new fields. They were universally found in the East River Field. It is believed that the Fresh, which covered the fields from the 5th. to the 21st. of March was the cause of their appearance in such numbers.[37]

[36] Allston, *Sea Coast Crops*, pp. 14, 15.
[37] Hopeton Plantation Book.

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The leaf worm, although nearly always present, became destructive only when the conditions for its development were favorable, such as, a warm winter followed by a wet spring. Planters constantly attempted to fight the insect by seeking to raise a plant which would mature its pods sufficiently early to produce a paying crop before the worm reached its most destructive stage. Once the caterpillars appeared in great numbers, however, the average planter of the ante-bellum period knew little to do but curse the fate which sent them. By turning large flocks of turkeys into the fields, they could save many acres of cotton, but no plantation kept a drove large enough to protect all the fields in a bad year, for, when the caterpillars reached the final stage of development, they usually destroyed a crop within forty-eight hours. In 1846-1847, caterpillars reduced the estimated crop of the South from 2,400,000 bales to 1,779,000.[38] J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, recalls that caterpillars so greatly damaged three hundred acres of his father's cotton in 1867 that he saved only seven bags of cotton.[39] On this occasion, while driving along the main road to his summer home on the opposite side of the island, a distance of twelve miles, his father crushed caterpillars under his wheels the entire way. Having finished the fields, they were then in possession of the road. Doubtless some planters learned before 1860 that they could successfully combat the leaf worm by dusting their plants with Paris Green,[40] but this method was not common knowledge until much later.

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[38] *DeBow's Review*, VI, 126.

[39] Whaley, "History of Sea-Island Cotton." Unpublished MS.

[40] Allston, in his *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15, advises, "Destroy the enemy

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The weather not only abetted the insects in their destruction of the cotton crops, but sometimes itself brought ruin. In 1819 James Hamilton Couper was found recording in his plantation book, "In the Spring, the Cotton was very generally destroyed by Frost," and "On the night of the 14th Octr. a sharp white frost destroyed about 70 acres of cotton at Hopeton."[41] In 1823 he wrote:

> The crop was set in good time; and was unusually promising until the excessive rains which commenced about the middle of July. These rains continued nearly two months, and occasioned the cotton to drop nearly the whole of the middle & under crop. The upper crop in quantity and maturity promised well, but from the diseased habit which the plant had acquired never opened.[42]

In 1826 he wrote, "This is the only cotton crop since 1818 which has not been cut off by spring freshes, early fall frosts, or gales of wind," and the following year he again recorded, "A very high fresh which occurred about the end of May nearly destroyed the Cotton in Carr's Is." There were heavy rains again in 1828 and 1829, and in 1830 "a very severe Hail Storm was so destructive to the cotton crop, that the failure . . . was nearly entire." With this year, Couper left off recording his observations on crops, but in a letter to his son in 1855 he wrote, "We have had a glut of rain during the week; and as was to be expected the cotton is shedding freely. Three fourths of the Cotton crops are destroyed by the August rains."[43]

in embryo, as the energetic planter . . . has already done." He doubtless refers to dusting the plants with a mixture of Paris Green, rosin, and damaged wheat flour.

[41] Hopeton Plantation Book. [42] *Ibid.*

[43] Couper-Wylly Letters, August 23, 1855, James Hamilton Couper to Hamilton Couper.

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248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir
133 Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in
248 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un-
132 usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by
[731] caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

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## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 233.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

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he had made it, and it was the factor who enabled him to do so.[47] He sold the planter's cotton on commission. He

[47] See factors' statements and letters in the McPherson and Gregorie Papers, and the John E. Fripp Papers. The following statement is John E. Fripp's account with his factor from September, 1856, to May, 1857:

Cr.——John E. Fripp, Esqr.——In Account——Current with——
Coffin & Pringle

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1856 | | | | | |
| July 22 | By Balance at your credit as pr. account rendered | | | | 86.77 |
| November 20 | By Nett Sales of 3 Bags sold in Liverpool | | | | |
| | say £50. 13.10 | | | | |
| | £39.19.01 @ 9¼% | | 194 | | |
| | £10.14.09 @ 8½ % | | 57.77 | 245.77 | |
| | £50.13.10 | | | | |
| | Less advance recd. 17th June last | | 194 | | |
| | " 127 days Interest on advance from 5th September last to maturity of Sales 10th January 1857 @ 6% | 4.01 | | | |
| | " our commission @ 2½% on balance say on $51.77 | 1.29 | | 199.30 | 46.47 |
| 1857 | | | | | |
| January 5 | By received for T. M. Hanckel's order upon Legare & Colcock | | | | 135.75 |
| February 20 | By received for 3 Hides | | | | 11.10 |
| April 13 | By Nett Proceeds of 11 Bags Cotton as pr. Sales rendered | | | | 1,712.85 |
| | | | | | $1,998.94 |

Dr.——John E. Fripp, Esqr.——In Account——Current with——
Coffin & Pringle

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1856 | | |
| September 30 | To Sundry Postages paid to date | .28 |
| November 26 | " remitted him | 50.00 |
| | " 94 yds California Kersey @ 40c | 37.60 |
| | " 124½ yds Brown Plains @ 34c | 42.33 |
| | " 44½ yds Union Plains @ 25c | 11.12 |
| | " 56 Blankets | 129.20 |
| | " 20 yds Satinet @ 62½c | 12.50 |
| | " 1 ps Red Flannel 35 yds @ 25c | 8.75 |
| | " 1 ps Long Cloth 40½ yds @ 15c | 6.07 |

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248 sold him on credit the provisions on which his plantation operated: his Negro cloth, his farm implements, frequently his cotton seed, and much of his corn and bacon. He paid the planter's taxes and cashed his drafts.

Frequently the planter and his factor were related by blood ties so that the agent had an additional incentive to treat him as a preferred creditor. While the relation between individual planter and factor was often friendly, there was in general a feeling of resentment between the two. When the planter's crop failed, his factor might consider that the failure was due, in part at least, to mismanagement; while the planter constantly regarded his factor's commissions as too high. An Edisto planter who once raised large crops of sea-island cotton still speaks with bitterness of the more than hundred years of bondage in which Charleston factors held sea-island planters.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | " 1 ps Bleached Homespun 47 yds @ 12½c | 5.88 |
| | | | " 48 pair Shoes @ $1.10 | 52.80 |
| | | | " Freight $2.72 Drayage 19c | 2.91 |
| 1857 | | | | |
| January | 1 | | " paid his order to B. S. Screven | 50.00 |
| March | 3 | | " paid him | 500.00 |
| | 4 | | " paid 8 Months & 13 days Interest on his Bond for $3415 to John Webb to date | 154.60 |
| | | | & on account of the Principal of said Bond | 1,345.00 |
| | | | & one year & 1 Month Interest on his Bond for $4000 to same to date | 303.33 |
| | 10 | " | paid his order to Wm. C. Danner & Co. | 104.26 |
| May | 5 | " | paid his order to O. P. Law, Tax Collector | 95.56 |
| | | | | $2,902.40 |
| | | | To Balance brought down at your debit this day | $ 903.55 |

E. E.

Charleston 10th June 1857
Coffin & Pringle
for John P. Matheson

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Without his factor, however, the planter would have been hard put to it to operate his plantation. The factor often held the planter's cotton in storage waiting higher prices, paying storage and insurance, which, of course, were deducted from the sale of the cotton. Sea-island cotton was usually later in reaching the market than the short-staple cotton because of the longer time required in ginning it. It did not begin to move freely into market until the first of the year, but some planters had their factors hold their cotton as late as July and August.

It usually cost the planter about 4 per cent of the value of the bale to market his cotton after it had been ginned. For instance, in June, 1835, Miss Mary B. Elliott, daughter of William Elliott, the first successful planter of sea-island cotton in South Carolina, sold ten bales of prime cotton from her plantation "The Battery"[48] for $1,258.65, the freight, storage and factor's commission of which were $48.64, or 4 per cent of the receipts.[49] In July it cost her 4.6 per cent of the receipts to market five bales of stained cotton and two bales "a shade better." In June, 1840, she was paying 4.1 per cent for freight, storage, and commission. In 1859 John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island and Bluff plantation on the Oakatee, was paying 4.1 per cent.[50] Freight ordinarily cost $1 a bale; landing, weighing, and storage about 26 cents a bale; insurance, about 37 cents a bale, and the factor's commission 2½ per cent of the sale price.[51] Planters on St. Helena Island ordinarily

[48] The town of Port Royal was built on this plantation during the Civil War.
[49] Miss Mary B. Elliott Account Book, 1835-1849.
[50] John E. Fripp Papers.
[51] Based upon statements which Coffin & Pringle, factors, made to John E. Fripp, in Fripp Papers.

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sent their cotton to Beaufort by their own sail boats which were loaded at the plantation docks. At Beaufort they put the cotton, which they billed to their factor, on a boat for Charleston, paying the usual $1 a bale for freight.

The price paid for sea-island cotton varied with the yield and demand for the staple throughout the antebellum period, as did that of upland cotton. Between 1806 and 1816 the price varied from 25 cents to 47 cents a pound.[52] At this time, sea-island cotton was not graded, as William Elliott pointed out in 1828,[53] but sold generally as either fine or inferior. The account book of Miss Mary B. Elliott, his sister, in which she recorded her sales between 1830 and 1849 indicates that she sold during this time four grades of cotton: extra fine, prime, inferior white, and stained or yellow.[54] The price which she received for prime cotton varied from 21 cents in 1843 to 62½ cents in 1836. The inferior white brought 4 or 5 cents a pound less than the prime cotton and the extra fine about that much more. The stained cotton sold usually from 7 to 9 cents a pound.

A sea-island cotton planter of Liberty County, Georgia, analyzed his cotton crops from 1830 to 1847 and found that the average price he received a pound in the eighteen years varied from 13½ cents in 1842 to 41 cents in 1838.[55] At the same time his yield per acre varied from 68 pounds in 1846, when he received net proceeds of $41 a hand, to 223 pounds an acre in 1842, when he

[52] *DeBow's Review*, IV, 412.

[53] *Supra*, p. 51.

[54] The classes of long staple cotton on the market were: Floridas, Santees, Maines, and Sea Islands. Each of these was usually classified as common, medium and fine.

[55] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 128-129.

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realized $80 a hand. The net proceeds per hand were highest in 1835 at $137 a hand and lowest in 1846 at $41, with an average of $83 for the eighteen years.

Miss Mary B. Elliott received over a period of eleven years an average of $87.54 a bale for her sea-island cotton, receiving as high as an average of $183.57 a bale in 1836 and as low as $54.61 in 1848.[56] If it cost an average of $27 a bale to gin the cotton, as Seabrook of Edisto Island estimated,[57] and 4 per cent of the receipts to market it, then the planter had $57.04 a bale out of which to care for his slaves, pay the general overhead on his plantation, and realize interest on the investment of his capital.

[56] Elliott Account Book, 1835-1849.
[57] *Supra*, p. 30.

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CHAPTER V

# PLANTATION MANAGEMENT

WHILE MOST sea-island planters were ready to agree upon the unsuccessfulness of growing long staple cotton, at least one of them was unwilling to attribute their failure to caterpillars, storms, and the Charleston factors. Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, writing on this subject in 1834 for the *Southern Agriculturist*, was of the opinion that it was due rather to the planter's mismanagement: to his absence from the plantation in the summer months, to his want of strict personal supervision when he was at home, to over-planting, and to ignorance.[1]

## THE OVERSEER

St. Helena planters quite generally employed overseers to supervise the detailed operations of their plantations, at the same time reserving the right to lay down the general rules of management.[2] When the planter had several large holdings, as for instance, Captain John Fripp and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, it was impossible for him to attend personally to all the affairs of his crops and his laborers. Had the planter been disposed to undertake so arduous a task, he likely would have done so at the risk of his health, for the whites were subject to the diseases of the summer months, especially malaria, or the "intermittent fevers." No planter, therefore, who could borrow the price of an overseer's wages would spent the "sickly season" on his

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[1] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "On the Causes of the General Unsuccessfulness of Sea-Island Planters," *Southern Agriculturist*, VII, 177-183.

[2] For a list of regulations made by a planter for his overseer, see Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 115-122.

[p. 74]

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plantation. Some St. Helena planters, however, who were unwilling to leave their plantations for long, built a health resort on a bluff on the seaward side of the Island so that they might direct the general management of their plantations during the summer months, the period so important in the growth of sea-island cotton.

While practically every cultivated tract of land on St. Helena Island had its overseer, not every tract had a resident overseer. The owner might employ only one overseer, who had general supervision over his various tracts, and delegate the details of management to a trusted Negro, known as the driver. Consequently, on some plantations there was not even a house for an overseer, the plantation being superintended by the driver and visited by the overseer living on another plantation.

The overseer's position was a difficult one, for his employer expected him not only to manage the plantation economically and raise a good crop, but also to keep the Negroes satisfied and happy. It was customary to furnish the overseer with a house, provisions, and one or two house servants in addition to his money wage.[3] The salary varied with the overseer's ability and the planter's prosperity. James Hamilton Couper, who for several years was the head overseer, or "general manager" of Hopeton plantation, in Glynn County, Georgia, received $2,000 a year and "the general run of the plantation."[4] When he bought half of the plantation in 1826, he retained the general management under the following conditions: "$1000 to be allowed [me] for management, I am

[3] For a planter's contract with his overseer see Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 122-126.

[4] Couper-Wylly Papers, John Couper to James Couper, May 24, 1828.

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also to make the same use of plantation money for maintainance as heretofore. I am also to be allowed a cook, washerwoman and boy as houseservants, a woman for poultry and a stable boy,—or an equivalent. . . . One-half the wages of an overseer and one-half his finding to be allowed by you, and the other by me. The salary not to exceed $600."[5]

At the time James Hamilton Couper was receiving $2,000 a year, Charleston papers were printing advertisements of overseers who offered their services for as low as $50.[6] Miss Mary B. Elliott, of "The Battery" on Port Royal Island, had seven different overseers between 1834 and 1849 whom she paid from $200 to $350 a year.[7] From 1842 to 1861, H. M. Stuart had six different overseers for his Oak Point plantation in St. Helena's Parish whom he paid at a rate of $165 to $320 a year.[8] Both Miss Elliott and Mr. Stuart were forced on one occasion to change overseers in the middle of the year, and the longest that either of them retained the same overseer was six years.

Planters were often willing to make many concessions to their overseers, for a frequent change demoralized the Negroes and led to the general deterioration of the plantation. In 1828 the *Southern Agriculturist* attributed the good condition of the Butler plantation on Butler's Island, Georgia, to the fact that the management of the estate had been kept in the same family for twenty-six years, R. King

[5] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Hamilton, May 22, 1826.

[6] *Charleston Courier*, Feb. 20, 1828. "A Married Man, whose Wife has been brought up in the Country, will take care of a Plantation as Overseer, for fifty dollars a year."

[7] Elliott Account Book.

[8] H. M. Stuart Receipt Book.

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having assumed management in 1802, finding the gang good, but "very disorderly which is invariably the case when there is a frequent change of managers."[9] Later his son succeeded him.

Louis Manigault, after having made only half a crop due to his new overseer's inexperience, wrote, "He says 'he will do better another year, that now he sees into it,' and as is well known, 'Never change an Overseer if You can help it.' We try him once (but only once) more."[10] But he proved no better the second year than the first. "Elated by a strong and very false religious feeling he began to injure the plantation a vast deal, placing himself on a par with the Negroes, by even joining in with them at their prayer meetings, breaking down long established discipline, which in every Case is so difficult to preserve, favouring and siding in any difficulty with the people, against the Drivers, besides causing numerous grievances."[11] And so Manigault was forced to look for a new overseer.

### ORGANIZATION OF SLAVE LABOR

Planters learned early in the use of slave labor that it was necessary to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over the others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations the seasoned Negroes trained the new ones and were responsible for their behaviour. In the early days of the plantation regime, when a gang of fresh Africans was purchased, they were assigned

[9] R. King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[10] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 143.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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466 in groups to certain reliable slaves who initiated them into
567 the ways of the plantation. These drivers, as they were
464 called, had the right of issuing or withholding rations to the raw recruits and of inflicting minor punishments. They taught the new slaves to speak the broken English which they knew and to do plantation work which required little skill, gathering oyster shells to be burned for making lime, mixing concrete from sand, lime, and shells, cutting wood, and ditching fields. At the end of a year, the master or overseer for the first time directed the work of the new Negro who now had become "tamed," assigning him to a special task of plantation work along with the other seasoned hands who had long since learned to obey orders, to arise when the conch blew at "day clean," to handle a hoe in listing and banking, to stand still when a white man spoke.

The planter usually divided his hands into four classes: drivers, tradesmen, house servants, and field hands. The number of drivers on a plantation depended upon its size. Only the largest of the St. Helena plantations had as many as two. It was the driver's business to superintend generally the field hands, and he carried a small club or whip as his "wand of office." He issued rations; he saw that each laborer's task was properly performed; and he inflicted corporal punishment whenever he saw fit, always, however, subject to the overseer's or master's order. In the absence of the overseer or owner, the driver usually succeeded to much of their authority, and in many cases knew more about the details of plantation affairs than the owner himself. For instance, when St. Helena Island was captured by Federal troops in 1861,

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the drivers quite generally remained at home issuing rations and directing the work of the plantation.

R. King, Jr., overseer of the Butler estate, thought that the selection of drivers was one of the "grand points" in plantation management. A cruel driver could demoralize the whole plantation, while an honest one could keep the slaves busy and happy. "An order from a driver," he said in explaining his method of plantation discipline, "is to be as implicity obeyed as if it came from myself, nor do I counteract the execution, (unless directly injurious,) . . . It would be endless for me to superintend the drivers and field hands too, and would of course make them useless."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, a missionary to St. Helena Island in 1862, described Limus, a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations, as being "very smart" and easy to learn. "He has the energy and *cuteness* and big eye for his own advantage of a born New Englander. He is not very moral or scrupulous, and the church-members will tell you 'not yet,' with a smile, if you ask whether he belongs to them. But he leads them all in enterprise, and his ambition and consequent prosperity make his example a very useful one on the plantation."[13]

Next to the driver in importance and authority were the tradesmen and the house servants. While the num-

[12] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec. 1828. "But the grand point [in managing the Butler estate] was to suppress the brutality and licentiousness practiced by the principal men on it; (say the drivers and tradesmen). More punishment is inflicted on every plantation by the men in power from private pique, than from a neglect of duty. . . . The driver to screen favourites, or apply their time to his own purposes, imposes a heavy tax on some. Should they murmur, an opportunity is taken, months after, to punish those unfortunate fellows for not doing their own and other tasks. . . . As an évidence of the various opportunities that a brutal driver has to gratify his revenge, . . . let any planter go into his field, and in any Negro's task he can find apparently just grounds for punishment."

[13] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 37-38.

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ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

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The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16] Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

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[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

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ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18]

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862, found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants.

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house.

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 287.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

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THE TASK SYSTEM

464 Less than half of a planter's total number of laborers
567 could usually be counted upon for a full day's work.

When Captain Basil Hall visited the United States in 1827 and 1828 he found on a sea-island plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 122 slaves. Of these, seventy were men and women between the ages of fourteen and fifty; forty-eight were children under the age of fourteen; and four were superannuated. The seventy workers were classified as follows: thirty-nine full hands, sixteen three-quarter hands, eleven half hands, and four quarter hands. Out of seventy persons, therefore, the planter had fifty-
(463) seven and a half "taskable hands," but those working in
(359) the fields were only forty-four taskables, while the other thirteen and a half were employed as cart drivers, nurses, cooks for the Negroes, carpenters, house servants, and stock minders.[20]

The number of taskable hands on a plantation varied from year to year. Children were not sent to the field until they were fourteen, but were put to work at minor jobs, pulling weeds, "minding child," picking up trash, washing dishes. Superannuated slaves were also given tasks calling for little physical exertion; such as, gardening, tending horses, nursing, sewing. *Enceinte* women did half tasks until confinement, and women with suckling babies also did half task until the child was eight months old. A slave who had been sick did a portion of a task until he had sufficiently recovered to resume his accustomed amount of work.

[20] Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828*, II, 229.

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The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

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BRINGING IN MARSH GRASS

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for Weehaw plantation near Georgetown, which were also observed on St. Helena plantations, were as follows:[21]

Corn: Sowing done in gang. Covering done in gang.
Hoeing ¼ acre Hauling up ½ acre.
Plowing corn 2½ to 3 acres; a man & mule will tend 30 acres. Stripping fodder ¾ acre on first day—after that strip 1 acre & carry home that of the previous day.

Potatoes & Slips:
Planting—3 [hands] in a ¼ acre, who also bed it up.
Hoeing—2 in a ¼ acre. Hauling up 20 Compass.[22]
Digging slips—men, 5 rows—Women, 4 rows & carry home.
Digging roots for allowance—5 to 7 rows, as they bear.
Weeding is usually done by the shufflers.[23]

Peas: 3 hands to 3 acres when planted between corn.
Harvesting—2 large blankets.

Ditching . . . 6 to 8 tasks. Spreading straw[24]—if wet ½ acre. if dry ¾ acre. Listing in straw—½ acre.

Getting task stakes, 500 to a hand[25]

Splitting Rails—100 Rails 12 ft long & heavy

Cutting Wood—1 cord. . . .

Splitting garden railings—500 to 3 men. . . .

Cutting down & piling up corn stalks, 1 to 1¼ to 1½ acres.

Digging ditches . . . —600 cubic feet.

The tasks at cutting marsh grass and digging marsh mud for fertilizing the fields were estimated by the cart load and varied with the weather and the distance of the marsh from the field.

[21] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book.

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[22] A compass was five feet as measured by a wooden triangle called a compass.

[23] Children or superannuated men and women.

[24] On St. Helena plantations marsh grass was used instead of the rice straw spread on the Weehaw fields.

[25] Each hand's task was staked off.

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SLAVE RATIONS

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The amount and type of rations which were issued to the hands varied with the plantation. For instance, four different plantations on Edisto Island observed the following practices.[26] One plantation master issued to each hand one bushel of potatoes a week from about October 1 to February 1, and then one peck of corn, ground or unground as preferred, or one peck of broken rice. The owner gave out meat occasionally. On another plantation the rations were: one bushel of potatoes, or ten quarts of corn meal, or eight quarts of rice and four quarts of peas. In addition to this, the slaves, numbering 170, were allowed during the year twenty barrels of salt fish, two barrels of molasses, and fresh meat occasionally. On a third plantation the diet was varied by a weekly ration of a half bushel of potatoes, six quarts of meal, and twenty-one pounds of fresh meat, or ten quarts of meal or rice. A fourth plantation gave out, in addition to the usual half bushel of potatoes, a quart of vegetable soup once a day during hard labor and twice a week at all other times.

In 1862 Edward L. Pierce reported that the customary rations issued by St. Helena planters were a peck of corn a week to each hand and meat at Christmas and in June when work was hardest.[27] While a few plantations allowed meat only at Christmas, a few others dealt it out as often as once a month or once a fortnight. Some plantations also gave molasses and sugar occasionally. Children were allowed from two to six quarts of corn a week, the amount varying with the age of the child. Edward S. Philbrick, one of the Government's superintendents of

[26] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 134.
[27] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.

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567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(278) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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the money thus obtained they bought extra clothing, coffee, sugar, and what was with them the chief necessity of life, tobacco.[31]

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R. W. Roper estimated in 1844, in an address delivered in Columbia, S. C., before the State Agricultural Society, that it cost a planter $11.52 annually to feed a slave.[32] His estimate was based upon the following rations: twelve bushels of corn at 50 cents a bushel, twelve quarts of salt at 1 cent a quart, two pounds of bacon a week at 4½ cents a pound, and twelve pounds of tobacco a year at 6 cents a pound. While the prices quoted in 1844 were, of course, not the same for each year of the ante-bellum period, they approximated fairly closely the general average.

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Clothing cost the planter considerably less. St. Helena planters ordinarily allowed each slave two suits a year, one for summer and another for winter. Thomas A. Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, gave out in April for every 200 hands 500 yards of men's blue cotton cloth, like the material used in workmen's clothes in the North, 600 yards of coarse unbleached cotton shirting for the men, 600 yards of the same material for women's underclothes, 600 yards of calico in gay colors for frocks, 100 handkerchief pieces, and 100 straw hats for men. In November he issued 550 yards of stout woolen cloth for men's clothes and 600 yards of thinner woolen for women, 1,200 yards of unbleached cloth for shirts and underclothes, 100 turban handkerchiefs for the women, 100 warm caps for the men; 200 pairs of shoes, and 67 blankets of assorted sizes. The house servants got hose and flannels in addition to

[31] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.

[32] R. W. Roper, "Address," *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. 3, p. 89.

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these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead of the usual two suits received by field hands.

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Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of clothing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handkerchief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

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Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

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The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

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Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

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[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.

[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.

[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.

[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.

[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

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> The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery."

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

" Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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Doctor; and since the Proprietor never grudges a Doctor's bill, however large, he has a right to expect that the Overseer shall always send for the Doctor when a serious case occurs."[46] But the Overseer was cautioned against permitting persons to lie up when "there was nothing or little the matter with them."

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Many plantations had hospitals, or "sick houses," as the Negroes called them. The hospital on Prospect Hill plantation on Edisto Island was a brick building. Sir Charles Lyell found the hospital on Hopeton plantation in 1845 to consist of "three wards, all perfectly clean and well-ventilated." One was for men, another for women, and a third for lying-in women.[46] The hospital was in charge of the mistress of the plantation, or the overseer's wife, assisted by a Negro woman whose special task it was to look after the sick. Sir Charles observed that the Negroes refused to take medicine from any hands other than those of their master or mistress. When a Negro child was sick it was usually the mistress who sat up all night giving medicines rather than the mother. After Mrs. Trescot, of Barnwell Island, had been up all night nursing a Negro woman, she said to her English guest next morning, "When people talk of my having so many slaves, I always tell them that it is the slaves who own me. Morning, noon, and night, I'm obliged to look after them, to doctor them, and to attend them in every way."[47]

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Since the owner and his wife or his overseer attended to all the simple illnesses of his people, he sometimes attempted to school himself in medical knowledge. The

[46] *DeBow's Review*, XXI, 381; Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 116, 120.
[46] Lyell, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[47] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 141.

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*Southern Agriculturist*, in an article on "The Plantation Doctor," issued the warning that "the planter of all others, should be acquainted with medical remedies, to cure those diseases and injuries to which his Negroes, from their occupations, are so frequently liable."[48] The planter might obtain for his own instruction in the treatment of minor diseases numerous books of "family medicine." One such book, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*,[49] published in Charleston in 1848, lists all the diseases common to the Negro together with the treatment therefor.

Despite the planter's own ministrations, his plantation medical bill was often high. Miss Mary B. Elliott's Account Book gives the medical bill for her plantation for seven of the years between 1837 and 1849. It was lowest in 1849 at $25 and highest in 1845 at $124.94 with an average for the seven years of $68.89. E. M. Whaley's bill of 1862 for his Little Edisto Negroes whom he had moved to Georgia amounted to $329.50. The bill, which is itemized for the year, indicates that the doctor was frequently called at night to treat a sick Negro. For six days in April the doctor visited Jim every day and gave him medicine, charging $2.50 or more a visit. From November 4 to December 2 he visited Louisa's child, sometimes every day, at other times only once a week.[50] Some planters made a contract with their doctors to attend to their Negroes at a given price per head for the year. For example, a planter near Savannah paid his doctor a flat rate of $1.50 a slave, while a certain Dr. Pritchard

[48] *Southern Agriculturist*, X, 561.
[49] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine.*
[50] MS in Whaley Papers dated December 6, 1862.

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567 offered his services to another planter in that vicinity at
758 $1.25 a head.[51] On St. Helena Island at least four of the planters were doctors.

567 Negroes seem to have been especially susceptible to
164 cholera, "peripneumonia," and dysentery, or bloody flux, as it was most commonly called. When once cholera appeared among the Negroes, it usually could not be controlled until several had died. In 1852 and again in
[165] 1854 cholera swept off many of the best slaves on Louis Manigault's plantation on Argyle Island, Georgia. After
[734] these losses, Manigault bought 771 acres of "high land" on the Georgia main which he used partly for cholera camps and for the summer residence of the Negro children.[52] In 1855 when about fifty cases of cholera appeared among James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation Negroes, he wrote to his son in alarm, "The causes I cannot discover, they [the Negroes] live at various settlements, are employed in every kind of work, and have the same food."[53]

Couper considered "peripneumonia" almost as alarming as cholera.[54] "Peripneumonia" was the ante-bellum term for pleuropneumonia, a combination of pleurisy and
[165] pneumonia. Although it did not occur in epidemics, it was nearly always fatal to the slaves. Although dysentery did not always appear among the plantation Negroes in a severe form, in 1857 Henry A. Middleton, Jr., lost forty of his people on Weehaw plantation, near Georgetown, from an epidemic of this disease.[55] After the epidemic,

[51] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 166.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 143.
[53] Couper-Wylly Papers, March 9, 1855.
[54] *Ibid.*, April 13, 1857.
[55] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[58] 567 (758) (743)

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[58] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 12, 18[illegible]

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

567 Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. 567
The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also 844
usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement 759
of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded 567
the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery dur- 434
ing the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[80]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two 567
of each garment and six diapers."[80] The garments were 854
flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of 297
homespun.[81]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, 567
she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or 853
an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[80] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[81] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[82] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On
862 Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[62]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
(164) as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[62] *Ibid.*

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between 1833 and 1850. Within a period of five years William Jenkins lost three infants in succession. 165

Data for the comparison of the death rate of whites and Negroes in the ante-bellum period are meager. The death rates for Charleston from 1830 to 1845 are as follows: 165 567

COMPARISON OF WHITE AND BLACK DEATH RATES IN CHARLESTON*

| Year | Deaths Per Thousand | |
|---|---|---|
| | Whites | Blacks |
| 1830 | 25.4 | 25.0 |
| 1831 | 21.4 | 26.3 |
| 1832 | 19.2 | 18.1 |
| 1833 | 18.2 | 17.9 |
| 1834 | 23.8 | 22.7 |
| 1835 | 23.2 | 21.5 |
| 1836 | 24.6 | 51.0 |
| 1837 | 21.1 | 21.4 |
| 1838 | 54.6 | 30.3 |
| 1839 | 33.4 | 25.6 |
| 1840 | 19.7 | 21.5 |
| 1841 | 15.2 | 22.3 |
| 1842 | 19.9 | 20.9 |
| 1843 | 16.4 | 30.4 |
| 1844 | 14.4 | 23.1 |
| 1845 | 18.9 | 20.8 |

The death rate of the whites was highest in 1838 when 54.6 persons per 1,000 died due to an epidemic of yellow fever, and lowest in 1841 when only 15.2 per 1,000 died, with an average for the sixteen years of 23.1 per 1,000. For the blacks the death rate was highest in 1836 when 51 per 1,000 died from an epidemic of cholera, and lowest in 1833 when only 17.9 per 1,000 died, with a general average of 24.8. The general average for the whites was lower by only 1.7 persons per 1,000 than the general average for the blacks. At the same time the average 000

* J. D. B. DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 294.

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000 death rate for the whites in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1840 was 23.2 per 1,000 and for the blacks 32.3 per 1,000.[84]

567 The data available showing the ratio of births to
163 deaths in the slave population of the sea-island region are
165 likewise meager. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book records the births and deaths on his plantation from 1845 to 1860, as follows:

BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON WEEHAW PLANTATION, 1845-1860[85]

| Year | Births | Deaths | Increase | Decrease |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1845 | 21 | 24 | .. | 3 |
| 1846 | 17 | 20 | .. | 3 |
| 1847 | 28 | 16 | 12 | .. |
| 1848 | 21 | 25 | .. | 4 |
| 1849 | 22 | 20 | 2 | .. |
| 1850 | 26 | 9 | 17 | .. |
| 1851 | 18 | 19 | .. | 1 |
| 1852 | 25 | 20 | 5 | .. |
| 1853 | 29 | 22 | 7 | .. |
| 1854 | 24 | 20 | 4 | 4 |
| 1855 | 25 | 59 | .. | 34 |
| 1856 | 27 | 11 | 15 | .. |
| 1857 | 22 | 40 | .. | 18 |
| 1858 | 28 | 14 | 14 | .. |
| 1859 | 20 | 18 | 2 | .. |
| 1860 | 31 | 20 | 11 | .. |
| Total | 384 | 357 | | |

Beginning in 1845 with approximately 252, the slave population of Weehaw plantation showed after sixteen years an increase of births over deaths of 27, giving an increase of 10.7 per cent in the slave population. The number of deaths was highest in 1855 when an epidemic of whooping cough and measles among the children brought the number up to 59 and lowest in 1850 when

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] The high death rate is probably accounted for by the fact that planters usually included stillbirths in the numbers of deaths.

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only nine died. The number of births was greatest in 1860 with thirty-one and lowest in 1846 with only seventeen. 567 163 165

Some idea of the child-bearing period of the slave women on St. Helena Island may be obtained from records in the John E. Fripp papers. One record gives a list of births from 1802 to 1860. Of the twenty women whose child-bearing records seem to have been complete, two women had ten children each; one, nine children; two, eight children; three, seven children; one, five children; four, four children; four, three children; and three, two children. It is possible to ascertain from the records at what age ten of these women first bore a child. Die, who was the youngest mother in the group, was fifteen when her first child was born; Jenny was seventeen; Daphney, eighteen; Jane, Judy, Matilda, Olive, and Martha, nineteen; Doll, twenty; and Hetty, twenty-two. Four of Hetty's ten children died in infancy as did four of Olive's eight children. The others lost from one to two children each. 567 163

## PLANTATION PROFITS AND LOSSES

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James Hamilton Couper, who administered the James Hamilton estate for forty years, often said that the estate realized a higher percentage of profit on an investment in Schuykill River bonds issued by the city of Philadelphia than it did upon an investment in 600 slaves and 1,500 acres of Georgia seacoast farming land.[68] Data for a tract of 800 acres of this estate raising sea-island cotton have been preserved as follows:

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AVERAGE RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS ON HAMILTON PLANTATION FOR FORTY YEARS[a]

| | Valuation |
|---|---|
| **Investment** | |
| 120 slaves @ $450 | $54,000 |
| 800 acres land @ $20 | 16,000 |
| Stock: horses, mules, oxen, cattle | 2,000 |
| Farm implements | 2,000 |
| Total | $74,000 |
| **Receipts** | |
| Sale of cotton | $ 5,277 |
| Increase of slave stock, av. of 4 @ $450 | 1,800 |
| Total | $ 7,077 |
| **Disbursements** | |
| Support[c] of 120 slaves | $ 2,200 |
| Taxes | 162 |
| Depreciation @ 2% of investment | 1,480 |
| Total | $ 3,842 |
| **Profits** | $ 3,235 |

The profit realized on one well-managed sea-island cotton plantation over a period of forty years was, therefore, only 4.37 per cent. With so small a profit as this, it is no wonder that planters complained of the general unsuccessfulness of planting sea-island cotton. Yet on rare occasions, those marvelous years when both the price and the weather conspired to give fabulous yields, the profits might rise as high as 100 per cent on the investment. Planters considered their lands and their labor fit for no crop other than sea-island cotton, and the occasional high returns made them willing to gamble on the results.

[a] Wylly, *Seed That Was Sown in the Colony of Georgia*, p. 59.

[b] *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 61. Table made from data given.

[c] This item includes clothing, food other than provisions raised on the plantation, physician's bill, overseer's and manager's salaries.

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CHAPTER VI

# THE PLANTERS

## THE HOME-SEEKERS

IN THE EARLY days of the settlement of South Carolina, St. Helena Island attracted both the home-seeker and the speculator. Landgrave Joseph Morton, for instance, in 1703 had a grant for 1,270 acres of land in the vicinity of St. Helena, although he already had a prosperous plantation on Edisto Island where he had established his home.[1] Earlier than this, John Bailey had a grant for 4,800 acres which included a section of St. Helena Island, but before many years he was selling parts of it in small tracts.[2] Of the home-seekers, the Caperses, Fripps, Eddingses, and Chaplins were planting on St. Helena by 1725. Such pioneer families as these remained generation after generation adding to their holdings by grant, purchase, or marriage, gradually dispossessing the improvident planters and the speculators.

By 1760 the Jenkinses, Scotts, and Perrys had plantations on St. Helena, and later came the Popes, the Coffins, the McTureouses, the Pritchards, the Whites, the Wallaces, the Bakers, the Fullers, and the Crofts.[3] At the close of the plantation regime in 1860 the Capers family

[1] Grants for Land in South Carolina, XXXVIII, 430.

[2] Memorial Book, III, 313-314.

[3] The Reynolds family was also among the earliest settlers on St. Helena Island and owned land there until after 1825, but by 1860 they no longer had holdings on the Island. Those who had lived on St. Helena prior to 1860 include a long list of names, among whom are the following: Cowan, Norton, McKee, Waight, Fendin, Oswald, Sams, Ellis, Bland, Clark, Greaves, Ladson, Evans, Morgan, Greene, Hall, Goodman, Adams, Betterson.

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had a record of 151 years of planting on St. Helena and the Fripp family had a record of 136 years.

The case of the Fripp family is especially interesting because members of that family finally came to possess a large portion of the Island. As early as 1707 John Fripp had bought land on Edisto Island,[4] but it was not until 1724 that he made a purchase of 480 acres of the tract on St. Helena Island[5] which had been granted to John Cowan[6] in 1706/7. After that, he and his sons and their children gradually added to their holdings until by 1860 they owned more than twelve thousand acres of land on St. Helena and neighboring small islands which were distributed among some twenty plantations. Indeed, William Fripp, Sr., owned 3,472 acres, the greatest acreage of any planter in the parish, and Captain John Fripp had 2,210 acres divided among seven plantations besides a controlling interest in Hunting Island, 2,000 acres of uncultivated land which was set aside as a game preserve for the planters who owned it.

The social life of St. Helena seems to have been less pretentious than that of some of the other Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia; but, due to the destruction of most of the family records during the occupation of the Island by the Federal Army during the Civil War,[7] the data on this subject for the whites of St. Helena are so meager that one cannot be dogmatic in this respect.

[4] Memorial Book, III, 313-314. [5] *Ibid.*

[6] Cowan Creek which separates Ladies Island from St. Helena was named for him.

[7] *Rebellion Record*, III, 309. A reporter for the *New York World* wrote shortly after the capture of Port Royal, "In the forts and in plantation residences around, were found a mass of documents, letters of all descriptions, and official papers."

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Mrs. Abigail Capers, evidently a woman of northern birth, writing from Laurel Hill plantation to a friend in the North in 1791, has left an admirable picture of life among the planters on St. Helena Island in the early days of the plantation regime. She says:[8]

> Most of those whom I have had an opportunity of knowing are far from discovering any trace of extravagance; in proportion to their Fortunes, they are the plainest people I ever met with wholly attentive to the Cultivation of Indigo, the profits of which article is mostly expended in the purchase of Negroes, & nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves.—These singularities are inherited from their Fore-Fathers—& many follow so closely in the path thru which their Ancestors trod as to deny themselves the Comforts & conveniences of life—
>
> As there is no general Rule without an exception you will naturally conclude that there are some families amongst us, who are more liberal in their sentiments, & who do not believe that happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation, where a great majority are slaves—As yet I have not given Carolina the praise it merits.—The country is beautiful & were it not for the intense heat of the summer months, the Climate would be charming—if a spirit of Industry & emulation prevailed, a great alteration would soon be visible, but the want of Education in both Sexes prevents their striving for the general good, & a patriotic spirit is as strange amongst our neighbours as the term. However, these defects will be amended whenever it becomes the practice for parents to procure the means of knowledge for their Children, were they half as careful to lead them good examples as they are to bestow a large Inheritance, I will venture to say the Country would be considered vastly more important. Many eyes are already opened, & it is now thought necessary for a young man to know something besides reading[,] writing & arithmetic,— . . .

[8] Copy of original in possession of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, St. Helena Island, S. C.

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000 As I have already exposed the faults of the natives, I will proceed to acquaint you with their virtues, which are for the most numerous.—Hospitality to strangers & Charity toward the poor, every where prevails [.] Strong attachments reign in families, and Quarrels among Neighbours are rarely known— . . . St. Helena . . . contains Seventy families, forty of whom are eminent planters, . . . we are seated in a Genteel neighborhood, & few sundays pass but we see good deal of Company, as that is high visiting day—

SOCIAL CLASSES

162 567 Sixty-nine years later there were still only forty landowners on the Island.[9] If there were still seventy families on the Island, the white population numbered about three hundred and fifty,[10] while the slave population was more than two thousand.[11] The slave population, therefore, greatly outnumbered the white population. Indeed, in 1860 the slave population of Beaufort District was 81.2 per cent of the total, a proportion of blacks to whites exceeded only by one county in South Carolina, that of Georgetown, and by few others in the entire South. The following table gives a comparison of the black and white population for the last three decades of the ante-bellum period:

WHITES AND BLACKS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[12]

| Year | Whites | Slaves | Free Negroes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1840 | 5,650 | 29,682 | 462 |
| 1850 | 5,947 | 32,279 | 579 |
| 1860 | 6,714 | 32,530 | 809 |

[9] *Supra*, pp. 41-42.

[10] Estimating five members to the family.

[11] In 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Government, reported the Negro population of St. Helena to be 2,721. Some slaves had left with their masters in 1861; others had fled, others were working at Hilton Head and Beaufort; while still others were in the army. See Pierce's "Report" in *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 316.

[12] *United States Census, 1840*, pp. 226-227; *United States Census, 1850*, p. 338; *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Population*, pp. 448-449.

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The proportion of whites to blacks remained practically the same during these three decades, the whites being 15.8 per cent of the total population in 1840 and 16.8 per cent in 1860.

Even with such a small percentage of whites in the population, there were, as Mrs. Capers suggests in 1791, social classes among the whites. There were three general classes with various shadings of social differentiation between them: the "genteel," the middle class, and the poor. Some of the "eminent planters," of whom Mrs. Capers spoke, belonged to the gentry. They were the ones whose sea-island cotton sold at the top prices. They educated their sons in England in the days before the Revolution and afterward in South Carolina or in the North. They spent the hot summer months at a health resort; they had their hunting clubs and their literary societies. They entertained on their plantations and at Beaufort and Charleston.

The middle class was composed chiefly of the overseers and trades people, although no strict line was drawn between classes. It sometimes happened that an overseer was himself a planter and a member of the gentry. Even on St. Helena Island there were storekeepers who sold small supplies to the planters and traded with the slaves. The agent for the Federal Government found a German storekeeper on the Island in 1861 who had taken considerable quantities of cotton in payment of debts which he claimed some of the planters had allowed to accumulate.[12]

It has often been claimed that St. Helena's Parish con-

[12] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

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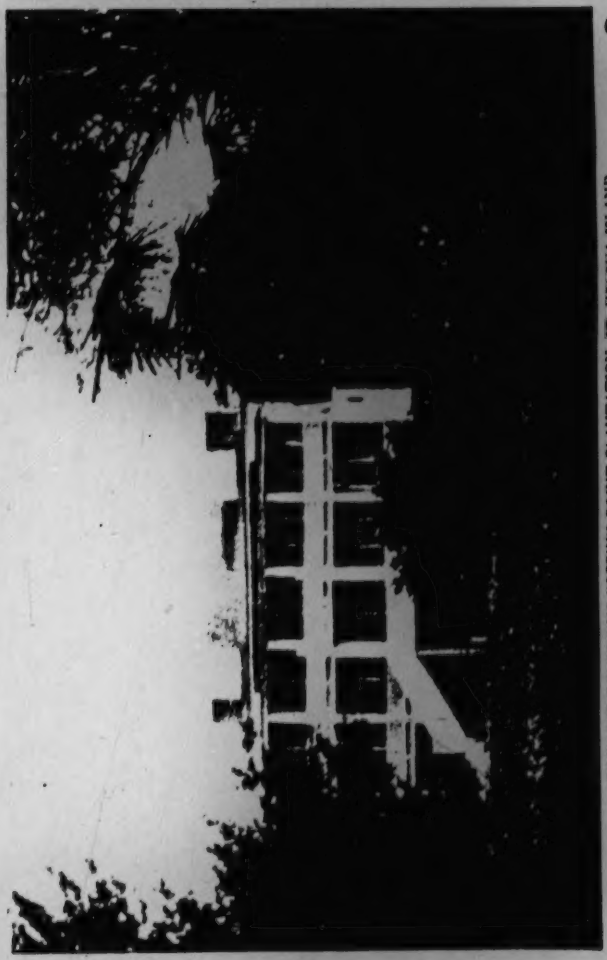
000



THE "BIG HOUSE" ON COFFIN'S POINT PLANTATION, ST. HELENA ISLAND

[facing p. 108]

1

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tained no poor whites, but the *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish*, as well as other records, refute this tradition. In 1737[14] the parish assessed itself £100 currency for the support of the poor, and in 1820[15] the poor tax amounted to 25 per cent of the general tax, or $725. The poor whites kept small shops, worked on the rivers as boatmen or fishermen, or did a little planting.

### THE "BIG HOUSE"

It was customary for the planters of St. Helena Island to spend the winter months at their plantation houses and the sickly months, from June until October, at a health resort. At the eastern end of St. Helena Island stood the plantation of Thomas Aston Coffin at whose house began a public road, called the Sea-side road, that extended thirteen miles to a Jenkins plantation at Land's End on Port Royal Sound. Two miles from the Coffin plantation a road diverged to the right, leading to Ladies Island and Beaufort on Port Royal Island, a distance of some eleven miles. Along these roads were most of the plantation houses on the Island.

When Edward L. Pierce investigated conditions on St. Helena Island for the United States Government early in 1862 he found that the master, if a man of wealth, was likely to have his main residence at Beaufort, sometimes having none on the plantation, but having a small house for the overseer or for the driver. "He may, however, have one," continued Mr. Pierce in his report, "and an expensive one too, as in the case of Dr. Jenkins, at St.

[14] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726-1812*, p. 25.
[15] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 372.

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Helena, and yet pass most of his time at Beaufort, or at the North. . . . The houses for overseers are of an undesirable character. Orchards of orange or fig trees are usually planted near them."[16]

Ordinarily the plantation home, or "big house," as the slaves called it, was built in a clump of fine live oaks, approached by a stately avenue of magnificent oak trees gracefully draped with gray moss. Back of the house were usually to be found orchards of peach, orange, and fig trees. Scattered among these trees were the corn houses, the stables, cotton houses, the well which supplied the house with water, and the cabins of the house servants.[17] A few hundred yards back of these stood the fence and gate, invariably left open, which shut off the slave quarters and the fields.

The houses of the owners and of the overseers were usually built high off the ground. At The Oaks, one of the Pope plantations, the residence, which was just completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, is high enough above ground for the present occupant to use the space underneath as a garage. In some cases this ground floor was enclosed and made a part of the house. In such instances, the kitchen, dining room, and sometimes the sewing room were located there.[18]

Miss Harriet Ware, who came from Massachusetts in 1862 as a missionary to the Negroes on St. Helena Is-

[16] Pierce, "Report" in *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 304.

[17] For a description of William Fripp's Pine Grove plantation see *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 23-24.

[18] Prospect Hill on Edisto Island is a beautiful example of this type of house. It was built about 1790 and was designed by James Hoban, who was also the architect for the White House. In 1860 the house was owned by William Grimbal Baynard.

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land, described the plantation houses as "being all built of hard pine, which is handsome on the floors, but the rest of the woodwork is painted in this house[19] an ugly green, which is not pretty or cheerful. The walls are always left white. Clapboards are unknown, but hard-pine boards, a foot or more broad, are put on in the same way, and everything outside is whitewashed. The place is very attractive-looking, grapevines and honeysuckles and pine woods near."[20] Miss Laura M. Towne, a volunteer from Philadelphia for missionary work among the Negroes, thought The Oaks "not a pretty place, but the house is new and clean, about as nice as country-houses in Philadelphia, without carpets though, and few of the civilized conveniences."[21] Some of the other houses the missionaries found to be "two-story affairs, old, dirty, rickety, poorly put together and shabbily kept."[22]

Not all of the planters left the Island for Beaufort or for the North during the summer months. Some of them went to the Island's own health resort, St. Helenaville.[23] Here was a long, sandy beach where one might bathe in the salt water at high tide and where one might have fresh cool breezes from the ocean through most of the hot summer days. A missionary from the North found St. Helenaville to be in the spring of 1862 "a Deserted Village of a dozen or more mansions[24] with their house-servants' cabins behind them, and two churches in a large pine wood,

[19] Pine Grove plantation.
[20] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 21.
[21] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 13.
[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 77.
[23] There is now scarcely a trace left of St. Helenaville. It was practically destroyed in May, 1866, by a tornado. *Nation*, II, 658.
[24] Most of these houses were small.

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free from underbrush, . . . The village is directly on the creek on a bluff like that on which Beaufort is situated, about eight feet high, and is the place the white people used to spend the summers for health and society—those who did not go North to travel, or to Beaufort."[25] Some planters, such as William Fripp, had a house both in the village and in Beaufort as well as the family house on the plantation.

The houses in Beaufort were more pretentious than the ones on St. Helena Island. Here planters vied with one another in building imposing mansions. Sir Charles Lyell who visited Beaufort in 1845 described it as "a picturesque town composed of an assemblage of villas, the summer residences of numerous planters, who retire here during the hot season, . . . Each villa is shaded by a verandah, surrounded by beautiful live oaks and orange trees laden with fruit."[26] Although Miss Harriet Ware thought in 1862 that the Coffin home at Coffin's Point plantation must have been handsomely furnished, judging from the pieces which were left—"rosewood tables, side-boards and washstands with marble tops . . . sofas that must have been of the best"[27]—the St. Helena homes were plainly furnished in comparison with the display to be found in the houses in Beaufort. On the walls of some of the Beaufort houses there were portraits of the owners drawn by the famous American painter, Thomas Sully, and some done even by French and Italian artists; on their floors were expensive Turkish and Persian carpets; on their

[25] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 30-31.

[26] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 231. For a description of the houses in Georgetown, S. C., see Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 129-130.

[27] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 60.

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shelves, volume after volume of masterpieces in English and French handsomely bound. Edward S. Philbrick, of Massachusetts, writing to his wife in 1862 after the Federal Army had occupied Beaufort, said, "There is something very sad about these fine deserted houses. Ours has Egyptian marble mantles, gilt cornice and centrepiece in parlor, and [a] bath-room, with several washbowls set in different rooms."[28]

Beaufort was significant only as a summer resort, for it had little, if any, commercial importance.[29] During the hot weather when the planters were in their summer residences, the population was about 2,000, but at other periods of the year it was less than half that number.[30]

Besides St. Helenaville and Beaufort, there were several other summer resorts in that region. They were generally located in the sandy ridges in the attempt to get away from the swamps and marshes where the disease-bearing mosquitoes bred most freely. Most of these settlements bore the names of their founders, as McPhersonville, Gillisonville, Grahamville, Heywardsville. Today they still exist as small villages.

### EARLY INTEREST IN EDUCATION

St. Helena's Parish seems to have been interested early in the education of its youth. In 1747 the Reverend Lewis Jones bequeathed a legacy of £100 sterling to the church wardens and vestry of the parish "towards the Education of poor Child.n of this Parrish,"[31] and the vestry contracted with the parish schoolmaster to teach a selected group of

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[29] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. LIII, sup., serial no. 111, p. 71.
[30] *Ibid.* The Census of 1850 lists the population of Beaufort at 879.
[31] Salley, *Minute of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish*, pp. 39, 43.

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poor children for a specified number of months each year. Those who could afford it or did not care to patronize the parish teacher employed private tutors, several families sometimes joining to pay a teacher's expenses. This practice, begun in the colonial days, was continued during the ante-bellum period, but wealthy planters who had been in the habit of sending their sons to England to be educated prior to the Revolution,[32] sent them in the ante-bellum period to the College of Charleston, the South Carolina College,[33] and to Harvard, Princeton, and Yale.

The General Assembly of 1786-1788 incorporated the Beaufort Society and the St. Helena Society, organizations which had been formed both for religious and educational purposes, and in 1795 a group of citizens of Beaufort obtained a charter for the establishment of Beaufort College which was to be supported from the sale of vacant lots in the town and from the sale of escheated and confiscated property in the parish. In 1811 the General Assembly passed an act providing free schools.[34] The act granted neighborhoods with schoolhouses $300 a year for free elementary instruction, preference being given to poor orphans and children of impoverished parents. Beaufort qualified for state aid, and in 1826 had a grammar school, three schools for boys, one for girls, and three for young children.[35] These schools had a combined enrollment of about two hundred pupils. In 1850 there were twenty-eight schools in Beaufort District supported in part by

[32] See Edward McCrady, "Education in South Carolina prior to and during the Revolution," *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, IV, no. 5.

[33] Later the University of South Carolina.

[34] H. G. Cutler, *History of South Carolina*, I, 532.

[35] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 373.

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public funds which amounted to $1,800. The enrollment was 598 pupils.[36]

In ante-bellum days Beaufort was distinguished throughout South Carolina for the learning and culture of its citizens, and St. Helena Island lived in the reflected glory of its health-resort town. As early as 1802 a library society was organized in Beaufort; in 1826 the volumes numbered between six and eight hundred,[37] while by 1860 they had climbed to the thousands.[38] There were also many private libraries both in Beaufort and on the plantations.[39] On St. Helena, the libraries of Dr. William J. Jenkins, Thomas Aston Coffin, and J. J. Pope were sufficiently large to attract the attention and admiration of the conquering army officers in 1861. A reporter of the *New York World*, in describing the capture of Port Royal, mentioned "a rich old plantation mansion, not far from the fort, on an estate belonging to a family by the name of Pope. Here was a splendid library, a mass of papers and documents, and a file of the *Charleston Mercury*, for the last thirty or forty years. One was seen dated as far back as 1812."[40]

George P. Elliott, writing in the *Charleston Mercury* in 1857, called attention to the high order of society in St. Helena's Parish. Among the natives of Beaufort, he

[36] Cutler, *op. cit.*, II, 605-606, 639.

[37] Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

[38] When Beaufort was captured by the Federal Army in 1861 the library was considered confiscated property and sent to Washington where it was placed in the Smithsonian Institute and subsequently burned when the building housing it was destroyed by fire.

[39] The Receipt Book of Henry M. Stuart and Account Book of Miss Mary B. Elliott show frequent purchases of books.

[40] *Rebellion Record*, III, 309 (*New York World* narrative of capture of Port Royal).

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mentioned such men as Thomas Heyward, Jr., signer of the Declaration of Independence and a circuit judge of South Carolina; Robert Barnwell, a distinguished speaker of the House of Representatives of South Carolina; Stephen Elliott, botanist and editor of the *Southern Review*; John A. Stuart, editor of the *Charleston Mercury*. "There are distributed from the Beaufort postoffice annually," he wrote, "thirty-three thousand one hundred and twenty-four newspapers, three thousand four hundred and sixty magazines and other periodicals, and we have not been able to find a single man or woman, native of the Parish, that cannot read and write.[41] The public schools have been always of the first character and the evidence of this is, that our young men, at various times, have carried off the first honors, at Yale, at Princeton, at Columbia, and at Charleston College; and this is a Parish that has not above 1,200 white inhabitants."[42]

## RELIGION

Prior to the Revolution the Church of England was the established church of South Carolina. In 1712 when the parish of St. Helena was established, a group of inhabitants elected the Reverend Mr. Guy, assistant to the rector of Charles Town, resident minister, "after having first obtained the consent of the Reverend Mr. Johnson, the Bishop of London's Commissary, then at Charles-

[41] There were 206 illiterate white adults in Beaufort District in 1850, *Census of 1850*, p. 343. Beaufort District was composed of Prince William's, St. Helena's, St. Luke's, and St. Peter's parishes and included what are now Beaufort, Hampton, and Jasper counties.

[42] "Beaufort and Its People," *Charleston Mercury*, Sept. 25, 1857; also in Benjamin R. Stuart, *Magnolia Cemetery, an Interpretation of Some of its Monuments and Inscriptions*.

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000 Town."[43] The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts allowed Mr. Guy a salary, and continued for many years to give the parish aid, "in compassion to their great wants." When Mr. Guy arrived, "the people had no teacher of any persuasion, and lived all without using any kind of publick divine worship."[44] He performed the service in the parishioners' houses in different parts of the parish.

In 1724 the parish obtained a grant from the provincial government to which some of the wealthy citizens added contributions, and erected a small, neat brick church in Beaufort. The Society sent the Reverend Mr. Lewis Jones to be rector of the parish church, and he served there with much good to the community until his death in 1747.[45]

As early as 1734 the Reverend Mr. Jones was ordered to go to "St. Helena Island to perform Divine Service once in 6 weeks for Six Months."[46] Later a small church of tabby and brick, sixty by forty feet, was built in the center of the Island on the road leading to Jenkins' plantation at Land's End, serving as a Chapel of Ease to the parish church in Beaufort. After the Revolution, the church was enlarged, and the Island became a separate cure about 1794. Several of the planters donated land for the glebe and the Reverend John S. I. Gardiner, later rector of Trinity Church, Boston, was minister there for some time, having "a respectable congregation."[47]

[43] David Humphreys, "An Account of the Missionaries Sent to South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 546.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 547.

[45] Salley, *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish*, p. 32.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[47] Frederick Dalcho, *Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina*, p. 395.

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Although the official religion of the province of South Carolina was the Protestant Episcopal, this denomination was not the first to have teachers in the vicinity of St. Helena Island. Before 1712 Anabaptist and Presbyterian preachers had been there, although none were living in the region in that year.[48] St. Helena's Parish Register refers occasionally to persons who were not of the Episcopal persuasion, labeling them "Dissenters" and "Anabaptists." The Euhaws,[49] in Beaufort District, was the center of the Anabaptist denomination prior to the Revolution,[50] and from that group missionaries went out winning converts. Hugh Bryan, one of the most active Presbyterian leaders in South Carolina before the Revolution, was a resident of St. Helena's Parish.[51] By 1820 the Baptists had become the most numerous sect in the District,[52] and also in 1860 the Baptists outnumbered the other denominations in Beaufort District, there being in 1860 twenty-seven Baptist churches, twenty-three Methodist, eleven Episcopal, and two Presbyterian.

It is not known when the first Baptist church was built on St. Helena Island, but the large brick church situated near the center of the Island, still known as "Brick Church" and still used by one of the Baptists groups on the Island, was erected in 1855. The Baptists and Episcopalians seem to have been the only denominations hav-

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377; Humphreys, "Missionaries Sent to South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 547.

[49] That is, the land formerly occupied by the Euhaws.

[50] See John O. B. Dargan (?), *Christian Fellowship: Or the Solemn Covenant of the Baptist Church of Christ in Beaufort, S. C.*; Morgan Edwards, *Materials Toward a History of the Baptists in South Carolina.*

[51] See Hugh Bryan and Mary Hutson, *Living Christianity Delineated in the Diaries and Letters of.*

[52] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 373.

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000 ing churches on St. Helena in 1860. After the Civil War there were still enough whites on the Island to maintain the Episcopal, or "White Church," as it was sometimes called, but the Negroes took possession of "Brick Church." Today there is only one Methodist church on the Island; the Episcopal church was destroyed by a forest fire and has not been rebuilt; the remaining eight churches are of the Baptist denomination.

### RECREATION

"Hunting is the principal amusement of the planters, and its consequent associations at the club house," wrote Robert Mills in 1826 in his sketch of Beaufort District.[83] In 1860 hunting was still one of the chief amusements of the planters.[84] Hunting Island, an island of 2,000 acres separated from St. Helena Island by Harbor River, which had long borne that name, was set aside as a hunting preserve for its owners, Captain John Fripp, John G. Barnwell, General Stephen Elliott, Edward M. Capers, Dr. W. J. Jenkins, and others. In 1860 it was well stocked with deer.

It was customary on the Sea Islands from Charleston to Savannah for the planters to maintain a hunting preserve and a club house where monthly dinners were given, each member furnishing in rotation dinner, service, and liquors. Captain Charles S. Wylly has left a description of the club dinners which were held at St. Clair house, St. Simon's Island. "Let us picture," he said, "the dinner of December 7th, 1851:

The hour is five p. m. . . . The room is warmed and cheered

[83] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 376.
[84] See William Elliott, *Carolina Sports*.

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by the glowing coals in a great fire-place; the table with cover laid for fourteen, is clothed in the snowiest of damask and lit by a score of candles made from the wax of the myrtle berry which cover the salt marshes; the brass candlesticks shine like virgin gold; the dishes are of the palest blue, East Indian China. The waiters, James Dennison from The Village, Sandy and Johnny from Cannon's Point, assisted by old Dic and Sam Froid, have since nine in the morning been busy in the kitchen. The guests arriving, . . . are mounted on wiry steeds, whose only living had been drawn from moss, marsh and shucks . . . but who shew in gait and mettle their descent from Spanish and Arab stock. They are met each by one, or oftener two black boys, . . .

The dinner was not served in courses, save that the two soups, one a clam broth, the other chicken mulligatawny, were brought on first, the fish, shrimp pies, crab (in shell) roasts, and vegetables were all placed in one service; the dessert was simple, tartlets of orange marmalade, dried fruits and nuts. The dishes disposed of, amid general gossip and talk, and the cloth drawn, the great punch bowl with its mixture of rum, brandy, sugar, lemon juice and peel, was brought in. The wine glasses were pushed aside and stubby bottle-shaped glass mugs were handed round; and the chairman of the meeting, rising, announced that the health of the President of the United States would be drank, standing and with cheers.[66]

After this opening of the evening, there followed, according to Captain Wylly's account, "scenes of extraordinary conviviality verging, I fear, into hard drinking and the recountal of the most surprising adventures and experiences."

Planters also entertained frequently at their homes with house parties, dinners, and teas. A former slave of Thomas A. Coffin, of St. Helena, has left an account that his master entertained very little at his plantation house on the Island, choosing rather to entertain in more elaborate

[66] Wylly, *The Seed That Was Sown in the Colony of Georgia*, pp. 55, 56.

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style in Charleston.[56] The planters of St. Helena seem to have made frequent trips to Charleston, going a part or all of the way in their own small boats, leaving from their private wharfs on their plantations.

Sir Charles Lyell who visited the Sea Islands in 1845 wrote from James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation with much warmth concerning "the perfect ease and politeness" with which the planters entertained in their homes. "There is a warm and generous openness of character in the southerners," he wrote, "which mere wealth and a retinue of servants cannot give; and they have often a dignity of manner, without stiffness, which is most agreeable. The landed proprietors here visit each other in the style of English country gentlemen, sometimes dining out with their families and returning at night, or, if the distance be great, remaining to sleep and coming home the next morning."[57]

These visits always entailed extra burdens on the mistress of the plantation, who was already over-burdened with many household duties. Captain Wylly, a relative of James Hamilton Couper, recalls the busy lives of the plantation mistresses in his own family:

> The mistress of one of these plantation houses, and hostess of this never-ending house-party, led an arduous life. Servants she had in numbers; but, excepting perhaps a butler or a head housemaid, they were often idle, incompetent, and needed her constant oversight and care. Almost every half hour during the day would she be called to administer to some want or to grant or refuse some request from her many dependents. At nine the plantation nurse arrived with a list or "tally" of the sick.

[56] MS in possession of Penn Industrial, Agricultural, and Normal School, St. Helena Island.

[57] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 246.

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The serious cases had to be visited first, and, if necessary, a physician summoned; for the others, medicine to be prescribed, weighed and measured. At eleven the wagon from the quarters came, with probably the whole carcass of a beef or sheep, and she was required to direct the cutting of the joints reserved for the table and kitchen and order the disposal of the remainder. The cook must have a personal interview and minute directions. The same was demanded by the fisherman, who wishes to show his catch and receive orders regarding the opening of oysters, clams, or the boiling of crabs or prawn. At twelve the three seamstresses, whose perpetual work was the fashioning of plantation garments, arrived with their baskets of completed coats, pants or shirts. These must be "checked up" against the cloth, buttons and thread that had been issued them and other woolens and home-spuns measured and delivered. And by now the butler wishes to know what he had best serve to the gentlemen returning from their hunt.

At two a tired and weary woman sank into a chair, hoping for a brief rest. Vain hope—a frightened mother calls for "Missis" to "just run up to de quarters to see little Nancy, who is fall into a fit." A half mile of unshaded road intervenes. But go she must. The fit is found to be but indigestion; . . . old Simon stops to say he would like some pain killer, also tobacco. Bella says she *must* tell her Missis she and Tom, her husband, have agreed to part; a lesson on marital duties is to be read, and after that some kind words are to be spoken.[58]

When at last the Mistress reaches the "big house" it is after three, and dinner is to be served in half an hour to a number unknown until her husband returns. But it is certain that he will bring with him someone whom he has met by chance upon the road. The Mistress must busy herself with the final preparations for dinner, and if she is the mother of a growing family not even the few minutes left before dinner can she claim as her own.

[58] Wylly, *The Seed That Was Sown in the Colony of Georgia*, pp. 24, 25.

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The people of Beaufort had various societies in which the planters of St. Helena and their wives took some part. The women had their Dorcas Society which corresponds to the present-day church societies, and their missionary societies to encourage home and foreign missions. In 1835 there were in Beaufort also a Tract Society, a Bible Society, and a Benevolent Society, which seem to have had a fairly continuous existence through the ante-bellum period.[59] The men also had a literary society besides the library society already mentioned.

In 1850 a group of citizens organized the Southern Rights Association of St. Helena's Parish. Two councils of safety were appointed, one for Beaufort and one for St. Helena Island. Those serving for St. Helena were Joseph J. Pope, Sr., Joseph D. Eddings, Daniel Jenkins, Edgar Fripp, F. O. P. Fripp, and Dr. J. A. P. Scott.[60] Later in 1851 when the association began to talk of secession, a group of members, including John M. Fripp, William Fripp, Sr., and J. J. T. Pope of St. Helena objected, stating that they had understood that the purpose of the organization was not secession but the following words of the constitution:[61]

> To organize more effectually the people of St. Helena Parish, in support of Southern interests; to insure concert of action among the citizens of this and other Southern States for the vindication of their rights; to maintain the Federal compact in its original purity and simplicity, as the only means of preserving the Union, and to support the State authorities in any measure South-Carolina may adopt for her defence or that of her sister States against the injustice and oppression of those of the North.

[59] MSS, Elliott Account Book and Stuart Receipt Book.
[60] Moore, *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 197-202.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201.

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Twenty-nine of the 135 members, including three from St. Helena, withdrew from the association, but the organization continued to function, sending delegates to the various Southern Rights meetings held in the state.

The planters of St. Helena were, thus, not all of one mind nor all of one class. They varied in political belief and in social customs from the cultured Coffins, leaders of society in the aristocratic coastal country of South Carolina, to the storekeeper who was the first to confiscate the planters' cotton when they fled from the conquering Federal troops in 1861.

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CHAPTER VII

# THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

## THE SLAVE AND THE LASH

567 461 THE EVERY-DAY life of the slave people on a St. Helena plantation was by no means crowded with constant toil. In the late spring when the cotton had to be hoed at the critical stages and again in the autumn when [466] the cotton was in "good blow" they might work from [431] "day clean" to "fust dark," but these were unusual periods, and, as a reward for the extra labor, their masters dealt out choice rations of molasses and meat and passed around presents of tobacco and gay headcloths. The ordinary task of a full hand kept him in the field only four or five hours a day so that the "smart" ones were habitually through by two o'clock. Only the "t'ick headed" remained as late as five. The rest of the day was theirs to spend as they chose.

000 A southern youth, Hamilton Couper, who had spent all his life on his father's sea-island cotton and rice plantation on the Georgia coast was surprised to find the white servants working so hard in New Haven where he was attending Yale. The Irish maid-of-all-work in his rooming house, so he wrote to his mother, "does more than any 567 servant I have ever seen."[1] The Honorable Amelia Murray of England who visited Couper's parents at their Hopeton plantation was also impressed with the difference in work required of the southern slave and the northern "saucy help." "I never saw servants in any old English family," she observed, "more comfortable, or more de-

[1] Couper-Wylly Papers. Hamilton Couper to Mrs. J. H. Couper, 1846.

[p. 124]

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voted; it is quite a relief to see anything so patriarchal, after the apparently uncomfortable relations of masters and servants in the Northern States."[2] Sir Charles Lyell, another distinguished English guest in this coastal family, thought the condition of the slaves was "more like that formerly existing between lords and their retainers in the old feudal times of Europe, than to any thing now to be found in America."[3] 567

Even the slaves themselves admitted that they were generally well-treated. All on St. Helena Island agreed that, while most of them had "good Massa," certain planters were "Massa Debil heself."[4] The Coffin Negroes reproached the northern missionaries who came to the Island after the capture of Port Royal in 1861 with the fact that there was no "confusion" when they belonged to "Ole Massa."[5] Yet other Negroes were careful to show the missionaries their scars from the lash, and one woman solemnly reported that four babies had been "killed within her by whipping."[6] Miss Laura M. Towne found in one dining room "a whipping-post and pulley for stretching and whipping,"[7] which was probably a fly brush with which some facetious person had tried Miss Towne's credulity. 567 797

There was far less cruelty practised on the sea-island slaves than northern sympathizers were inclined to be- 567

[2] Murray, *Letters From the United States, Cuba and Canada*, p. 220.

[3] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 261.

[4] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers, Port Royal, May 18, 1862.

[5] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 165.

[6] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 58. For other instances of cruelty practised by St. Helena planters see Sarah M. Grimké, *American Slavery As It Is*. It must be remembered that this book was published to prove a case against slavery and that many of the accusations are obviously absurd.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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567 lieve. Whipping made a rebellious and sullen slave who shirked his work and stirred up trouble. This was the reason that a driver was permitted to inflict stripes only in the presence of the overseer and that some planters forbade whipping altogether. No driver on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island was permitted when R. King was overseer to inflict punishment until after a regular trial. "When I pass sentence myself," said King, "various modes of punishment are adopted; the lash least of all,—Digging stumps, or clearing away trash about the settlements, in their own time; but the most severe is, confinement at home six months to twelve months, or longer."[8] All planters admitted that punishment was necessary in order to carry on the plantation routine; it was inherent in the system of slave labor; but the lash was the least effective mode.

### CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

567 181 Before 1860 it had frequently been pointed out by travelers in the South and by masters themselves that the coastal Negroes, especially the sea-island Negroes, were less advanced culturally than the "Up-Country," or Piedmont Negroes, because they had less association with civilizing forces. It was evident to even a casual observer that on the sea-island cotton plantations, where the slaves had contact with few whites except the overseer and his family and but little intercourse with the slaves of other islands or even of other plantations on the same island, they must remain more stationary than where they equaled in number the whites or even formed a minority, as was true in a large part of Piedmont South Carolina.

[8] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828, p. 524.

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Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9] 569 181

When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island 569 177 569 191

[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

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after the Federal occupation in 1861. Arthur Sumner, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, tried to describe to his cousin their way of speaking. "These negroes speak with an inarticulate jabber. The sounds roll around in their great chops, and come pouring out through their huge mouths, so that I find it easier to understand a foreign language than confused utterance. Their idioms, too, are funny. I told Byron, a boy who waits upon me, that I was going to distribute clothing on his place. 'Talk *we* house?' said he;—meaning, 'Are you speaking of our house?' . . . Byron came to me with a message from his mother—'Ma says if you give her some trade'—Imagine such a sentence uttered as if it were a word of many syllables. Can you make it out? . . . 'Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread?'"[11]

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These missionaries from the North, who, of course, knew nothing first-hand of slavery, thought that the St. Helena Negroes were the most degraded and backward of all the coastal slaves in the South.[12] After the northern whites had become acquainted with other sea-island Negroes from such places as St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and Edisto Island, South Carolina, who were quartered temporarily on St. Helena Island by the Federal Army, they were still of the opinion that the St. Helena slaves were the most retarded in the South except those on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Arthur Sumner wrote late in 1862, "The Georgia and Florida negroes are vastly superior in appearance, character, and intelligence, to the natives of these Islands. It is the testimony

[11] Arthur Sumner Papers. Port Royal, May 18, 1862. The last word was pronounced as if spelled tred, not trade.

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

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of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[13] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

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It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

567 184 177 (133)

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

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[13] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

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to Beaufort, Charleston, and the North. Some of the St. Helena people were as alert and ambitious as the whites themselves. Charles Ware, of Massachusetts, in 1862 described Charles, the carpenter on Hope plantation, as "a man after my own heart." "He attracted me first by his dignified and respectful demeanor, and by his superior culture. He has a little touch of self-consideration. He, more than any other negro I know, seems to me like a white person."[15]

### SOCIAL CLASSES

The Negroes themselves perhaps unconsciously set a premium on a knowledge of "buckra" ways, for they placed in the upper classes of their social scale those who had superior advantages of learning the customs of the dominant race. The "swonga" people were the drivers who took their orders directly from the overseer, the house servants who were intimately associated with the master's and the overseer's families, the mechanics who were permitted to hire their own time from their masters and work in Beaufort or Charleston. To this group also belonged any among them who from superior rank or intelligence acted as their official or self-appointed leaders. The religious leaders and the plantation watchmen were usually "swonga" Negroes, as were also the witch doctors and those who could boast of physical prowess. It is obviously difficult to point out definitely the various gradations in the social classes among the slaves, but in general the drivers and mechanics stood at the head, followed by the house servants, and at the bottom of the scale stood the field hands.

[15] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 82.

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Edward S. Philbrick was surprised in 1862 to find the St. Helena Negroes so sensitive to social distinctions and "caste feeling." "There is no race in the world," he wrote from Coffin's Point plantation, "with whom a little *state* gives so much power as the African. They have always been accustomed to see men of any power treated as such, and receiving the attention corresponding thereto. They have always seen a white man on a horse, and have got to think it so far a badge of power & caste, that they will hardly lift their hats to a white man on foot. In fact the Negroes themselves, while moving about from one plantation to another always find some old mule to straddle & look down with contempt upon a 'walking nigger.'"[16] Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary like Philbrick, also observed the Negroes' sensitiveness to class feeling. Upon visiting two Negro women, she was made to understand that they were "both of the colored aristocracy, had lived in the best families, never did any work to speak of, longed for the young ladies and young 'mas'rs' back again, because April was the month they used to come to Beaufort and have such gay times."[17]

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### SLAVE MARRIAGES

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The amount of interference in the domestic life of the slave varied with the opinions and attitudes of the master. A Charleston planter told his English guest, Captain Basil Hall, in 1827, that he made no attempt to regulate the habits and morals of his people except in matters of police. "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till the next day," he said. "The

[16] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce, March 27, 1862.
[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 14.

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567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give [177] up their African customs of polygamy and accept the [595] Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 St. Helena planters quite generally required their 177 slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to im- 584 press the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might 585 request that the ceremony be performed at once, where- 177 upon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

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567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
839 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
[144] Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
567 life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
581 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
"poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
[165] ing until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

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his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) (837)

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

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567 252 (412) (285) huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 252 262 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from (23) the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate (264) to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

567 264 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have
advised the people to set the women in their proper place
—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.;
and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is
just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing
degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be
more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain
Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour
of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at
their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three
dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near
the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for
the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking
party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children
were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant
tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

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shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

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567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
592 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
593 also that there was little family affection among them.
Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
461 within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
461 in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

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to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[85] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[86] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[87]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[85] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[86] Elliott Account Book.

[87] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

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567 clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that
432 whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was
511 overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[28]

567 The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple
461 recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent
226 most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[28] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

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By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 273 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 535

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

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567 533 which they sang with evident delight."[40] Captain Basil Hall, who was rowed down the Altamaha in a cypress dugout by "five smart negroes," was impressed by the "wild sort of song" with which they accompanied their labor. He thought the song "not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen at Bombay."[41] Whitelaw Reid, who heard the Negroes singing at "Brick Church" on St. Helena in 1865, described their song, "Roll Jordan Roll," as having "a curiously monotonous melody."[42] Miss Towne thought that the St. Helena folk "in their lowest state . . . could always do one thing well—sing." "At first," she said, "they sang melody alone, but after having once been given the idea of harmony, they instantly adopted it."[43]

567 627 A holiday was always the occasion for much singing, dancing, and general merrymaking. It was the custom on St. Helena Island to give the Negroes Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christmas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work. These were holidays which the master set aside for his people and instructed his overseer to observe. P. C. J. Weston clearly indicated in his "rules to the overseer" the holidays which he wished the Negroes on his South Carolina rice plantation to have:

No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except going for a Doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who

[40] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, p. 393.
[41] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 228.
[42] Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 103.
[43] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest, and [except by] those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.[44] 567 527

Most of their holidays the slaves spent "pleasuring themselves." Christmas was the great event of the year, for it was at this time that the master distributed rewards to his people as well as extra provisions of beef and molasses and "hands of tobacco." The master of at least one sea-island plantation also provided his slaves with "plenty of whiskey." At the end of the three-day orgy the Negroes were often "completely done up with eating, drinking, and dancing."[45] [273]

A holiday was also the occasion for many requests to visit the island stores and neighboring plantations, but most planters discouraged inter-plantation visits and required the overseer and the drivers to check up frequently on the activities in the "street." An overseer was supposed to see that all was well in the quarters before he went to bed, and the drivers were also responsible for keeping the street quiet. It was by this means rather than by the patrol system that sea-island planters kept peace on their plantations at night, although occasionally the planters or their overseers joined in "riding a patrol." No slave was permitted either by law or by plantation regulation to be absent from home without a ticket. While some planters permitted every well behaved slave to have one whenever he requested it, others issued tickets more [574] 567

[44] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 117.
[45] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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567 reluctantly. To check upon the comings and goings of the people it was customary to have "list" twice a day on Sunday when the names of all the men were called, from which none was excused except those who were sick or who had tickets. At the evening list "every negro must be clean and well washed."[46]

### RELIGION AND EDUCATION

567 797 While it is undoubtedly true that some planters in the early days of the introduction of slave labor into South Carolina were hesitant about allowing their Negroes to become christianized for fear that it might elevate them above their chattel state,[47] by the opening of the antebellum period masters quite generally came to look upon the conversion of the Negroes as one of the justifications of slavery. They not only encouraged the various religious denominations to send missionaries to their slaves, but they often built plantation churches for the special use of the Negroes and permitted their sons and daughters to instruct the slaves from the Bible. Missionaries, appointed by the church but chiefly paid by the planters, preached to the Negroes and catechized them. Ministers prepared special sermons and catechisms for them. Bishop Meade of the Episcopal denomination published his *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for servants, to be read to them in families* in Richmond in 1836, and the second edition of Rev. Charles C. Jones' *The Catechism for*

[46] Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[47] *The South-Carolina Gazette*, March 27, 1742.

"WE [the Grand Jury at Charles Town] present, . . . that, by influence of . . . HUGH BRYAN, Great Bodies of Negroes have Assembled together on Pretence of religious Worship, Contrary to Law, and destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Inhabitants of this Province."

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*Colored Persons* was published in Savannah in 1837. These are only two of many such works published in the South. 567 797

The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist denomination collected for their missions to the Negroes between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars in 1837 and in 1840 reported nineteen missionaries, thirteen missions, 232 plantations administered unto, 5,482 members, and 3,811 children.[48] Very little data can be obtained concerning the activities of the Baptist denomination among the sea-island Negroes, although it is known that more of them adhered to the Baptist faith than to any other. In the summer of 1838 a revival of religion commenced among the Negroes of Liberty County, Georgia, and spread throughout the entire coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia, continuing for two years. During that time the Congregational Church in Liberty County and the Baptist churches throughout the region greatly added to their colored membership.[49]

In addition to the space reserved for slaves in the rear and in the gallery of "Brick Church" on St. Helena Island, practically every plantation had its own "praise house" where the people held their weekly services. In case the planter provided no separate building, services were held in the cabin of the religious leader. Miss Towne wrote to a friend shortly after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the praise house was "always the cabin of the oldest person in the village of negro houses."[50] She was 567 796 346 567 346

[48] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, pp. 82, 83.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[50] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 20.

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A ST. HELENA ISLAND PRAISE HOUSE

[facing p. 148]

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567 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the planta-
846 tion where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[81] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[82]

567 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who
794 were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing,
796 pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members
533 of a church.[83] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine one word 'ginst t'oder."[84] After another hymn and per-
(782) haps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

[81] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[82] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[83] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[84] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.' "[55]

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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
535 first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
535 by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

567 Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
796 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 27n; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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567 ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C.
795 Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island
793 and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances,
567 and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in
795 dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect
789 or striking resemblance to some form or type which has been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 They were also quick to follow the custom of the
795 whites in "churching" offending members. "The dis-
688 cipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

567 The church was not only responsible for giving Chris-
794 tianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teach-
212 ing a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[84] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[85]

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For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[86] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

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[84] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[85] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[86] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

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CHAPTER VIII

# "CONTRABAND OF WAR"

## THE CAPTURE OF PORT ROYAL

175 FOR THREE DAYS the Federal fleet had been collecting in Confederate waters, until by the afternoon of November 6, 1861, Confederate scouts were able to count forty-five steamers and gunboats outside Port Royal Sound. Only the most timorous were fearful of an attack on the two forts guarding the entrance to the Sound, Fort Beauregard at Bay Point on Eddings' Island and Fort Walker upon Hilton Head, and the consequent capture of Beaufort. The planters themselves could not conceive of any military strategy which would make the possession of Beaufort important to the enemy. It was Charleston's scalp which the fleet had come to take and the display outside Port Royal was a subterfuge. So they remained on their plantations with their families quietly waiting for the enemy to sail on.

The Confederate officers were not to be taken by surprise, although they were fervently hoping that Beaufort with its inadequate defense was to be spared. They asked for reinforcements at once and began preparations for an attack. At dawn on the morning of November 7 the "armada," led by the sixty-gun flagship of Captain DuPont, advanced in battle array upon the two forts with their feeble batteries, twenty guns at Fort Walker and nineteen at her sister fort across the Sound. At 9:25 o'clock a nine-inch gun from one of the forts opened fire. Soon firing was general upon land and water, but the advancing fleet came on safely beyond the range of the Con-

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federate barrage. Passing both batteries, they turned and delivered, in their changing rounds, a terrific shower of shot and shell in flank and front. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Confederate forces commenced retreating to Ferry Point, leaving the Sea Islands about Fort Royal Sound in the possession of the Federal Army during the remainder of the war.[1]

When word came that Beaufort was actually to be attacked, the confusion on the plantations was overwhelming. Hastily gathering together what clothes they could, wives prepared themselves and their children for the flight to the main, while husbands got ready the flats and boats for the trip. They took with them only the house servants most urgently needed in the care of the family, the nurses and cooks, instructing the field hands to remain at work under the direction of the drivers until their return. In their flight they had little time or space for family heirlooms or valuables. They left their houses and their fields just as they were. By afternoon when the Federal troops took possession of the district, not a white person of Confederate sympathies could be found in Beaufort or on the plantations.[2]

[1] See "The Capture of Port Royal, S. C.," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, pp. 192-197; *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 186-193.

[2] A few weeks later a general outcry arose in Charleston over this unpremeditated flight. Women and politicians alike declared that the planters should at least have taken time to destroy the crops which were evidently going to be of such benefit to the enemy. To this attack, a St. Helena planter replied in the *Charleston Daily Courier*, Dec. 2, 1861:

"Our sacrifices already have exemplified our patriotic devotion, and our failure to have entailed greater, by the destruction of our several crops, resulted in our having been steadily employed in providing ways and means for the retreat of the forces at Bay Point . . . it is . . . true that the successful conduct of that retreat was entirely due to the exertions of the little band of men composing the St. Helena Mounted Riflemen, Captain Fripp [in command]. . . .

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175 General W. T. Sherman, in command of the "Expeditionary Corps" arriving at Port Royal, as this region was now to be called, on the fleet in command of Captain DuPont, described in two official reports conditions as he found them after the battle:

> The effect of this victory is startling. Every white inhabitant has left the island. The wealthy islands of Saint Helena, Ladies, and most of Port Royal are abandoned by the whites, and the beautiful estates of the planters, with all their immense property, left to the pillage of hordes of apparently disaffected blacks.
>
> . . .
>
> The surrounding country evacuated by the whites, as described in my last, has upon it an abundance of valuable property, including ungathered crops and cotton mostly gathered. I have directed all the means of transportation, such as boats, scows, wagons, &c., to be collected for the use of the Army; but in regard to other private property, such as can be made of no injury to us in the operations of the enemy, I have directed not to be interfered with. This, however, is a difficult matter, and there exists too great a propensity to rob and pillage the houses and plantations left in charge only of the blacks.[3]

175 567 Later Hazard Stevens who also witnessed as an officer of the Federal Army the capture of Port Royal attributed much of the looting to the Negroes whom he de-

"The facts are briefly these. So soon as it was understood by the St. Helena Company that a retreat of our forces from Bay Point might become necessary, every hand was employed and every individual busied in gathering together the flats and boats from every quarter of the Island. This duty was rendered doubly arduous by the unwillingness displayed by some of the negroes, who shrunk from executing the order from fear, and in many instances secreted themselves at the appointed time. So excited and disorganized had they become from fear inspired by the terrible cannonading only three miles distant from their point of rendezvous, that it was found necessary to have the flats, as they were manned, each superintended by a member of our little company, who were instructed to make an example of the first rebellious negro who hesitated to row."

[3] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 6, 188.

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scribed as being in "the densest ignorance, some of them the blackest human beings ever seen, and others the most bestial in appearance." "These ignorant and benighted creatures flocked into Beaufort on the hegira of the whites," wrote Stevens, "and held high carnival in the deserted mansions, smashing doors, mirrors, and furniture, and appropriating all that took their fancy. After this loot, a common sight was a black wench dressed in silks, or white lace curtains, or a stalwart black field hand resplendent in a complete suit of gaudy carpeting just torn from the floor. After this sack, they remained at home upon the plantations, and reveled in unwonted idleness and luxury, feasting upon the corn, cattle, and turkeys of their fugitive masters."[4]

The Negroes were inclined to hold aloof from the invading army. They had been told by their masters that the enemy was likely to seize them and carry them off to Cuba. They, who were accustomed to look upon persons even from neighboring islands as "foreigners," were startled by the presence of so many white persons. The officers had expected to put the Negroes to work at once in getting ready the new camps, after the example of General Butler, who had earlier captured Hampton Roads and solved his labor problem and the status of the Negro simultaneously by declaring the slaves contraband of war. But, after the army had been at Port Royal more than a month, the Negroes still were suspicious. A great many would come in to watch the operations of the white soldiers, bringing with them wives and children, but when work was suggested most of them would again take to the

[4] Stevens, *Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, pp. 354, 355.

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woods and the swamps, often leaving their families to be fed by the army.[5] By February, 1862, however, 600 Negroes had collected at the Federal camp at Hilton Head.

The Negroes on the islands more remote from Beaufort and Hilton Head quite generally remained on their respective plantations under the direction of the drivers who still held the keys to the corn-houses. With the same sense of responsibility that they felt before their masters fled, they dealt out rations and directed the work of the field hands. In one instance a Federal agent was called upon to settle a dispute between a driver and a field hand, as being the only white man to whom an appeal might be made. The driver was refusing the hand his peck of corn because he had been absent visiting his wife on a neighboring plantation when the corn was gathered, the work having been done after "gun shoot," as the Negroes termed the battle of Port Royal. The hand protested that he had helped to plant and hoe the corn and had been absent when it was gathered only because of sickness. Upon this evidence the agent advised the driver to deal out the peck, and the driver promptly did so.

The St. Helena Negroes seem to have had little part in the looting of their masters' houses. They were accustomed to the absence of their owners and to seeing the "big house" closed many months during the year. They could not believe, as the soldiers told them, that their masters were gone for good. After a while they did begin to take a few simple articles such as sugar and soap,[6] and

[5] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 202.

[6] Their attitude is in striking contrast to that of the Combahee River Negroes who usually to a man went off with the Federal Army when a raid was made up the River. On one such occasion, seventy-three Negroes on the plantation where

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later, when they saw the soldiers entering the houses, they also took pieces of furniture, but by far the greater portion of valuables was taken by the soldiers and Government agents.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE CONQUERING ARMY

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When the Federal Army captured Port Royal, it found that it had also taken possession of some ten thousand Negroes who might be "contraband of war," but whose status was doubtful, nevertheless. They could not be treated as northern laborers, put to work at the camps, and then ignored. It was even possible that the Army might in the last extremity have to feed and clothe them. But in the meantime there were valuable provisions for the Army on the plantations and valuable crops in the fields which could not be left to the uncertain course of the Negroes.

One of the first orders to the troops was to collect boats and mules for transportation service and corn and cattle for the commissary. Edward L. Pierce later reported that the Army had taken nearly all the corn from Ladies Island, hoping that the surplus on St. Helena would be sufficient to feed the Negroes of both islands, and from all the plantations it had taken the workable mules and horses and many of the oxen, which they slaughtered for beef, sometimes killing as many as "fifty or more head on a plantation."[7]

two Federal boats anchored aided in the destruction of their own and three neighboring plantations. They set fire to the "big house," containing a library of 3,500 volumes, to the steam threshing mill, rice barn, corn house, kitchen, storeroom, mule stable, and three Negro houses. They put on board 6,000 bushels of rice from the plantation barn and then, with their clothing tied in bundles and with their chickens and pigs squealing a protest, climbed on the vessels to the last woman and child. See *Charleston Mercury*, June 19, 1863.

[7] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, p. 319.

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To the Treasury Department, the War Department turned over the task of collecting and selling the cotton. For this purpose, Secretary Chase hastily appointed certain men whom he called cotton agents to direct the work of the Negroes. William H. Reynolds, lieutenant colonel of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Artillery, was appointed resident agent and placed in charge of the cotton agents. His motives appear to have been superior to those of many who worked under him. In making a report on the progress of work to Secretary Chase the first of the year he wrote:

> I find on most of the Plantations corn, and Sweet Potatoes, in sufficient quantities to support the Negroes.
>
> I have made arrangements to furnish them with salt, molasses & other small stores in moderate quantities deducting the cost of these articles from the amt due them for labor.
>
> . . . I find it is impossible to hire the Negroes by the day, on many of the Plantations, & have authorized my clerks to allow them a dollar for every four hundred pounds of stone cotton which they deliver at the steamboat landing, paying them partly in money & the bal in Clothing & Provisions—[8]

Edward L. Pierce, a special agent for the Treasury Department, who arrived at Port Royal a few weeks after the cotton agents, found some of them practicing "a reign of terror over the Negroes." One of them, a carpenter from New York City, had the "profoundest contempt" for his laborers.[9] Others also wrote of the dubious practices of the cotton agents. "Mr. Whiting has not been a Government agent for two months," Miss Towne wrote indignantly in 1862, "and yet he lives in Government

[8] Port Royal Correspondence. Wm. H. Reynolds to S. P. Chase, Jan. 1, 1862.
[9] *Ibid.*, Edward L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, March 30, 1862.

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property, making the negroes work without pay for him and living upon 'the fat of the lamb,'—selling too, the sugar, etc., at rates most wicked, such as brown sugar, twenty-five cents a pound; using Government horses and carriages, furniture, corn, garden vegetables, etc. It is too bad. The cotton agents, many of them, are doing this."[10]

While the cotton agents promised wages to the laborers, they were slow to pay, for the Department expected the fund arising from the sale of cotton to take care of the expense of picking it. The difficulty in getting the Negroes to work, together with the difficulty in getting the cotton ginned and to the New York market, added to the delay. The agents had expected to bale the cotton on the plantations, but the Negroes had quite generally broken up the gins so that most of it had to be sent to New York for this purpose. Consequently, it was April, 1862, before the Negroes received any pay for their labor, and then some of it was in orders on the agents' stores where prices were high. Consequently, the Government was facing general discontent and uneasiness among the Negroes only a few months after having taken them under its protection.

At the time that the Treasury Department was assigned the task of marketing the cotton, it was also given jurisdiction over the operation of the plantations and, consequently, the general welfare of the laborers on them. As early as January 15, 1862, General Sherman had applied to headquarters for authority to put into operation

[10] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 55, 61. See also pp. 16, 17, 66, 67.

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a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department. He wrote to the adjutant-general on this date:

> For the future maintenance of these people some system must be established, and one which will permit them to sustain themselves; but before they can be left entirely to their own government they must be trained and instructed into a knowledge of personal responsibility—which will be a matter of time. I have, therefore, the honor to recommend that suitable instructors be sent to them, to teach them all the necessary rudiments of civilization and secondly, and in the meantime, that agents, properly qualified, be employed and sent here to take charge of plantations and superintend the work of the blacks until they are sufficiently enlightened to think and provide for themselves. They should receive wages, and the profits of the plantations, after all expenses are paid, should go to the Government. I can see no other way to lay a groundwork for future usefulness with this unfortunate class of people.[11]

The next month General Sherman issued an order appealing to the benevolent people of the land "in behalf of the helpless blacks of South Carolina within the limits of his command."[12]

When the Treasury assumed the responsibility of the Negro, Secretary Chase had in mind some such plan as Sherman had already suggested. It occurred to Chase that here was an opportunity to test the ability of the Negro to exercise freedom in case it were eventually given him. Under a fostering benevolence, the Negro was to be given the chance of revealing his capabilities. Out of the battle of Port Royal there gradually arose in the minds of those in the North the scheme for a great social experi-

[11] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 218.
[12] *House Ex. Doc. No. 142*, 41st Cong. 2d Sess.

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ment which would form some basis for a decision concerning the status which the Negro should be given after the war.

To put some such scheme in operation the Department chose Edward L. Pierce, a young abolitionist of Boston who had studied in Chase's law office. He had been at Hampton, Virginia, and after he was mustered out of military service in July, 1861, went to Washington where he had occasion to relate some of his recent experiences with the Negroes to Secretary Chase. This fact together with their personal friendship was perhaps responsible for the Secretary's sending Pierce, then practicing law in Boston, a wire December 21, 1861: "If you incline to visit Beaufort in connection with contrabands and cotton, come to Washington at once."[13] On the twenty-fifth Pierce conferred with Chase and, on January 13, 1862, left New York City for Beaufort to make an investigation of social conditions among the Negroes under the temporary appointment as special agent for the Treasury Department.

Pierce found the "contrabands" discontented with the treatment they had received at the hands of the cotton agents and the Army. They were suspicious and reticent. When asked if they desired to be free, they would often answer, "De vite man do w'at he pleases wit' us. We yunnah niggers now, Massa."[14] But, concluded Pierce, "in spite of their condition, reputed to be worse here than in many other parts of the rebellious region, there are such features in their life and character, that the opportunity is now offered to us to make of them, partially in

[13] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 54.
[14] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 308.

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this generation, and fully in the next, a happy, industrious law-abiding, free and Christian people, if we have but the courage and patience to accept it."[15] Whereupon he outlined a plan to the Secretary by which he thought this ideal might be realized.

He was much opposed to the plan of leasing the plantations with the people upon them to the highest bidder, as the cotton agents had recommended. Instead, he would propose a system of superintendents of plantations whereby certain men, carefully chosen for the position, should be appointed to manage the cultivation of the plantations, their chief object being "to promote the moral and intellectual culture of the wards" and "to prepare them for useful and worthy citizenship." The superintendents, who were to be selected "as carefully as one would choose a guardian for his children," were to have complete authority on their respective plantations subject only to a director-general. The superintendents were to be compensated by a good salary, say $1,000, and the laborers by a standard wage graduated by the wants of the laborers and the ability of the Government to pay, this ability to be determined by the profits arising from the cultivation of the plantations. He thought, however, that the Government should be able to allow rations and 40 cents a day.

As a part of the plan, Pierce advised the Government to send missionaries "to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature" and teachers to instruct the laborers in reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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salaries of these persons, Pierce thought that the Government could rely upon private benevolence.[16]

While Pierce's "Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," of February 3, 1862, which at once received wide publication, was for the most part enthusiastically received in the North, there were some who thought that he went too far in presuming upon the Negro's ultimate citizenship. Even his personal friends in Congress refused to support the plan, and President Lincoln did not wish to be troubled with "such details"; for, so Pierce thought, he approached the great question of the status of the Negro "slowly and reluctantly."[17] Chase seems to have been well pleased with the report and at once put it in operation.[18] In looking about for the proper person to put this difficult and important experiment into effect, it was natural that the Secretary should choose the father of the plan.

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Although the Department had adopted the plan of superintendents, it had no funds with which to pay them. At this critical stage the Educational Commission, organized in Boston February 7, 1862, and the Freedman's Relief Association, organized in New York on the twentieth of the same month, volunteered to pay both superintend-

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

[17] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 65.

[18] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. The authority by which the Treasury Department assumed the responsibilities outlined in the report was based upon the Act of July 13, 1861, by which the President was authorized to permit commercial intercourse with any part of the country in a state of insurrection under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The act authorized the Secretary to appoint the officers needed to carry into effect such permits, rules, and regulations. President Lincoln sanctioned the enterprise in a note to Pierce, February 15, 1862, and the War Department approved the plans in an order to General Sherman which he made a part of General Orders, No. 17.

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ents and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived $200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.[19]

### THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.[20]

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

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[19] Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen.*

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, p. 315.

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lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government.

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In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the careless and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward

175 657 567 464

[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

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175 S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had
657 left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve with-
567 out remuneration in this social experiment, contributing
464 himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St.
(248) Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum
(433) times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[26]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[26] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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175 tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for
657 Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 out-
658 lined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of plant-
429 ing under the system arising out of the sale of planta-
tions:

175 I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—
658 or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this,
657 most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one
248 of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and employ some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more. The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules, carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the ensuing year.[35]

175 The Governnient thus gave up the paternalistic idea of
657 government-operated plantations and was content until the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, permitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

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inquire too closely, to cultivate the plantations, employ the Negroes, and teach them the ways of civilization. For one thing, this system was far more economical than that pursued in 1862 and 1863. The social experiment which had been started so enthusiastically had been an expensive enterprise,[27] and the Government, now more interested in winning the war than in "civilizing" ten thousand coastal Negroes, turned the responsibility over to someone else. Saxton's powers were now very much limited, but he still retained supervision of "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products." With the Port Royal experiment the Government began the policy of protection which later it was to apply to the Negro throughout the South during the period of Reconstruction.

### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

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The men and women led by Edward L. Pierce who reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, took seriously their charge to train the "contrabands" for citizenship. A few failed in this arduous undertaking because of their incapacity to govern men, but none failed from lack of purpose or unwillingness to endure hardships. Some even died at their posts, victims of smallpox and of the fevers from which the former masters had annually fled to the health-resort towns.

[27] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 118n. "Taking the plantations as a whole, the Government lost in 1862 the whole $200,000 which it had cleared from the planter's big cotton crop of 1861." But see also *House Ex. Doc.* no. 72, 37th Cong. 3d Sess. in which Secretary Chase outlined on Feb. 18, 1863, the expenses of the Port Royal experiment. The receipts were $726,984.10 and the expenditures $225,705.34, giving a balance on hand of $501,278.76. The majority of the receipts arose from the sale of the confiscated cotton.

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175 657 A superintendent's work kept him busy early and late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[88] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In 175 addition to these duties which were essential to the culti- 657 vation of the land the superintendent was expected to 641 attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[89]

195 One of the most serious problems which the superin- 657 tendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers. 466 They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

[88] *House Ex. Doc. no. 142*, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[89] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

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employer and he knew it. General Saxton attempted to meet this situation by the establishment in July, 1863, of plantation commissions, or courts for the administration of justice, composed of Government superintendents and certain superintendents of privately owned plantations. The commissions were allowed to make arrests whenever in their opinion it was necessary, but they were held liable for abuse of power. Having made an arrest, the commission proceeded to hear the trial.[40] Miss Harriet Ware, a teacher on St. Helena Island, after attending a meeting of court in 1864, thought it a very interesting but very sad experience. "Men and boys took the oath one after the other and then lied as if they had sworn to do so," she wrote. "Their ingenuity was wonderful, and we had to come to the conclusion that if those who we supposed spoke the truth had been on the other side they would have lied as badly as the others."[41]

Later in 1863 General Saxton obtained still further relief for the harassed superintendents. In the autumn the Government built a large number of houses near St. Helenaville for refugees brought to St. Helena from other places. These surplus houses permitted the superintendents to dispose of the turbulent and unruly on their plantations "without the scandal and excitement" which otherwise would have accompanied their removal.[42]

While the superintendents were busy with the crops, the women missionaries were visiting the cabins attempting to teach the mothers simple rules of health, cleanliness, and order. The presence of the women seemed to allay

[40] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 201n.
[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 223.

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the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

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Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

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To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

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But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

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Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

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[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

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The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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175 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of
657 training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of planta-
658 tions in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them
871 to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of
657 the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of
175 morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less
657 of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general
181 manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

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suspect that most abolitionist views of their character are exaggerated in their favor."[52]

THE LAND SALES

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Congress by Act of August 5, 1861, levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on all the states and territories for the purpose of conducting the war, of which South Carolina's quota was $363,570.66.[53] To collect the tax in the eleven insurrectionary states, Congress passed an act, June 7, 1862, calling for the appointment of direct tax commissioners. Collections were made in all the southern states during the war and after its close either by voluntary payment or by sale of land. Commissioners sold land for the non-payment of taxes in Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina, but in every state except that of South Carolina the lands were bid in at the tax sales by the commissioners for the United States. The presence of the northern missionaries in the region of the tax sales altered the situation in South Carolina.

The commissioners for South Carolina, W. E. Wording, W. Henry Brisbane, and A. D. Smith, having been appointed, ordered the first sale of land to take place at Beaufort, February 11, 1863. The land to be sold was that in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes in Beaufort District, the area occupied by the Federal Army, and included the whole town of Beaufort. Many friends of the Negro both at Port Royal and at the North objected to a sale under the Act of June 7, for they wanted some special

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[53] By Act of Congress approved July 1, 1862, the operations of the Act of August 5, 1861, were suspended until April 1, 1865, except for the collection of the first annual tax, and by Act of June 30, 1864, it was further suspended until additional legislation.

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provision whereby land might be reserved for the ownership of the Negroes. A. D. Smith, chairman of the commission, was himself eager for some such provision to be made. In his preliminary report to Secretary Chase of January 1, 1863, he wrote meaningfully:

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> The great object to be attained is the proper, permanent, and efficient organization of a system or systems of labor for the freed people. . . . The essential prerequisite . . . to this end is to obtain such a control of and title to the soil as will enable it to give a fixed and permanent character to whatever measures may be inaugurated for the organization of their industrial and social energies. All this, by the operation of the act of June 7, 1862, is placed within the grasp of the government. There can be no doubt that the government will be reimbursed many fold, even in a pecuniary point of view, for any appropriation it shall make, or outlay incur, in inaugurating this system.[54]

Miss Towne claims responsibility for the idea which made possible the establishment of such a scheme. "General Saxton is much opposed to the sale of the land to speculators," wrote Miss Towne, February 1, after a visit from him. "He thinks they ought to be preempted by the people, or else so divided and sold that the people can buy, and not be left a prey to greedy speculators and large landholders." Miss Towne suggested that General Hunter stop the February sale as a military necessity, and "General Saxton caught at the idea."[55] General Hunter immediately issued the order against the sale, and the commissioners, after striking off one lot in Beaufort, adjourned until further notice.

[54] *Senate Ex. Doc.* no. 26, 37th Cong., 3d sess.
[55] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 100, 101.

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The commissioners took the matter to the War Department, and the order came back to proceed with the sales, leaving, however, Hunter, Saxton, and the commissioners to make restrictions as they saw fit. Accordingly, on March 9 plantations and lots in Beaufort were put up for sale and struck off, some to the United States and others to "speculators," for the most part, superintendents and teachers, at about $1 an acre.[56] About two-thirds of the land was bid in by the United States and the other third bought by fourteen "loyal citizens."

Eleven of the plantations sold to private citizens were bought by Philbrick. Like Pierce, Edward L. Philbrick thought that the social experiment of training slaves for future citizenship had not been given a fair trial. When he learned that the conquered territory was to be sold for taxes, he conceived the idea of carrying on the experiment privately. In setting forth his plan to friends at the North he explained, "I . . . don't undertake it for the sake of making money at all, but for the sake of carrying out to a more satisfactory issue the present short-lived and unfairly judged experiment of free labor, and for the sake of keeping the people out of the hands of bad men."[57] Accordingly, he interested fourteen men, all but

[56] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The average price paid per acre for all the lands reserved by the United States was 34 cents. See speech of William Elliott in House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 135. See also pp. 140, 141. The agreement made on April 8, 1863, between Philbrick and his backers provided that the land be bought in his name and that he have complete responsibility for managing the estates. Philbrick, after paying the subscribers 6 per cent interest, should receive one-fourth the net profits, but he was to be liable for losses and did not have the right to call for further contributions. He was protected by the provision that no subscription could be withdrawn unless he ceased to superintend the enterprise. On closing the experiment, the net proceeds were to be divided *pro rata*.

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175 one of Boston, in the project, and on March 9 bought 6,795 acres, valued by the commissioners at $24,120, for about $7,000, eleven plantations including Coffin's Point, Fripp's Point, Cherry Hill, Pine Grove, John Fripp's Big House, Mulberry Hill, Corner Farm, two plantations on Ladies Island, and Morgan Island.[88] For the most part he employed to help him in the experiment the superintendents and teachers who were already on the plantations. After conducting the enterprise for two years with many vexations and losses, he began to sell the land in 1865, some plantations to white men from the North, others in small tracts to Negroes. He got from $5 to $10 an acre for land for which he had paid a little more than a dollar.[89]

The land bid in for the United States had been bought with the idea of providing for military and naval purposes and with the hope eventually of placing land within the reach of the Negro. The President's instructions to the tax commissioners of September 16, 1863, outlined a plan whereby this hope might be realized. After listing
175 the land to be reserved for military and naval purposes,
423 providing for land to be sold to men serving in the army,
659 navy, or marine corps, and setting apart thirty-six school farms of 160 acres each, he directed that all parts of certain tracts not otherwise appropriated be surveyed into twenty-acre plots and sold to "heads of families of the African race, only one to each, preferring such as by their good conduct, meritorious services, or exemplary character, will be examples of moral propriety and industry to

[88] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. But see *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 172.
[89] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 277, 296, 315, 324, 326.

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those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[60] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction.

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On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[61] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[62]

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[60] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc. no. 146*, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[61] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[62] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

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General Sherman, after having finally reached the sea in his famous march thereto, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865, setting aside "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida," for the freedmen, and especially reserved the islands for "the sole and exclusive management" of the Negroes.[63] The order, however, specifically exempted from its operation those whites who had bought land at the tax sales. Saxton, who was authorized to put the terms of the order in operation, at once began to settle Negroes on the land. No Negro, however, acquired the title to the land by virtue of General Sherman's order. Later, Congress, for the relief of those who had been settled on abandoned plantations, ordered, in an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau Act of July 16, 1866, a sale of most of the public land at $1.50 an acre to "such persons and to such only as have acquired and are now occupying lands under and agreeably to the provisions of General Sherman's special field order." This same act called for a sale of the school farms in St. Helena's Parish at $10 an acre.[64]

Before the Government had sold all the land which it had taken over in 1863 for the non-payment of taxes, the possession of it had become an irksome problem, grievous alike to the Government and to the people who were trying to rehabilitate the region after the War. Money was scarce and the buyers few. It was not until 1876 that the Government finally disposed of all the land.

[63] *House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.
[64] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, secs. 6-12.

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The injustice of the tax sales[68] finally became apparent. The entire property-owning population of two parishes, except for a few free colored citizens in Beaufort and one loyal citizen on Ladies Island, had been deprived of their homes and all they possessed[69] to meet the tax apportioned to the entire state. In cases where the Government was still in possession of the property, former owners were permitted under the redemption act of 1872 to reclaim their lands upon the payment of the tax, costs, interest, and penalties, and under this provision a few plantations on St. Helena Island were redeemed. Through the ceaseless efforts of Congressman William Elliott, of Beaufort, Congress at last in 1891 passed an act providing a meager compensation of $1 an acre for woodland and $5 an acre for cultivated land, after the United States Supreme Court had declared the Direct Tax Act unconstitutional. The Government also refunded the amount of tax collected from each landholder. Sea-island planters, once the inhabitants of one of the wealthiest areas in the South, were now scattered throughout the United States, and the region which had been their homes for more than a century was left in the possession of their former slaves and the men and women from the North who had helped in the experiment of converting chattel into citizens.

[68] The history of the tax sales might well be a volume in itself, and can only be briefly summarized for the purposes of this study. For excellent summaries see *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws; House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.; Speech of William Elliott in the House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242; and see *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, ch. CC, secs. 6-12; DeTrevelle *v.* Smalls, 98 U. S., 513; Court of Claims Reports (1891-1892), XXVII, p. 27.

[69] MS, Record of Sale of Household and Plantation Equipment in South Carolina. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The personal property on the plantations was sold at auction in 1864.

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### THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government 423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 423 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily rou- tine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it [434] had come the responsibility of earning their own living, [241] and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 372.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

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CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered 491
in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, 248
led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On 175
either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow 361
porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former 175
overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated 248
the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as 423
far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked 175
off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond (137)
was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four 248
weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. (243)
Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough (244)
for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old

[p. 191]

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248 175 (657) men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded (492) the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on (493) foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy (292) calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

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[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

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The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Heb-enly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune: (533) (539)

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2] (782)

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A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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175 eral officials, and northern speculators who hoped to make of Beaufort, or if not of Beaufort, of Hilton Head or Bay Point, a great seaport second only to New York. A few [466] planters were able to redeem their land and begin planting under contracts with their former slaves made on terms approved by General Saxton, now assistant commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau.[3] Dr. Clarence Fripp, for instance, began to practice medicine on St. Helena Island shortly after the close of the war and by November, 1865, had obtained a surgeon's contract from General Saxton and was living at St. Helenaville next door to his former residence which was then occupied by Miss Towne.[4] Not more than three or four planters were able to redeem land on St. Helena. The heirs of Captain John Fripp redeemed a part of Corner Farm; Mrs. Eliza H. Chaplin, five acres of her Indian Hill plantation which originally contained 400 acres; and Edgar W. Fripp, 732 acres of

[3] Saxton was succeeded January 15, 1866, by General Robert K. Scott of Ohio. See Webster, "The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 86-91.

[4] Dennett, special correspondent for the *Nation*, in the issue of Nov. 30, 1865, gives a picture of Clarence Fripp on his return to St. Helena. Among the northern soldiers and traders in the hotel at Hilton Head, Dennett discovered a "person who had the easily distinguishable appearance and manners of a South Carolinian." This gentleman, a person of some fifty years old, dressed tolerably well in a suit of grey clothes, with a large display of crumpled linen at the collar and cuffs of his coat, sat before the stove, smoking and talking very freely about his present poverty and his plans for the future. After saying that he had left St. Helena when DuPont captured Port Royal, leaving his plate and furniture behind, he told about the sale of his plantation for federal taxes. "Some Massachusetts man had bought it, and he didn't know when he would get it back. . . . Up in Greenville he soon spent all his money to support his family, but if he'd had money he couldn't have saved his property. How was he to come back inside the Yankee lines and pay the tax? The Commissioners knew very well it couldn't be done; the sale was a very unfair thing." By returning to Beaufort now, "he hoped to be able to pick up a little medical practice; but if his profession failed him, he supposed his son and himself could put up a cabin somewhere in the vicinity, and get fish and oysters enough to live on."

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an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[5] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[5] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

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175 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves
433 better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but
511 they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

### WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superin-
175 tendent under Philbrick for the Government and later re-
567 mained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his
659 scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private
181 funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

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*meum* and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in making claims,—these are the traits which try us continually in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us despair of their improvement—at least, in the present generation. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.'"*

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Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Government's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

* *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

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him, ere he will gain all his rights; but I would rather, for his own sake, see him oppressed for generations, than be spoiled and petted as he has been here. He would come out of the struggle more manly and self-reliant.[7]

Philbrick had been opposed from the first to giving the Negroes anything except in payment for services actually performed. He observed in the autumn of 1862 that they were more economical of food than they had been in the spring when they thought that the Government would ration them as their masters had done. Philbrick would have followed the same rule in regard to tools, paying them wages enough to enable each person to buy his own hoe and spade. The superintendents were likewise opposed to the Government policy of selling land to the Negroes at a special price. After the sales had been effected and the Negroes had been in possession of their holdings for more than a year, Philbrick was of the opinion that "no race of men on God's earth ever acquired the right to the soil" with so little effort as the Negroes on St. Helena. He thought that they would have been better off had they paid the market value of the land, "because they would use the land for which they had paid full price more economically, would be likely to get more out of it, and would be taught a feeling of independence more readily than by being made the recipients of charity."[8]

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Philbrick himself had acquired his land at a lower price than the Negroes had paid, but he overlooked this fact in evaluating the Government's policy toward the Negro because he was honestly attempting to put into

[7] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers. Feb., 1865.
[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 276, 277.

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc.* no. 6, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 113.

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175 464 466 [427] [465] a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 248 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The [458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[18] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[18] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

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175 423 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

(578) As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 167 735 Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

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towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

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175 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor
464 from the Island.

175 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of
St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them
511 through the year, there were some who prospered. At
[342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story
houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of
paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still
[492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in
[493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-
[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday
suit.

175 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little
prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and
731 night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction every-
where. The crops had not been so promising in many
years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in
August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were
carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not
suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the
family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and
part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the
storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

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ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out. 175 731

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23] 731

THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while 175 837 884

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
[848] desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

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the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

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It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits." [26]

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In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc. no. 79*, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Wording, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

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ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

[28] The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

[29] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

[30] There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

[31] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

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872 [175] grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 [46] [567] As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 527 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are [273] all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[32]

574 527 175 Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[32] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[22]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[22] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

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175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over [505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.

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121 African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages.[10]

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

•12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea islands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well." Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English grammar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

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•12 177 from white folk music." Even "superstitions," so often regarded as evidence of the primitive African origins of black southerners, were attributed by Johnson to white sources. "A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent." Other studies in the St. Helena project by Guion Griffis Johnson and T. J. Woofter, Jr. were in the same tradition.[11]

While black scholars such as John Wesley Work, James Weldon Johnson, and N. G. J. Ballanta had claimed African origins for the Afro-American spirituals, the only white scholar who had shared that view was the music critic Edward Krehbiel in 1914. In the 1920s and 1930s a number of white scholars, including Edward M. von Hornbostel, Newman Ivey White, Robert Winslow Gordon, Guy B. Johnson, and George Pullen Jackson, had contended that the Afro-American spirituals represented selective borrowings from white folk hymnody.[11] For the most part folklorists of the period tended to publish large collections of lore without drawing many conclusions about them. Elsie Clews Parsons collected black folklore in the sea islands off South Carolina and in the Caribbean. She refrained from inferences, but her careful annotations showed the similarity of her material to folklore collected in Africa. On the other hand, Newbell Niles Puckett, in his *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (1926), said that, while most whites believed black "superstitions" to be relics of African heathenism, "in four cases out of five it is a European dogma from which only centuries of patient education could wean even his own ancestors." The black folklorist Zora Neale Hurston suggested a more complex relationship between African and European elements underlying Afro-American folklore but was somewhat vague about their proportions.[12]

12 Both Elsie Clews Parsons and Zora Neale Hurston were trained anthropologists who had studied with Franz Boas at Columbia University. Boas—eager to combat the evolution-

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•12 ary tradition in anthropology that considered blacks to be at an earlier, less advanced level of civilization than whites—denied any enduring influence of African culture. According to Boas,

> The traits of the American Negroes are adequately explained on the basis of his [*sic*] history and social status. The tearing away from the African soil and the consequent complete loss of the old standards of life, which were replaced by the dependency of slavery and by all that it entailed, followed by a period of disorganization and by a severe economic struggle against heavy odds, are sufficient to explain the inferiority of the status of the race, without falling back upon the theory of hereditary inferiority.

12 Another Boas student, Ruth Benedict, wrote of black Americans in her book *Race:* "Their patterns of political, economic, and artistic behavior were forgotten—even the languages they had spoken in Africa." She accounted for this loss in the same way that E. Franklin Frazier and Guy B. Johnson had: "Conditions of slavery in America were so drastic that this loss is not to be wondered at."[18]

By the 1930s one anthropologist was beginning to ask if scholars might not, upon close examination of Afro-American culture, find "that there are some subtle elements left of what was ancestrally possessed." Himself a student of Boas, Melville J. Herskovits had early in his career scorned the idea that there were even lingering traces of Africa among black Americans and had doubted that there was any separate Afro-American culture. "That they have absorbed the culture of America," he wrote in 1925, "is too obvious, almost, to be mentioned." As he began to conduct comparative research in New World Afro-American cultures, he began to question his earlier position. As late as 1937, however, when

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8. Ralph Betts Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933); Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs, and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (1944): 186–95. For more recent perspectives, see Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (Athens, Ga., 1984); Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low Country Georgia, 1750–1860* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1985); and Clarence L. Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia* (Athens, Ga., 1986).

9. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 291.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 3–5, 42–44, 342.

11. Robert E. Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures with Special Reference to the Negro," *Journal of Negro History* 4 (1919): 116. For an interesting perspective on conservative and radical manifestations of the catastrophist school see Orlando Patterson, "Rethinking Black History," *Harvard Educational Review* 41 (1971): 299–304.

12. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in America* (Chicago, 1939), pp. 21–22, 479. See also his "Traditions and Patterns of Negro Family Life in the United States," in *Race and Culture Contacts*, ed. E. B. Reuter (New York, 1934), p. 194; and his *The Negro Church in America* (New York, 1963).

13. Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1930), pp. 10–11, 128, 171; Guion Griffis Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1930); T. J. Woofter, Jr., *Black Yeomanry: Life on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1930). For a discussion of Guy B. Johnson and his role in the St. Helena project, see Daniel Joseph Singal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919–1945* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), pp. 315–27.

14. John Wesley Work, Introduction to *Folk Song of the American Negro*, ed. Frederick J. Work (Nashville, Tenn., 1907); James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamund Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* (New York, 1925); Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* (New York, 1925); Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music* (New York, 1914); Edward M. von Hornbostel, "American Negro

121 so. The publication of "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change" by Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968) marks the beginning of a significant focus on variation within linguistic systems. An important shift was begun from a view of linguistic phenomena in terms of only categorical divisions, with discrete boundaries, toward a view of at least some of the same phenomena in terms of continuous processes, with no clearly defined natural boundaries. In a sense, this shift may reflect a change in philosophical orientation from the Aristotelian categorical thinking which has characterized much of Western European thought to that of the more process-oriented thinking which has developed in America through the work of major philosophers like Whitehead, Dewey, and Mead.

•12 Two major models for treating such continuous processes in linguistic systems have developed since the publication of that important article; these models differ chiefly on the basis of what aspects of linguistic phenomena they continue to treat in categorical terms. The model developed initially by Labov (1969) and extended by G. Sankoff (1973), Cedergren and D. Sankoff (1974), and G. Sankoff (1974) has utilized the 'variable rule' as a central concept. The variable rule has permitted expression of systematic individual variation for some grammatical items, while maintaining the isomorphism between the grammar of the individual and that of the speech community

•12 of which the individual is a part. This model is sometimes labeled the 'Quantitative Paradigm.' The model developed by DeCamp (1971, 1973), Bailey (1973), and Bickerton (1975), in contrast, has allowed variability in the communal grammar and has permitted an analysis of the speech community in terms of individuals having different grammars, who nevertheless communicate with each other. The grammar of the individual speaker in this model, variously called the Wave Model or Dynamic Analysis, has been viewed in categorical terms. Bickerton, in particular, views grammatical rules in terms of categorical shifts from one rule to another, with possible variation only in the transition stage between an old and a new rule. DeCamp (1973) has come closest to combining the process-oriented features of both models in his suggestion that an implicational model of the type proposed in DeCamp (1971) and utilized as the basis for the Dynamic Paradigm proposed by Bickerton (1975) might incorporate certain features of the frequency analysis used by Labov and Sankoff.

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197 In the study of linguistic change in Gullah, both models have been useful in analysis of the data. Implicational scales which include information on relations of 'more or less,' rather than merely 'presence or absence,' have revealed relationships not readily apparent from frequency counts alone in some cases. Frequency data on the use of creole features by speakers carefully matched for

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12 197 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

121 128 1.3 Overview

Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer fE, a static-locative preposition (to), and the third person singular pronouns ee and Em. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in bus
and the sound of the unstressed
vowel in Cuba

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121 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
178 have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
177 Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
178 open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated the American ethos to the extent evident among northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland (U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes increasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

•12 The related and important question of the present in-
178 vestigation is whether in addition to the retention of linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," African Language Society (1966), pp. 171-179.

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) (789) A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) (751) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

861 of the grandparents also reported beatings as frequent as one per week. Only children (7.1%) reported beatings as frequently as twice a week.

TEST OF THE GENERATION NULL
•12 HYPOTHESIS ($H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$)
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There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations. $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2 = M_3$.

1. The relationship under measurement was between generation membership and use of physical punishment. The same rationale for the use of questions two, six, and eight developed in the test of the first Null Hypothesis also applies here. Again question two is the direct and questions six and eight are tangential measures of the relationship.
2. Under the direct test the relationship was significant at the .01 level. The Chi Square value was 15.36, while the critical value at 4 df was 13.28. The first of the tangential measures was insignificant. The critical value at (.05) with 4 df was 9.49, while the Chi Square value was 2.96. In this case the $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2 = M_3$ was supported. The second indirect test of the relationship (question 8) was significant at .001. At 8 df the critical value was 26.12 while the Chi Square value was 26.37. These significance levels (.01, .001) are the basis upon which the Null Hypothesis was

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rejected in favor of the alternative $H_2$: $M_1 = M_2 \neq M_3$.

3. Significant generational differences in discipline behavior and attitudes were clearly noted. As a matter of fact nine of the generational relationships were significant. Five of these relationships were significant at the .001 level. It is extremely clear that the generations differ in application of and in attitudes about discipline. There were however, nonsignificant differences across the generations relative to: (a) the age at which children are no longer beaten (question 6), (b) the causes of the last beating (question 7), and (c) on the boundaries of asocial behavior (question 9).

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VARIABLE OF SEX

The relationship between the variable of sex and question two, "How oben beetn for dis?" was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The responses were: <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. The critical value was 5.99 at 2 df the Chi Square was 2.11. Sixteen point two of the males and 32.4% of the females said the <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio was used by their parents. Fifty-four percent of the males and 59.6% of the females thought physical discipline often followed asocial acts. More males (29.7%) selected the <u>sometime</u> reaction ratio than did the females (77%).

The relationship between the variable of sex and

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121 is predominantly English. As exemplified in the previous
197 discussion, lexicon alone does not constitute a dialect of a language. A dialect of English is a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. In the United States dialectal variations present virtually no comprehension barrier to other speakers of American English outside of a particular region. Gullah does lack the structural intercomprehensibility afforded by dialects of American English, and consequently it can not be properly defined within the boundaries of the English language in the same manner as many English dialects.

121 Creole languages are no longer regarded as 'bastard' dialects disowned and held in low repute by linguists. Rather, they are now studied as independent language systems with inherent peculiarities resulting from their own course of development. Creoles studied in this manner allow linguists not only to examine subtleties in phonological, syntactical and morphological elements as they contrast with their superstrate and substrate sources, but also to make judgments about creole systems as they compare and relate to each other.

•12 The massive studies undertaken recently on languages throughout the world have revealed striking similarities among pidgin and creole languages which could not have had any prior genetic affiliation. For example, both Atlantic and Pacific creoles have a number of reduplicated

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•12 words, restricted vocabularies, few morphological inflections, few redundancies, little embedding, and little allomorphic variation. In common with other languages, they have analytic negative markers, conjunctions, and aspect (Hall 1966, Hymes 1971, Kay and Sankoff 1972, Todd 1974).

Various theories such as the monogenetic attempt to explain the similarities through a common ancestor, possibly 'Sabir', a Portuguese lingua franca which was somehow circulated around the globe. The problem with this theory is comprehensiveness. It does not tell us where the grammar of the ancestor comes from. Other pidgins and creoles exist in the world which are not based on European languages and these pidgins and creoles also share some of the characteristics of European-based languages. Todd mentions in Africa pidgin versions of Ewondo, Hausa, Ngbandi, Zulu, Bemba and Swahili. In Papua one finds a pidginized version of Motu; and a pidginized Malay is widely used in Indonesia and Malaysia. She explains that Ewondo Populaire is one of the names given to a pidginized Ewondo spoken in the vicinity of Yaoundé in Cameroon. When compared with Ewondo it is seen to have a limited vocabulary, and a considerable reduction in inflection and grammatical contrasts commonly found in Bantu languages (Todd 1974:39-41). According to Todd, in standard Ewondo the negator is variable, but in Ewondo Populaire it is not and, like the negators in English-based pidgins, it follows the subject and precedes the verb

•12 phrase or initiates a negative imperative sentence.

| *English* | *Freetown Krio* | *Ewondo Populaire* |
|---|---|---|
| I do | a du | me bo |
| I don't do | a nɔ du | me ke bo |
| do | du | boo |
| don't do | nɔ du | ke boo |
| I did | a bin du | me nga bo |
| I didn't do | a nɔ bin du | me ke nga bo |

*Comparison of verb phrases (Todd 1974:41)*

121 The polygenetic theory attempts to explain similarities among creoles through a spontaneous generation process where creoles are thought to have developed independently with influences from their parent languages. Some 121 polygenesis proponents such as Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1966) suggested that pidgins and creoles resulted from 'baby talk' 114 used by overseers to communicate with their servants. Consequently, the language which developed was simplified in grammatical and phonological structure. This theory is unsatisfactory for several reasons. (1) Early accounts indicate that the European overseers and their families were learning the creole from the servants and not vice versa (Dillard 1972:192); (2) if the European had improvised his own unique variety of baby talk to communicate with his servants, one would not be able to account for the fact that all French creoles are mutually intelligible and (3) the structural similarities shared by the Atlantic creoles of Spanish, French and English are too numerous for pure coincidence (DeCamp 1971:19).

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121 the polar ends, but also features unique to itself. DeCamp's scale shows no representation of a speaker of Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English. It is not known whether such a speaker exists.

Bickerton (1973:642) criticizes DeCamp's procedure. He says DeCamp constructed his scale randomly from different linguistic categories. He mixes phonological, syntactic, and lexical variables, thus making his analysis incommensurate with the study of formal linguistics. Phonological variables, Bickerton says, have a decisive influence on the selection of lexical and syntactic variables as in allegro speech. If DeCamp had confined analysis to linguistically related variables, Bickerton suggests that his description would have had more credibility and it would have been of more significance as a theory of variation and linguistic change.

•12 A final point that I would like to make concerning DeCamp's characterization of variation of a continuum is that he says that each speaker masters a span of the continuum, but that no speaker masters variety one and variety ten unless he also masters varieties two through nine. The criterion of mutual intelligibility gives some support to this claim. The fact that English-speaking tourists in Jamaica have difficulty understanding certain varieties of these creoles leads one to suspect that part of the continuum is English and part of it is Creole. What DeCamp did not say and leaves one to conjecture is that the span is semi-permeable depending on the speaker's production and

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•12 reception rules. Competence includes a speaker's ability to understand utterances beyond a level that he is able to perform. He may have the competence to understand several intermediate spans but he may have a production command only over varieties that are in close proximity.

To deal with the problem of competence and performance, Bickerton proposes a third approach to solving the problem of representing the mechanics of variation through the use of a continuum. He proposes a new metatheory based on abstract relationships existing in grammars. These abstract relations are used to show that variability stemming from competence simply results from the spread and evolution of language change through space and time. Like DeCamp's performance model, 'leaky grammars, variants that fit no system, conflicting native-speakers' intuitions, performance error—all the problems that vexed previous formulations' are seen as a segment of a multifacet holistic paradigm (Bickerton 1973:643).

To avoid DeCamp's errors, Bickerton develops a more sophisticated model by incorporating into his theory a system of rule changes accounting for intra- as well as inter-individual variation. He follows C.-J. Bailey's theory that rule changes never extend immediately to all categories, but begin in a very limited area, saturate it and then go on the the next category.

DeCamp found implicational relationships existing between speakers A, C, and B. Bickerton labeled this area

•12 a conflict, and called each conflict a stage in the progression of language change. He anticipated the speaker whose performance differed from that predicted by the competence model. He accounted for intra-individual variation by rule conflict: where at any given point in time a situation exists between speaker *A* who has a rule *X* and speaker *C* who has a rule *Y*, there exists a speaker *B* wherein application of rule *X* alternates with the application of rule *Y* (Bickerton 1973:643).

121 Washabaugh questions the bidirectionality of variation proposed by Bickerton and others. He suggests that variation in decreolization may be vertical, contrastive or horizontal depending on three social factors: (1) pressure to avoid the basilect, (2) pressure to acquire the acrolect, and (3) pressure to use a careful speech style for formal situations. The pressure to avoid the basilect is the strongest motive because speakers are not always aware of how they want to talk, but they have a keen perception of how they DO NOT want to talk. Washabaugh does not deny that variation is systemic. Rather, he suggests that it is directed by psychological as well as social and linguistic pressure (Washabaugh 1977:329-51).

The consultants in this study are shown to illustrate the theory and mechanics of these multidimensional variation of English verbs and pronouns. The quantitative measurement of fluctuation between English and Creole

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[For additional information on the author's theoretical orientation, see Category 12.]

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[For additional information on linguistic theory, see Category 12.]

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# *Introduction to the Brown Thrasher Edition*

CHARLES JOYNER

•121 LOOK AT THE PICTURES. HERE ARE CABINS AND PRAISE-houses, oxcarts, banjos, and coiled baskets. Here are carved chains and masks, wooden figures and walking sticks. Here are the haunting faces of black coastal Georgians.

121 115 Here is Katie Brown, sitting on the sunny steps of her unpainted cabin, her head swathed in a white kerchief, her body encased in a well-worn sweater. Her visitors have come down the coast more than fifty miles from Savannah, crossing over to Sapelo, one of the long chain of sea islands that stretch along the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Passing the sawmill village in the center of the island, they have bounced through woods and underbrush over winding, tree-shaded oxcart paths to the tiny settlement on the lower end of the island. Here live the descendants of Sapelo's plantation slaves. Katie Brown is a gracious hostess to the visitors who ply her with pipe tobacco and questions about old-time customs and beliefs. They ask her about "sitting-up" with the dead, about conjures and spirits, about the use of drums in church services, and about animal trickster tales. "Yeah, we hab set-ups wid duh dead," she acknowledges, but maintains, "I ain know bout conjuh." As for drums in church, she recalls that they "use to hab um long time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um." Regarding Buh Rabbit stories, she says, "I heah um, but I fuhgits." But she has not forgotten Belali Mohomet, her great-grandfather who came from

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Africa and became the driver on Thomas Spalding's Sapelo plantation. Belali Mohomet and his wife, Phoebe, prayed "wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set," she recalls. "Dey bow tuh duh sun and hab lill mat tuh kneel on." She also tells the visitors the story of her grandmother. "Belali he from Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds we didn know." On the same day, every year, her grandmother had made a strange, flat cake.

> She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tek dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. "Saraka" she call um.

Katie Brown has endured. She is one of the oldest dwellers on Sapelo. Her words gradually reveal to the visitors a portrait of Sapelo's black community, a culture in which the past still persists into the present, a culture shaped as much by remembered traditions from Africa as by encountered traditions from elsewhere.

Look at the pictures. Here is Tony William Delegal, the blind Ogeechee Town centenarian who toiled as a slave on Major John Thomas's Harris Neck plantation and who can still sing an African song for the Savannah visitors. Here is Henry Williams of St. Marys, born a slave of "William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation." Williams recalls Daddy Patty, an Ibo who "use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he came from. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im." Patty had told the men of life in Africa. "Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz." And here is Jim Myers of Mush Bluff Island, sitting on the oak logs that serve as front steps for his cabin in a hard-

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121 115 [757] packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke" [567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house, chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu- [192] merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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•(2) Projects Administration, the Federal Writers' Project employed over six thousand jobless persons, some of whom were experienced in putting words on paper—novelists, poets, Ph.D.'s, journalists, and free-lance writers. They interviewed sharecroppers and living exslaves; they transcribed court records and inventoried cemeteries; they collected oral history and folklore. Through their state guides and other publications they contributed materially to a better understanding of America. Jerrold Hirsch writes that the national director, Henry G. Alsberg, and the folklore editor, Benjamin A. Botkin, shared a vision that attempted to reconcile cosmopolitan and provincialism. They respected the provincial sense of place and understood that every place possesses its own unique qualities and heritage, but they did not believe a sense of place was incompatible with a more cosmopolitan perspective informed by knowledge of other traditions. They saw American culture as pluralistic, a mosaic of different traditions, each contributing to the whole. But they found it difficult to communicate such a vision to state and local units. There are advantages to both provincial and cosmopolitan perspectives—that of the insider and that of the outsider—but rarely did any one person possess both. According to Hirsch, southern fieldworkers were closer to their folk roots and were more sensitive to local folklore than those outside the region and largely avoided the condescending tone that distanced the collector from the folk. When white southern fieldworkers reported black folklore and folkways, however, they could be as patronizing as their counterparts in other states. The national office worried that their encouragement of local folklore might contribute to a divisive regionalism. Botkin, hoping to emphasize the process of cultural interchange, wished a line "to be clearly drawn between the acculturative and contra-acculturative phases of regionalism." The Savannah Unit's concentration on African survivals rather than on black acculturation in Georgia found itself in conflict with the vision of the national office, which

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•121 felt that *Drums and Shadows* promoted a racist theory of cultural evolution in which cultural traits might "survive" from earlier, more "primitive" stages of culture but would eventually disappear under contact with more "advanced" cultures.[1]

*Drums and Shadows* was also in conflict with popular stereotypes. Published in 1940, it was offered to an American public whose image of black Georgians was formed by *Gone with the Wind*. Margaret Mitchell's novel had won the Pulitzer Prize in 1936, and David O. Selznick's film version had enjoyed enormous popular and critical success in 1939, setting box-office records and sweeping the Academy Awards. Black Georgians, as portrayed in *Gone with the Wind*, were either loyal, unsupervised field hands like Big Sam—so grateful to be allowed to be "de one dat sez when it's quittin' time at Tara" that he is later proud to dig trenches to help the Confederates win the war—or loyal, unhurried house servants like Prissy (who "don't know nothin' 'bout birthin' babies"), or the butler Uncle Peter (whose incongruous dignity is presented as faintly comical), or the bossy, influential Mammy (the Emily Post of Tara, arbiter of what is appropriate and what "ain't fittin'"). Unlike David Wark Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, the images are sentimental rather than paranoid, patronizing rather than vicious; but they are nonetheless inaccurate and demeaning.[2]

Seduced by such affectionate and appealing stereotypes, Americans were ill prepared for the real black Georgians presented in *Drums and Shadows*. It presented a world far removed from the traditional South of sentimental romances in which Colonel Massa sips mint juleps on the magnolia-shaded piazza of the white-columned Big House, while happy, carefree slaves prance about, rolling their eyes and strumming their banjos. The real world of rural black Southerners in the 1930s was one in which families lived on less than two hundred dollars a year in leaky, tin-roofed houses lacking either glass or screens in the windows. It was a world

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121 in which children walked miles to rickety schools and the elderly walked miles to rickety churches. It was a world in which farmers borrowed small sums at indefinite rates of interest and lost their lands at indefinite rates of foreclosure. The major impact of the Great Depression on this world of perpetual depression was to bring in fieldworkers from the Federal Writers' Project.[3]

114 *Drums and Shadows* was sparsely reviewed at the time and did not enjoy large sales. The *New York Times Book Review* buried its notice on page 17, and the critic damned the book with faint praise. In a joint review of *Drums and Shadows* and Mason Crum's *Gullah*, C. McD. Puckette said that both books performed "a real service to folklore." He lamented that the "generation of Negroes raised under the tutelage of former slaves is thinning and sophistication is coming even to the last point of the outermost barrier island." And he praised the interviewers who "convince one that a faithful task has been done and Georgia can justly be gratified at this addition to the annals of the State." By comparison with Crum's book, he said that *Drums and Shadows* "covers the fresher ground only because fewer chronicles have recorded the stories of Sapelo, St. Simon's and St. Mary's."[4]

121 114 THE IMPORTANCE OF *Drums and Shadows* is much clearer in retrospect. It was the pioneering book in demonstrating the continuing, living influence of African folklore among Afro-Americans, not through bits and pieces of shadowy survivals gathered in small numbers over scattered wide areas, but through concrete examples gathered in massive quantities within a small area of the United States. In his foreword the sociologist Guy B. Johnson termed it "probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time."[5] The Savannah Unit was aware that the local folklore collected on the Georgia coast had implications extending far beyond the state of Georgia. The writers pre-

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sented their material in the explicit hope that it might be "useful as an outline for further investigations in this and related fields."[8]

In choosing to focus on African survivals, *Drums and Shadows* was consciously departing from a generation of scholarly consensus in the fields of history, folklore, sociology, and anthropology. The leading university historian of the Afro-American experience in slavery was Yale's Georgia-born scholar Ulrich Bonnell Phillips. His *American Negro Slavery*, published in 1918, remained the standard work on the subject until the 1950s.[9] Studies of Georgia slavery by Ralph Betts Flanders and Albert H. Stoddard were written in the Phillips tradition.[10] In *American Negro Slavery*, Phillips revealed a certain ambivalence regarding the amount of African inheritance by Afro-Americans. Occasionally he seemed to believe in African cultural continuity among the slaves. "While produced only in America," he wrote, "the plantation slave was a product of old world forces. His nature was an African's profoundly modified but hardly transformed by the requirements of European civilization. The wrench from Africa and the subjection to the new discipline while uprooting his ancient language and customs had little more effect upon his temperament than upon his complexion." Yet only a few sentences later Phillips quoted with approval a saying of the slaveholders that "a negro was what a white man made him." On the slave plantation, the slave left Africa behind. "Ceasing to be Foulah, Coramantee, Ebo or Angola, he became instead the American negro."[11] In any event, Phillips's view of Africa was terribly negative. "No people is without its philosophy and religion," he admitted, but "of all regions of extensive habitation equatorial Africa is the worst." As for the Africans, "the climate in fact not only discourages but prohibits mental effort of severe or sustained character, and the negroes have submitted to that prohibition as to many others, through countless generations, with excellent grace." Such

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•12 African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages."

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea islands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well." Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English grammar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

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12 ary tradition in anthropology that considered blacks to be at an earlier, less advanced level of civilization than whites—denied any enduring influence of African culture. According to Boas,

> The traits of the American Negroes are adequately explained on the basis of his [*sic*] history and social status. The tearing away from the African soil and the consequent complete loss of the old standards of life, which were replaced by the dependency of slavery and by all that it entailed, followed by a period of disorganization and by a severe economic struggle against heavy odds, are sufficient to explain the inferiority of the status of the race, without falling back upon the theory of hereditary inferiority.

•12 Another Boas student, Ruth Benedict, wrote of black Americans in her book *Race:* "Their patterns of political, economic, and artistic behavior were forgotten—even the languages they had spoken in Africa." She accounted for this loss in the same way that E. Franklin Frazier and Guy B. Johnson had: "Conditions of slavery in America were so drastic that this loss is not to be wondered at."[16]

By the 1930s one anthropologist was beginning to ask if scholars might not, upon close examination of Afro-American culture, find "that there are some subtle elements left of what was ancestrally possessed." Himself a student of Boas, Melville J. Herskovits had early in his career scorned the idea that there were even lingering traces of Africa among black Americans and had doubted that there was any separate Afro-American culture. "That they have absorbed the culture of America," he wrote in 1925, "is too obvious, almost, to be mentioned." As he began to conduct comparative research in New World Afro-American cultures, he began to question his earlier position. As late as 1937, however, when

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•121 he published his *Life in a Haitian Valley*, he declared that "going native" (being a participant-observer) was "neither possible nor of benefit among West African Negroes and their New World descendants." His stated reason was that the failure of the fieldworker to observe the racial etiquette of segregation would embarrass informants and subject the fieldworker to community ridicule."

Herskovits published his most significant work, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, in 1941, following several years of fieldwork in the Caribbean, in Brazil, and in West Africa. In it Herskovits proposed a general theory of culture change that posited the persistence of such African survivals in Afro-American cultures as *Drums and Shadows* had already demonstrated. *The Myth of the Negro Past* was immediately controversial. Nearly all American intellectuals, black and white, denounced his thesis as misguided and exaggerated. Racial integrationists such as E. Franklin Frazier and Guy B. Johnson were concerned that segregationists might use Herskovits's arguments to build a case that black Americans were unassimilable. Herskovits, a long-time foe of white supremacy, was no supporter of segregation (even though much of his *Myth of the Negro Past* was built upon the scholarship of Ulrich B. Phillips, whom he quoted approvingly a dozen times). But few Americans other than ardent white supremacists were prepared to accept his thesis of African survivals in the New World."

DRUMS AND SHADOWS preceded *The Myth of the Negro Past* by a year. In some ways, as in its fascination with primitivism and its sometimes patronizing tone, *Drums and Shadows* reflects the time and place of its inception. What is remarkable about *Drums and Shadows*, however, is not the occasional minor lapse but the determined and generally successful effort the whole project made to overcome such attitudes.

How did *Drums and Shadows* come to focus on African survivals among coastal black Georgians, then, since most schol-

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•121 ars of black America emphasized the loss of African culture? Melville J. Herskovits was an advisor to the project. One might suspect that he imposed the theme on the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers' Project. On the other hand, Guy B. Johnson was another major advisor. Was Johnson, identified with the white-to-black school of acculturation, outmaneuvered for influence by Herskovits? Was that why he was rewarded with the consolation of writing the foreword?

In fact, Mary Granger, district supervisor of the Savannah Unit, seems to have originated the survivals emphasis and to have chosen the project's advisors because of that emphasis. Granger—a woman of formidable intellect—was a cosmopolitan and well-traveled novelist. Her choice of Herskovits as advisor was an obvious one. Less obvious was her choice of Johnson. Johnson, however, maintains that he was never as hostile to the notion of African survivals as he has been depicted. He never denied the existence of African survivals nor opposed their study, although he believed that they played a less significant role in Afro-American culture than European elements did. He describes his position, then and now, as a middle position between the Africanist and Europeanist extremes. He believed, and still believes, that the balance lies somewhat closer to the Europeanist position. Johnson encouraged the Savannah project's search for survivals, and it was he who suggested the inclusion of an appendix documenting African parallels for the Georgia material. Furthermore, Johnson and Herskovits were social friends and visited Georgia together.[10]

*Drums and Shadows* certainly reflects the influence of Herskovits's earlier work in Dutch Guiana, Haiti, and West Africa rather more than it does Johnson's earlier sea island investigation. Not only are *Rebel Destiny*, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, and *Dahomey* listed in the bibliography—along with Johnson's *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*—but they are cited time and again in the annotations of black folklore from coastal Georgia.

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121 114 Herskovits and Johnson were not the only advisors chosen by the *Drums and Shadows* team. Among other outside consultants were the anthropologist William R. Bascom, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson, the folklorist Newbell Niles Puckett, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner, and the poet Sterling Brown. Three of the consultants—Johnson, Turner, and Brown—were black. Brown was perhaps the most influential upon the Savannah Unit. In his poetry he had already moved away from the pseudo-folk persona of the minstrel-show tradition to an authentic black folk voice. Perhaps the more literary orientation of the Savannah Unit gave Brown greater influence upon them than the social scientists could exert. The Georgia fieldworkers would have been familiar with a tradition in Afro-American literature that extolled—however equivocally—the African inheritance. Alain Locke had spoken ambivalently in 1925 of black Americans as "the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization." In the same year Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage" proposed that a black God would better understand the Afro-American's roots in Africa and anomalous position in America. Even earlier, in 1921, Langston Hughes had published a Whitmanesque identification with his African ancestors:

> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
> . . . . . .
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

126 Muriel and Malcolm Bell, photographers for *Drums and Shadows*, were inspired by their literary reference point to see Robert Lucas, whom they photographed at St. Marys, in the context of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. And they saw Katie Brown in the context of William Faulkner's Dilsey.[20]

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## INTRODUCTION

121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture."

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through underbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's 121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of reten-
128 tion, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows* eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal
(192) blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole lan-
(126) guage that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

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197 •121 128 [126] mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accurately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the [177] pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits."

128 [126] LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

121 128 Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Notes*

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2. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind* (New York, 1936); Jack Temple Kirby, *Media-made Dixie: The South in the American Imagination* (Baton Rouge, La., 1978), pp. 73–74, 169; Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., *The Celluloid South: Hollywood and the Southern Myth* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1981), pp. 3–4, 17–19, 128–29, 133–34; Rudy Behlmer, ed., *Memo from David O. Selznick* (New York, 1972), p. 151; Gavin Lambert, *GWTW: The Making of Gone with the Wind* (Boston, 1973), p. 70.

3. Cf. Clarence Cason, *90° in the Shade* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935); Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago, 1941); John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York, 1937); Charles S. Johnson, *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago, 1934); Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom* (New York, 1939); and Arthur F. Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1936).

4. C. McD. Puckette, "Sea Island Negroes," *New York Times Book Review*, April 6, 1941, p. 17. See also Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham, N.C., 1940).

5. Guy B. Johnson, Foreword to 1940 edition of *Drums and Shadows*, p. vi.

6. *Drums and Shadows*, original dust jacket.

7. Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York, 1918). For explications of Phillips's life and works see Eugene D. Genovese, "Ulrich Bonnell Phillips and His Critics," Foreword to *American Negro Slavery* by Phillips (Baton Rouge, La., 1966); Eugene D. Genovese, "Race and Class in Southern History: An Appraisal of the Work of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips," *Agricultural History* 41 (1967): 345–58; John Herbert Roper, *U. B. Phillips: A Southern Mind* (Macon, Ga., 1984); Merton L. Dillon, *Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Historian of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, La., 1985); and John David Smith, *An Old Creed for the New South: Proslavery Ideology and Historiography, 1865–1918* (Westport, Conn., 1985).

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121 113 Music," *International Review of Missions* 15 (1926): 748–51; Newman Ivey White, *American Negro Folk Songs* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928); George Pullen Jackson, *White and Negro Spirituals* (New York, 1943). For studies of the controversy over the spirituals, see Charles Joyner, "Music: Origins of Spirituals," in *Encyclopedia of Black America*, ed. W. Augustus Low and Virgil A. Clift (New York, 1981), pp. 591–96; John David Smith, "The Unveiling of Slave Folk Culture, 1865–1920," *Journal of Folklore Research* 21 (1984): 47–62; D. K. Wilgus, *Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1959), pp. 345–64.

15. See the following by Elsie Clews Parsons: *Folk Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923); *Folk Tales of the Andros Islands* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918); *Folklore from the Cape Verde Islands* (Cambridge, Mass., 1923); *Folk Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, vols. 1–3 (Cambridge, Mass., 1933–35, 1943). See also Newbell Niles Puckett, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1926), pp. i–ii; Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Philadelphia, 1935).

16. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York, 1938, 1963), p. 240; Ruth Benedict, *Race: Science and Politics* (New York, 1940, 1959), pp. 86–87.

17. Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro in the New World: The Statement of a Problem," *American Anthropologist* 32 (1930): 141–55; Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro's Americanism," in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Locke (New York, 1925), pp. 359–60; Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), pp. 326–27.

18. Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York, 1941; Boston, 1958), pp. 8, 25, 37, 40, 41, 45, 88, 118, 120n, 126, 127, 304. See Guy B. Johnson's review in *American Sociological Review* 7 (1942): 289. Cf. John F. Szwed, "An American Anthropological Dilemma: The Politics of Afro-American Culture," in *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. Dell Hymes (New York, 1972), pp. 153–81.

19. Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr., interview with author, Savannah, Ga., September 22–23, 1985; Guy B. Johnson, Chapel Hill, N.C., telephone conversation with author, September 14, 1985.

20. *Drums and Shadows*, p. ix; Locke, *The New Negro*, pp. 14–15; Countee Cullen, "Heritage," in *On These I Stand* (New York, 1947);

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Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," *The Crisis*, June 1921; Bell interview.

21. Hirsch, "Portrait of America," pp. 40, 301, 388.

22. For an analysis of the structure of the creole language, Gullah, and a history of how it came into being, see Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana, Ill., 1984), pp. 196–224.

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## *Photographers' Note*

121 126 LANDSCAPES AND NATURAL HISTORY PROVIDED SUBJECT matter for our start into what we thought for a time would lead to careers in professional photography. The first serious project was a series of pictures of Savannah houses and buildings for a history of the city's architecture, a venture that was inadvertently put aside. We had our own darkroom, in which we did our developing and printing. We used a German-made Eastman Kodak, a 2¼ × 3¼–inch ground glass camera called a Recomar. A sturdy tripod and a large black cloth enabled us to stop the lens down to its limit of f/32 and to bring forth a sharp image on the inverted glass screen. The stationary subject permitted ample time to compose our picture; first one of us, then the other made the necessary adjustments from under the black cloth. It was always an interesting maneuver and one that stood us in good stead when we came to the *Drums and Shadows* project.

Mary Granger, our older and interesting family friend, was the unquestioned leader of the Savannah section of the "writers" who were trying to break the depression's grip through the Work Projects Administration of the federal government. It was as district supervisor of the Savannah unit of the Georgia Writers' Project that she told us of her proposed study of African cultural survivals she believed to be extant along the Georgia coast. We were interested and from the outset believed we could photograph coastal blacks using the same technique we had found successful on Savannah architecture. We had seen the Julia Peterkin–Doris Ulmann

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121 collaboration, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* and resolved that our photo-
126 graphs of the Negroes would be as sharply focused as had been our Savannah houses. The soft focus of the Ulmann portraits was not to our liking, nor was the poor quality of their reproduction. Ulmann's remarkable ability to capture an attitude and to reflect her subject's character we hoped to emulate. We soon learned that to photograph a person, particularly a child, was far removed from making a portrait of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building.

126 Our picture-taking expeditions were always led by Mary Granger. If our subjects were to be close by Savannah she would have made arrangements with friends or with members of her staff who conducted earlier interviews. The usual procedure was for our leader to engage the subjects in conversation at a spot we had chosen with an eye to light and background. The camera on the tripod and the black cloth
126 that we were forever ducking under to focus and compose
123 invariably provoked their interest and usually put them at ease. Mary Granger's confident and cheerful demeanor and her good sense of humor accounted for the bright, responsive expressions that show on the faces of many of the older people. She questioned as she talked, made notes on interesting responses, and often would chant the African song "Kum Baba Yano," which she had learned from old Tony Delegal. This never failed to bring a look of incredulity to the faces of our subjects.

On the island trips and those to distant and remote areas our arrival was unannounced. Mary Granger was always ready to reward cooperative subjects or to persuade reluctant ones to be photographed with an offer of sweet rolls, tobacco, or old but serviceable clothes, all of which Miss Granger seemed to have in endless supply.

126 The *Drums and Shadows* photographs have appeared in
128 any number of publications, the artifacts and the Bowen grave markers more frequently than the portraits. The latter,

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# *Foreword*

•121 THE COASTAL REGION OF GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA is a fertile field for the study of old cultural heritages. Artists, poets, and novelists are not the only ones who have felt the allure of this region with its old plantations, its sleepy towns, its cypress swamps, its moss-hung trees, its ox carts, and its Negro peasantry. The works of C. C. Jones, Jr., John Bennett, Marcellus Whaley, Ambrose Gonzales, Reed Smith, Elsie C. Parsons, Ballanta-Taylor, T. J. Woofter, Jr., Guion G. Johnson, Guy B. Johnson, Robert Gordon, Lorenzo Turner, and others testify to the continuing interest of scholars in the history, folklore, folk music, and dialect of the Negro people of this region. These Negroes, more perhaps than any others in the United States, have lived in a physical and cultural isolation which is conducive to the survival of many old customs and thoughtways, both African and European. The present work represents an effort to go a bit deeper than any other work has done into certain aspects of the folk culture of these people in the coastal area. It is particularly welcome at this time, for it not only covers an area which has not received as much attention as have other areas, notably those around Charleston and Beaufort, but it is oriented toward the problem of African heritages in this country, a problem which is coming to be more and more important to the cultural anthropologist.

[171] Readers of *Drums and Shadows* will encounter much that is familiar, for many of the customs and beliefs found

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
171 them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African
114 heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E.
177 Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of
178 *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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•121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial under-
114 standing and the alleviation of friction between the races in
177 the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
178 these two, since I believe that there are a few important African survivals in the United States, but that the degree of significance of these African heritages is questionable in view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the nature and importance of African heritages in our civilization, almost everyone would agree that the question is interesting and worthy of study. Such study may not only satisfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the scientific problem of the processes which go on when two different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the
[128] material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no decision as to the African sources of particular traits. She has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
1940



[p. xxxvi is blank]

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## INTRODUCTION

175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs in-
178 tensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
(177) delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of
the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 754 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 121 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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177 178 [458 There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression. "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh*." The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

*When Roots Die* makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians,

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•121 lawyers, legislators, judges, newcomers and visitors to the islands, and (one hopes) developers themselves—with a stimulating introduction to the language and culture of the Gullah-speaking people of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands. This book can help neighbors to understand one another better. It tells the truth about the people of the Sea Islands and their endangered traditions in a fresh and meaningful way.

—Charles Joyner

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128 description of the geography, demography, and economic and social history of the region, because only in an environment like that of the Sea Islands could the inhabitants have maintained the level of continuity with African culture that has been recorded (and that surely remains to be recorded).

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the greatest portion of the book. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the settings in which the tales are told and the telling techniques employed, and sketches of some of the most prolific storytellers. Chapter 3 is composed of Gullah prayers and tales, with translations of some African counterparts. This section may be particularly pleasing to those interested in seeing just how closely the Gullah tales compare with African narratives.

Chapter 4 provides a description of those linguistic features in contemporary Gullah speech which have African parallels. This chapter may be especially useful in helping to delineate features characteristic of Gullah and not characteristic of inland African-American speech or of other speech varieties in the United States. In addition to providing insights into the status of present-day Gullah on the Sea Islands, Chapter 4 is germane to the interested reader's understanding of certain linguistic features of the Gullah speech samples.

• 121 Most often we get only a retrospective look at a culture after many of its unique features have been lost. One of the great attractions of the Sea Islands for students of the humanities and social sciences is that the expected slow pace of change in remote areas will permit a look into the culture as it undergoes transition. As outside forces erode the traditional social structure of the islanders, every attempt should be made to maintain a record of changing language, attitudes, and oral traditions. And as I hope to show in this book, researchers who come with the right preparation and receptive minds can make their studies as rewarding for the islanders as for the investigators.

121 114 In my own case, I decided that given the wide field of untapped resources in the Sea Island area, it would be wise to undertake my investigation in collaboration with a colleague from a field other than linguistics. Behavioral data, whether dealing with folklore, language, cognition, or their interrelationships, have in the past tended to be rigidly segmented and compartmentalized into folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology. The needs for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior, however, and for ex-

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121 changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are
114 becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea
114 Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to sev-
[178] eral families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

127 Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

121 One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

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121 tigation, the material and data needed to solve the problem, and the field procedures most likely to be useful.[3]

122 Preparing a research design is one thing; actual entrance into a Sea Island community is quite another. Because the islanders are suspicious of all outsiders, one group of investigators has suggested that research in the islands and in other black communities be conducted in conjunction with local, community-controlled agencies that provide services to the communities.[4] These agencies can be asked to verify the integrity of potential Sea Island investigators and to approve the uses to which they plan to put the results of their research: Not only do organizations of this sort have access to a wide range of information that would be useful to the researcher, but the researcher can reciprocate by making available to the agency any useful information that he or she acquires from outside sources. Coordinate research reduces the risk of community exploitation and is likely to produce positive results from the community.

124 No matter how careful one's planning has been, as I learned quickly, one may find it necessary to deviate from customary methods of assembling data and to adjust the procedures and time allotted for a study to correspond to the temperament and discretion of the informants. For example, included in the preliminaries made in preparation for my research was a word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants. Because the list was long, and the elicitation so painfully slow and exacting, I did not attempt to procure this information until almost two years after my initial investigation. By then the informants knew me well and were willing to tolerate such a tedious procedure. Even with their willing assistance, it took as long as a week, sometimes more, to complete the word list for one informant.

123 No research design or methodology, of course, can assure a successful investigation in any discipline in the Sea Island communities. In many ways the success or failure of a study becomes dependent on the islanders' response to the personality of the researcher, and their willingness to accept both researcher and project. Of primary importance, one must have a convincing reason for being on a given island. Patricia Nichols, to take one example, acquired entry into a river island community as a teacher—a profession highly valued by the Sea Islanders. According to her, working in a highly visible capacity at a job that made sense for the particular community chosen allowed her to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events.[5]

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# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like •121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one 491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

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538 prepared to create and perform his entire tale within a reasonably short period of time.[3] He does not and cannot perform effectively in isolation. He is influenced immediately by the occasion of the tale, and the atmosphere in which and the audience for whom he is performing. His tale is designed not to be read but to be performed and heard. In written transcriptions of oral literature the words are captured on the page, while the real flavor of the tales and the real artistry of the teller—the actual narration, the actual "telling of the tale" by a gifted and skillful performer—are lost.

Because the many communicative techniques used in storytelling, both verbal and nonverbal, are outside the realm of written literature, until fairly recently they were not felt to be important in written interpretations of Sea Island or other oral traditions. Collections by Parsons and others are indeed excellent in the depiction of characteristic 538 201 features of plot, but they are devoid of the many kinesic communicative techniques that a teller uses to engage his listeners' attention and actually mesmerize them with gestures—hand movements, a turning of the head, a long pause, a shifting of the eyes, a long knowing stare. Yet kinesics are a part of the oral performance, and much that is communicated through gesture has not been accounted for in written transcriptions of Sea Island oral literature. Even obvious verbal techniques like mimicry, repetition, ideophones (words which convey images and meaning through their sound), and rhetorical questions often fail to be taken into consideration, an omission that subtracts substantially from the beauty of the tales even as it obscures cultural methods of communication and expression.[4]

121 While it is too much to expect one discipline to teach us to be linguists, ethnologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, the common element among these and other disciplines is the commitment to interpreting and understanding the human interaction in language and culture. The need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior is becoming increasingly more apparent. David DeCamp, for example, drew attention to this need for exchange of information and ideas between linguists and scholars in related fields as a result of his efforts to scale sequential language data to form what he calls a linguistic continuum. Though he was the first to apply the technique to linguistic data, DeCamp found that as a general procedure it has been known to psychologists and sociologists as the Guttman Scalogram Analysis for over twenty years.[5]

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121 Dell Hymes also asserts that "a certain kind of information slips away" because of the lack of interdisciplinary approaches. To take an example, linguists, folklorists, and anthropologists rely on language samplings primarily for content, which provides an excellent means of delineating and analyzing elements of various cultures. Though folklorists and anthropologists may extract enough linguistic information to specify verbal genres—tales, prayers, myths, orations—they seldom specify features that one must know if one is actually to recognize instances of these genres in performance. On the other hand, linguists abstract grammar, for example, from speech data and tell us which utterances in sequences are grammatical and which are ungrammatical but they tell us little, if anything, about the various styles, modes, or contexts in which a given utterance may occur. Thus, while anthropologists acquire knowledge of social behavior and linguists acquire knowledge of language behavior, valuable information about cultures and language escapes when neither linguists nor anthropologists provide us with what Hymes calls the actual function of language within a society. We cannot assume, he goes on to say, that language has a homogenous function in every community, because ethnographic records suggest, for example, that "talk for talk's sake" is far from universal. Among the Gbaya of Central Africa, no one is regarded as skilled in narration; among the Wishram Chinook of the Columbia River, one does not talk when one has nothing that needs to be said; among the Paliyans of South India, by the age of forty men are reported as seldom speaking at all, and a talkative person is regarded with suspicion.[6]

121 201 In the area of nonverbal communication, Ray Birdwhistell discovered that body gestures in context had meaning "astonishingly like words in language." In the English, American, and German kinesic systems that he studied, he discovered that "there are body behaviors which function like significant sounds, that combine into simple or relatively complex units like words, which are combined into much longer stretches of structured behavior like sentences or even paragraphs." Gestures are culturally linked, and no one body position or motion can be said to be universal; no facial expression or body stance will convey the same meaning in every society.[7] Alfred Hayes summarizes Birdwhistell's basic assumptions underlying the systematic study of bodily movement and motions as follows:

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1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without meaning in the context in which it appears.
2. Like other aspects of human behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned and thus, subject to systematic analysis.
3. While recognizing the possible limitations imposed by particular biological substrata, until otherwise demonstrated, the systematic body motion of the members of a community is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs.
4. Visible body activity like audible acoustic activity systematically influences the behavior of other members of any particular group.
5. Until otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an investigable communicational function.
6. The meanings derived therefrom are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is investigated.
7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesic system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part.[8]

Some familiarity with body movements is important to the discussion of Sea Island literature because the performances of the individual are related to the function of the community of which he is a member, and have meaning in that context. Body expressions otherwise unique to certain African ancestral patterns may remain in the Sea Island communities, just as there are parallels in the language itself and in styles of dance and worship.

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Included in this discussion are examples of individual performing styles which are variations on a larger system of community-expected and -accepted behavior patterns during a storytelling event. According to Richard Dorson, there is a "group repertoire." There are indeed patterns of movements characteristic of *inland* black storytellers which are directly related to the culture as a whole. It was once assumed that most people in a subculture told the same tales in the same way. There is a very definite repertoire of gestures common to southern black sto-

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121 rytellers; every storyteller has command of these particular gestures and every southern black storyteller has these features in common with other members of the group. On closer observation of individual performers, however, we see that there is much variation and individuality of style. Once the group repertoire has been established, we can more clearly see the distinctions among performers.[9]

538 Beyond the area of kinesics, other nonverbal communicative interactions include such intrinsic components as the setting and atmosphere for storytelling and the degree to which audience participation influences and is actually a part of a Sea Island tale. Lacking these essential elements, most written versions of Sea Island, Caribbean, and some West African literatures appear as short, loosely strung-together episodic tales. The tales alone are barren and incomplete. They do not show the frequent words and phrases interjected by the listeners, nor do they indicate the subtle manner in which the speaker calls on them actually to help him along in telling his tale. Phillip Noss elaborates on this point: "When one reads tales that are meant to be presented orally, usually in a language other than the original, with little awareness of the cultural setting or the aesthetic principles and assumptions underlying the tale, it is not surprising if he concludes that the tales are merely action-packed episodes involving stock characters whose only dimension may be comic."[10]

The Western reader has been conditioned to judge language and literature through preconceived notions of the content of what an author writes, the organization and degree of development, and the style of the writing. The words are not heard, but a good writer's fervent hope is that the impact of the words will be felt, and consequently much of the writer's effort must be devoted to this task. In oral literature the performance, inclusive of audience participation, is as important as and in most cases more important than the actual content of the tale. For not only are the words heard, visualized, and felt, the whole narrative is actually experienced as one experiences a play. The characters that the performer creates are only as vivid and lifelike as the teller is able to make them. And how vivid they are made is often dependent on how enthusiastic the audience is. An excellent performer, when he slaps his hands together and says "Bam! That one stuck!" can make the audience experience the impact of the blow that Ber Rabbit delivers to the tar baby. As the speaker gradually raises his hand higher and higher in the air to indicate the height to which the buzzard takes the

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538 audience participation and response in such communities helps in the understanding of their language and literature in its social context.

It is to be hoped that more objective methods of describing communicative behavior in oral traditions will be included in future written versions of oral literature.

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## The Storytellers

The performance of an individual within a culture is directly related to the expectations of the culture, and the individual performer usually respects these expectations. The Sea Island storytellers follow techniques for telling stories that have been passed on as tradition. The best storytellers are those who know how to evoke lifelike images in a listener's mind and create suspense and drama through the interactions of characters. How these goals are achieved is determined by the individual storyteller. The most common devices used to create intensity and excitement include repetition of words and phrases at strategic points in a story; mimicry, which may involve anything from the shrieking sounds of a hog or the loping motions of a running wolf to the twittering sound of a partridge as he inadvertently moves through an oat field; voice modulation, ranging from a very high-pitched, shrill tone indicative of nervousness, agitation, and excitement to a very low-pitched, quiet tone suggesting cautiousness and reserve; and various bodily gestures, such as placing the left hand in the right armpit and pumping the right arm up and down against the body to produce the sound of a large animal galloping in the distance.

Oral style, like written style, is idiosyncratic. The individual speaker will embroider his own style on certain features and thus add uniqueness to his performance. The tellers vary. Some are very fluent and the words flow with ease. Some hesitate and search for words and often resort to *ah*, *wime*, or other fillers to try to unify what they are saying. Some tellers are better at certain kinds of narratives than others. I found that Mr. Henry would not tell any tales about Ber Rabbit and his uncanny ways, but he could talk for hours about historical events such as the Garvey movement or the 1893 storm. His style, like his topics, was always elevated and serious. On the other hand, Mr. Oree would tell only humorous tales, and his preference for trivial

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> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

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195 rest you mouth!: shut up!
long eye: envy

192 Most linguists agree that lexicon is perhaps one of the most arbitrary features that languages borrow from one another, and it is in this area that they tend to borrow most extensively. As Talmy Givón has explained, when different linguistic groups come in contact, it is natural that the area of most acute linguistic conflict will be the lexicon; by borrowing words from each other, speakers resolve the communication conflict. But languages seldom borrow grammar.[13] Thus, in areas (193) where Gullah is spoken, it is well to understand that while the lexicon is primarily English, much of the underlying grammar is rooted in West African languages.

•121 In detailed analysis of Gullah I have used Walt Wolfram's "matrix of cruciality," selecting for discussion those features still persistent in Gullah speech.[14] Every effort has been made to present very technical material as nontechnically as possible, in order to assist readers in understanding peculiarities of Gullah speech, not only to help them appreciate the language but to suggest something of the rhythm and flow of the narratives and tales, a quality which, as I have noted, cannot be captured on paper.

## Features of Grammar

193 Many characteristic features of grammar and syntax set Gullah apart from other varieties of African-American speech.[15] Unlike standard English, which relies heavily on subordination to convey relationships between ideas, contemporary Gullah relies on coordination, or the combination of sentences that are short, abrupt, and loosely strung together. Gullah thus dispenses with many of the prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, and participles that tie together complex standard English sentences. In addition, the relationships between sentences are not necessarily specified through grammatical operations but may be left to be inferred from the usage or context.

The verb and pronoun systems are particularly distinctive in Gullah. Some distinguishing features of the verb structure include the uninflected verb, verb serialization, the introductory verb *say* [se], the complementizer *for* [fə], and verb reduplication.

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

127 113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

122 113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

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## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2: These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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# Introduction

•12 This study grew out of my interest in the sociohistorical relationship between community, religion, and resistance as these concepts affected African-Americans during slavery. My focus is limited to the Gullahs of South Carolina for several reasons. First, a monographic approach allowed for more in-depth interpretations and analyses of community, religion, and resistance. Second, the Gullah slave community's religious legacy has not had the historical treatment it deserves in the scholarship. Third, this community of slaves provides a significant model for studying African-American adaptive capacities and retention of traditional African provenance.

The notion of community used in this book presupposes that subjectively the term represents a sense of collectivity and togetherness, based on a definite pattern of essentially positive relationships, possibly changing over time, and a sense of mutual dependence. Objectively speaking, community occurs when a group of social actors are bound by responsibility, accountability, and compromises made in order to maintain organization and stability. Hence, on a rational level, for the closeness and security which community offers, it extracts loyalty, obedience, relinquishing of some individual freedom, and personal authority.[1] (And community has strong political connotations if viewed in this light.) Essential to a community's development is the culture of the people involved. There are various ways of defining culture. Here it refers to creative, adaptive, dynamic patterns of behavioral meanings, which are inherited and historically transmitted through rituals, symbols, and systems of communication that represent societal understanding, awareness, and conceptions of life. Community and culture are intricately con-

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12 nected. Grasping the significance of one can lead to meaningful analyses of the other: "community is a culturally defined way of life."[2]

The above methods of considering community-culture provide one foundation for understanding the direction of this book on the Gullah socioreligious experience. It is also a way of interpreting the link between the meaning of community among the Gullahs and one major group of their African foreparents. These African communities of the Windward Coast (today Sierra Leone and Liberia) were structured under the sacred and secular authority of two secret societies—Poro for men and Sande for women. Nearly all West African ethnic groups had secret societies, but most were not mandatory organizations like Poro and Sande. Instead they were associations of exclusivity or privilege. Nevertheless, the prevalence and structure of such societies suggest that they could, if reinforced by similar but new traditions, and servicable in a new ambiance, be *adaptively* retained. Thus this volume argues that some adaptive concepts of community (and aspects of spirituality) inherited from secret societies fused with Gullah interpretations of Christianity, becoming part of folk religion in the slave quarters.

The second major theme of this study—religion—is, as previously stated, engaged with the first. If community broadly organizes human social existence and social relations, religion as employed herein, is an integral component of community and culture. It provides powerful, persuasive belief systems, symbols, and images of cosmic order which act as realistic explications of human experience and/or the human condition. The sacred symbols embodied in a people's religious beliefs synthesize their ethos and world view. In addition to interpreting reality cosmologically, Clifford Geertz suggests that the "moods and motivations" produced by religious orientation cast a "lunar light" over a people's secular life.[3] This view provides a foundation for my treatment of Gullah attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I argue that traditional African spiritual belief and cosmology, particularly that of the BaKongo and other Bantu peoples, found a significant niche within Gullah Christian practices and helped stage their folk religion. The strength and flexibility of some African spiritual customs, such as the use of sacred medicines, ancestor reverence, and beliefs about immortality facilitated merger into an African-Christian synthesis among the Gullahs.

Belief systems can be a source of interpreting social and psychological human processes, comprehending natural phenomena, or may recom-

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•121 mend ways of dealing with reality. The Gullahs defined life in sacred terms, an inherited African legacy.[4] Their introduction to Christianity reinforced this sense of the sacred but also raised questions regarding contradictions inherent in the teachings. Slaves who organized the 1822 revolt attempt in Charleston, called the Vesey Conspiracy, based their right to rebellion on several principles, among which were certain Christian beliefs extracted from the Bible. Yet slave masters and clergymen used the same Bible (albeit different texts) to explain *their* "right" to keep blacks in bondage. Both groups' beliefs determined their interpretations of scriptures, reflecting diametrically opposed interests and attitudes. Furthermore, as the more isolated Gullahs became "Christians," their spiritual orientation continued to foster independent ways of thinking. This was demonstrated by the Gullah's spiritual autonomy, in the structuring of their community-culture, their sense of morality, and sense of themselves as a people.

In this volume, I have tried to strike a balance between "pure" religion (for its own sake, other worldly or transcendental) and applied religion (its functional or empirical use) because both were practiced among slaves who ultimately adopted Christianity. Yet evidence sometimes points to a cloudy qualitative difference between the two. Some Gullah slaves accepted Christianity at face value as presented by missionaries and masters. Most did not, but instead blended transcendental aspects of Christianity with the everyday, paramount reality of their human experiences and aspirations.

Awareness of the empirical impact of religious instruction, and in some cases the lack thereof, is important for understanding how and why folk religion flourished among the Gullahs. The religious instruction movement also provides a way of contemplating the reasons for Christian instruction on the part of whites. Almost from the beginning a few whites, despite much opposition, attempted to Christianize slaves. Some slaves responded warmly. Yet a concerted process of slave conversion among the majority of coastal Carolina slaves did not begin in earnest by whites until around 1830. Even then, the way was sometimes filled with pitfalls created by a reluctant master class and disinterested clergy. Furthermore, the culturally and geographically isolated black population, whose main spiritual tradition still rested on Africanity, showed only lukewarm interest for some time. Certainly there was exposure to Christianity before 1830—from acculturated, privileged blacks and occasional spiritu-

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121 175 ally moved ministers and planters. Also the Great Awakening of the colonial era touched South Carolina even if it did not linger there for very long. And early Methodists actively tried bringing Christianity to the Gullahs, but were under bans of proscription as an antislavery denomination. Hence, prior to the movement begun by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1829, most slaves working in the fields received their "Christian" instruction from fellow slaves. When slaves accepted Christianity under Methodist and later Baptist tutelage, they embraced it selectively, fusing Christianity with African traditions to create Gullah folk religion. This religion was a means of explaining experiential reality for the Gullahs on sacred and secular levels. If community was the base or substance of Gullah life, spirituality (a more appropriate term, I think, than religion) was the superstructure upon which the foundation was posited.

The final area of investigation in my broadly considered three-tier thematic construct, is resistance—perhaps the most debated issue in the North American bondage experience. There is a tendency to interpret resistance in its strictest sense—as bloodletting or flight to freedom. These are obvious means of rebellion, and from the beginning, African-Carolinians were a restless, insurgent group. This study is a further comment on that spirit of resistance. Yet I primarily delve into what are in my opinion equally meaningful ways of analyzing resistance to enslavement. The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy denotes the end (as far as historical knowledge goes) of concerted efforts at black liberation among the Gullahs. The revelation of the Conspiracy and subsequent debates over the value of religious instruction (since the event was planned under the guise of religion) ushered in, paradoxically, a movement to convert the slave population in South Carolina. From outward appearances the Vesey Conspiracy marked the end of organized black resistance in South Carolina. This is the juncture at which I believe the question of resistance takes on expanded meaning. I attempt to demonstrate that resistance against white power and hegemony was conspicuous in the Gullahs' sense of cultural autonomy, authoritative, creative community-building, and their spiritual disengagement from the slaveocracy's version of Christian teachings. The means and methods of their accomplishment are viewed through the Gullah community and folk religion.

121 127 I have benefited greatly from the works of previous writers. W. E. B. DuBois was among the first to discuss elements of continuity between

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121 the African tradition and the "spiritual strivings" of African-Americans. He was also a pioneer in expressing the historic role and significance of
127 black religion as a means of political protest. And Sterling Brown, another sage of African-American cultural thought, observed over forty years ago, that much could be learned of black life-style and values through studying the folklore of slaves. Brown, one of the earliest interpreters of black thought, viewed folktales, spirituals and narratives as historical documents that spoke "with convincing finality against the legend of contented slavery." Thus more recent scholarship on the slave community, from which my own work draws directly, is part of a tradition begun with the exploratory works of African-American writers of previous generations. Among current scholars, perhaps the most extensive elabora-
121 tion of the importance of black culture as a means of delving into the
114 black mind-set is provided by Lawrence Levine in *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine's seminal work provides an impressive continuum for probing black culture and black thought through analysis of slave folk beliefs, spirituals, and African-American fusion of the sacred and secular. Levine's general discussions of the significance of African traditions and behavior patterns among bondspeople is supported in the particular case of the Gullahs. He debates, as I do, the contention that slaves did not oppose bondage and he maintains that if historians cannot perceive the "sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders," it is perhaps the historians' problem and not the slaves'.[5]

My book is a regionally limited and more concentrated study involving only the period of enslavement. Levine's work permeates myriad areas of black thought, encompassing bondage *and* freedom, allowing for an emphasis somewhat different from mine and for a greater range of cultural and aesthetic treatment. Bondage takes up only two, albeit important, trend-setting chapters of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. My attention focuses on a full interpretation of one group's spiritual experience in a manner not previously explored. For instance, I see evidence of a strong New Testament ideology and outlook among the Gullahs as they embraced Christianity. Levine does not ignore this impact, but sees more Old Testament messages in general African-American consciousness.[6] Additionally, my work discusses the means by which slaves may have forged African sacred-secular traditions and offers explanations about *how* meanings of religious symbols and rituals related to social processes

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and community structure. Ultimately my study presents an amplification of rather than disagreement with most of Lawrence Levine's interpretations. Our methods are not always comparable yet our motivations seem to grow from similar concerns and lead to complementary conclusions—at least in terms of the bondage experience.

A pioneering and, for me, encouraging work on slave religion is Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. Raboteau writes that one purpose of his book was to provide a "rough sketch for further, more exhaustive examination" of slave religion.[7] Nearly a decade has passed since his book was first published. Slave religion, though considered the pillar of African-American culture, remains largely unexplored through historical scholarship (even Raboteau's background was in religious studies).[8]

Thematically, Raboteau's book and mine run parallel: the African heritage, slave conversion, religious life in the slave community, and the relationship of religion to resistance. Yet we treat these issues differently. In his early chapter entitled "Death of the Gods," Raboteau summarily states that certain factors "tended to inhibit the survival of African culture and religion in the United States." Whatever African influences remained, says Raboteau, are found in "spirituals, ring shouts and folk beliefs." In the case of Gullahs, and perhaps other slave communities, his two contentions seem contradictory.[9] Spirituals, the ring shout, and folk beliefs tell us most of what we know (at least from the Gullahs themselves) about Gullah religion. These cultural traits move us as close, perhaps, as we can come to understanding a *black Weltanschauung*, and they were intrinsic to Gullah religion. If we probe folk religion and culture, it leads to some general insights, as Levine demonstrated, about slave religion. I examine the manifestations and meanings (as symbols and rituals) of various elements of Gullah folk belief. Then I compare my hypotheses with African spiritualism, cosmology, and other beliefs. I do not argue for "survivals," a somewhat lifeless term implying passive existence. But I do argue for the presence of dynamic, creative, cultural trends of African provenance among the Gullahs, which they adapted to their concept of Christianity and integrated into New World black collective consciousness.

Raboteau and I both expend much energy on the slave conversion process because it is crucial to the black religious experience in America. On this issue we are probably in closer, though not complete agreement.

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•121 114 Christianity was capable, says Raboteau, of "producing a Christian social order based on the observance of mutual duty, slave to master and master to slave."[10] I found however, an abundance of literature on the "duty" of the former, but comparatively little on the "duty" of the latter. Certainly, a liberal attitude existed in the religious sector of the South—probably the only sector where such ideas could survive. Raboteau provides an excellent treatment of eighteenth-century religious activity. Early Methodism is the best, though not the only example of religious liberalism. The emergence of a few independent black churches is another. In the mid nineteenth-century Lowcountry, this tradition was to some extent epitomized by Methodist lay preachers who supplied the plantation missions.[11] As far as slaveholders and most regular clergy were concerned however, amelioration of bondage via religion was a minor consideration when compared to the influence of social control ideology. Raboteau seems to argue for balance between white conversion of slaves for moral and spiritual reasons and the use of Christianity to encourage docility and submission. That may have been true for the South in general. I do not ignore the white moral and spiritual imperative, but the weight of the argument in coastal South Carolina leans heavily toward the use of religion to encourage submissive personalities.

Raboteau understandably desires to "preserve the texture of slave testimony and to avoid forcing the experience reflected in that testimony into any preconceived theoretical framework."[12] I also try and conserve the historical reality of the black religious experience. However I saw important elements in the Gullah experience in need of interpretation and I sometimes practiced what some scholars have called imaginary reconstruction of historical facts.[13] When empirical data implied theoretical constructions or thematic conclusions I did not avoid hermeneutics. This is most obvious in the difference between Raboteau's and my treatment of two issues—religious life and rebellion. Our conclusions are, I think, somewhat similar. Our methodologies and discussions of operative, determining forces that explain these phenomena differ. Also (as is the case with Levine's work), our emphasis differs. One obvious explanation for this is that I am writing about a community, not the entire slave South. Yet contrasts go deeper than that. Raboteau sees a complex ambiguity in slave life and religious orientation which supports accommodation as well as rebelliousness, and which ultimately offered "freedom," and "transcendence" for the "individual."[14] Certainly among the Gullahs a range

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•12 114 of responses to religion existed. But *particular* responses predominated and I emphasize these. Thus I structurally explore and interpret not only the spiritual experience, but religion as a *determining factor* in Gullah ideas of liberation, resistance-culture, and community organization. Although my book is primarily historical, it also addresses psychological, sociological, and anthropological issues. That apparently is not Raboteau's intention. Thus, thematic similarity between the two books is deceiving. Still, Raboteau's fruitful beginning furnished grounding for my study and hopefully, for others, in an area of black history worthy of and needing much more examination.

114 Two other scholars deserve mention here even though their major works are not directly on slave religion. My work has been influenced by Vincent Harding because he places the historical black experience in progressive-nationalistic, radical-protest, freedom-quest perspectives. His book, *There Is a River*,[15] is a poetic, apocalyptic historical message that *struggle*, more than "survival," permeated black motivations in the North and South, among slave and free. Harding's work is a statement that may ostensibly address a black popular audience.[16] Yet it is no less a significant contribution to the historical literature.

The late Herbert Gutman's *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* explores black cultural beliefs and behavior as well as examines the black family. And if black religion is one key to the nature of black life and culture, the black "family," despite historical (and present-day) assaults, is the other. Gutman analyzes the adaptive nature of black culture, specifically patterns of family cohesion. Yet researching familial associations involved investigating origins of marrying practices and ceremonies, belief systems, kin obligations versus decisions to flee, child-rearing practices, sexuality, and collective organization. Gutman is exceptional in inquiring into the African past and relating this to the above deterministic features of black culture.[17] No historian has made such frontal attempts to integrate specific aspects of Africanity into the historical functioning of the black family.

Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* set the tone for a more conservative view of slave life: slaves "accommodated" their bondage, masters were "paternalists" who exercised their "hegemonic" power with a sense of "duty" and "burden."[18] *Roll, Jordan, Roll* is a culminating achievement based on years of research and writing centered around issues related to the above concepts, and despite its conservative conclusions, is part of

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114 spired these considerations). Yet my examination of symbolic elements, behaviorisms, and rituals within Gullah culture lead to interpretations
114 and conclusions different from Genovese's. The socioreligious connection that encouraged and helped fashion black life did not, among the
• 121 Gullahs, rest "on a politically dangerous kind of individualism."[23] What Genovese interprets as conservatism and individualism, I see as forged resistance culture and group consciousness.

121 Slave religion had its individualistic tendencies. Yet on the positive side these enhanced a sense of personal dignity and self-esteem. Of course some slaves were involved mainly for spiritual, otherworldly gratification. But more significantly, religion was a support for community-building processes, collective strength, and solidarity. Life represented more than "endurance," "accommodation," or "survival," but an effective means of resisting the hegemonic trappings Genovese writes about. Genovese also sees Christianity as binding "master and slave together in universal communion,"[24] though contributing to their separation. *Communion?* It is doubtful that slaves accepted this psychic bonding. My evidence points to the contrary—to a people defending their collective spiritual separation and independence.

121 Genovese is confusing when he acknowledges the African heritage in the slave work ethic, dancing, cooking, and even housing, but maintains
114 that "spiritual collectivism retreated before the advance of Christianity." In place of Africanity slaves "accepted Christianity's celebration of the individual soul," which became their "weapon of personal and community survival."[25] This "community" is a type of nationalism in its most conservative form—religious. It is a sort of knee-jerk reaction (this nationalism) that replaces true struggle or resistance and forces slaves into a Gordian knot with the planters pulling the strings. This nationalism confines slaves as willing social, psychological, and cultural dependents.[26] Without the input of resistance, this type of religious nationalism takes a conservative, nonprogressive emphasis. But among the Gullahs resistance to bondage on a number of levels remained a facet of black life. It is important to historical inquiry that the experiences of boudspeople be examined in terms they help define, as one does with other groups—slaveholders for instance. Otherwise one risks espousing a kind of retrospective cultural chauvinism. Why interpret the psyche of the slave through the ideology of the slave master? Or, how much can

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•121 114 we learn about workers by studying them through management ideology?

Professor Genovese describes the slave South in prebourgeois or precapitalist terms, a theory other historians have adopted. One can see the convenience and appeal of this definition as a means of explaining social and economic relations. Paternalism is a prebourgeois ideology for the most part. Paternalistic, feudalistic, or signorial relationships characterize societies where political and religious structures are inextricably tied to their economies. There is less class cohesion, or class consciousness in prebourgeois societies because of the simplicity of production organization and the "self-sufficiency" of communities. Within such an historical period, the oppressed group supposedly never become *conscious* of the *true* economic driving forces behind historical movement. Nor are the oppressed *conscious* of their own victimization because class relations in these societies remain complex and concealed. This is a contrast to the stark simplicity of class interest and exploitation under capitalism.[27] Not all of the South, especially that which provides Genovese's model, fits the economic pattern. Plantations were largely dependent upon an international market for profit. They were not "self-sufficient" since other areas of the country and world supplied them with provisions and commodities of life-style. But the social pattern in prebourgeois society raises more interesting questions if applied to the bondspeople—the oppressed. Can we say that slaves were not *conscious* of their *oppression* (that they had only *false consciousness*)?[28] Slave testimony indicates otherwise, though not in the Marxist-Leninist sense. The wealth of masters and impoverishment of slaves is evidence of the "alienation" (lack of ownership of or equitable return for labor) of the "producers" (slaves) from their "commodity" (fruits of labor). Oppression and victimization were realized on the conscious level, but slaves' reaction to these forces needs to be measured less from a twentieth-century perspective.

121 As far as class relations being concealed, in the slaves' case under a web of paternalism and hegemony, the polarization between master and slave, especially when the latter was a field hand, was real. And of course Marx (who developed this analysis) was not referring to bondage, but to feudalism. In the latter case, relations may be less obvious because, among other things, peasants have a claim to the land they cultivate, race is not a factor, cultural differences are not as divisive, and in some societies,

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•121 the peasants and the lords were distant relations. Thus a system of patronage, dependency, and moralism could exist. But did slave masters need to morally justify a system of exploitation against blacks? On the individual level they occasionally did, especially with favored slaves. But as a class, history indicates that in the final outcome, slaveholders had no more moral imperative toward the slaves than capitalists have had toward industrial workers.

Genovese's sources certainly point to contradictory aspects of bondage, most of which supports paternalism, conservative Christianity practiced by slaves, and black accommodation. The complexity of his argument and thoroughness of his research is food for thought, to say the least. Where were paternalism and accommodation embraced by blacks? John Blassingame wrote that if Stanley Elkins' "Sambo" existed at all, he (or she) was probably a "big house" inhabitant.[29] Could the same be said for the enslaved religious accommodationists if they existed as a group? *Roll, Jordan, Roll* contains discussions of blacks in numerous occupational roles and situations—from preachers to prostitutes, from children to old folk. But it is difficult to find the workers in the fields—those who perhaps represent the "beauty and power of the human spirit" in ways that mammies, drivers, body servants, and artisans may not. Our glimpse of field hands comes through only vaguely. Most social actors in *Roll, Jordan, Roll* are white, or they are the "privileged" blacks, more likely bearers and beneficiaries of accommodation, than people in the quarters. Genovese implies as much about "life in the Big House." But he eases out of the contradiction by asserting that no social stratification existed between field hands and house servants who identified with white culture.[30] Thus we are left thinking these black "integrationists" carried accommodation to the slave quarters and the field hands bought it. Perhaps the author gives too much credit to the capacity of "big house" and "favored" slaves to fashion their brand of "nationalism" and impose it on the larger black population. I think at least two types of nationalism developed—one from the slave quarters and one originating with the "favored" groups. In any case more studies are now taking a less monolithic approach to slave society. Just as there were many Souths, there were many slave communities, and their complexities await more examination. We know that slaves created communities. We are just beginning to investigate the nature, structure, and stratification of these communities. Recent, more regionally focused works ask new questions, but also

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121 seem to reinforce the 1970s "slave community" consensus to which previously mentioned (and many unmentioned) scholars contributed so prolifically. Inherent in that consensus is the theme which on some level we all agree: among African-Americans the oppression of bondage bred resistance and active, even if it was not always open, rebellion.

121 The primary methodologies used in structuring this book are comparative and dialectical. A comparative model is adopted because I wish to demonstrate the relationship between African, white Protestant, and 128 Gullah worlds. Thus in Part I the African background is discussed. Here I ask the reader's forbearance. This discussion of the African slave trade, 121 ethnic displacement, and the significance of the African socioreligious legacy, is necessary because these relate to the entire thrust of the book and because my theory regarding ethnic origins and African influences will be controversial, yet I believe, sound in plausability.

I agree with Eugene Genovese that to some extent, "an understanding of the slaves requires some understanding of the masters and of others 128 who shaped a complex slave society."[31] Part II, consisting of two chapters, begins my dialectic of black-white counterpoint and deals with South Carolina up to the War for Independence. One chapter is devoted to missionaries and masters. The next chapter, on the black religious experience, deals with the Great Awakening and that limited group who laid a foundation for acculturation and black-to-black spiritual interaction. Part III continues the black-white counterpoint. Chapter 5 develops concepts of black rebelliousness, and the period of the American War for Independence is crucial. It represents a time of religious liberalism on the one hand and black resistance on the other. Yet the ultimate outcome of the new "republicanism" was retrenchment of old socioeconomic alliances and forces. The black response is rebellion. Immediate white reaction is repression. But on another level white "thinking men" believed in a safer, possibly more successful method of dealing with black recalcitrance. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze and narrate the movements, primarily by Methodist laymen and Baptist planters, to convert the masses of Gullahs. These chapters also interpret Gullah responses to Christianity, slavery, and life in bondage. In Part IV the counterpoint technique is dropped. Throughout this book I attempt to present a picture of plantation life among Gullahs, as well as a view of slave religion and conversion. But Part IV is devoted fully to offering a presentation of Gullah socioreligious culture in a collective setting. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 sug-

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114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

•121 771 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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175 If the results of Christian instruction were measured by numbers of rebellions following Vesey and Turner, it could be said that insofar as status quo proponents were concerned, such instruction of bondspeople was eminently successful. Slaves appeared to accept Protestantism taught in a spirit purposely antithetical to their will to freedom. Emphasis was on authority, dependence on future rewards and punishments for suffering or wrongdoing on earth, and a profound inequality between master and slave. This seemed especially the case in the Sea Islands. There no widespread slave conspiracy or rebellion was known of, and Christianity appeared well entrenched by the time of freedom.

•121 This study examines the Christian conversion process among the Gullahs in an effort to understand these slaves' interpretation of Christianity
175 and the motives behind attempts to Christianize them. It is hypothesized that Gullah slaves of coastal Carolina used Christianity as an ideology with strong connotations supporting their sense of freedom. Early efforts to resist bondage, represented fusing Christianity with Africanity to provide a militant nationalism articulated by the black rebels of Charleston. Failure of that Conspiracy shook the Gullah community and may have facilitated a new adaptive structure in which slaves selectively employed Christianity in ways important to their own social existence. Slaves continued to oppose bondage, not with physical force, but by creating a strong, religious collective which shielded them from a sense of alienation. But their experiences were also based on an African world view and cultural structure though conceptually expressed in Christian terms. In the new religion, the slaves found some features reminiscent of their African socioreligious past. It also offered an explanation for their historical situation, which inspired currents of hope. On the Sea Islands, Gul-
121 lahs partly used the moral teachings of Christ as a basis for community
175 structure and organization. Yet they saw no contradiction in refusing to
797 blindly internalize everything they were taught. Thus Gullahs did not trespass against their own moral sense or jeopardize their integrity as a people struggling against oppression. Their retention of an African world
121 view enabled them to maintain an appreciation of life on a collective level, striving to preserve the group consciousness that was a main ingredient of African heritage. Hence Christian and African traditions helped shape the resistance culture and plantation commonwealth that evolved in the slave quarters. In this sense religious instruction of the slaves can-

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not be measured merely from the standpoint of its negative use as a conservative force, but rather in relation to its value to slave life, community, and the slaves' efforts to remain spiritually free. 121

The present study then elucidates the role of slave religion among the Gullahs. Slave folk religion, comparable to the elaboration of a new Sea Island dialect of English, facilitated and, to no small degree, made possible the cohesion of a New World culture, Gullah culture. The approach which is attempted here will naturally involve an examination of the slave trade, Christian conversion, and the heritage of West African socioreligious and philosophical traditions to the extent that they were serviceable in bondage.

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771 Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new reli-
567 gion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive
177 and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

•121 One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a
177 black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

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# Notes

## Introduction

1. C. J. Calhoun, "History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities: Some Problems in Macfarlane's Proposal," *Social History* 3, no. 3 (1978): 369, and his "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 109–16. For other views of community, see for instance Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978); and Robert Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). 121 113

2. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 89; C. J. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Foundations of Popular Radicalism during the Industrial Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 159. While Calhoun's views on community are useful here, we strongly disagree on other issues, especially regarding his anti-E. P. Thompson view of how ideologies affect laboring classes. Calhoun, *Question of Class Struggle*, passim. [114]

3. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 90–105, 124.

4. Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 173–76, 179, 183–85; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old New* (London: James Clarke 1928), 187–88; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 2–16; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 85–93.

5. W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* in *Three Negro Classics* (New York: Avon Books, 1965, first pub. 1903), 213–21, 337–49; Julius Lester, ed. *The Seventh Son: The Thoughts and Writings of W. E. B. DuBois*, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1971) I: 252–62, 277–82; Manning Marable "The Faith of W. E. B DuBois: Sociocultural and Political Dimensions of Black Religion," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Fall, 1984): 15–33; Sterling Brown, et al., eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Dryden Press, 1941); 6, 412–21; Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore: The Black Ethos in Slavery," *The Massachusetts Review* 9, Pt. 2 (Summer, 1968) 417–37. Stuckey's newly completed work is an addition to the new scholarship. However it was unavailable when my book went to press. Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness; Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3–135, 54.

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121 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.

113 7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

(114) 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

114 113 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–98, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35, E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–37; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

114 561 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

114 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.

113 23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 46–59.
567
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling
567 represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
*First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968;
113 repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

•121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

179 SKIN AND HAIR. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

(P. Vii-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, began by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Purpose of Dissertation

121 In recent years linguists have recognized that historical change can be observed in children's acquisition of a first language, in the sign language of the deaf, and in newly developing languages like pidgins and creoles. The immediate aim of the present study is to provide evidence from a rapidly changing creole that language change can be observed in the present, across age and social groups, within a cohesive speech community. As a contribution to an emerging theory of linguistic variation, it will provide evidence that linguistic variation is systematic both for individuals and for the speech community, is inherent to language change, and can be activated by social factors which may be different for each community.

This study is also seen as a contribution to the growing documentation of the history of Black Americans in the United States. Gullah, as the language spoken by the vast majority of those slaves imported to the coastal rice plantations of colonial South Carolina, is in some senses a more native American language than those dialects of English

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spoken by early settlers from the British Isles. Gullah in its earliest stages developed from the needs of speakers of many West African languages for a language of mutual intelligibility. The subsequent changes in this creole have come about as the functions for which the language was used increased and as its speakers began to interact on a more socially equal level with speakers of standard English. Because of the historical patterns of migration by blacks from the coastal plantations to fields in the Mississippi delta and then to urban ghettos of the north, Gullah probably serves as the source for those dialects of English which are unique to Black Americans. As such, Gullah and the changes it has undergone serve as an important base for discussions of the language varieties used by much of the black population in the United States.

## 1.1 Change and the Post-creole Continuum

For purposes of the discussion which follows, certain central terms will be defined. Pidgin is used here in the sense of a language variety which develops in a contact situation between speakers of different native languages. As such, a pidgin is no one's first language, it is relatively unstable, and it is used for a limited range of communicative functions. As the pidgin becomes used for a wider range of functions and as its structure becomes more stabilized, it sometimes acquires native speakers who use it as a first language. At this stage, the language variety

121 197 is said to be a creole. Some creoles exist in contact with the official standard variety of the language with which they correspond. When social conditions are favorable, such a creole merges with the standard. During the period of merger, a post-creole continuum exists which ranges from speech showing highly creolized structures, similar to those of the pidgin stage and very different from those of the standard, to speech which is nearly that of the official standard in grammatical structure. The post-creole stage of Gullah is the subject of the present study.

In his discussion of the general phenomenon of a post-creole speech continuum, DeCamp (1971) proposes that two conditions are necessary for the development of the post-creole stage of a creole:

1) a correspondence between the official communicative standard and the creole

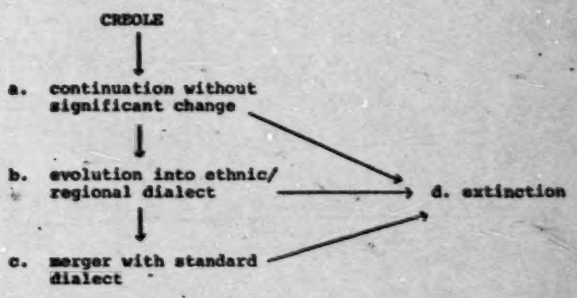
2) a recent breakdown of formerly rigid social stratification, with differing degrees of acculturation for sub-groups.

Communities in which Gullah is spoken now meet these two conditions. The official standard for the region is English, although the spoken variety of this standard is a low-prestige dialect of the standard. The social conditions are also met. Formerly rigid social and economic segregation along racial lines has broken down to a significant extent in schools, businesses, and politics within the region. Economic conditions for many members of Gullah-speaking communities have changed for the better over the

121 197 past four decades. Geographic mobility and opportunities for participation in portions of mainstream culture have increased both the motivation and the chances to use the standard variety of English.

DeCamp describes four alternative final stages for the creole life-cycle as follows: continuation without change, extinction, evolution into a 'normal language,' and merger with the corresponding standard. I would like to propose a slightly different schema, in which four alternatives are seen as potential stages in the life of a creole, which can be stopped at any point by relevant social and geographic factors. Two of the four alternatives are different from those of DeCamp in important ways. Instead of 'continuation without change,' I suggest that 'continuation without significant change' is more accurate, since no language used by living speakers exists without exhibiting some change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language,' I suggest rather 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' is a preferred characterization, since creoles are 'normal' languages in every structural sense although they may have a more limited range of functions than an official standard. At this stage the language variety is often associated with a particular social group or geographic region and is viewed as a low-prestige dialect of the standard language. The standard dialect with which it can merge at the final stage of its life-cycle is that dialect which has been standardized,

121 often through writing, and is the high-prestige dialect of
197 the standard language. The following diagram shows these possible stages in the post-creole life cycle:




According to such a schema, a creole would go through stages (a) and (b) before reaching (c), but could go directly to (d) at any point in its history, given the relevant social circumstances. The stage of 'extinction' can mean both that the creole has no more living speakers as well as that attitudes toward the language variety are such that it is no longer considered a separate entity, distinct in some degree from all other languages. In his discussion of creoles, DeCamp considers Gullah to be an extinct creole. As the analysis of linguistic variables in Chapter 4 will show, for certain grammatical categories some speakers have systematic

•121 differences from other varieties of English which would
197 indicate the continuing life of the creole. DeCamp's theory of a language continuum at the post-creole stage makes it possible to understand stages (a) through (c) as co-existing synchronically for a given speech community, thereby mitigating the problem of determining precisely the stage which characterizes a particular community at a given point in time. In the speech community studied here, individuals can be found whose speech reflects all three stages. Certain speakers are moving faster than others toward merger with the standard, and selected social factors appear to influence their rate of change. The continuum theory legitimizes the variation which has become increasingly evident in all modern studies of the language used in such communities.

The notion of a linguistic continuum allows us to better understand why different linguists might look at the same speech community and describe the language variety used variously as a 'creole' or as a 'dialect.' At the stage in which a post-creole community is moving toward a non-standard dialect of the standard language, valid comparisons can be made both with the creole grammar and with the standard grammar--forward and backward, as it were. Thus Labov (1969) has described verb forms used in an urban language variety spoken mainly by speakers of West African descent in terms of a dialect of the standard, whose differences from standard English are the result of relatively low-level

121 phonological rules. Stewart (1969), on the other hand, has
197 maintained that the same surface differences result from underlying structural differences, having their origin in a creole variety of English which preceded the nonstandard dialect used by many blacks. Placing the language variety under discussion within a broader continuum, it becomes easier to see how both Stewart and Labov could find equally valid correspondences on either end of this continuum.

| creole | nonstandard dialects | standard |
|---|---|---|
| GULLAH | BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR | NETWORK ENGLISH |
| | | [WHITE SOUTHERN ENGLISH] |

Figure 1. Language Varieties in the Gullah Post-Creole Continuum

121 The place of the White Southern English dialect in this continuum is problematic and outside the scope of the present discussion, but its place as part of such a continuum should be noted (see Wolfram 1974 for a discussion of the relationship of white Southern speech to Vernacular Black English in rural Mississippi).

The view which such a continuum permits of the

•121 nonstandard dialect spoken by many blacks in the United States of African ancestry has two important pragmatic consequences. For educators of children who speak this dialect on entering school, the creole origins of the dialect can be emphasized as a means of drawing attention to the significant differences between the children's language and that used in the classroom, particularly in standardized reading and test materials (see Traugott, 1976 for a detailed comparison of some major differences between English-related pidgins, creoles, and dialects of Black English). For linguists concerned with writing comprehensive grammars of English, the correspondence between this significant minority dialect and the standard can be emphasized, thereby fostering a more comprehensive view of the language as a whole. It may even be the case that consideration of dialect variation, such as that which exists between Black English and standard English dialects, will provide evidence to help decide certain theoretical issues (see Carden, 1973 for such a claim). It has become increasingly clear that grammatical analyses which make no provision for systematic variation within and across dialects will be seriously inadequate in accounting for speaker and communal competence.

## 1.2 Issues in Variation and Change

Variation as an integral part of linguistic change has been studied systematically only for the past decade or

12 so. The publication of "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change" by Weinreich, Labov, and Herzog (1968) marks the beginning of a significant focus on variation within linguistic systems. An important shift was begun from a view of linguistic phenomena in terms of only categorical divisions, with discrete boundaries, toward a view of at least some of the same phenomena in terms of continuous processes, with no clearly defined natural boundaries. In a sense, this shift may reflect a change in philosophical orientation from the Aristotelian categorical thinking which has characterized much of Western European thought to that of the more process-oriented thinking which has developed in America through the work of major philosophers like Whitehead, Dewey, and Mead.

12 Two major models for treating such continuous processes in linguistic systems have developed since the publication of that important article; these models differ chiefly on the basis of what aspects of linguistic phenomena they continue to treat in categorical terms. The model developed initially by Labov (1969) and extended by G. Sankoff (1973), Cedergren and D. Sankoff (1974), and G. Sankoff (1974) has utilized the 'variable rule' as a central concept. The variable rule has permitted expression of systematic individual variation for some grammatical items, while maintaining the isomorphism between the grammar of the individual and that of the speech community

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12 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between
197 language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

1.3 Overview

•121 Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied
128 in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer *fE*, a static-locative preposition (*to*), and the third person singular pronouns *se* and *Em*. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in *bus* and the sound of the unstressed vowel in *Cuba*

175 into the late 1700's. The significance of this population balance for setting the tone for subsequent development of this important English colony has been largely overlooked. Unlike other major immigrant groups who colonized the Atlantic coast, the West African group brought no written language through which to preserve a record of its activities in the early colonization. Inheritors of a vigorous oral tradition, the settlers from West Africa brought stories, customs, and traditions which are as yet preserved only sporadically in written form by folklorists and in Southern short stories and novels. As the two groups from northern Europe and western Africa lived and worked together in approximately equal numbers, a new culture evolved which has been different enough from mainstream culture in the United States to evoke stereotyping, and which bears testimony to the impact which West African traditions has had upon its development.

•121 The Southern heritage which took root in this colony and spread west to Mississippi, and even into Texas in later years, embraced many complex patterns of human interaction: a hospitality familiar to the chiefs' homes in southern Nigeria; an orientation to family and kinship strong enough to foster jokes about Southern cousins; musical and story-telling traditions which defy description as a blend of their two major sources, and yet seem different from either; and distinctive speech patterns which have been used by various dramatists and novelists to evoke humor and scorn, while

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121 serving as sources of both shame and group unity for their speakers. One portion of these speech patterns is the subject
121 of the present investigation: that language variety described
197 by linguists as a creole, now in the post-creole stage of development, spoken primarily by descendants of the original African immigrants. Labeled Gullah or Sea Island Creole by linguists, and known as Gullah, Geechee, or country-talk by its speakers, this language variety has speakers along the coastal strip between northern Florida and southern North Carolina. Its home base, however, is a smaller area within South Carolina which follows the boundaries of the earliest plantation system between what is now Georgetown County (the county just north of Charleston) and Jasper County on the Georgia border. Both Georgia and North Carolina lie outside the home base of the creole originally, since Georgia was a nonslave settlement until 1750 (Wood, 1974:260), and what is now North Carolina was sparsely settled during the early years of colonization. During the period in which the area's distinctive cultural patterns were being set, a relatively small area of South Carolina formed the central location of the African immigrant population.

The choice of Gullah as the language variety spoken by the majority of the African group and its descendants was not a foregone conclusion. It was a choice related to the subservient position of the slaves from West Africa in the colonial society. As Reinecke (1969) observes, three general

•121 197 types of immigration may be distinguished from the linguistic point of view. The first type, settlement in enclaves which preserve ethnic individuality and language even though cut off from their parent groups, was characteristic of parts of central Europe prior to the nineteenth century. The second type, assimilation into the established society with total or almost total loss of ethnic identity and language, has been typical of highly industrialized and newly established countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, and certain countries in South America. Assimilation is easier if the immigrants are of the same skin color as the established group and share important cultural traditions. In colonial coastal South Carolina, European settlers from England, France, Scotland, and Wales followed this pattern of assimilation. The third type of immigrant adaptation has been characteristic of plantation laborers who are of a different race, culture, and language from their colonial masters. Brought into the colony as either slaves or contract laborers, these immigrants have not been able to maintain their own languages or to assimilate fully into the established group. For laborers whose contact with the homeland has been effectively cut off, who are thrown into daily contact with fellow laborers speaking different languages and of different cultural traditions, and who are permitted little or no chance of participation in the social life of their masters, development of an interlanguage can be seen a

121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
• 121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
•121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

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# CHAPTER 3

## FIELD WORK PROCEDURES

### 3.0 Overview

121 123 Having been raised in the white community of an adjacent county in South Carolina, I recognized early that establishing rapport with the black community in rural Georgetown County on the level conducive to good research would be one of the most difficult parts of the field work for the present study. Accordingly, I sought the advice of others who had done field work in rural South Carolina and in non-European communities in the southwest. Through J. 121 Herman Blake and his colleague, Triloki Pandey, of the University of California at Santa Cruz, I became aware of the concept of action anthropology, first developed in the work of anthropologists from the University of Chicago on the Fox Project in southern Iowa during the forties and fifties. 121 Since this concept has influenced greatly the procedures 128 followed in my field work on Gullah, I will discuss in section 3.1 the major issues addressed by action anthropology and their possible extension to action linguists. Section 3.2 will discuss the field worker's functions within the community, and section 3.3 will describe the collection of data.

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3.1 Action Anthropology and Action Linguists

•121 In an article devoted to the topic of action anthropology, Piddington (1960) distinguishes this kind of work from applied anthropology on the basis that application and pure research are not divorced from each other in action anthropology, as they often tend to be in applied anthropology. While applied anthropology is often oriented toward achieving certain preconceived goals within a community, action anthropology allows concrete plans for action to emerge from the ongoing processes of social action. In the optimum field work situation for action anthropology, the people themselves, rather than an administrator-anthropologist, decide what to do and carry out their decisions. A recurring theme in discussions of this kind of anthropological field work is the complementary nature of the goals of learning and doing. It is probably no accident that it was students from the University of Chicago's department of anthropology, where John Dewey was an influential figure at an early stage in the university's history, who first asked the questions which led to the development of this concept. Peattie (1960) specifically cites Dewey's Theory of Valuation in her discussion of the evolution of the Fox Project, as the field work among the Mesquakie Indians in Iowa came to be called.[1]

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[1]Much of the conceptual background for such an approach to the social sciences was laid by the work in philosophy of Dewey and his younger colleague at Chicago, George Herbert Mead. Active in the early settlement-house movement in

121 Tax's earlier description of the motivations behind the project (1958) shows how the students moved increasingly away from preconceived notions about concrete actions which would help the Indians solve specific problems, to a process of allowing actions to evolve from discussions and activities in which they and the Indians participated together. Within such an ongoing process, their learning about community values and structures was deepened, and the general approach proved both to enhance the research and to help the community.

Since my goal in the South Carolina study was the description and analysis of selected grammatical features undergoing change in the speech of the community, rather than an ethnographic study, I found it necessary to make modifications of the notions developed within action anthropology. While these modifications did not alter the larger goal of helping the community in the process of learning about its language, they did entail less mutual discussion and action with the community than did the original Fox Project. Because my time was limited to no more than six months in the area, I relied on intensive observation of community behavior patterns, discussions with school officials, and knowledge

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Chicago and interested in social problems facing recent immigrants to the U.S., Mead engaged in community work during his teaching years at Chicago--work which almost surely contributed to his ideas on the relation between Self and Society. His ideas on language, similar to those of Wittgenstein and valuable to sociolinguists, are only now becoming publicized from the lecture notes of his students (Miller, 1973).

121 of past community action projects to determine what my most
123 useful and acceptable function could be as a working participant in community life. It is my belief that my working in a highly visible capacity at jobs that made sense in terms of the particular community's values allowed me to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events during the short span of five months. It is true that speech directed to me often reflected the particular role I had assumed, but it is also the case that by having a valid reason for being among the people at a variety of times and places, I had the opportunity to observe a wide range of language activity in which I was not an active participant. I believe that these observations allow conclusions about the range of linguistic variation in the community to be made with a greater chance of validity than had I worked only with informants in the traditional manner or with select small groups in the manner of some recent sociolinguistic
121 investigations. It is my hope that a kind of action linguistics might be stimulated by the approach outlined here, which would add to the productive methods developed by sociolinguists like Labov, Stewart, Gumperz, and Hymes by fostering a more purposeful integration of the linguist into the community in some functional sense. It may be that such a community-based language experience will promote the kind of applied linguistics which Ferguson has called for over the years. (See Ferguson, 1975 for a summary of these

121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

123 872 Because the river island which was the focus of my study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible 126 was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

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# CHAPTER 4

## LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

### 4.0 Overview

•121 193 The present chapter deals with three grammatical categories chosen to represent the changes now underway in Gullah. The syntactic functions of the three categories--complementizer, preposition, and pronoun--are clearly distinct from each other in this creole. The morphemes used for the creole and standard forms within each category are distinct phonetically from each other, for the most part. Older Gullah texts indicate that variation has been present within these categories for at least the past century; for the complementizer, change to standard forms is almost complete for most speakers in the area studied. For each category, analysis of the systematic linguistic changes in 121 128 progress will be presented. Section 4.1 examines the pre-infinitival complementizer, section 4.2 a static locative preposition, and section 4.3 the third person singular pronouns. Section 4.4 summarizes these findings.

### 121 193 4.1 Complementizer

A number of recent papers have presented evidence that many languages have morphemes which function both as

121 case markers and as complementizers (Ferguson, 1970; Noravcsik, 1972a and 1972b; Gorbet, 1973; R. Clark, 1973; Hinds, 1973; Joseph, 1975). Washabaugh (1975) has presented evidence for the existence of similar morphemes in a number of creoles. In order to adequately explore these relationships between the complementizer and other syntactic categories in Gullah, section 4.1.1 will describe the uses of the morpheme fE for the grammatical categories of preposition, complementizer, and conditional marker. Section 4.1.2 will present an analysis of the functions of the pre-infinitival complementizer in Gullah, along with a discussion of the direction of change presently shown by this grammatical category. Section 4.1.3 will summarize historical developments in this category for English and will point to possible universal relationships which obtain between complementizers and case markers in creoles and in fully expanded languages.

### 4.1.1 Uses of fE in Gullah

The particle fE, phonetically [fə], is used as a complementizer in Gullah in pre-infinitival position. This morpheme is also used as a preposition and as a conditional marker on the verb. Examples of the three syntactic uses of the particle fE are given below:

PREPOSITION
Benefactive: (1) but yet I reckon they doing that fE the children way go to school (S2)

'but yet I reckon they're doing that for the children who go to school'

complementizer. It is also easy to see that the subjectivity expressed by for is common to its irrealis mood-marking function as a "potential subjunctive," in Aijmer's terms.

I suggest an evolutionary sequence of [case marker > complementizer > conditional] for both standard English and Gullah, with Gullah showing an overt conditional modal and English only a 'potentially' subjunctive use of for. I suggest further that such a sequence may represent some universal process which can be expected in other developing creoles and which may be discovered historically for fully expanded languages. Washabaugh (1975) presents a well-argued case for such a relationship between case marking and complementizing functions for the particle fi in Providence Island Creole (Colombia). He proposes that the evolution of a complementizer from a locative preposition reflects a universal process, and cites evidence of a similar development in Sranan, the creole of Senegal, Mauritius Creole, American Indian Pidgin English, and Hawaiian Creole. As discussed earlier, the prepositional use of fE cannot be considered locative. With the qualification that the preposition or case marker be considered 'locational' in the sense discussed by E. Clark (1970), I find Washabaugh's analysis a useful one for investigation of other creoles. In Tok Pisin of New Guinea, presently undergoing the transition from pidgin to a creole, Sankoff (personal communication) has found evidence for a complementizer function developing for a particle

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# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

121 197 The present chapter deals with the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the [123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult [124] speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic 128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

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128 the mobility patterns of the two sexes in the mainland community and on the river island. Section 5.4 will discuss the relationship between these social factors and the linguistic variation described in Chapter 4. A final section will provide a conclusion and brief summary of the findings of this study.

## 5.1 Sex of Speaker and Language Use

121 128 Because the existence of sex differences in language use has been one of the most thoroughly documented findings of sociolinguistic studies over the past two decades, a brief summary of these findings will be presented in 5.1.1. Data from the present study, which differ in important respects from data of earlier studies, will be presented in 5.1.2.

### 121 5.1.1 Previous Studies

When the present study was begun, it was expected that women would use more standard forms than men of comparable age and socio-economic status. For the island community, this generally proved to be the case. In the mainland community, however, women in the oldest age group used significantly more creole and nonstandard variants for the three grammatical categories analyzed than did men in their group. Previous studies have generally found that females use more standard forms in their speech than men of their age and social class. Fischer's study (1958) in a New England

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•12 village found girls to use more ing, rather than in, participle endings than boys. A verbal form like walking, for example, would be used more frequently by girls, while boys would use the lower-prestige form walkin' more often. In the larger and more diverse population of New York City, Labov (1966) found that women used fewer stigmatized forms in careful speech and showed sharper shifts from stigmatized forms to prestige forms when changing from casual to careful speech. In a Piedmont community of North Carolina, Levine and Crockett (1967) found equal use in reading style of the postvocalic r, a prestige form for that region, but women used the feature more frequently in a more formal word-list style. In Detroit, Shuy et al. (1968) found women to use the prestigious -ing ending more than twice as often as men in the general urban population, while Wolfram (1969) found for the black population that females within each social class used forms closer to standard norms than did males. Sankoff and Cedergren (1971) found women in Montréal, Canada, to use the liquid l characteristic of standard Canadian French more frequently than men generally, although younger professional women use it less than older women within their class. Trudgill (1972, 1974) found women of Norwich, England, using the standard -ing ending more frequently than men. In his study of phonological change in Eskilstuna, Sweden, Nordberg (1973) found young and middle-aged women leading the way in the transition from the older

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•12 dialectal forms to prestigious standard forms. One study differed from this general finding that women use more standard or prestige forms. Fasold (1972) examined the black working population of Washington, D. C., and found either no difference between the sexes or slightly more use of standard forms by males. Most of the studies cited have considered the use of standard or prestigious forms by women to constitute 'conservative' linguistic behavior.

In other studies by Labov and his associates (see Labov, 1972; Labov, Yeager, and Steiner, 1972), women have been found to be in the forefront of linguistic changes, exhibiting 'innovative' behavior. In summarizing studies of sound changes underway in a variety of U. S. communities, Labov et al. found women to be more advanced than men in the adoption of new forms. In the sound changes reported in Nordberg's study of a city near Stockholm (1973), women's faster adoption of standard forms over older dialectal froms also must be considered innovative behavior. Various explanations have been offered for this seemingly paradoxical behavior of women, as both conservators and innovators. Labov (1972: 304) has suggested that women, as part of the social role assigned to them, are allowed a wider expressive range than men. Trudgill (1972: 182-3) has observed that women in industrial societies may achieve social status more on the basis of their appearance than through their occupational activities, and may be more aware than men of the

•121 social significance of linguistic variables. Both Labov and Trudgill have observed that women exhibit patterns of 'linguistic insecurity.'

Three methodological problems characterize previous studies of sex differences in language use. First, the methods used to assign women to social classes are inadequate. Second, the sex of speaker as a variable is treated differently from study to study. Third, some studies have not taken into account the community norms for language use in labeling linguistic behavior 'conservative' or 'innovative.' Sociologists such as Watson and Barth (1964), and Acker (1973) more recently, maintain that no current model of social stratification permits accurate classification of women in modern societies. Two assumptions underlie all present methods of classification: occupation is the measure most heavily used as a major index of social class; the family is taken to be the primary social unit. Most of the sociolinguistic studies cited above have used the occupation of the head of a household as a major index of an entire family's social class. Unmarried women and widows have received different assignments in different studies. Some have assigned widows to the social class of their dead husbands. Single women have been treated in three different ways: assigned to their own typically low-status occupations and the corresponding social class; given their father's social class; or, as in Levine and Crockett's Worth

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•121 Carolina study, systematically eliminated from the study. Married women have been assigned to their husband's social class, even though little or no evidence exists to support the general assumption that married people belong to the same social class just because they live together. Hacker, in an early critique of the status of women (1951), observes that marriage may not represent the point of minimum social distance, but that inequalities of status may actually be preserved in marriage. She says, ". . . a dominant group member may be willing to marry a member of a group which, in general, he would not wish admitted to his social club" (64). No sociolinguistic research has dealt overtly with this issue. On the matter of the way in which sex is treated as a variable in these linguistic studies, most studies have not taken care to match speakers for age and sex, as well as for social class. While Labov has been in the forefront of recognizing the importance of sex differences as a factor in linguistic change, his New York study included far more women than men overall. He himself notes that the different proportions of men for his lowest and highest social classes pose problems in interpretation of the data (1966: 310). Fasold also has a disproportion of one sex in some age groups for his Washington study, and reports difficulties in drawing valid conclusions about sex differences in language use. Trudgill uses equal numbers of male and female speakers for his Norwich, England, study, but does not give figures on

•121 their distribution by social class. The studies of both Fischer in New England and Sankoff and Cedergren in Canada are exceptions to the general failure to match speakers for sex and age within social groups. A final methodological problem has been the general lack of discussion about community norms for language use. Labov has been an exception on this point, taking care to establish from his data the norms for a social group. But little discussion has been devoted to the problem of comparing linguistic behavior from group to group for the two sexes. Use of a given feature may represent conservative linguistic behavior within one social group and innovative behavior within another. To take only the obvious example, use of the -ing participle ending means preservation of an older prestige form for a white middle class group, but introduction of a new form for a black working class group. Fasold found slight evidence that females use more stigmatized forms, such as distributive be, in the black working class population of Washington; such behavior probably represents conservative linguistic behavior in terms of the community norms, rather than the innovative behavior which he suggests (1972: 216-7). In the black rural communities studied here, women of one community were found to be linguistically conservative, while women in the other showed innovative behavior. An appreciation of the differences between these communities is essential for the discussion which follows; discussion of these

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121 differences is included in the sections on age and mobility, as well as in the section which follows.

### 5.1.2 Sex Differences in the Mainland and Island Communities

In the present study, the two communities identified in Chapter 2 loosely constitute two social classes, in the region under study. The existence of these groups was determined by becoming a participant in the social life of the larger community of rural Georgetown County, in the manner described in Chapter 2. From the river island community, which was the primary focus of this study, two women and two men were selected from three age groups and the speech used by them in unstructured conversation was compared for the use of three linguistic variables. The age groups selected were determined to be natural groupings for the communities studied, and will be discussed in 5.2. From the mainland community, two men and two women in the oldest age group were compared for the use of the same variables. 121 193 The percentages of creole and nonstandard variants used by these selected speakers for a static-locative preposition, the pre-infinitival complementizer, and the third person singular pronouns are given in Table 6 below, ordered according to the rate at which these variables are changing toward the standard forms. Validity for the findings presented here is not claimed solely on the basis of the small sample of sixteen speakers, but on the combination of this

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 121]

121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close family relationships which obtain between several of the speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show striking differences in language use.

121 In the mainland community, older men use more
562 standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
193 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
184 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington, D. C. For the island community, women generally use more standard forms than men in all three age groups, although speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145 possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in the island community.

121 I suggest that sex differences in language used by
562 the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
463 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
193 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
184 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

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community as well as domestic servant for the post office—a unique job combination which she handled with skill and grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

A second factor which may influence both choice of language variety and choice of occupation is that of identification with island life. A more detailed attitudinal study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

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121 factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker.
561 In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are mar-
193 ried to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while
(184) the husband uses some for two grammatical categories.
Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

There is some indication that sex differences in the
562 use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight
193 years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island
561 children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

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562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be com-
561 pared with the data from the longer adult conversations, but they give some indication that sex differences in language use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better in school than mainland boys in their group, but their language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar. These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' discussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972) operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the two social groups under discussion here, however, the pattern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in the island community.

5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

•121 Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropologist who has studied language and social relationships in a black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat-
[197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

• 121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as pre-
121
vious studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted,
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we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process
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of language change. One group of women is strongly resist-
562
ant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

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121 perspective as a participant in community life, however, the
19 life experiences of these groups of women have been different
178 from each other and from those of men in their groups. Re-
562 cent anthropological analyses have pointed out that men and
121 women universally occupy different positions within their
562 cultural and social groups (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974;
Keenan, 1974). In these analyses, women are seen as outside
the male-oriented norms of their social groups. Linguists
have long understood that the interaction of language and
social life has important consequences for linguistic be-
havior (see especially Ferguson, 1959 and Hymes, 1967, 1973).
121 If the two sexes have differentiated social roles within all
562 societies, we must expect certain linguistic consequences
19 to follow from the different life experiences of the two
sexes. Men and women will speak differently from each other
in every social group, but the ways and extent to which they
differ can be expected to vary from social group to social
group. Hymes (1973) has observed that inequality among
speakers arises because some speakers participate in social
situations not available to other speakers. To resolve the
paradox of linguistically conservative and innovative women,
the social situations open to women in their respective
groups must be carefully examined. Focusing on women as
members of social groups, we should not be surprised to find
them represented at the extremes of linguistic conservatism
or innovation, depending on the speech situations open to
them as active participants in communal life.

000 them as active participants in communal life.

5.5 Conclusion

•121 178 193 Language does not change in a vacuum. It changes as part of the life experiences of people who use it. Because language is inherently a shared process, those who use it share in determining the direction of change. The analysis of the linguistic variables presented here has shown that the direction of change in Gullah is all in the direction of the standard variety of English. Within each category, speakers show systematic variation which indicates that the meanings or uses most basic to the original creole variables are last to change toward the standard. The variant fE as pre-infinitival complementizer is retained longest for the introduction of purposive clauses. The pronoun oe is retained longest to distinguish neuter subject from neuter object Ea, a distinction not made by standard it. The static-locative preposition to is retained for indications of spatial notions, while standard at is introduced for expression of temporal and figurative notions never expressed by the creole to. Although individual speakers show shared patterns of variation in their movement toward the standard, they make separate choices about the speed with which they move toward it. Young and middle aged women in one community find it advan- (562) tageous, probably for job-related reasons, to move faster toward the standard than any other segment of their speech

121 community. Older women in another community choose to resist
178 change toward the standard longest of any speakers in the
193 study. The social factors of sex, age, community membership,
562 and geographic mobility have been shown to influence the activation of change. Sex is indicated as the most influential of these social factors, but its effect is different in the two social groups examined here.

121 The pattern of change exhibited in Gullah does not
178 parallel that reflected in the history of English. For
193 standard English, to is the original pre-infinitival complementizing particle and retains this function today. Originally introducing infinitival forms in variation with infinitival verb endings, to later shared this function with other particles such as at, til, and for. Although some of these forms are retained today in certain dialects of English, to has never lost its original complementizing function in the standard dialect. The status of for in this grammatical category for standard English is presently the subject of debate by synchronic and historical linguists; in some analyses it has become a complementizer in the base structure, while in other analyses it has retained its prepositional status throughout the history of English. By way of contrast, the particle fE in Gullah was the original complementizing particle, now being replaced by standard to. In the English pronominal system, the singular personal pronouns were marked for gender throughout the history of

121 English; the animate pronouns were marked for case as well.
178 The original Gullah personal pronouns, ee and Em, are marked
193 for case but not for gender. As Gullah changes toward the standard, these pronouns are acquiring distinctions for gender, but the genderless form ee is retained longest where it marks an original case distinction for inanimates which English does not make. The preposition to was used to mark static location in some earlier dialects of English, as well as dynamic movement, and is still found in some nonstandard dialects today. In its use as a static-locative preposition in Gullah, to holds the strongest claim for origin as a dialectal variant of English. The pattern of expansion for this grammatical category in Gullah, however, is similar to that for English-related creoles in the Caribbean and argues for a development characteristic of an expanding creole rather than of a dialect of English.

The basic Gullah variants used for the pronominal
121 and prepositional categories discussed here suggest that the
193 Caribbean creoles and Gullah may have had different histories in important respects. For Gullah, the basic distinction in the personal pronoun system is between the syntactic functions of object and non-object. For the English-related creoles of Jamaican and Guyanese, the basic distinction seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. In the Gullah prepositional category, to is the variant used for basic locative relationships, while at and by are used

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121 193 in the Caribbean for the same semantic domain. These differences in forms used for fundamental grammatical categories suggest that further inquiry into the origins, as well as comparative studies, of all these English-related creoles might lead to further insights about the common patterns of development for expanding languages.

121 178 193 For the analysis of change in Gullah, aspects of both the dynamic model and the quantitative paradigm have been used and both have led to insights about underlying processes. For a complicated grammatical category like the personal pronoun system, the implicational scale utilized in the dynamic model has shown relationships and directions of change not readily perceived through simple frequency counts of variants used by each speaker. For greater faithfulness to the data, however, and for a clearer picture of the patterns of change than simple 'presence or absence' of creole variants would give, some indication of 'more or less' relationships between variants has been included. For showing important relationships between social factors and the activation of linguistic change, quantitative data on individual speakers, whose social characteristics were well established and readily compared with those of other speakers, have been essential. Both models are inadequate at those points where they insist upon categorical divisions rather than allowing for descriptions of continuous, systematic processes. To accurately and fully reflect the findings of the present

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121 study, the dynamic paradigm must allow for systematic indi-
178 vidual variation in parts of the grammar undergoing change.
193 The quantitative paradigm must allow for more communal variation than is usually considered to exist within the boundaries of a single speech community. Both these models have moved us closer to a conceptualization of language as a process experienced by those who speak it.

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000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

•121 464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

464 162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

434 While the median annual income of rural families was $6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was $2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under 434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median 592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had 464

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## CHAPTER II

## OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

•121 Discipline is one means the parent has of guiding the socialization of its young. Parental discipline behavior ranges from verbal persuasion to the use of force. Differences of mode, in technique, and attitude toward discipline have been noted across class and cultures. Perhaps no two parents discipline their children in exactly the same way. Likewise children react and are affected differently as the methods, beliefs, and situations differ. The behavioral scientist tries to determine and measure whether there is discernible patterning to the differences.

Discipline behavior is but part of the overall pattern of interactions occurring within the family environment. While it is difficult, study of the total environment in which discipline behavior occurs provides the more valid indication of the affects of particular features on discipline interactions.

Roy's[3] investigation raises the question of whether differences in discipline behavior is more related to

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[3]Katherine Roy, "Parental Attitudes Toward Their Children," Journal, Home Economics, XLII (1950), 652-653.

•121 environmental or to cognitive variables? The literature strongly suggests the cognitive relationship. Subsequently the impetus has been on study of the effects of permissive discipline on later cognitive growth, i.e., intelligence, educational attainment, language style, etc.. In this preoccupation, the other side of the coin--the effects of the environment--have been relatively neglected.

Roy found that as the number of rooms in the household increases, parents reported less use of physical punishment. Likewise as the parents' perception of safety in the community increased physical punishment decreased. Positive relationships were reported for number of children in family, age of parent and child, and the use of physical punishment. Her comparison between sex and the use of discipline aggression showed that females maintained the more consistent pattern. The affective potential of environment was clearly shown.

This section can be concluded by returning to the Roy investigation. If the direction and concerns of the subsequent research is a measure, the implication of Roy's study has not been followed up. Her report stands as a warning that the cognition related superiority found for children reared in middle class situations, may be more a function of environment than of the language enrichment the parent offers. The lack of systematic knowledge in this area is multiplied

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•121 when the discipline practices of Black parents are considered.

Differences in cultural reference, experiences and economic disposition act as antecedents of parental discipline behavior. A fundamental concern of those engaged in comparative discipline research has been in controlling the differences in cultural reference and economic status among Black families. The inability to control these factors, particularly that of cultural history is a glaring limitation of much of the comparative discipline research.

For example the commonly reported positive relationship between class and use of physical discipline does not appear to be the pattern for Black parents.[4] In contrast, the reported tendency is for Black parents to use physical discipline across class lines.[5] Billingsley reiterates the conceptualization of a sliding class scale to account for the above tendency.[6] He maintains that because Black parents tend to cluster at the bottom of class ranges, they retain more of the behaviors and attitudes of parents in the lower adjacent class category.

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[4]Franklin E. Frazier, The Negro in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), pp. 3-21.

[5]G. K. Kamii and N. L. Rabin, "Class Differences in the Socialization Practices of Negro Mothers," Journal of Marriage and Family, XXIX (1967), 302-310.

[6]Andrew Billingsley, Black Family in White America (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968).

121 However, differences in the obstacles to social mobility encountered by Black and White parents may also underly the cross-class use of physical discipline by Black parents. Similarly the influence of an urban versus a rural cultural experience as an affective force on the discipline habits of Black parents must also be considered. Concurrently, what changes in the discipline habits of Black parents occur as a consequence of family migration from rural to urban environment?

Herskovits[7] in explanation of the physical disciplining habits of Black parents offers a historial base for this behavior trait. He suggests that beating, yelling, shouting and whipping are forms of discipline used throughout West African societies. Furthermore, he proposes the retention of similar discipline practices among Blacks in the United States.

The problems of controlling the antecedent factors which influence discipline behavior is no doubt difficult. This difficulty is particularly highlighted among Black parents. Perhaps the single most difficult element to control is that of the cultural cohesiveness and life experience of Black parents. Nowhere in the United States is there more uniformity in life experience and cultural

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[7]Melvelle Herskovits, Myth of the Negro Past (Chicago, 1941).

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•121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121 197 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the [576] [177] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

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[8]Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9]Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gulliah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10]Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

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121 197 [576] [177] become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The conflicting feature of these two notions is evident. Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.

121 197 174 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 174 178 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the relatively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

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121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
124 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections, that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

[13] Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

121 behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated
114 and where there was sufficient common understanding among
178 them to give significance to African survivals."[14]

In contrast to Frazier's assertion of the complete destruction of the African family organization among American blacks. Dubois[15] believed that careful research would reveal traces. While many aspects of the Sea Island experience have been studied, systematic investigations of the African family organization as proposed by Dubois has not been attempted among Sea Islanders. In this regard, Turner warns that Sea Islanders often exhibit African behavioral features only among the intimate circles of the family. However, if the essential role of the family in cultural transmission is understood, then systematic information on Sea Island child rearing may provide clues on the extent of the survival of African elements among Island families. Furthermore, such an investigation may provide a retrospective glimpse at the processes of de-Africanization of the American black family.

121 Parson's collection of Sea Island folklore identifies
178 attitudinal patterns and beliefs which are clearly of West

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[14] Ibid.

[15] W. E. B. Dubois, The Negro Family (Atlanta: University Press, 1908), p. 21.

121 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
178 have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
177 Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
178 open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated the American ethos to the extent evident among northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland (U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes inceasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

12 The related and important question of the present in-
178 vestigation is whether in addition to the retention of linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," African Language Society (1966), pp. 171-179.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 178 855 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West African family and tribal traditions. Among West African tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island 121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the 627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were 623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which [177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the [692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder 885 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent 178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island 121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can [177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African 121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea 855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
621 nities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These
861 factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of <u>child rearing within a West African heritage</u>. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

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121 African and the child rearing practices of Black American parents a clear conception of Sea Island child rearing beliefs and practices may be an essential prerequisite. Until this prerequisite research is completed, projected relationships between Sea Island and West African child rearing must be viewed as merely conjecture. The intent of this investigation is to outline the child rearing discipline habits of Sea Islanders.

THE SEA ISLAND FAMILY

121 861 Because of their lower socio-economic status the use of physical punishment manifested in parental discipline may be commonly reported by Sea Island parents. However the factors of isolation and clearly defined social patterns may negate that of socio-economic status, and have the effect of diminishing the use of physical punishment. Or these factors may have the opposite influence of increasing the use of physical punishment.

121 592 861 The relatively small living space of Sea Island households coupled with a high proportion of extended family situations could produce a high use of physical punishment in discipline. Similarly the low educational attainment levels and occupational status would suggest high use of physical punishment among Sea Island parents. That whipping

121 178 861 as a form of discipline commonly found among West African peoples would be also common to Sea Island parents is

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121 consistent with the postulation that Gullahs have main-
178 tained West African cultural traits.
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At present the extent to which these relationships
121 will hold for Sea Island parents can only be postulated.
86 There exists in the literature few clear statements describing the rearing practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks. Neither is it clear how these rearing practices and attitudes have been formed or modified as a consequence of time, isolation, and/or as a result of the American experience. Likewise the extents to which the discipline practices and beliefs of Sea Islanders is commonly held across generations can only be postulated. It is not clear whether younger islanders hold attitudes toward discipline which mirror the views of older islanders, or if there is a trend toward more attunement to the rearing practices and discipline methods commonly found among urbanized youths. Neither is the literature clear on the discipline attitudes and practices of island parents in comparison to their elders. The intent of the present investigation is to provide some indication of the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks, and to provide a historical perspective of those practices and beliefs and to thereby tentatively assess the extent and direction of change.

121 PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

This research investigation has four primary aims:

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•121 1. To identify the parental discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Sea Islanders.

2. To compare the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Islanders across three generations.

3. To identify the parameters of asocial behavior and their disciplinary consequences among Sea Islanders.

4. To gage the influence of isolation (measured by distance from the mainland) on the discipline habits and attitudes of Gullah Islanders.

One goal of the study is to clearly identify the discipline habits of Gullah parents. Secondly, the comparative emphasis is aimed at measuring the direction and extent of change in discipline habits and beliefs across three generations. Finally, the intent to gage the affective influence of isolation on the discipline habits and views of Gullah Islanders.

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# CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

•121 In order to generate the information outlined under the study purposes, Sea Island family units were the most appropriate source of data. With the same aim, these family units were identified in each of the five Sea Islands communities. The cross-generational interest of the study was satisfied by the membership of each family unit.

### STUDY DEFINITIONS

121 592 Family Unit.--The family unit consisted of six members. A unit contained three groups with two (sex-paired)* members in each group. The three groups of a family unit were: (1) grandparents, (2) parents and (3) children. Group I members were grandparents, either of maternal or paternal linkage. Group II members were parents and siblings of group I members. Group III members were children. Group III members were either adopted, step and/or the own children of group II members.

Family Unit Structure.--Unless conceptualized in exaggerated forms, the comparison of the structural resemblance

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*There were more female members in group I. The ratio was nineteen females and nine males.

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121 592 of the Sea Island family unit to traditional concepts of the extended family would be erroneous. The extended design on the islands is the family gap. Within this gap elder or grandparents either share or maintain a separate dwelling. The family gap living situation is the most prevalent family structure on the Sea Islands. In this structure whether or not grandparents maintain separate or shared living quarters has little to no effect on their roles and functions; therefore, the extended versus nuclear family design was irrelevant and was not used.

121 STUDY SAMPLE

Sample Source.--Family units resided on the five Sea Islands of Charleston County, South Carolina. These islands, listed sequentially in terms of distance from Charleston City, were James, Johns, Yonges, Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands.

Sample Size.--The sample size consisted of fourteen family units; six members were in each unit. The total size of the sample was eighty-four respondents.

Same Conditions.--Four family units were from James and four were from Edisto Islands. Two family units each were from Johns, Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. There were a total of twenty-eight members in each generational group. There were forty-seven females and thirty-seven males.

PROCEDURES

•121 124 The initial task was to compile listings of the Black families on each island. This task was accomplished by interviewing residents of each island. The postal workers among those interviewed were knowledgeable of the names and addresses of the islands' Black families. Black school teachers who live and work on the islands were helpful in estimating the number and ages of children in the families. Elder Black islanders were helpful and very adept at outlining the kinship trees and in detailing the composition of the families. When a list for each island containing the names of at least twenty families had been compiled, the first task was considered complete. Based upon the available information on family composition, only families which met the study's definition of a family unit were included on the five lists.

124 The second task was to authenticate the composition of the listed families and then to elicit the participation of family units meeting the study definition. Each family named on the lists was coded with randomly assigned three digit numbers. Then slips of paper containing these three digit numbers were produced for each listed family. By island of residence, these numbered slips were dropped into one of five shoe boxes. Each shoe box was labelled to represent one island. All the boxes had covers. The covers

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V Island by sex by questions one thru thirteen.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

I a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

II a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

III a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_3$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

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DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

The research is not clear on how discipline is applied in extended family situations. In households in which grandparents are present there is more opportunity for value transmission. One result may be less variation in discipline behavior across generations. The extended family structure no doubt adds to the chance for value conflicts to occur. However, the high cultural status accorded Sea Island elders may tend to negate the chance for the occurrence of value conflicts. It is also likely that younger Sea Islanders whose values conflict with their parents may

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than
603 paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of <u>the discipline philosophy of two for one</u>. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, <u>The Role of the Father in the Family</u>, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders held in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

•121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship, between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

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CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

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197 ment for a creole language to survive.
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Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, [191] many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of 178 speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure 592 of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder 855 member is usually the established household spokesman, 887 and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As 197 expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language [177] of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

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197 The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

•121 197 rigid social stratification brought on by educational programs and other acculturative forces to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of creole speakers to modify their speech in the direction of the standard.

The dynamics involved in this modification process have received little attention from either scholars in creole studies or variation theorists. DeCamp begins this investigation by proposing four alternative stages in the life cycle of a creole language: (1) continuation without change, (2) evolution into a 'normal' language, (3) merger with the superstrate, and (4) extinction. Nichols modifies two of these stages, suggesting instead of 'continuing without change', 'continuing without significant change' because all languages used by living speakers change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language' she recommends 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' because creoles ARE already normal languages, though given the relevant social circumstances they may become extinct at any point (Nichols 1976:4)

Extinction is an obscure term for languages. It can mean that the creole has no living speakers or that it is no longer considered a separate language. Of the four alternatives, DeCamp (1971:17) says that 'Gullah, once widely spoken in Georgia, South Carolina, and the nearby Sea Islands, is now nearly extinct on the mainland and becoming rare on the islands...' Yet he offers no evidence

121 to support his claim. Rickford's analysis of the language
197 situation on the Sea Islands is less dramatic than DeCamp's, though similarly pessimistic about the vitality of Gullah as a distinct variety:

> What is most widely spoken on the Sea Islands today is best described as a 'decreolized' or mesolectal variety of Gullah. In fact, I would prefer to abandon the term 'Gullah' entirely because its associations with some purely basilectal variety are already too firmly entrenched. (Rickford 1974:94)

Impressionistic statements of this kind are often misleading or incorrect, and DeCamp and Rickford suggest that Gullah has drifted farther along the post-creole continuum than this study shows. The only safe method of determining linguistic change in Gullah is to count features and their variants. A computation will help to determine the degree, if any, to which present day Gullah is evolving from the creole pattern described by Turner in 1949. This dissertation addresses itself to a quantitative investigation of evolutionary patterns of retention and movement in Gullah and to a demonstration of the dynamics involved in this variation and movement process.

The measurement of fluctuation between features necessarily involves counting. Therefore it is important to choose variables suitable for quantitative analysis. In selecting linguistic variables, I chose ones which met the principal criteria that Labov (1964:166) outlines for quantitative sociolinguistic investigations. These criteria are as follows:

1. The variable should be high in frequency.

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121 2. The variable should have a certain immunity from conscious suppression.
197 3. The variable should be an integral unit of a larger structure.
4. The variable should be easily quantified on a linear scale.

121 My aim is to investigate features that the discipline
197 accepts as characteristic of creole language, and then to
193 contrast frequency counts of these features with those of English. The features selected for this investigation are the preverbal markers and the unmarked third person pronominal forms. These are grammatical categories that will likely appear in any consultant's speech without suppression and with a certain regularity of frequency if they are a part of the speaker's natural grammar, and if the speaker speaks long enough. These variables are an integral part of the grammar of Gullah, and they are easily quantifiable. In addition, Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of these categories for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The investigation of these specific categories will help to determine the degree to which Gullah remains distinct or is evolving toward English. Bailey (1966:146) distinguishes the Creole system from the English system through the use of preverbs and third person pronouns in the following manner:

1. The tense system of the Creole is limited to the unmarked verb for general purposes, and a particle specifying 'past'; English has a more elaborate tense system.

2. There is no subject-verb concord in the Creole; the

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121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.

197 3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person
193 pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

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197 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguis-
114 tically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

•121 In 1949, Turner settled the controversy of African
197 influence with the publication of *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. To date, his work remains the most authoritative source on Gullah. His aim was not to prove that this language had no remnants of British English, but to prove that African elements also existed in and interfered with the linguistic system to such an extent that the language was creolized.[1]

## 1.2. Problems in Creole Studies

Creolists no longer attempt to argue for ONLY European or ONLY African ancestry for Gullah and other Atlantic creoles. They now concern themselves with the genetic classification of the elements of these languages. But they do not agree on any typological criterion which defines the various mixtures resulting from the merger of genetically unrelated languages. Schuchardt, an early scholar in the area of creole studies, referred to a language resulting from such unions as a 'Mischsprache', a language composed of elements derived from both parent languages but possessing the genetic classification of neither.

121 The Atlantic creoles could be classified as branches of Indo-European language families, or branches of Niger-Congo language families. The French creoles, for example, could be added as a branch of the North Gallo-Romance

•121 families, or to the Kwa language families (Hymes 1971:4). The problem is not that linguists would deny that creoles ARE genetically related to their parent languages. The problem is determining HOW and to what extent they are related.

The classification of creole languages is further obscured by varying methods of evaluating systematic correspondences. It is difficult to assess which resemblances are basic and how vocabulary is to be weighed in relation to grammatical pattern. The vocabulary is generally borrowed from the superstratum while the grammatical pattern is formed from the substratum (Hymes 1959: 58). Another problem in typological classification is that creolists have not defined linguistic features which exclusively characterize the structure of creoles. For example, reduced inflections and borrowed vocabulary are often regarded as structural features of creoles, but Givón argues that two important facts have been overlooked in the discussion of these and other features.

> 1. The S[ubstrate]-language in most creoles discussed in the literature was a non-inflected language to begin with, either West African (which, according to Valkhof (1966) formed the initial substratum for all the Caribbean creoles) or South East Asian;
> 2. The L[exifier]-language in all these cases was a highly inflected European language, such as English (Krio, Jamaican Creole), French (Haitian) or Spanish (Papiamento). (Givón 1973:21)

Morphologically, the evidence is that a creole will follow the structure of the substrate and not that of the superstrate. No evidence shows that creoles are characterized by lack of inflections or that creolization involves the reduction of inflections. Givón goes on to say that

121 inflected languages tend to lose their inflections in time before developing new ones, and that languages which borrow in great quantity from the lexicon of another often erode the borrowed inflection without becoming a creole (Givón 1973:21). An example of this erosion process is seen in the change from old to modern English, though what caused the inflections to vanish is unclear. It may be argued that inflections are useful for helping to minimize errors in comprehension. Yet Chinese gets along well without them. Inflections seemingly complicate the grammar and make languages more difficult to learn. Yet all children learn language at about the same rate regardless of structure. Consequently, language effectiveness cannot be measured by morphology alone.

A second feature attributed to creole languages is borrowed vocabulary. It is in this area that all languages tend to borrow most extensively. While they do borrow lexicon, Givón (1973:26-7) enumerates some reasons why languages seldom borrow grammar:

> 1. The most idiosyncratic and unsystematic feature of human languages is the pairing of actual sound sequences to actual meanings in the lexicon. This is, happily, the most arbitrary thing about language and thus also the area where languages diverge the most.
> 2. It is only natural that when different linguistic groups come in contact, the area of most acute linguistic conflict is the lexicon. Thus given no universality in this area of total arbitrariness, this is also the area where languages are likely to borrow most from each other—in order to resolve the conflict.

[197] Some dialectologists classify Gullah as a dialect of English rather than as a creole language because its lexicon

•121 is predominantly English. As exemplified in the previous
197 discussion, lexicon alone does not constitute a dialect of a language. A dialect of English is a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. In the United States dialectal variations present virtually no comprehension barrier to other speakers of American English outside of a particular region. Gullah does lack the structural intercomprehensibility afforded by dialects of American English, and consequently it can not be properly defined within the boundaries of the English language in the same manner as many English dialects.

121 Creole languages are no longer regarded as 'bastard' dialects disowned and held in low repute by linguists. Rather, they are now studied as independent language systems with inherent peculiarities resulting from their own course of development. Creoles studied in this manner allow linguists not only to examine subtleties in phonological, syntactical and morphological elements as they contrast with their superstrate and substrate sources, but also to make judgments about creole systems as they compare and relate to each other.

12 The massive studies undertaken recently on languages throughout the world have revealed striking similarities among pidgin and creole languages which could not have had any prior genetic affiliation. For example, both Atlantic and Pacific creoles have a number of reduplicated

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12 phrase or initiates a negative imperative sentence.

| *English* | *Freetown Krio* | *Ewondo Populaire* |
|---|---|---|
| I do | a du | me bo |
| I don't do | a nɔ du | me ke bo |
| do | du | boo |
| don't do | nɔ du | ke boo |
| I did | a bin du | me nga bo |
| I didn't do | a nɔ bin du | me ke nga bo |

*Comparison of verb phrases (Todd 1974:41)*

•121 The polygenetic theory attempts to explain similarities among creoles through a spontaneous generation process where creoles are thought to have developed independently with influences from their parent languages. Some 121 polygenesis proponents such as Robert A. Hall, Jr. (1966) suggested that pidgins and creoles resulted from 'baby talk' 114 used by overseers to communicate with their servants. Consequently, the language which developed was simplified in grammatical and phonological structure. This theory is unsatisfactory for several reasons. (1) Early accounts indicate that the European overseers and their families were learning the creole from the servants and not vice versa (Dillard 1972:192); (2) if the European had improvised his own unique variety of baby talk to communicate with his servants, one would not be able to account for the fact that all French creoles are mutually intelligible and (3) the structural similarities shared by the Atlantic creoles of Spanish, French and English are too numerous for pure coincidence (DeCamp 1971:19).

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•121 Proponents of another polygenetic theory seek to explain similarities among creoles through contact language processes where a creole results from mixtures of European and West African languages. DeCamp summarizes some basic problems with this theory:

> If we assume that the language-mixing process was eclectic, taking one feature from this African language, another from that one, we are still unable to explain the similarities between all Caribbean creoles and the remarkable uniformity of French-based creoles. That each group would just happen to choose the same features from Twi, the same from Hausa, etc., would stretch coincidence too far...as LaPage pointed out...many of the common features of Caribbean and African creoles are also shared by other creoles such as Pitcairnese, where there have been no African influences... (DeCamp 1971:20)

The most recent theory of linguistic universals is perhaps the most comprehensive. It accounts for similarities among creoles through the process of natural language acquisition. It is assumed that there are elements which are natural to the actual language learning process, and creole languages bring us closer to what that common linguistic process is than so-called 'natural languages', which are assumed to already have prescribed levels of grammatical markedness (Kay & Sankoff 1974:73-84 passim).

From the standpoint of universals in communication, Cassidy (1971:213-15) points to certain perceptual strategies as primary: (1) establishment of group identity (inside group vs. outside group); (2) establishing forms for differentiation between statements, questions, commands, and requests, and (3) naming objects and basic concepts like time, food, clothing, people and body parts. As the pidgin matures, it begins the process of refinement or elaboration

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•121 and distinctions, referring to quality, condition, plurality, manner, aspect and modalities, appear. Since pidgin and creole languages are generally uncomplicated by elaborate systems of markedness, they are thought to be closer to the universal base of natural language learning than languages which are highly marked. Proponents of this theory (Cassidy 1971, Givón 1973, Kay & Sankoff 1974) believe that human beings are biologically programmed to acquire language. Givón (1973:3) likens the process of pidginization and creolization to child language acquisition:

> At the start he [the child] presumably has in his mind only what Chomsky terms "Universal Grammar" or the human faculty of language acquisition. This initial grammar of the newborn child is, presumably, sufficiently specific in all areas of the grammar. Whatever the ultimate nature of the specifications, the child's grammar at the outset is highly unmarked.

If humans have an innate biological propensity to acquire language, one can assume that there are also linguistic universals common to all languages, and speakers of pidgins and creoles by nature of their contact situation must rely on this universal process for communication. Yet persuasive as it seems, the theory of universals is vague. Pidgin and creole languages have not been adequately studied long enough to be able to define exactly what universals are involved in language learning and what their relationship to creoles is.

Another development in creole studies and more pertinent to this study is the area of variation theory. With

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12 the expansion of the field of linguistics to include the study of pidgins and creoles where variation is the rule and uniformity is the exception, creolists now have reasons for a different philosophical orientation, one incorporating rules variable enough to encompass descriptions of the acrolect, basilect and the intermediate varieties as well.

The search for this philosophical model led to two approaches to variation. The proponents of the first (Labov 1966, Shuy et al. 1969, Sankoff & Cedergren 1972) maintain that all members of a speech community share an isomorphic grammar, but systematic individual variation exists in the performance of each member. This variation is described through an elaborate system of variable rules, with some indeterminacy to acknowledge the concept of free variation.

DeCamp(1971) criticizes this theory, pointing out that switching phenomena and other deviations are described empirically without incorporating them into the theory. He says this approach to variation is analogous to Trager and Smith's 'common core' approach to English phonology where all variants are lumped into an undifferentiated mass. He says attempts to describe variation based on Trager and Smith's system or Weinreich's 'diasystem' are simple superimpositions of two or more separate systems which obscure the peculiarities of the individual system without actually giving us any information about the language itself. Arbitrary juxtapositions of separate

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•121 descriptions, DeCamp explains, are only elaborate systems of notations conveying the same information as one might find in 'a whole shelf of separate grammars.' None of these theories enables one to describe the correspondence between analogous features in different dialects. None of them enables one to 'convert sentences from one dialect into equivalent sentences in another', and this, DeCamp claims, is the purpose of describing dialect variations in the first place (DeCamp 1971:352).

Proponents of the second approach claim that multilingual communities result from where the creole and the superstrate are no longer discrete systems. (For Jamaica see DeCamp 1971:354, Bailey 1971:348, Cassidy 1971:204; for Hawaii see Reinecke and Tokimasa 1934, Tsuzaki 1971; for Guyana see Bickerton 1973). They claim that speech heterogeneity is due to the mutual interference of one, two or perhaps several grammars within a single speech community. They claim also that these dialects may be described on a grid with each gradation corresponding to the grammar of a particular dialect. While all variation theorists have been concerned with establishing systems for linguistic varieties, each adopts a different descriptive method.

Beryl Bailey (1971:341), for example, makes no claim for a linguistic continuum. She devises a technique based on an idealized construct of a true creole and Standard Jamaican English. She analyses various texts and plots their distance from a hypothetical base by determining the ratio of

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•12 rules necessary to convert texts to Standard Jamaican English or Jamaican Creole respectively. She assumes that varieties of speech are produced by mutual interference of two discrete grammars. Bickerton (1973) argues that if we accept Bailey's theory, principled descriptions of these speech varieties would be literally impossible because the system she proposed is based on random interferences of English and Creole.

David DeCamp (1971) suggests that the speech varieties in creole communities can not be described through either monosystemic or bisystemic treatment. Any treatment of them should be in terms of rule-governed behavior and rule-governed behavior suggests the existence of implicational relationships on a scaled continuum. With these concepts in mind, he insists on a theoretical paradigm with a competence-performance model including (1) the speaker's incomplete knowledge of his language, (2) the limitations on his memory span, and (3) the speaker's momentary lapses, reformations and conversions. He shows that his competence-performance model can be accounted for by a formal system of rule changes in generative grammar, and that binary features (e.g. (+) or (-) oratorical) would be sufficient to account for the variation and conversions (DeCamp 1971:352).

To relate his theory to his data, DeCamp selects six features which he says are among the many which define the continuum in Jamaican English. He devises a mini-continuum

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121 by illustrating the distribution of these features in the speech of his consultants:

*Features*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | child | +A | pikni | -A |
| B | eat | +B | nyam | -B |
| C | th | +C | t | -C |
| D | dh | +D | d | -D |
| E | granny | +E | nana | -E |
| F | didn't | +F | no ben | -F |

The feature (+A) indicates habitual use of the word *child;* (-A) indicates the use of *pikni* in equivalent context. (+D) indicates a phonological contrast in such pairs as *den/then;* (-D) indicates lack of a phonological contrast, etc. (DeCamp 1971:355)

By sorting the consultants according to their features of speech, DeCamp determined the co-occurrence of features within the pattern of each speaker and plotted the distribution of the six features to form the following hypothetical continuum:

| CONSULTANTS | VARIABLES A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 2 | - | + | + | + | + | + |
| 3 | - | - | + | + | + | + |
| 4 | - | - | - | + | + | + |
| 5 | - | - | - | - | + | + |
| 6 | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 7 | - | - | - | - | - | - |

*Figure 1: Distribution of the features of a linguistic continuum for seven Jamaican speakers. DeCamp's data are presented in scalogram form (Lefebvre 1974:54).*

Disregarding variation, DeCamp found that features scale neatly. If feature A had a positive value, indicating

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•12 habitual use of the word *child*, then features B, C, D, E, and F also had a positive value. If a speaker had a negative feature A, indicating habitual use of the word *pikni* but a positive B, he will also have positive C, D, E, F, etc. He concludes that if all the *n* variants of a speech community are thus arranged in an ordered series such that the difference between any variety and its neighbor is minimal, the result is a significant continuum, similar to a color spectrum.

One obvious problem with DeCamp's theory is that he considers only binary alternates (+) or (-) features for his consultants' choices. This defect is inherent more in Guttman scaling than in DeCamp's theory. Guttman scaling was originally designed to show inter-informant variation and it is not designed to deal with the kind of intra-individual variation that DeCamp is proposing. It makes no allowances for intra-individual choices which can not be measured in terms of style shift, age, social class or setting. By failing to incorporate intra-individual variation into his theory, he neglects to account for individual variation: the speaker who says *nyam* but who would not normally say *pikni*. There are speakers who say EXACTLY that, but they can not be assigned a clear-cut value of (+A) or (-A) which the Guttman technique calls for. Furthermore, Bickerton (1973:642) argues that binary selections do not allow the true characteristics of the mesolect to surface, which contains not only features from

121 the polar ends, but also features unique to itself. DeCamp's scale shows no representation of a speaker of Jamaican Creole and Standard Jamaican English. It is not known whether such a speaker exists.

Bickerton (1973:642) criticizes DeCamp's procedure. He says DeCamp constructed his scale randomly from different linguistic categories. He mixes phonological, syntactic, and lexical variables, thus making his analysis incommensurate with the study of formal linguistics. Phonological variables, Bickerton says, have a decisive influence on the selection of lexical and syntactic variables as in allegro speech. If DeCamp had confined analysis to linguistically related variables, Bickerton suggests that his description would have had more credibility and it would have been of more significance as a theory of variation and linguistic change.

12 A final point that I would like to make concerning DeCamp's characterization of variation of a continuum is that he says that each speaker masters a span of the continuum, but that no speaker masters variety one and variety ten unless he also masters varieties two through nine. The criterion of mutual intelligibility gives some support to this claim. The fact that English-speaking tourists in Jamaica have difficulty understanding certain varieties of these creoles leads one to suspect that part of the continuum is English and part of it is Creole. What DeCamp did not say and leaves one to conjecture is that the span is semi-permeable depending on the speaker's production and

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12 a conflict, and called each conflict a stage in the progression of language change. He anticipated the speaker whose performance differed from that predicted by the competence model. He accounted for intra-individual variation by rule conflict: where at any given point in time a situation exists between speaker *A* who has a rule *X* and speaker *C* who has a rule *Y*, there exists a speaker *B* wherein application of rule *X* alternates with the application of rule *Y* (Bickerton 1973:643).

• 121 Washabaugh questions the bidirectionality of variation proposed by Bickerton and others. He suggests that variation in decreolization may be vertical, contrastive or horizontal depending on three social factors: (1) pressure to avoid the basilect, (2) pressure to acquire the acrolect, and (3) pressure to use a careful speech style for formal situations. The pressure to avoid the basilect is the strongest motive because speakers are not always aware of how they want to talk, but they have a keen perception of how they DO NOT want to talk. Washabaugh does not deny that variation is systemic. Rather, he suggests that it is directed by psychological as well as social and linguistic pressure (Washabaugh 1977:329-51).

The consultants in this study are shown to illustrate the theory and mechanics of these multidimensional variation of English verbs and pronouns. The quantitative measurement of fluctuation between English and Creole

•121 variables also reveal correlations between linguistic and social patterns. Some of these patterns of movement are shown in the Creole proverb, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

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# CHAPTER 2

# THE CREOLE VERB PHRASE

## 2.0 The Pre-Verbs

•121 The quantitative measurement of linguistic variables in Gullah will necessarily involve a computation of variants. The counting itself may seem fairly simple. But, as is so fittingly indicated by Labov (1972a:82),

> ...even the simplest type of counting raises a number of subtle and difficult problems. The final decision as to what to count is actually the final solution to the problem at hand.

My procedure is to limit the number of variants to those which can be identified reliably and to set up appropriate categories for each class of variants. For example, one
121 class of variable is the basilectal verb phrase in Gullah
193 which has bare stems and the preverbal markers /dɑ/, /bɪn/, /bɪnɑ/ and /dɔg/.[2] A quantitative analysis of these forms and their relation to English verbs emerges from the speech of selected consultants whose performances indicate a slant toward:

(1) Isolect A, Creole

(2) Isolect B, a division of usage between Creole and English;

(3) Isolect C, English.

121 The notion of a linguistic continuum aids in the conceptualization of speech varieties ranging from those with features

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121 quite distinct to those with features indistinguishable from Standard English. Fluctuation between overlapping variables forces a direct confrontation with the problems of linguistic variation, and the problem of deciding what quantitative relationships exist between the variants.

The whole issue of variation could be dismissed if one assumes that all variation between English and the creole are examples of code-switching defined as a shift from one linguistic system to another by a speaker who has acquired two or more systems (Wolfram 1969:55). Labov (1971:457) provides an example of a clearly delineated Spanish-English code-shifting in the following:

> Por eso cada, you know it's nothing to be proud of, porque yo no estoy proud of it, as a matter of fact I hate it, pero viene vierne y sabado yo estoy, tu me ve hacÍ a mÍ, sola with a, aquÍ solita, a veces que Frankie me deja, you know a stick or something, y yo aquÍ solita, que es Judy no sabe y yo estoy hacÍ, viendo television, but I rather, y cuando estoy con gente yo me...borracha.

But to regard variation within a language as simply a kind of switching phenomenon is clearly inadequate to describe the language mixture currently in process in creole language communities. First, a bilingual speaker usually has a distinct class of phonological, lexical or grammatical variables associated with a switch. Creole speakers by nature of their language do not have such a neat delineation between English and Creole classes. Furthermore, code-switching seems to suggest that a speaker is bilingual and competent to interact in a multilingual community. This assumption is impractical for creole

•121 communities because some members of the communities are most likely not bilingual and the ability to make a sizeable switch to a more socially acceptable form of speech is beyond their competence. Attempts to perform beyond competence may produce forms which are neither English nor Creole. If one assumes that there are two sets of mutually balanced variables involved in the move from Creole to English, then a sound quantitative approach may reveal which system of variants is predominant. Two kinds of variation are involved in the description of contact language situations:

> (1) variation resulting from language mixture, or variants which are importations from another language;
> (2) variation resulting from inherent variability or variant forms which are an integral part of the vernacular
> (Wolfram 1969:44)

The problem with the notion of language mixture, as Wolfram sees it in Black dialect, is that one has to assume that any feature which occurs among the speakers must be described as an integral part of the speakers' system. The infrequency of a form is irrelevant as long as it does eventually occur. For example, the third person singular -s morpheme, categorically present with most verbs in English, occurs infrequently in Black dialect. The infrequency of the occurrence is irrelevant in describing the system, as long as it does occur. Thus, this description 'denies the fundamental dynamics of language contact in which a form is borrowed without its systematic integration into a recipient language or dialect'

•121 (Wolfram 1969:45).

A consequence of the concept of inherent variability is that one has to make an obligatory English rule optional in order to describe the speech behavior of some speakers. According to Wolfram, the English copula is obligatory in certain environments (*he's nice*), and in this same environment it is sometimes present and sometimes absent in Black dialect. Wolfram says if this unpredictable occurrence is not delegated to inherent variability its presence has to be interpreted as an importation from standard English. Unusual variants may be automatically disregarded as examples of dialect mixture, with only those forms most unlike standard English being reported. If, however, both kinds of variation are considered in the study of contact languages, then quantitative evidence as well as structural clues would indicate underlying systematic processes involved in a speaker's move from one system to another (Wolfram 1969:45).

Fluctuation between variants is expected as an inherent part of certain isolects. However, because forms fluctuate does not mean that both were a part of the particular isolect historically. The synchronic fluctuation may mean that a speaker is in the process of resolving a rule conflict and will thus produce variants from one system and then another until the conflict is resolved.

Having considered the kind of linguistic variation

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121 that is expected in creole communities, I now move to more specific investigations of the kind of variation involved in the analysis of the Creole preverbs and English correl-
121 ates. The corpus includes consultants selected from a
115 total of forty speakers ranging in age from 10 to 96 years. Twenty-one were selected from the forty primarily on the length of their recorded speech samples, and their willingness to participate in the study. The speakers are discussed in the Appendix,[A] and numerals corresponding to each name are[A] when reference is made to particular constructions.

193 Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of the preverbal markers /də/, /bɪn/, /bɪnə/, and /dɔŋ/ for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The preverbs are particles that function as members of the verbal auxiliary and may precede any type of main verb. The verbal categories are marked for aspect opposed to time (Cunningham 1970:63). According to Turner (1949:225) the unmarked form of the verb is used to refer to past, present, or future; and no particular form is used to indicate whether or not an action is continuous. Because Gullah employs a predominantly aspectual system, it is sometimes impossible to make one-to-one correlations with English. But, as with most languages, it is possible to make 'closest approximations'. In Table 2.1 the Creole preverbs and their closest approximation are counted and compared. Table 2.1 shows the diversity of the language situation on Wadmallow Island, and that there is considerable

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 31]

A. [See Category 115, pp. 148-152--Analyst]

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# CHAPTER 3

# THE PRONOMINAL SYSTEM

## 3.0. Creole Pronominal Systems

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The grammatical systems of Atlantic Creoles are complex, but they are not complicated by the elaborate systems of marking found in their European superstrates. Speakers of Indo-European languages must learn to use synthetic processes and devices which are not necessarily required for communicative interaction. Examples of such complications include the presence of obligatorily marked surface categories such as tense, case, gender, number, noun classifiers, voice, mood, and others. None of these is universal, and all may be missing in pidgin and creole languages without effective communication being lost.

It is argued that languages need a certain amount of redundancy for effective communication 'because linguistic exchanges take place almost invariably in conditions which are far from ideal' (Martinet 1960). Several theories have been proposed to explain the function of redundant devices. Included among them is Osgood's, which says that the redundancy quotient of a language will be around 50%, and that:

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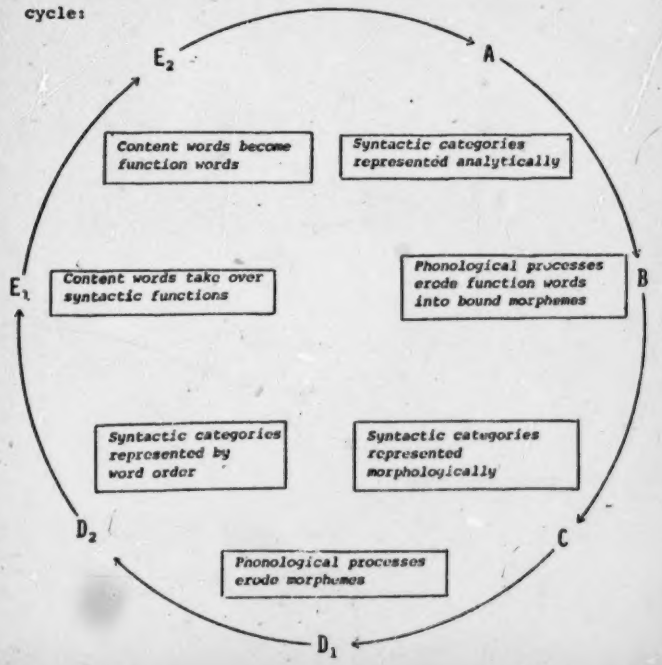
> if a code becomes too tightly efficient, speakers will begin to add in redundant features in order to be understood, but as this process inevitably overshoots it mark, and the code becomes too redundant, speakers will begin to drop out certain features and 'get away with it'—and the cycle begins again (Osgood 1963:305).

Various theories have been proposed to express the need for redundancies in languages: Labov (1971), Givón (1973), and Traugott (1973). Dreyfuss (1975) summarizes the cyclic processes proposed by Traugott, Givón and others to explain the loss and acquisition of morphological elaboration with the following analytic-to-syntactic cycle:



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121 19 The cycle suggests that syntactic and morphological elaboration can serve at least three functions in a language: (1) maintaining an adequate level of redundancy to allow for communication under inadequate conditions (the theory of redundancy formulated by Martinet and others); (2) providing material for stylistic variations (hypothesized by Labov 1971); and (3) expressing the categories of natural syntax (the theory hypothesized by Traugott 1973) (Dreyfuss 1975).

The pronominal system of creole languages has been studied by a number of creolists. Their findings indicate that creoles are not complicated by redundancies and elaborate systems of gender and case marking often found in Indo-European languages. For example, Jamaican Creole has little or no case marking but maintains gender marking for animate and inanimate. Cameroons Creole and Melanesian Pidgin mark neither case nor gender. Sierra Leone Krio marks case but not gender. Historically Gullah has been marked for case but not gender (Nichols 1976:86-7). 121 193 If present-day Gullah maintains a similar pronominal structure, one expects the categories of case and gender to be unspecified, and the nominative, objective, and possessive forms of third person singular pronouns to be essentially the same.

As a first test of this hypothesis, a survey was conducted of the use of third person singular pronouns throughout the Wadmalaw community. Third person singular

121 193 pronouns were tested because sex reference is generally marked in English by these forms.

The corpus included twenty speakers selected from the Island, ranging in age from ten to ninety-six years. A quantitative survey was taken of the pronominal distribution for each speaker.[7] Nine were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and on the range of pronouns used. These nine consultants are among the ones who assisted in the verb study as well.

Though the concern of this chapter is third person singular pronouns, Table 3.1 is presented to show the distribution for a range of pronominal possibilities in Gullah.

193 (115) All of the following variants are used by the nine consultants, though all are seldom used by the same consultant:

GULLAH THIRD PERSON SINGULAR CASE PRONOUN VARIANTS

| *Nominative* | *Variants* | |
|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | ɪm i hi | 'he' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i hi ʃi | 'she' |
| *neuter* | ɪm i ɪt | 'it' |
| *Objective* | | |
| *masculine* | ɐm i hɪm | 'him' |
| *feminine* | ɐm i ʃi hɐɪ | 'her' |
| *neuter* | ɐm i ɪt | 'it' |
| *Possessive* | | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i ɪz hɪz | 'his' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i ʃi hɐɪ | 'her' |

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the distribution and percentage of occurrence of each variant. Nichols' study (128) on pronominal variation in Gullah, undertaken on a neigh-

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193 individual consultants.

•121 193 To devise an implicational scale, I designated numerical indices to pronominal forms and their alternates in sequential order away from the basilect. The basilect form is numbered one, its first replacement is numbered two, its second replacement three, etc. The highest number for any form represents the acrolect for that category. The presence of two or more numbers in a single cell represents the existence of a rule conflict. Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently (Table 3.4).

193 Table 3.5 shows a number of pronoun variants used by each consultant. However, the degree of fluctuation between English and Creole reveals that the speakers' grammar is closer to Creole than it is to English. Some variants are clearly a reflection of English intrusions but a quantitative survey of the most frequently used forms show only slight movement from the creole pattern recorded by Turner in 1949.

Many of the cells are split, indicating rule conflicts in performance. The presence of six empty cells in the third person feminine possessive column again suggests that speakers avoid marking this position. When forced to select a feminine possessive pronoun, /i/ is the one chosen 86% of the time. Most often, speakers supply extra linguistic data or mark this slot with the definite article *the*, which is also done in Krio and Jamaican Creole:

Gullah: i kɔt de ɸut, mɔ̃n 'She cut her foot, man', or 'He cut his foot, man' (1)

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NOTES

121 1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to
197 fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among
198 people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was apple linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

121 2. No consensus has been reached on what features
193 the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

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S 121 193 regarded BASILECT as that speech variety which is farthest from standard (#10, the acrolect). MESOLECT has been used to refer to that variety falling approximately midway (#5). All intermediate varieties may be recognized by the prefixes *pre-* or *post-*. These terms, however, should be understood to represent gradations of a speech continuum with one grade merging into the other in a manner similar to a color spectrum. They are not to be regarded as separate entities (see Bailey 1974, DeCamp 1968, Bickerton 1975). Cunningham (1970:67) says the past progressive results from a combination of *been* + *da* → /bɪnə/. It is S [128] written /bɪnə/ in this study. The slash marks (/ /) are used to represent broad phonetic rather than strictly phonemic transcription.

S 193 3. The *-ing* morphemes appear in the basilect, but generally in relation to /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* as the progressive aspect marker.

A 121 193 4. For opposing arguments see Krapp (1924), McDavid and McDavid (1951). For arguments for a creole origin see Stewart (1967), Dillard (1972), Rickford (1974), and Bickerton (1970).

A 193 5. Black dialect consultants 25, 26 and 27 assure me that the *-s* suffix is used consistently to mark all persons and numbers by some speakers.

S 193 6. For more detailed discussion, see Cunningham 1970.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

Considerable interest in Gullah dialect has developed, not only in South Carolina, but thruout the country, within the past few years. This interest is due largely to the masterly contribution of the late Ambrose Gonzales. It seems appropriate to the University of South Carolina committee on publications, therefore, to publish this study by Dr. Reed Smith, Professor of English in the University, presenting the technical details of the Gullah dialect.

B. L. PARKINSON, Director.

University Extension Division.

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## FOREWORD

•121 Gullah, that quaint linguistic mongrel of the black folk
197 of the Carolina-Georgia coast and sea-islands, an English dialect molded by the lips and genius of African slaves, was lifted into the rank of literary languages by Ambrose E. Gonzales by his masterpiece, "The Black Border." Some of the myths and lore of these Negroes had been set down before, but it was left to Gonzales to shape these tales and philosophy into artistic form and contribute them as a positive endowment to our literature. "The Black Border," with its Gullah Vocabulary, has placed this treasure within the easy enjoyment of all readers of English.

128 It was my pleasure and privilege to assist in the preparation of this Vocabulary and in the unification of Gullah words, which, up to that time, existed almost entirely as spoken and unordered vocables. It is now possible for any one, with these Gullah Stories and Vocabulary, to write any English word in a true Gullah form.

121 Dr. Reed Smith has added to these labors the true contribution of the scientist. He has worked out the laws and analogies that unconsciously wrought this quaintly beautiful transformation of English through the mentality and spirit of the slaves in Southern homes. He has placed Gullah upon the plane with our great dialects,—Irish, Scottish, and some of the English idioms.

An examination and reading of Gullah will convince any sincere mind that, in allurement, in sheer beauty of word and phrase, and in a certain winsomeness of its own, it is a permanent enrichment of our language and literature.

STANHOPE SAMS,

Asst. Editor *The State*.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
• 121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo* Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral, and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity, is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dis-
114 pense with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

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CHAPTER FIVE

## *Religious Songs*

533 175 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro, the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections. [533]

•121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

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other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubtedly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region.

121 114 (122)

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal-

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# II

## FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

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THE FIRST collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals.*

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

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### FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

#### *Secular Songs*

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

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revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

## SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

### *The Problem Stated*

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The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music*,[2] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

[2] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

### *The Comparison of Musics*[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music.*

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

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The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

I. Words of Songs
   A. General subject matter
   B. Specific lines
   C. Forms or patterns
II. Tunes
   A. Modes and scales
   B. Modulations
   C. Intervals
   D. Endings on other than keynote
   E. Melodic patterns
III. Rhythm
   A. Metre
   B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

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121 177 533 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying the relation of African music to American Negro music would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

### *The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual*

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

. . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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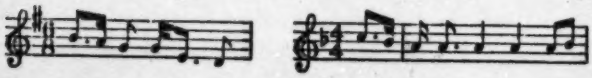

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

*Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent history of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their money crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

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121 113 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

127 128 In the preparation of this manuscript I have become greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

June, 1930. G. G. J.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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# *Pine Barren Near Eulonia*

•122 [491] AFTER THE MUDDY RUTS THROUGH THE PINE clearing had ended, there was no road, and the car jerked and bounded about among the pine trees. The soft brown needles made better traveling than the boggy wagon tracks that were behind us, but our method of procedure was rather bewildering, for there was no mark by which to retrace our tracks. As we went deeper into the pine woods there was no sign of habitation.

[115] Our driver,* who had offered to help us when our car had stuck in the bog, was a six-foot, shiny black Negro, strong necked and lithe, with a twelve-inch hunting knife strapped to his hip. We had never seen him before, nor the smaller Negro beside him on the front seat. In the back seat we were concerned with our feet, which rested precariously among loose cartridge shells. We feared that a sudden jolt from a pine stump might make us stamp down on the shells and explode them.

361 Suddenly we came upon a reed and paling fence higher than the head of a tall man. There was nothing to be seen over the top of it, no sign of occupation. We drove around to the side where, protected by some feathery bushes, a small opening hardly distinguishable from the palings led into an enclosure. Scattered without plan about a smooth sand clearing were three or four small unpainted wooden cabins, two connected by a narrow board walk just above the ground. Other smaller structures, sheds, and work tables were placed

* *Reuben Taylor, Eulonia.*

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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [39]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs
535 back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

• 122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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121 tigation, the material and data needed to solve the problem, and the field procedures most likely to be useful.[3]

122 Preparing a research design is one thing; actual entrance into a Sea Island community is quite another. Because the islanders are suspicious of all outsiders, one group of investigators has suggested that research in the islands and in other black communities be conducted in conjunction with local, community-controlled agencies that provide services to the communities.[4] These agencies can be asked to verify the integrity of potential Sea Island investigators and to approve the uses to which they plan to put the results of their research. Not only do organizations of this sort have access to a wide range of information that would be useful to the researcher, but the researcher can reciprocate by making available to the agency any useful information that he or she acquires from outside sources. Coordinate research reduces the risk of community exploitation and is likely to produce positive results from the community.

124 No matter how careful one's planning has been, as I learned quickly, one may find it necessary to deviate from customary methods of assembling data and to adjust the procedures and time allotted for a study to correspond to the temperament and discretion of the informants. For example, included in the preliminaries made in preparation for my research was a word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants. Because the list was long, and the elicitation so painfully slow and exacting, I did not attempt to procure this information until almost two years after my initial investigation. By then the informants knew me well and were willing to tolerate such a tedious procedure. Even with their willing assistance, it took as long as a week, sometimes more, to complete the word list for one informant.

123 No research design or methodology, of course, can assure a successful investigation in any discipline in the Sea Island communities. In many ways the success or failure of a study becomes dependent on the islanders' response to the personality of the researcher, and their willingness to accept both researcher and project. Of primary importance, one must have a convincing reason for being on a given island. Patricia Nichols, to take one example, acquired entry into a river island community as a teacher—a profession highly valued by the Sea Islanders. According to her, working in a highly visible capacity at a job that made sense for the particular community chosen allowed her to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events.[5]

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# Acknowledgments

•122 A major portion of this book would consist of names if all the people who contributed in some way were included. Before all others, however, I gratefully acknowledge the people of the Sea Islands, because without their willing cooperation there would have been no book. I am especially indebted to two residents of Wadmalaw Island, Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) and Ida Morris-Hamilton (Miss Ida Mae) for accepting me into their homes and providing me with ties to well-respected island names. Since the islanders know and understand well the meaning of sharing as an inherent part of the extended family, I express my gratitude to the following families rather than to individuals: the Browns, the Williamses, the Pickneys, the Linens, the Jenkinses, the Middletons, the McClouds, the McClures, the Buggs, the Mitchells, the Seabrooks, the Orees, the Smalls, the McDermotts, the Pyatts, the Washingtons, the Mickells, the Gibbses, the Riverses, the Macks, the Ropers, the Higginses, the Simmonses, the Dents, the Fraziers, the Murrays, the Quimbys, the Cummingses, and the Campbells.

000 I wish to thank the Nigerian people from the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio cultures for their tolerance and patience in helping me to learn their languages and folklore traditions. I offer special thanks to the Ihejetoh family, the Udondek family, the Onunkwo family, and the Konyeers family.

128 Several friends, colleagues, and professors at the University of Michigan offered assistance and provided guidance for this book in its embryonic stages. These include Rosie Morant Douglas, who first told me about the Sea Island people while sitting in the undergraduate library one afternoon in 1972, and Faith Mitchell, who accompanied me on my first trip to the island communities. I wish also to thank Richard Bailey, J. C. Catford, Peter Fodale, Lemuel Johnson, Patrick Bynoe,

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South Carolina



128 Louise Rounds Ball, and Kathy Eiseley, who gave me the stimulation and encouragement that I needed to begin the project in 1973.

I have also benefited from the knowledge and insights of several linguists, anthropologists, historians, folklorists, and friends from other universities. Outstanding among these is my mentor and friend Professor Charles Joyner, a native of the coastal area and the author of *Down by the Riverside*. He believed, even when I felt that I no longer believed, that the manuscript would become a book. I also acknowledge others who were kind enough to listen or read drafts of the manuscript, honest enough to provide principled criticism, and most of all committed enough to write out lengthy suggestions on how to improve it. I offer special thanks to Ralph Fasold, Fred Cassidy, Dell Hymes, Orlando Taylor, Ian Hancock, Irma Cunningham, Salikoko Mufwene, Michael Montgomery, Lettie Molter, John Rickford, William Stewart, and Molefe Asante.

I warmly acknowledge my long-time friend from the Sea Island area, Dr. G. Franklin Edwards of Howard University, who in the words of the islanders often had to "brace my back against the wall of Zion, and plant my feet deep down in the soil" in order that I might finish this book. Other friends and colleagues who provided willing but "tired" ears include Claudia Tate, Edward Hawthorne, Arnold Wallace, Charles Sessoms, Michael Miller, Lettie Austin, Marshall Banks, Vernon Jones, Karen Michell, Carolyn Stroman, and my typist, Sally McCoy.

I wish to extend special thanks also to Malcolm Call, Ellen Harris, Dariel Mayer, Sandy Hudson, and Douglas Armato at the University of Georgia Press. I am particularly indebted to Janis Bolster, not only because she is a painstakingly proficient editor but because she was "gifted" with the ability to make the most obscure concepts flow easily into prose.

122 The research for this book was supported by several sources; without their assistance, I would never have been able to complete this study. At the University of Michigan I received a Horace H. Rackham Research Award and a summer grant from the Center for African and Afro-American Studies. At Howard University my work received support from the Faculty Research Program in the Social Sciences, the Humanities and Education Program of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs; and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Faculty Grants Program. I was also awarded a WHMM Television De-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•122 velopment Grant and a service grant from South Carolina Educational Television. I am especially grateful to Mary Jaffee for her assistance and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for providing funds for this project for a one-year period.

000 Finally, I wish to acknowledge the generous support of my family: my mother and father, Haller and Curtis Jones, who kept my children while I went to Africa; Grandma Joella and my sisters and brothers, Beryl, Katie, Joycelyn, Phillip, Chester, Charles, and Bernard, who all took turns taking care of my children when I went to the Sea Islands. Most of all, I am grateful to my husband Sidney and our children, Beanie, Antoneia, Brie, and Benji, for tolerating me as I undertook my research. Now Beanie no longer has to ask, "Mommy, haven't you finished yet?"

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

127 113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

122 4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 609 113 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

Ro. 1697

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# *Acknowledgments*

122 My thanks to the University of California at Los Angeles for research support I have received in the past several years, through summer and sabbatical assistance. Funds from the Institute of American Cultures, College Institute Program, Faculty Career Development Program, and the Academic Senate were most generous.

127 In my search for information on the Gullahs I visited and had correspondence with many libraries. While investigations were not always fruitful, every library staff was helpful. I wish to thank the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Methodist Church Archives, Wofford College; Baptist Collection, Furman University; Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina; South Carolina Historical Society; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Library of Congress; Cornell University Library; Houghton Library, Harvard University; Historical Society of Wisconsin; Interlibrary Loan staff at the University of California at Los Angeles; and Oscar Sims, Social Science Bibliographer at UCLA.

128 I have received encouragement and suggestions from a number of people. My colleague Ruth Bloch read two important chapters of the manuscript and offered useful suggestions for rewriting. Daniel Littlefield of Louisiana State University read and commented on my chapter on the African slave trade and shared with me his historiographical knowledge of source material. Michael Mullin of California State University, Sacramento, read an earlier draft of the manuscript and offered perceptive comments. My colleague Gary Nash referred me to important source material and read an early version of the manuscript with much care and

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

128 I am grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Charles A. Ferguson, Gillian Sankoff, and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, for their invaluable ideas, suggestions, and encouragement at various stages of this study. I am indebted also to three people who early encouraged and aided my investigations of Gullah: Edith Trager Johnson, Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Rebecca Agheyisi. Without Irma Cunningham's (127) earlier dissertation on the syntax of Gullah, the present work could not have been undertaken.

122 During my field work in coastal South Carolina, many 123 people gave concrete help of different kinds. Through the courtesy of William S. Young, Thaddeus Thompson, Edgar Caddell, and Peggy Walker, I was able to spend valuable time with the school children of rural Georgetown County. In the island community, Prince and Rebecca Washington introduced me to the community and spent hours of treasured conversation with me. My mother, Mildred Mitchell Causey, and her sister, Annie Laurie Bonnette, opened their homes to me whenever needed; I benefited in many unforeseen ways from their years of teaching in the public schools of the state. Another- 128 native of the Waccamaw region, historian and folklorist 129 Charles W. Joyner, was a source of crucial information and

128 insight at several points. My friend and colleague at
127 Winthrop College, Shirley Brice Heath, shared with me the joy of discovery and the pain of facing the unknown; her anthropological field work in up-country black communities
128 was an invaluable source of comparative data. My human and intellectual debt to Nolan Pliny Jacobson, my former professor at Winthrop, is greater than either of us knows.

Throughout my studies at Stanford, three people have been particularly supportive: Jean Beeson, Clara Bush, and Frank Nichols. I thank them for helping me to keep this work in perspective.

• 122 A Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies during 1974-75 helped support the research and the writing of this dissertation.

124
125

Schematic of the Scale Measurements

| | Scale | Everytime | Often | Sometime | Seldom | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quest. | (3) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

STUDY CONSIDERATIONS

122 Adjusting to the Sea Island environment was a crucial prerequisite to the successful conduct of this research effort. Even though the researcher is a native speaker of the Gullah dialect a period of adjusting or tuning into this speech pattern was necessary.

These adjustments were expedited by time and by gaining as much exposure to the dialect as possible.

124 Through the pre-administration activities it became clear that the interviewing schedules would have to be flexible and modified in consideration of the summer habits of the islanders. What this meant along with other things was that the researcher had to conduct the interviews of women folks at a time when the daily chores were completed and the women were relaxing from the summer heat. For working members of the family weekend and late evening interviews were most appropriate.

During the trail administration family members were obviously anxious about being isolated from the family and discussed their anxiety with the researcher. It was apparent that this procedure operated in opposition to a rather free flowing interaction style among family members.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

128 I am deeply grateful to my chairman, Professor Richard W. Bailey for his encouragement and penetrating criticisms of this manuscript, and to Professor J. C. Catford and Kathleen Gaudy who gave freely of their time and patience to aid my understanding of the phonetic properties of Gullah. In addition, I am indebted to Professor David Lawton of Central Michigan University for his encouragement, criticism and assistance in establishing correlations between Gullah and Jamaican Creole. I wish also to express my gratitude to Professor Peter Fodale for his valued counsel and recommendations, and Professor Peter Hook for contributing to my understanding of Guyanese Creole.

•122 I owe special thanks to Professor Lemuel Johnson, Patrick Bynoe and the staff of The Center for African and Afro-American Studies for funding my research project. Without their aid, the fieldwork could not have been undertaken. I wish to thank also Mr. Sidney and his children, Antoneia and Beanie, for providing a familiar environment in which to undertake this study.

006 Finally, I will be forever grateful to Jimmie Williams, Mrs. Myma and the people of Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. Without their cooperation, this dissertation would not have been possible.

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124 bogging?' The consultant would answer, 'Boots.' It often
126 took as long as a week to complete the word list for one consultant.

115 The Consultants

The consultants listed below were all born on Wadmalaw and had resided little or no time on shore.

1. Mrs. Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) is a very gracious widow of seventy-four years. Her assistance in eliciting natural responses from others for word list and syntactic
• [122] structures was invaluable. I resided with her and am indebted to her for data recorded in familiar environments.

2. Mr. Henry Gibbs is a ninety-six-year-old gentleman. He remains still very active, loquacious, and alert. His recollections of ex-slave conditions and uninhibited speech was a major contribution to this work.

3. Mr. Ozzie Rivers (Mr. Happi) is a deeply religious seventy-year-old gentleman. He contributed much to my understanding of the phonology of Gullah. His vast store of religious experiences were reminiscent of similar ones dating back to West Africa.

4. Mrs. Annie Brown (Miss Missi) is a lighthearted widow of seventy-six, who leads a very private and secluded existence. I am grateful that she agreed to assist me with

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

## *Acknowledgments*

122 In the twenty-five years of research represented in the collection of slave songs,
128 from which the comparatively few examples in this book have been culled, aid has been given me that words can never repay. Without the help of its many friends, this music of the Georgia Sea Islands could not have been preserved. Two of its admirers gave generous support in the four frightening years following 1930. One provided the funds needed to continue the work when the chastened Negroes would do for a quarter what they will not do today for a dollar; the other contributed her time, thought and general assistance.

I wish that the names of all who have shared in this work could be given, but
114 over a period of years I have become indebted to so many associates that it is inad-
115 visable to mention more than those whose coöperation has produced far-reaching results.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parsons of Lakeville, Connecticut, and Wassaw Island, and the late Augustus Oemler of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, gave me in February, 1909, my first opportunity to hear the singing of primitive slave songs on the coast of Georgia.

In later years the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jones, of Sea Island, furnished an opportunity to hear similar songs on Sapelo Island.

The friendly interest of the late Mrs. Clifton of The Ridge, McIntosh County, made me acquainted with the "ring-shout," which is so rarely seen, even by Southerners, that few realize "shouting" is a religious dance of African origin, and not a loud cry.

The Misses Dent, of Hofwyl Plantation, on the mainland in Glynn County, generously shared their knowledge of the songs that descendants of their family's slaves have been encouraged to preserve.

In Camden County, Mr. Chacey Kuehn, of Satilla Pines and New York City, gave valuable help in locating the best singers in the neighborhood of Tompkins, Burnt Fort, and Jerusalem.

The late Howard E. Coffin never lost an opportunity to share with others his delight in the slave songs. The applause of the cosmopolitan audiences he assembled at

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region. 121 114 (122).

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal- 128 128 114

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent history of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their money crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

121 [122] • [127] 121 113 [p. vii]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



121 collaboration, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, and resolved that our photo-
126 graphs of the Negroes would be as sharply focused as had been our Savannah houses. The soft focus of the Ulmann portraits was not to our liking, nor was the poor quality of their reproduction. Ulmann's remarkable ability to capture an attitude and to reflect her subject's character we hoped to emulate. We soon learned that to photograph a person, particularly a child, was far removed from making a portrait of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building.

126 Our picture-taking expeditions were always led by Mary Granger. If our subjects were to be close by Savannah she would have made arrangements with friends or with members of her staff who conducted earlier interviews. The usual procedure was for our leader to engage the subjects in conversation at a spot we had chosen with an eye to light and background. The camera on the tripod and the black cloth
126 that we were forever ducking under to focus and compose
123 invariably provoked their interest and usually put them at ease. Mary Granger's confident and cheerful demeanor and her good sense of humor accounted for the bright, responsive expressions that show on the faces of many of the older people. She questioned as she talked, made notes on interesting responses, and often would chant the African song "Kum Baba Yaw," which she had learned from old Tony Delegal. This never failed to bring a look of incredulity to the faces of our subjects.

On the island trips and those to distant and remote areas our arrival was unannounced. Mary Granger was always ready to reward cooperative subjects or to persuade reluctant ones to be photographed with an offer of sweet rolls, tobacco, or old but serviceable clothes, all of which Miss Granger seemed to have in endless supply.

126 The *Drums and Shadows* photographs have appeared in
128 any number of publications, the artifacts and the Bowen grave markers more frequently than the portraits. The latter,

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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•123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle w sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie
(789) smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell
(533) Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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Georgia

# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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•123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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Georgia

## *Sunbury*

123 OUR CAR CAME TO AN ABRUPT STOP IN THE SANDY road before the board fence which enclosed a small group of weather-beaten clapboard houses. We called to a young Negro girl who lounged in a doorway and she came forward to see what we wanted. Almost simultaneously there appeared from the other houses scattered about the clearing a number of other persons.

Two women about thirty-five years old and nine or ten small children all approached the fence. At first they were rather wary, but their attitude gradually turned to friendliness and they hung over the high board fence, talking and laughing in great good humor. Elizabeth Roberts,* the young girl whom we had first seen, appeared to be the leader of the group.

795 We were interested to know if these people had river baptisms any more. "Duh Sunbury Baptis Church an duh Palmyra Baptis Church both hab baptizins," Elizabeth told us. "Cose it depend on how many folks wants tuh leab duh Presbyterian Church an jine duh Baptis. Mos ub us is already baptize."

"Where do they hold the baptisms?" we inquired.

The group all pointed in the direction of the river. "Right obuh deah in duh Sunbury Ribbuh," they chorused.

Elizabeth again took the initiative. "All duh candidates is robed in wite," she explained. "Duh preachuh come frum

* *Elizabeth Roberts, Sunbury.*

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

After much persuasion we gained the older woman's con-
[123] fidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told
115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a
262 settin-up."

272 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

"No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any
262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought
535 to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

"We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said.
[533] "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

"Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah
[202] it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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115 Muh granmudduh jis refuse tuh die fo she seen me an duh
n63 baby. She say she hab tuh see us fo she die. Ebry day she ax fuhrus. She git weakuh an weakuh but she jis wohn die. Wen duh baby wuz a few days ole, I git dress an go tuh see uh. Fus I wuz fraid tuh bring duh baby intuh duh sick ruhm fuh dey say it bad luck fuh somebody bout tuh die tuh look at a baby. Sometime duh baby die too. I tell dis tuh muh gran an she laugh at me an tell me she ain gonuh take duh baby wid uh. Den I bring duh baby in an she sing tuh uh an hole uh in uh ahms. She tell me she wuz gonuh die now an dat I wuz tuh continue uh wuk wid duh folks yuh. Right attuh dat she die."

115 For a while longer the woman chatted on in a friendly manner, discussing various incidents that had taken place in the neighborhood. In parting they presented us gra-
[123] ciously with some fresh figs from the garden and asked us to visit them again whenever we returned to the settlement.

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361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire
[231] fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning them-
461 selves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three
•123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished
[115] to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt
[291] hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

[361] Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and
[829] wondering how far from the main road this little settlement

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI),[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
• [123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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115 row wooden gate opened into a field where a winding path led to the small cabin of Julia Grovernor,* called Juno by the island Negroes. Julia, very black, tall and gaunt, was slightly hostile and suspicious and disinclined to talk. Even [123] the pipe tobacco, potent in most cases, she indifferently dropped.

"No'm, I ain know nuttn. Ise feeble-minded. I bin weak in head sence I small chile. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout witches. I ain know nuttn bout root doctuhs. No'm, I ain nebuh heah uh cunjuh. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout spells. No'm, I ain kin tuh Katie Brown."

115 This refusal to answer except in the negative seemed to continue indefinitely. Finally, however, after innumerable 124 slow, quiet, good-humored questions that showed no resentment at her hostility, she became friendly in a reserved and superior way. It was soon evident that this sullen, reticent woman, though hostile to outside invasion, was not feeble-minded, but on the contrary sharp-witted, with a dry sense of humor.

"Muh gran, she Hannah. Uncle Calina muh gran too; 829 dey bote Ibos. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran Hannah. She marry Calina an hab twenny-one chillun. Yes'm, she tell us how she brung yuh.

"Hannah, she wid huh ahnt who wuz diggin peanuts in 829 duh fiel, wid uh baby strop on uh back. Out uh duh brush 567 two wite mens come an spit in huh ahnt eye. She blinded an wen she wipe uh eye, duh wite mens done loose duh baby frum huh back, an took Hannah too. Dey led um intuh duh woods, weah deah wuz udduh chillun dey done ketched an tie up in sacks. Duh baby an Hannah wuz tie up in sacks lak duh udduhs an Hannah nebuh saw huh ahnt agen an nebuh saw duh baby agen. Wen she wuz let out uh duh sack, she wuz on boat an nebuh saw Africa agen."

* *Julia Grovernor, Sapelo Island. Deceased winter, 1938.*

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115 another Belali Mohomet descendant, who came to the door of his neat cottage clad in blue denim. Delighted to have visitors, Shad was eager for conversation. With a few polite (123) words of thanks for the pipe tobacco, he began to talk of the old days.

829 "Muh gran wuz Hestuh, Belali's daughtuh. She tell me Belali wuz coal black, wid duh small feechuhs we hab, an he (567) wuz bery tall. She say Belali an all he fambly come on same boat frum Africa. Belali hab plenty daughtuhs, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, Bentoo, Hestuh, Magret, and Chaalut.

"Ole Belali Smith wuz muh uncle. His son wuz George Smith's gran. He wuz muh gran Hestuh's son an muh mudduh Sally's brudduh. Hestuh an all ub um sho pray on duh bead. Dey weah duh string uh beads on duh wais. (782) Sometime duh string on duh neck. Dey pray at sun-up and face duh sun on duh knees an bow tuh it tree times, kneelin on a lill mat."

We asked Shad if he had ever heard his grandmother say anything about Africa. Had she ever mentioned what sort of house they lived in or what food was generally eaten? Shad nodded eagerly, and from the steady flow of talk that followed it was evident that he had heard much of the land of his ancestors.

"Muh gran Hestuh say she kin membuh duh house she lib in in Africa. She say it wuz cubbuh wid palmettuh an grass fuh roof, an duh walls wuz made uh mud. Dey make duh wall by takin up hanfuls uh mud an puttin it on sumpm firm, sticks put crossways so. I membuh some pots and cups dat she hab made uh clay. She brung deze frum Africa. She membuh wut dey eat in Africa too. Dey eat yam an shuguh cane an peanut an bananas. Dey eat okra too. Yes'm, das right, dey calls it gumbo. Dey dohn hab tuh wuk hahd wid plantin deah. Jis go in woods an dig, an git big yam. Dey eat udduh roots too. Dey ain no flo tuh

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115 We went by to talk with Charity Lucas, a fine looking upstanding, middle-aged Negro woman. She told us she did not know much about her father's people,—they had come from around Carolina,—but her mother and her mother's people had come from around Waycross and she herself had been born in Waycross. She said that the coast Negroes were very different from the interior people. She had heard talk of conjure and spirits around St. Marys but she didn't believe much in it herself; she had not been brought up that way.

Her son Robert (Plate XXII), A a tall, lithe, powerful young Negro of about twenty-five, was rather taciturn. He had heard of these things but didn't care to speak of them and didn't believe in them much anyway.

Charity advised us to go to see old Jim Myers. "Now theah's one that's ole an'll be able tuh tell yuh plenty. He's neahly ninety and sho likes tuh talk."

We asked if his memory were good. "Yes'm, it's as good as mine. I guess it's bettuh."

We asked for directions and she told us how to go, ten miles deep into the woods off from the St. Marys-Kingsland highway.

491 Our road and what later turned out to be a pine needle wagon track carried us through Marianna, John Houstoun McIntosh's plantation, through Sweetwater Hammock and on through other settlements to Mush Bluff Island where old Jim Myers lived. The last mile we had to walk, owing •123 to some swampy patches in the wagon track. A Negro boy of about eleven sauntered around a bush, and his eyes popped open in frightened surprise at strangers appearing so suddenly in the woods.

"Does Jim Myers live near here?" we asked.

342 "Right theah roun the cawnuh of the path," he said, and we came suddenly upon the house, a three room unpainted, board cabin sitting about two feet off the ground on large,



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-DD--Analyst]

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121 tigation, the material and data needed to solve the problem, and the field procedures most likely to be useful.[3]

122 Preparing a research design is one thing; actual entrance into a Sea Island community is quite another. Because the islanders are suspicious of all outsiders, one group of investigators has suggested that research in the islands and in other black communities be conducted in conjunction with local, community-controlled agencies that provide services to the communities.[4] These agencies can be asked to verify the integrity of potential Sea Island investigators and to approve the uses to which they plan to put the results of their research. Not only do organizations of this sort have access to a wide range of information that would be useful to the researcher, but the researcher can reciprocate by making available to the agency any useful information that he or she acquires from outside sources. Coordinate research reduces the risk of community exploitation and is likely to produce positive results from the community.

124 No matter how careful one's planning has been, as I learned quickly, one may find it necessary to deviate from customary methods of assembling data and to adjust the procedures and time allotted for a study to correspond to the temperament and discretion of the informants. For example, included in the preliminaries made in preparation for my research was a word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants. Because the list was long, and the elicitation so painfully slow and exacting, I did not attempt to procure this information until almost two years after my initial investigation. By then the informants knew me well and were willing to tolerate such a tedious procedure. Even with their willing assistance, it took as long as a week, sometimes more, to complete the word list for one informant.

123 No research design or methodology, of course, can assure a successful investigation in any discipline in the Sea Island communities. In many ways the success or failure of a study becomes dependent on the islanders' response to the personality of the researcher, and their willingness to accept both researcher and project. Of primary importance, one must have a convincing reason for being on a given island. Patricia Nichols, to take one example, acquired entry into a river island community as a teacher—a profession highly valued by the Sea Islanders. According to her, working in a highly visible capacity at a job that made sense for the particular community chosen allowed her to observe and participate in a great variety of speech events.[5]

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•123 People in general are often insecure about their particular varieties of speech, and collecting spontaneous speech data can be a problem for anyone conducting a linguistic survey. It is even more of a problem on the Sea Islands because the native speakers of Gullah can and do adjust [195] their speech to produce the closest possible approximations of standard English when they are addressing strangers. To eliminate pressure on the speakers to avoid the creole speech (and to help validate my presence), I explained that one of my objectives for being on the islands was to learn as much as possible about folk medicine "roots," folktales, "lies," and "the old-time talk." I explained, for example, that my grandmother had taught me to identify and collect herbs or roots which were helpful in alleviating certain ailments or even in effecting certain cures. These topics generated much interest and humor; consequently, I was able to assemble a wide store of knowledge concerning medicinal cures, complete with folktales, as well as to collect several varieties of speech data.

123 Something I learned by sitting through one market day in Charleston illustrates a final point. As I observed an islander selling tomatoes, I 437 realized that she felt much more satisfaction when she sold her goods to a person with whom she had haggled assiduously over the price than when she sold the same amount for a higher price to a well-intentioned but clearly patronizing customer. She had been robbed of the satisfaction of arriving at an "agreed" price. Feelings about the inequality of human beings had been transmitted along with the unequal prices of the tomatoes.

123 Achieving and maintaining equality in relationships is crucial when striving to establish rapport with informants. Kenneth Goldstein cites a 124 statement to this effect made by Alan Lomax in 1950 during a symposium on data collecting at the Mid-century International Folklore Conference held at Indiana University:

> People say to me that they would like to help me along with my work, that I look as if I need help. And I tell them that I am taking up their time and that I would like to make it up to them. There was never any question of dignity being involved; none of us in our situation was more dignified than anyone else. If the informant liked to drink, I drank; and if he liked to acquire a salary, I haggled with him very hard and very seriously, but we fought over it as equals.[6]

[p. xxiv is blank]

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# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a
491 bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

• 123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

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123 arriving at New Jerusalem African Methodist Episcopal Church. I attended church service because one must go to church to see the greatest gathering of people, and one must have the minister's sanction for one's work if one is to gain cooperation during the research. I was introduced to the congregation, and after the service the islanders were warm and hospitable, as is the custom on the church ground and as is common practice in many southern communities. But once we left the grounds, most members of the community became very conservative and even hostile concerning the mechanics of their culture. Their reactions to me followed a specific pattern. First they asked, Whose daughter are you? Because I was not the daughter of anyone on the island, the next question was, Who are your people here? As I had no relatives on that island or any island, the next question was, Whom did I know, or whom was I visiting? When they learned that I neither knew nor was visiting anyone, [124] most interviews ended on the spot—even though most people had promised at church to offer their assistance.

Quite by coincidence, I gave an elderly lady a ride to Charleston. As I drove along the winding roads, she told me that she lived alone, loved to crab and fish, and took a "nip" for her arthritis every now and then. She had lived in the Wadmalaw community all her life and had a host of relatives and friends on neighboring islands up and down the Carolina/Georgia coast. She knew the traditions; later, she would be instrumental in helping me to learn them. Because this lady was socially active and was held in high esteem, she was ultimately able to provide me with acceptable answers to the questions Sea Islanders ask of all new faces. I became Miss Myma's "granddaughter" who lived away and came to visit every summer.[1] (My greatest accomplishment would be finally getting her to leave Wadmalaw and come to Michigan to visit me.)

123 609 Having a person well known and well respected to provide a lineage helped in my approaches to the community. But since most people born on any given island know each other, I soon realized that I had the status of "outsider," and no outsiders, black or white, are welcomed warmly into Sea Island activities or viewed without suspicion until they have spent considerable time among the people, performing daily tasks and becoming involved in daily living activities. The people have long been ridiculed for their speech, life-style, and mannerisms. In addition, they are very much aware that their culture has been a topic of interest to folklorists, linguists, historians, and others since the

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•123 [609] early twentieth century.[2] Thus they are quite naturally suspicious of anyone taking notes, carrying equipment, or wandering about unaccompanied by a resident. The islanders are a proud, perceptive people and can very soon sense insincerity and patronizing attitudes. It generally requires more than an offer of cash payment, gifts, or other remunerations to motivate them to assist a researcher's study. Though it was not my original plan to become indoctrinated into Sea Island culture through hard labor, I learned very quickly that most of the [481] islanders are active, "going" people. Those who are not engaged in city jobs are likely to be fishermen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, basket weavers, market people, or laborers in the produce fields. Often workers allowed me to accompany and assist them, and I found that the rewards for becoming involved in daily life through hard work were great indeed. Returning home from a day in the fields in an open-bed truck, listening to the islanders laughing, joking, and planning for the weekend, made the tasks I had accomplished that day seem easier. Equally important, I obtained some of the most interesting speech data while learning to make baskets or working in an okra field.

114 After five years of gathering information on the Sea Islands, I went to Africa in 1978 to compare the Sea Islanders' language and culture with the patterns of some of their ancestors. The Nigerian villagers' welcome was far warmer on my first introduction to their communities than the Sea Islanders' had been. Many of the elderly Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio women had never seen an African-American woman and walked some distances to see the *Indocha*, or what was termed a "white-black woman." The label was used not out of disrespect but for lack of a better one to refer to a person born from African heritage but raised speaking a European tongue. After I explained my purpose for coming far "across the water," I was never in need of anyone to assist in any efforts. The villagers were as eager to hear what words, customs, and traditions the Gullah speakers retained as I was to tell them. Their eagerness was sharpened by their fervent hope that somehow some of the language, literary traditions, and social customs had derived from their particular culture, whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Ibebio. Life among these people was fascinating and amazingly similar in some ways to the life patterns of the Sea Islanders, even after the passage of centuries. It is about these similarities in language, literature, and culture that I promised to write this book.

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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
• 123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
[562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522] enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly con- [123] genial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

[533] With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
• [123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this
[264] home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice
[262] cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

538 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a
524 good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still
123 standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the
342 site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
(365) of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate con-
(514) nections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to
123 make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

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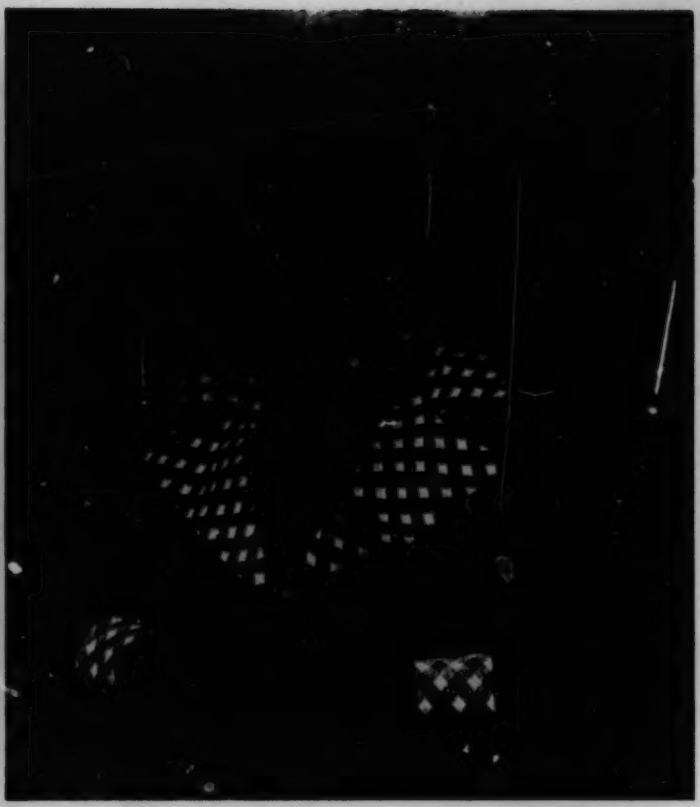

Miss Myma, who has lived her entire life on Wadmalaw Island, befriended the author and introduced her to the ways of the island and its people.

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159 one of her friends, who accused her of taking some tobacco which Miss Myma clearly could not have taken. Her friend attacked her viciously and called her some scandalous names. With each insult Miss Myma replied, "You de right, darlin," or "Sho will, honey," or "I know you ben tell truth for sho, baby." Finally, the friend looked rather foolish, throwing out insults and having them accepted so calmly. So, clearly feeling unfulfilled because she had not had the satisfaction of arousing Miss Myma to any angry word play, she left kicking up dust and looking back over her shoulder as she stalked down the sandy lane from Miss Myma's house. I had seen Miss Myma at her best in heated arguments over far smaller issues before; thus I asked her in amazement why she had not retaliated and defended herself forcefully. She took her pipe from her mouth, shook it in the direction her friend had taken, and replied thoughtfully that that particular woman was a fool, and she left fools in the hands of the Lord.

159 Miss Myma was apparently in her mid to late seventies when I met her. She told me that she "forget" how old she really was, but she
• 123 could come close if I could tell her how old some of her childhood friends were. In spite of her age, she remains one of the most active people on the island. She taught me to crab, net, and fish. In fact, I caught my first dogfish while fishing on the banks of an island stream. The thing actually had feet and barked like a dog when I caught it on the hook. When I asked if the fish were edible, the children standing on the bank laughed at my ignorance before they said no.

Every day was an exciting day with Miss Myma. We got up around six o'clock and drove the fifteen or more miles to James Island to get a cup of coffee. Miss Myma liked to ride, and I loved the invigorating smell of the Sea Island morning air. If we were going to the creek that day, we would gather our gear beforehand. If we were going "bog-
159 ging" for crabs, which was Miss Myma's preferred way to catch them, we would get our sticks and go to the creek after the tide had gone out.
123 Bogging for crabs is hard work; one even needs specific shoes for this venture. When the tide goes out, many crabs are left in the various
226 nooks and crannies of the creek bank and bed. The stick is used not only for support but to prod into holes to scare out the crabs. When one is found, it is provoked into clamping onto the stick and then pulled up and dropped into a large bucket. If the crab is ornery and refuses to clamp onto the stick, the stick is used to hold him down. He is picked up from the back and his two front claws are quickly clamped together;

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159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
•123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
226 out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
226 heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
133 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
538 Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable
538 and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke take little nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleeping times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never understand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways, dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
•123 gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538 she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written
159 literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
123 year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter,
757 who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

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chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me. Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

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159 afternoon, while buying a soda at Mr. Ted's store, that she had on a
832 mighty fine-looking dress and it was sho' hitting her in all the right places. She turned, gazed into his eyes just a split second longer than what was respectable, flipped a few ashes from her cigarette on his shiny black shoes, smiled ever so slightly, and walked away. He watched her as she moved out of his eyesight. Then he hitched up his pants, put both hands in his front pockets, and asked the Lord to give him strength.

159 Late one Saturday afternoon I walked up the lane past the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house to visit Ida Mae. She lived in a two-
123 room shanty with three of her five children. The two older girls had lived with her mother since they were born. There were no children yelling and screaming outside, however, so I thought Ida Mae was not home. I started to leave when she popped her head out of her bedroom and said, "Hi, Pat." I was lonely, so I was glad to find her in. I asked her why it was so quiet, and where the children were. She said she sent them down to her mother's house to spend the night. When I asked her why, she replied, "Ain't you business, but I de spect company soon, and when he de come, you go have fe leave." I said that was okay. We sat on the broken steps in front of her shanty and chatted about general things, children, school, work, people on the islands.

She asked about my husband and if he didn't get jealous with me running around down there. I said i didn't think so, that I had really never given him a reason to be jealous. She replied that men never needed a reason to be jealous, that they were jealous by nature and it was to a woman's advantage to keep them that way. She asked what I was doing on the islands every year, and what Africa had been like, and if the men loved big-butt women there as much as men did here. I told her that I was trying to reconstruct Africanisms, and yes, the African men loved big-butt women as much as Sea Island men did. In fact, I told her that my female friends in Nigeria had teased me because my rear end was not as round as theirs, and I had retaliated by saying that was true for me, but the Sea Island women still had behinds that would put theirs to shame. She laughed and said she was glad I told the bitches that.

She offered me a cigarette. I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't smoke. Then she offered me a shot of whiskey; again, I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't drink. Then she offered me a joint; I thanked her and said I didn't smoke pot either, and wondered where

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she had got it. She turned, studied me a moment, and said, "You ain't de drink, ain't de smoke cigarette, ain't de dulge in pot. What de hell you do for fun? You de Jehovah Witness or something?" I laughed and told her I liked to travel, write, and come down there to visit her. She shook her head and replied that I must lead a sad life if coming down there was what I called fun.

As we sat talking and gazing out at the dusk and incoming fog, she asked me if I remembered the time I had gone with her to work in the field tying tomatoes. We laughed and reflected on that day. She had told me that if I really wanted to go I had to get up around six o'clock, put on some long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and borrow one of Miss Myma's wide straw hats. I could hardly sleep that night thinking I would oversleep and miss the truck. Miss Myma woke me up, though, and cautioned me for the fifth time that it was too hot in the fields, that some people had had sunstrokes, and that I should stay there with her until Ida Mae came back in the evening. For the fifth time I said no, I wanted to go. When I arrived at Ida Mae's house dressed in my tomato-tying clothes, she grinned at me and asked if I had brought anything for lunch. I said no, so we walked down to Mr. Ted's store, and I bought some Vienna sausage and crackers. Then we stood by the highway until Dan Seabrooke came along in his truck and picked us up to drive us the ten or so miles to the tomato patch. Once we got there, we piled out and were each given strips of twine and told to take a row. I took one between Ida Mae and one of her friends because they felt that between the two of them, they could help me keep up.

Tying tomatoes is a monotonous, tiring, backbreaking job. Some of those rows were more than a mile long. A stick had been hammered into the ground to support each plant. We took the twine and tied the plant to the stick near the base, in the middle, and at the top. Each plant was about a foot from the next, and when we had tied one plant to its stick, we moved on to the next one, and the next one, and the next one, and the next one until we reached the end of the row. When we reached the end of one long row, we turned around and started back down another long row. It took a while for me to get the hang of what to do, and thus I found myself falling behind the others in the field. Ida Mae stopped tying her row and started tying my plants in front of me, so that when I got up to that point I could skip to where the rest of the people were. Around ten o'clock I was tying as fast as I could and sweating profusely. I did not think I could make it until noon and finish at least half a day, but Ida Mae told me if I could tie just until I reached

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159 the big Angel Oak down on the end it would be noon and I could rest.
123 That consoled me. She said that when our shadow was directly under our feet on the row we were tying it would be twelve o'clock. When that happened, true enough, the whistle blew and we stopped, walked back to the truck, took turns getting cool drinks of water with a dipper from the cooler in back of the truck, got our lunches, sat down, ate, and rested.

One o'clock came only too quickly, three came too slowly, and five o'clock quitting time not quickly enough. The temperature rose to more than 103 degrees, and there was nothing between the sun and my head but Miss Myma's straw hat. I will always be grateful to Ida Mae for her help that day. She tied her row and most of mine, but I could at least tell Miss Myma that I had made a day! I would treasure that day and that ten dollars as among my most demanding achievements.

159 As we sat and continued to wait for Ida Mae's company, I re-
123 minded her of her summertime addiction to card playing. When she did not catch a truck to go to the fields, she spent the day, from sunup
525 to sundown, with her card-playing buddies. They took turns buying a nipping bottle to help them get through the day. I met her when she came to play cards one day under the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house and Miss Myma took me out to meet her and her friends. I think I enjoyed these people more than any other group on the Sea Islands. When they played cards, they played for money, and for keeps. They invited me to play once; I accepted and lost twenty dollars my first game. After that, I just sat and listened. I learned that Ida Mae could outplay and outcurse any of the men. In addition, she could match them word for word playing the dozens. Once a card-playing friend asked her to scramble him some eggs for breakfast. She replied, "I ain't you wife." He said he knew that, but he still wanted some eggs. She answered, "I ain't you maid." He said he would pay her to cook them. She replied, "With what? I de win all you money." Then he said, "Well, I pay you with something else then." She answered, "You ain't got nothing else I de want." He said, "Well, you de come on and de go with me and you de see what I got." She burst into laughter and said, "What for I ben go with you, you ain't know what fe do with me if you de get me!"

159 Now we sat on in the dark. Eventually we saw the lights from a car
123 coming up the lane; the car stopped in front of the shanty, and a tall attractive man got out and, as was customary, handed her a half gallon of ice cream as a gift. Since I already knew him, and also knew that he

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159 was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down
[123] the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her
159 father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head
596 of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice. Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for
[538] spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at playing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115 *Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy* (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

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159 761 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr. Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

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## Present-Day Gullah

197 Since the early 1920s Gullah has been known to vary regionally; recent studies by Irma Cunningham, Patricia Nichols, Charles Joyner, Salikoko Mufwene, Ian Hancock, and me, conducted in different areas of the Sea Islands and the adjacent coast indicate that there are still distinct varieties.[8] Minor details such as consistent use of the pronoun *e*, which is applied to both sexes, and a distinctive fricative "fizzing" sound on words beginning with *w* would go unnoticed by casual observers. However, they permit the islanders to detect when one is from a different island, when one is a total outsider, and when one is trying to talk "proper," in the negative sense of the word. In fact, during my first few years on the islands, I learned that I should not [123] try to pass myself off as an islander by an attempt to imitate the Sea Island language. While I may have had the syntax right, I was never able to perfect the accent, and it is the stress and intonation that give one away. When I asked the islanders how they were able to detect such small differences, I was often told, "I ain't know how I de know, but I de know." And they did know.

197 The outside pressures now exerted on the Gullah-speaking com-
197 munities in the coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina have created the general conditions that David DeCamp describes for post-creole speech communities (i.e., communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with a standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and new educational programs and other infusions from the outside have broken down the formerly rigid social structure enough to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of Gullah speakers to modify their speech in the direction of standard English.[9] Given this sociolinguistic situation, the Sea Islands offer an ideal opportunity to investigate linguistic convergence and change.

197 Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify several facts about Gullah in order to distinguish it from the speech of other black Americans. First, whereas Gullah is a creole, inland black speech is defined as a dialect of English, that is, as a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. A dialect of any given language is similar to that language in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax; such differences as may exist often result from regional or social variations, and most dialectal variations present few

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

127 113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

122 113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

609 113

## Chapter 1

131 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

113 2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

[A. 1697]

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
[669] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of citizenship schools to other islands and the Charleston area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson de-
874 veloped the first program to train citizenship
641 school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segre-
563 gation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil rights groups turned their attention to voter regis-
[668] tration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[666] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done
114 in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
533 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
545 [Pix-B]

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Johns Island

114 area. Visiting the islands year after year since then, we are still concerned with the survival of its culture.

We did not come as traditional academic researchers. We came to work with a literacy and citizenship program developed by the Highlander Folk School to empower people. We knew this program would bring needed change to the islands. In a sense we had to create a role for ourselves which would both encourage that change and nurture those cultural roots. Guy worked during the winters between 1959 and 1961 using his music as part of the literacy classes. He drove Mrs. Septima Clark, the supervisor of the program, throughout the islands. He was introduced to the community by Mrs. Clark and by Esau Jenkins, a long-time fighter for progress and change, and was therefore accepted as a friend.

114 123 In 1963 we moved with our small son into the middle of the community around Moving Star Hall, the praise house and gathering place for many of the people Guy had met in the literacy program. During the next two years we gradually got to know our neighbors until finally they were sharing with us many of their real treasures: their warmth, generosity, candor, and humor, their wisdom, their songs and stories, the good times in their homes and fellowship in their social and religious gatherings. We recorded many hours of interview material, life experiences, religious expression—particularly several all-night watch meetings in Moving Star Hall, folktales and remedies, children's game songs. We produced two albums and published the first edition of this book. During this period we worked with Esau Jenkins and others to put on a series of sea island folk festivals for island residents and for visitors from the lowcountry area and elsewhere. We also arranged for a group of singers from Moving

(P. Xi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
•123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
346 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
503 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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During my field work in coastal South Carolina, many 122 people gave concrete help of different kinds. Through the 123 courtesy of William S. Young, Thaddeus Thompson, Edgar Caddell, and Peggy Walker, I was able to spend valuable time with the school children of rural Georgetown County. In the island community, Prince and Rebecca Washington introduced me to the community and spent hours of treasured conversation with me. My mother, Mildred Mitchell Causey, and her sister, Annie Laurie Bonnette, opened their homes to me whenever needed; I benefited in many unforeseen ways from their years of teaching in the public schools of the state. Another- 128 native of the Waccamaw region, historian and folklorist 127 Charles W. Joyner, was a source of crucial information and

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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CHAPTER 3

FIELD WORK PROCEDURES

3.0 Overview

121 Having been raised in the white community of an ad-
123 jacent county in South Carolina, I recognized early that establishing rapport with the black community in rural Georgetown County on the level conducive to good research would be one of the most difficult parts of the field work for the present study. Accordingly, I sought the advice of others who had done field work in rural South Carolina and in non-European communities in the southwest. Through J.
121 Herman Blake and his colleague, Triloki Pandey, of the University of California at Santa Cruz, I became aware of the concept of action anthropology, first developed in the work of anthropologists from the University of Chicago on the Fox Project in southern Iowa during the forties and fifties.
121 Since this concept has influenced greatly the procedures
128 followed in my field work on Gullah, I will discuss in section 3.1 the major issues addressed by action anthropology and their possible extension to action linguists. Section 3.2 will discuss the field worker's functions within the community, and section 3.3 will describe the collection of data.

121 Tax's earlier description of the motivations behind the project (1958) shows how the students moved increasingly away from preconceived notions about concrete actions which would help the Indians solve specific problems, to a process of allowing actions to evolve from discussions and activities in which they and the Indians participated together. Within such an ongoing process, their learning about community values and structures was deepened, and the general approach proved both to enhance the research and to help the community.

Since my goal in the South Carolina study was the description and analysis of selected grammatical features undergoing change in the speech of the community, rather than an ethnographic study, I found it necessary to make modifications of the notions developed within action anthropology. While these modifications did not alter the larger goal of helping the community in the process of learning about its language, they did entail less mutual discussion and action with the community than did the original Fox Project. Because my time was limited to no more than six months in the 121 123 area, I relied on intensive observation of community behavior patterns, discussions with school officials, and knowledge

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Chicago and interested in social problems facing recent immigrants to the U.S., Mead engaged in community work during his teaching years at Chicago--work which almost surely contributed to his ideas on the relation between Self and Society. His ideas on language, similar to those of Wittgenstein and valuable to sociolinguists, are only now becoming publicized from the lecture notes of his students (Miller, 1973).

121 of past community action projects to determine what my most
• 123 useful and acceptable function could be as a working partici-
pant in community life. It is my belief that my working in
a highly visible capacity at jobs that made sense in terms
of the particular community's values allowed me to observe
and participate in a great variety of speech events during
the short span of five months. It is true that speech
directed to me often reflected the particular role I had
assumed, but it is also the case that by having a valid
reason for being among the people at a variety of times and
places, I had the opportunity to observe a wide range of
language activity in which I was not an active participant.
I believe that these observations allow conclusions about the
range of linguistic variation in the community to be made
with a greater chance of validity than had I worked only
with informants in the traditional manner or with select
small groups in the manner of some recent sociolinguistic
121 investigations. It is my hope that a kind of action linguis-
tics might be stimulated by the approach outlined here, which
would add to the productive methods developed by socio-
linguists like Labov, Stewart, Gumperz, and Hymes by
fostering a more purposeful integration of the linguist into
the community in some functional sense. It may be that such
a community-based language experience will promote the kind
of applied linguistics which Ferguson has called for over
the years. (See Ferguson, 1975 for a summary of these

121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

123 872 Because the river island which was the focus of my study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible (126) was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

•123 872 especially when younger students spoke with the white teacher whose native dialect was a midwestern variety of American English, and differences in playground language and classroom language were also observed. Significant lack of understanding between teacher and pupil occurred on occasion. Efforts were made on both sides to remedy this lack of understanding, with children switching from Gullah syntax to more standard forms when asked to repeat an utterance and with the teacher giving additional directions to certain pupils known to have some difficulty in understanding her expectations. The teacher made no noticeable alteration in her language patterns, however. Whenever possible, other classrooms were visited and services appropriate to a teacher's aide were given when asked for. Conversations with the staff were helpful in learning of the difficulties which had been faced by beginning teachers who were unfamiliar with language patterns in the area, and in learning something of the attitudes toward language held by those staff members who were native to the county. The range of language used by the teachers themselves was also easily observed in informal groups having coffee or engaged in playground duties. Attendance at parent-teacher meetings gave limited contact with some parents in a school setting and with several school board members and community leaders.

123 As I got to know individual children, I made efforts to extend my contact with them beyond the school framework.

123 Taking my cue from the expressed desires and interests of the children themselves, I accepted requests to go fishing and learned from the children how to do it. These expeditions led to stops at my living quarters for supplies, and other children subsequently requested visits to my place. Several such visits by small groups of children provided invaluable insights into the range of language at their command. Conversations in a moving automobile were especially revealing about the fluency of the very youngest children, who spoke little in the classroom situation. Visits to some of the children's homes were a natural follow-up. Other activities outside the classroom included a field trip to the local steel mill in town with four children from a social studies class, attendance at church services, prolonged stops at the local grocery store and launderette, and shopping trips to town on Saturdays where I frequently encountered students and their parents.

The initial visits to the river island were made in the company of children I had become acquainted with in the school situation, and included a tour of the landmarks they considered of potential interest to me: a graveyard, the church, the abandoned elementary school, the open space by the school where they played ball. In their home environment I was able to observe interaction between situation and language, contact between children of different ages and the status relationships which prevailed, and some of the

•123 distinctive ways in which language was used in informal situations outside the school environment. On an early visit, an older child was observed to admonish a younger sibling not to talk that "country talk," in obvious concern that an outsider was present. Later visits included, whenever possible, an automobile ride from school to the boat landing for five or six children, who engaged in animated conversation with each other and largely ignored the presence of the driver. A more official introduction to the island community came at a church service on the island about two months after I had begun work in the mainland school. By the time I was invited to attend church on the "preaching" Sunday, I had become well enough acquainted with some island residents and past history to suggest to the head deacon that I might teach a volunteer writing class one night a week in the abandoned schoolhouse. Originally, I had entertained the possibility of teaching basic literacy classes, but interviews with older residents had changed my notions of the educational level and aspirations of the islanders. On the basis of what I had learned from daily work in the school and from visits to the island, I assumed correctly that a college-preparatory class would be welcomed by young people on the island. When I outlined my proposal for the congregation at the close of the church service to which I had been invited to present it, more than a dozen young people and some of their parents signed up for the class. Meeting this class weekly for the remainder of

•123 my stay brought contacts with an age group which ranged from junior high school students to young adults in their thirties. More importantly, it gave me a reason for being on the island which was accepted by the community, and which brought many hours of cherished conversation in homes as I shared meals and stayed overnight when I taught. It also gave me unexpected data on sex and age differences in use of the written code, as I taught a modified version of the freshman composition class I had taught for several years at junior colleges in California.

3.3 Collection of Data

126
124 Recording sessions on the river island were conducted in individual homes, using a Sony cassette recorder, model TC-92. Two initial recordings were made of older men describing the rice-planting process, using a hand-held microphone. The resulting data were clearly formal register and have been treated as such in the analyses. Subsequent recordings were made using a small clip-on microphone, Sony ECM-16, and produced more natural conversation. Topics ranged from descriptions of living conditions and activities on the island before the coming of electricity and motorized boat transportation, to discussions with teen-agers of whether or not they might remain on the island as adults. The common thread which ran through all the recorded conversations was the distinctive island life. While no formal

126 questionnaire was used, efforts were made to establish
124 whether or not the person had lived off the island for any considerable length of time, since it became apparent that mobility was a factor influencing language change. The approximate age of the speaker was usually revealed in the course of the conversation. From a total of sixteen recorded adult conversations on the river island, twelve have been selected for the comparative analysis of language change and social factors in the final chapter. These twelve were chosen to include two men and two women from three natural age groups, determined from my observations of interaction in the community. Older adults over sixty-five no longer worked outside the home regularly and remained on the island most of the time. Middle age adults, who had growing families, commuted off the island daily to jobs on the mainland. Young adults, most of whom were not yet married, engaged in frequent school and social activities with each other. All
[123] recordings used in the analyses include the researcher as participant, as well as whatever family members happened to be present. All were made with the knowledge and consent of the principal speakers.

Originally, the project had been conceived of as including a comparative analysis of individual speakers' language use with an outsider and with an in-group member.
[123] It was not possible to record natural conversations between island residents without the participation of an outsider,

126 but such a range of language use would be highly desirable
124 for inclusion in any comprehensive analysis of language
(123) change.[2] Observations of such conversations were made, and
some anecdotal information will be included as a supplement
to the recorded data. The one recording made without the
114 researcher as a participant is an example of highly formal
126 register; the circumstances of this recording were that an
elementary school child took home a recorder at my request
and asked her grandmother to record memories of her youth on
the island. In effect, the recorder itself acted as a participant, and was the recipient of a carefully rehearsed
speech.

In addition to recordings of conversations with
126 island residents, conversations with selected mainland resi-
124 dents were also recorded. From observations made of language
used by school children and by some mainland residents encountered at various community activities, it had become
apparent that the lower socio-economic group on the mainland
retained more creole features in their speech than did island
residents. For comparative purposes, therefore, four conversations made with speakers from this sub-group of this black

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[2]Denison (1969, 1971) provides a description of the range of language used by a particular community, in his study of a plurilingual community in the Carnian Alps. His analysis was based on observations made during extended vacations in the community, not recorded electronically, and serves as a model for the allocation of language resources which a given community might show.

126 population in rural Georgetown County are included in the
124 analyses of linguistic variables and in the comparison of social factors influencing linguistic change. These four recordings include two men and two women in the oldest age group.

Some recordings were also made of a wide range of children in the school setting. Most of these are relatively short stories told by the children or ritual insults exchanged by them at the very beginning or end of a recording session. Because the environmental setting and the kind of speech event differed from that of the adult recordings, these language samples cannot be directly compared with those obtained for adults. A summary of their characteristics will be included in the discussion of the sex, age, and mobility factors which affect language choices. All island children in grades three through six were recorded telling an anecdote or ghost story of their choice; the grammatical features used in these stories can be usefully compared from child to
126 child. These classroom recordings were made as a natural part of my activities as a teacher's aide. Since part of my
[123] classroom duties had entailed helping a small group of non-readers in sessions in which we had recorded the children's own stories for use in reading, working with small groups of children using the tape recorder was an ordinary classroom activity. The typed versions of stories told by the children were sometimes read to the class by the students themselves,

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

121 197 The present chapter deals with the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the [123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult [124] speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic 128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

124 had slit openings in their middle. Each box was throughly shaken after the slips were dropped into them. Before the first slip was drawn and after each subsequent draw the box was shaken. The drawing method was to blindly reach into the box and pick up one single slip of paper. This procedure was repeated ten times for each box. After ten slips had been drawn, the numbers on each slip was matched with the number and corresponding family names on the list for that island. When these ten families had been identified and noted, the slips were returned to the box from which they had been drawn. This overall procedure was repeated for each of the five boxes. The ordering of the boxes and consequently the drawing order corresponded with distance from the mainland. In this scheme, the James Island box was first and the Edisto Island draw was last.

The second task under this set was to authenticate the family compositions of the selected family units. Using the available entries, the researcher showed up at the address or family gaps of the tentatively selected units. At this point the researcher explained his purposes, which [123] was always prefaced by a detailed description of the researcher's family linkage. Then, at what the researcher deemed an appropriate point in the discussion, inquires were made about the composition of the family units. As a result of these inquiries only those units which met the

124 deleted in total. The first reducing action was taken be-
125 cause these questions elicited an extremely wide range of responses and was therefore judged as irrelevant and tangential to the experience of the respondents. The second deletion was taken because the complete instrument was too time consuming and tedious to complete.

124 The second major modification was in the method of administration. It quickly became evident that insisting on the absolute isolation of respondents was a hindrance to and heighten the inhibitions of the interviewees. The adopted procedure was to insist on interviewee privacy only to the extents to which privacy was feasible. See Appen-
[125] dix A for study instrument and subject categorization form. A

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

• 123 The presence of the researcher in the Family Gap ob-
124 viously disturbed the family activities. To counteract this effect the researcher made pre- or non-interviewing visits to each Gap before actual interviews were begun. The purpose of the pre[illegible] were to acquaint the researcher with the fami[illegible]ers (their patterns) and as importantly to have the family get adjusted to the researcher. These visits lasted as long as was necessary for this adjustment to take place. These visits lasting from "day clean" until late in the evening hours provided the

A. [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

123 researcher ample opportunity to explain the nature of the
124 research effort and to alleviate any concerns which were voiced. When the researcher was satisfied that these objectives had been met, the actual interviews were begun.

When all members of a unit had been interviewed, this procedure was repeated at the next Family Gap. When all interviews were completed on one island, the researched moved on to the next island repeating the same procedures until the interview schedule was completed.

INTERVIEW METHOD

The participation observation interview was used as the data collection method. A structured interview util-
125 izing thirteen questions was administered. Each interview was conducted from a structured format. After the respondent had designated where the interview was to be held, the actual procedure was to engage the respondent in conversa ion about the family. The focus of the conversations were initially directed at general aspects of the family and as the discussion continued the researched directed the content of the conversation by directly asking each question on the instrument. Respondents were allowed to answer questions in as much detail as they wanted. The researcher followed each complete response with the question "does dat about cover it?" If the respondent said yes, the researcher asked the next question. If the response was no, the

123 researcher asked "what else need be said?" and respondents
124 were allowed to complete their answers before the next question was asked.

RECORDING RESPONSE

124 A structured response sheet was used to record re-
126 sponses. This sheet contained a listing of each question and the possible responses. When a response was one of the listed responses, the researcher merely checked that response. When responses were offered for which no previous categories existed, these responses were entered under the category "other" for that question.

At the end of each interviewing day the researcher added those responses in the other category to the list of possible responses. The final activity of the day was to tabulate the responses.

RESPONSE MEASUREMENT

124 Responses for question Number 3 were scaled on a five
125 point design. Twelve of the questions had pre-established response categories. Each question was followed by a list of from three to eight separate response categories. "Other" was the last response category of each question. Responses which did not fit into existing categories made up the other categorical responses (see questionnaire, Appendix A). A

A, [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

124 Consequently, this procedure was relaxed to some degree during the actual interviews.

•123 Had not the researcher been a native of the Sea Islands this research effort would have been immensely more difficult. In part this difficulty could be attributable to the 114 workings of other researchers in this area. In particular, many of the islanders voiced deep concern over the book written by Carawan Ain't we Got a Right to the Tree of Life. These islanders felt this work was by no means an accurate representation of their life style or beliefs. But because 123 of the native heritage of the researcher many families agreed to participate in hopes of the writer being more able to accurately present the ethos of the Sea Island people.

128 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inference was the method of data analysis. The chi-square and the Fisher Exact Test were used to compute significance at either the .05, .01 or .001 level. The following analysis of relationship between the variables island, generation, and sex were conducted:

I Island (1,2,3,4,5) by questions one thru thirteen.

II Generation (1,2,3) by questions one thru thirteen.

III Sex (1,2) by questions one thru thirteen.

IV Island by generation by questions one thru thirteen.

7: Jackson L . (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## APPENDIX

## METHODOLOGY

126 The recordings reflect a variety of speech genres and styles. Samples were recorded around firesites, in vegetable fields, in 'juke' joints, on the backs of trucks, in private homes and at crab hunts. The social stratification of speakers ranges from a prosperous businessman and landowner to a semi-recluse. The samples reflect formal religious oratory, reminiscences, involved story-telling (called 'lies' by the islanders) and heated verbal debates, 'dozen style'.

•123 I was introduced to the Wadmalaw community by natives who were held in high esteem, and was welcomed to live among them and become involved with their daily work and play activities. On my third and last visit, I felt that I had been accepted not as a member to the community (to earn this kind of acceptance one must be born and raised on the island) but as a regularly visiting relative of SOME member of the community. The islanders were cooperative and gave me invaluable assistance in locating consultants who were elderly, long-term natives of the island with little formal education, and who could speak the purest form of Gullah. These requirements were not always reliable indices for descerning the true Creole

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



123 speaker. Many school-age children between the ages of 10
124 and 16 with formal education used Creole features as frequently as many of the elderly consultants.

124 The following preliminaries were made in preparation
125 for the study:

1. A list of features known to be Creole to keep me alert to Creole construction types.
2. An awareness of conversation topics most likely to have a high probability of eliciting natural responses.
3. A word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants.

124 The word list was not included until my third and
final visit to Wadmalaw Island. The list is long and the
126 elicitation is painfully slow and exacting. I soon learned that some of the words on the list were unfamiliar to the consultants, but I was given their equivalent word replacements. For example, Gullah speakers do not often say *bit*, *air*, *coffin*, or *cot*. Instead they use *bite*, *breeze*, *pinto* and *setee*, respectively. Each consultant who aided with the phonology survey was one that I had known and spent a substantial amount of time with over the three year period. Those who were able to read pronounced the words into my tape recorder and I transcribed them on the spot. Others who were unable to read because of failing eyesight or other factors were asked to pronounce the words using different techniques. For example, I often asked questions such as, 'What do you wear on your feet when you go

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)

> Narrow road is Heaven road
> Believer I know
> With here and there a traveller
> Believer I know
> The broad road is Hell road
> Believer I know
> Thousand walk together there
> Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
• 123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that ' said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

[8] In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 10.
[9] Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



123 126 533 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that: making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 533 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,[A]) to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.[B]) Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 177 178 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful attitude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

177 178

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A, [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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535 Island, called by the incongruous railroad term "Ball the Jack."[15] A few years
171 ago I saw it demonstrated by an old resident of Eleuthera, in the Bahamas, and its portrayal in the film *Sanders of the River*—for which "background shots" were made in villages along the Congo—indicates the region from which it originally came.

These dances, and such plantation activities as beating and fanning rice in the
• 123 traditional African manner, provide effective material for those in the family group who are moving-picture addicts. It is also possible that such survivals persist on our plantations as are not to be found elsewhere in America this side of Haiti or Dutch Guiana; but do not be discouraged if they do not come when you call. It took years for me to see the ring-shout and the Buzzard Lope, and to see and hear the ring-play dances and songs, and the songs in an African dialect. It is a curious fact that the Negro rarely volunteers information—on the sound principle, perhaps, that if you tell nothing you have nothing to regret; and this is my reason for giving so many identifying titles and lines. If you know what to ask for, the work is half done.

000 For the plantation owner who cares to take the trouble, a barbecue provides the quickest route to results. If the procedure is not already known, an old resident will tell how one should be conducted, and who is competent to do the work. Both whites and blacks remember with nostalgic regret the days when a barbecue celebrated the end of the plantation harvest. For the sake of the picture, if dancing takes place after the feast instead of before, a generous fat-wood fire should be built as close to a spreading live oak as is safe, and a few prizes of old-fashioned white aprons, gilt hoop earrings, gay handkerchiefs for the heads of the women, and red bandanas for the necks of the men should be supplied. A temporary platform of broad boards laid—on two-by-fours or on any firm foundation—under the oak tree will repay the extra trouble. If the plantation is not too near a city, there is likely to be such dancing and entertainment as would make a Broadway producer green with envy. An occasion like this brings out the best—also the worst—in the way of talent, and gives an opportunity to evaluate what is to be found at the back door.

Old songs like "O de Robe" and "Norah Hist the Windah" are suitable for a restful evening; but let it end with shouting, as was customary at the old-time prayer meetings, and the whole atmosphere will change. There will be an inner

[15] *I am told that the action employed in "Snake Hip" is similar to that used in "Ball the Jack."*

91 Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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CHAPTER TWO

## *African Survivals on the Coast of Georgia*

123

There are survivals of African songs on the coast of Georgia. But let no outsider imagine they can be heard for the asking. From experience I know this to be true. It took me three winters on St. Simon's to hear a single slave song, three times as many winters to see the religious dance called the ring-shout, still more winters to unearth the Buzzard Lope and similar solo dances, and the game songs known as ring-play. It may be only a coincidence, but the "funny songs" with African words, translated by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, have been the last to be found. They were discovered about the time Negro educators began to teach their pupils that the term African was not synonymous with barbarism, and that Africa had a culture of its own.

181

The secretiveness of the Negro is, I believe, the fundamental reason for our ignorance of the race and its background, and this trait is in itself probably an African survival. Melville J. Herskovits bears out such a conclusion when he quotes a Dutch Guiana Bush Negro as saying: "Long ago our ancestors taught us that it is unwise for a man to tell anyone more than half of what he knows about anything." [1] It is amusing to question Southerners as to the number of times they remember hearing Negroes volunteer information. Not one so far has recalled an instance in which something has been told that was not common knowledge.

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This inborn reticence, coupled with the fact that natives of Africa remember little about their forebears farther back than their grandparents,[2] is undoubtedly responsible for the race's lack of a past in either the Old World or the New. It is possible, however, that there may be a cause for their apparent forgetfulness of which the white man is unaware. On Sapelo I got the distinct impression from two descendants of Old Bilali, the famous Mohammedan slave, that the dead were dead,

[1] Handbook of Social Psychology.
[2] Mentioned by Clement Egerton in African Majesty.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
• 123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
181 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing some-
177 thing that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
(123) indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
181 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
177 by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
79 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[777] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14)[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
787 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my
763 empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

535
(123)

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

(175)
(529)

[2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 786 152 159 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of religious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 159 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 786 787 159 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said, "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

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123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull' him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

786 825 159

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay where she was until her ardor cooled:

123

(539)

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bar!
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bar!
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bar!
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bar!
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bar!

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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

123 796 [346] [352] Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

796 786

53

See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

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764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[145] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
764 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers,
171 there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination. but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died. his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my husband died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me
[123] if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

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## INTRODUCTION

121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is (124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, 754 visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many (759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the (777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as 121 his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
775 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, c] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69c] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

• 124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[777] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

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# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the
461 river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb)A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

•124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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•124 114 When we arrived, it was just getting dark. Black masses of trees were outlined against the sky. To the south a shining river curved into shadows. A little wind blowing up from the marsh tasted of salt.

The party was in full swing. Small groups clustered about the open fire, chatting amiably and tending the juicy pork which was slowly roasting on a grill. The light of the fire lit up the shiny black faces and touched here and there on a bright blouse or turban.

115 Uncle Jack, tall, bony-framed and lanky, had worn his usual workaday clothes to the party. His kindly, near-sighted eyes shone with excitement. Uncle Robert, small and spry, had dressed up in honor of the occasion. He was conspicuously proud of his derby hat, neatly brushed and [291] cleaned. It was about two sizes too large and came down to Uncle Robert's ears at the sides and to his eyebrows in front, but, almost new, it gave the old man a certain air of assurance and seemed to make him forget that his brown suit was faded and well worn.

When the opening merriment had somewhat subsided, the crackling of pork fat and the smell of hot yams drew the party around the fire where Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert were exchanging reminiscences of old times. For the most part the others listened, occasionally interjecting a sentence or two.

We asked how long the old men had lived on the island and Uncle Jack answered, "All muh life I lib right yuh on Wilmington Ilun. Bawn yuh an nebuh want tuh lib no place else. I got ebryting I want right yuh."

Uncle Robert, who was eighty-one, about ten years older than Uncle Jack, said that he had come to the island from Clinch County just before the War between the States.

The long journey undertaken so many years ago had made a vivid impression on him. With a far-away expression in his eyes, the old man told us about that trip.

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

(361) We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in (351) and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an (567) I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

•124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us (534) could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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Georgia

## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
(493) (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
(412) sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
• (124) mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
(123) head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilur.,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 row wooden gate opened into a field where a winding path led to the small cabin of Julia Grovernor,* called Juno by the island Negroes. Julia, very black, tall and gaunt, was slightly hostile and suspicious and disinclined to talk. Even [123] the pipe tobacco, potent in most cases, she indifferently dropped.

"No'm, I ain know nuttn. Ise feeble-minded. I bin weak in head sence I small chile. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout witches. I ain know nuttn bout root doctuhs. No'm, I ain nebuh heah uh cunjuh. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout spells. No'm, I ain kin tuh Katie Brown."

115 This refusal to answer except in the negative seemed to continue indefinitely. Finally, however, after innumerable • 124 slow, quiet, good-humored questions that showed no resentment at her hostility, she became friendly in a reserved and superior way. It was soon evident that this sullen, reticent woman, though hostile to outside invasion, was not feeble-minded, but on the contrary sharp-witted, with a dry sense of humor.

829 "Muh gran, she Hannah. Uncle Calina muh gran too; dey bote Ibos. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran Hannah. She marry Calina an hab twenny-one chillun. Yes'm, she tell us how she brung yuh.

829 "Hannah, she wid huh ahnt who wuz diggin peanuts in duh fiel, wid uh baby strop on uh back. Out uh duh brush 567 two wite mens come an spit in huh ahnt eye. She blinded an wen she wipe uh eye, duh wite mens done loose duh baby frum huh back, an took Hannah too. Dey led um intuh duh woods, weah deah wuz udduh chillun dey done ketched an tie up in sacks. Duh baby an Hannah wuz tie up in sacks lak duh udduhs an Hannah nebuh saw huh ahnt agen an nebuh saw duh baby agen. Wen she wuz let out uh duh sack, she wuz on boat an nebuh saw Africa agen."

* *Julia Grovernor, Sapelo Island. Deceased winter, 1938.*

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Georgia

# *St. Simons Island*

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been forgotten, we had little hope of good field work here. •124

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a [351] grape arbor and spreading live oaks. [296]

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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123 People in general are often insecure about their particular varieties of speech, and collecting spontaneous speech data can be a problem for anyone conducting a linguistic survey. It is even more of a problem on the Sea Islands because the native speakers of Gullah can and do adjust [195] their speech to produce the closest possible approximations of standard English when they are addressing strangers. To eliminate pressure on the speakers to avoid the creole speech (and to help validate my presence), I explained that one of my objectives for being on the islands was to learn as much as possible about folk medicine "roots," folktales, "lies," and "the old-time talk." I explained, for example, that my grandmother had taught me to identify and collect herbs or roots which were helpful in alleviating certain ailments or even in effecting certain cures. These topics generated much interest and humor; consequently, I was able to assemble a wide store of knowledge concerning medicinal cures, complete with folktales, as well as to collect several varieties of speech data.

123 Something I learned by sitting through one market day in Charleston illustrates a final point. As I observed an islander selling tomatoes, I 437 realized that she felt much more satisfaction when she sold her goods to a person with whom she had haggled assiduously over the price than when she sold the same amount for a higher price to a well-intentioned but clearly patronizing customer. She had been robbed of the satisfaction of arriving at an "agreed" price. Feelings about the inequality of human beings had been transmitted along with the unequal prices of the tomatoes.

123 Achieving and maintaining equality in relationships is crucial when striving to establish rapport with informants. Kenneth Goldstein cites a •124 statement to this effect made by Alan Lomax in 1950 during a symposium on data collecting at the Mid-century International Folklore Conference held at Indiana University:

> People say to me that they would like to help me along with my work, that I look as if I need help. And I tell them that I am taking up their time and that I would like to make it up to them. There was never any question of dignity being involved; none of us in our situation was more dignified than anyone else. If the informant liked to drink, I drank, and if he liked to acquire a salary, I haggled with him very hard and very seriously, but we fought over it as equals.[6]

[p. xxiv is blank]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



123 arriving at New Jerusalem African Methodist Episcopal Church. I attended church service because one must go to church to see the greatest gathering of people, and one must have the minister's sanction for one's work if one is to gain cooperation during the research. I was introduced to the congregation, and after the service the islanders were warm and hospitable, as is the custom on the church ground and as is common practice in many southern communities. But once we left the grounds, most members of the community became very conservative and even hostile concerning the mechanics of their culture. Their reactions to me followed a specific pattern. First they asked, Whose daughter are you? Because I was not the daughter of anyone on the island, the next question was, Who are your people here? As I had no relatives on that island or any island, the next question was, Whom did I know, or whom was I visiting? When they learned that I neither knew nor was visiting anyone, [124] most interviews ended on the spot—even though most people had promised at church to offer their assistance.

Quite by coincidence, I gave an elderly lady a ride to Charleston. As I drove along the winding roads, she told me that she lived alone, loved to crab and fish, and took a "nip" for her arthritis every now and then. She had lived in the Wadmalaw community all her life and had a host of relatives and friends on neighboring islands up and down the Carolina/Georgia coast. She knew the traditions; later, she would be instrumental in helping me to learn them. Because this lady was socially active and was held in high esteem, she was ultimately able to provide me with acceptable answers to the questions Sea Islanders ask of all new faces. I became Miss Myma's "granddaughter" who lived away and came to visit every summer.[1] (My greatest accomplishment would be finally getting her to leave Wadmalaw and come to Michigan to visit me.)

123 609 Having a person well known and well respected to provide a lineage helped in my approaches to the community. But since most people born on any given island know each other, I soon realized that I had the status of "outsider," and no outsiders, black or white, are welcomed warmly into Sea Island activities or viewed without suspicion until they have spent considerable time among the people, performing daily tasks and becoming involved in daily living activities. The people have long been ridiculed for their speech, life-style, and mannerisms. In addition, they are very much aware that their culture has been a topic of interest to folklorists, linguists, historians, and others since the

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# Appendix 1

# An Interview: Catching Fish

226 17 The ancient fishing methods explained in this interview are reminiscent of those found in Nigeria and other African countries near large bodies of water. I actually observed the drumming and spearing technique among the Igbo and Ibebio of northern Nigeria. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake also write of this continuing fishing practice on the Sea Islands.[1]

[115] The informant was a retired tradesman and a very important member in the church community. He said that he learned these practices from his father, and his father had learned them from the "old people" before him.

The interview has been edited slightly for clarity.

Mr. Daniel Dent
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
1983

226 •124 INFORMANT: To catch mullet fish, we goes in the river. Everything still. The water still. Make a few throw with the cast net, and you haven't catch anything. So you get up on the side of boat and you beat on side with you oars, or paddle. And you just keep beating—[you] call em dolphin, we call em horsemen—then beat until the porpoise come around. After the porpoise come around, then the mullet fish will come to the shallow water. [Then] you cast for catch em. You don't catch much fish without the horseman. The porpoise have to be around. The only way to get the porpoise, man—[you] don't see them—you beat some, on the side of the boat, and they'll hear you miles for miles under the water.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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226 INTERVIEWER: How does the sound go?

•124 INFORMANT: (Tapping out a steady beat on his chair) You can't hear the sound.

LISTENER: You can't get the right sound. Under water de different sound.

INFORMANT: (Taps again) Something like that. (Taps again) Here's the beat. This the way it sound. But a little bit lighter because e not on the water. You on the boat with a paddle. So that the way you get your fish when you fishes in deep water. You call the dolphin to the shore by paddle beating on the boat. So many time I done that for a living—until I can't number em.

INTERVIEWER: You called the dolphin three things?

INFORMANT: I call em a horseman or a porpoise. The way I learn, I learn from the old people.

INTERVIEWER: You call him a horseman?

INFORMANT: Uh hum. In fact, e *is* a horseman for a workman. See? You understand what I'm talk about now?

INTERVIEWER: A horseman?

INFORMANT: A horseman, yeah. Someting that most people call [a thing with] four feet. But the man [part] is a man. All right?

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any other fishing methods?

INFORMANT: I knows gig [gill] net [smoke fishing]. The way I use to, when I come up [was growing up], I was too poor to buy a lantern. So we just [went] out [in the] winter time, and those who had tires on they car, [if the tires were] no good, we use that for a light. And we goes in river. Sometimes the wind blows, e blind you with the smoke. But we had manage to catch many bushel of trouts and many bushel of fish with four-prong or three-prong gig. Caught many bushel fish that way. Just use a little tar for light by night, and we gelds [stick] fish in the water.

LISTENER: Catch em by stick em with that fork.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any other ways?

INFORMANT: Yeah, I had did this back in Hoover time when tings was bad. We didn't had, couldn't get a cast hook the way I want em. I had takes someting we call hog wire and put em cross the river. When the tide comes up, you goes and cut muckle mish [bush] and drop em behind the wire to hold the fish on that side when e [the tide] goes down because we didn't had a gill net to put over

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226 •124 INTERVIEWER: How does the sound go?

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LISTENER: You can't get the right sound. Under water de different sound.

INFORMANT: (Taps again) Something like that. (Taps again) Here's the beat. This the way it sound. But a little bit lighter because e not on the water. You on the boat with a paddle. So that the way you get your fish when you fishes in deep water. You call the dolphin to the shore by paddle beating on the boat. So many time I done that for a living—until I can't number em.

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 155]

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226
•124

river. Time was for tight, we couldn't buy a gill net. So what I be do, take hog wire and put em across em when tide low. When the tide get high, we take the bush and put em in the front of the wire. When the water start for go back, the fish can't get through, de stop on that side.

123 my stay brought contacts with an age group which ranged from junior high school students to young adults in their thirties. More importantly, it gave me a reason for being on the island which was accepted by the community, and which brought many hours of cherished conversation in homes as I shared meals and stayed overnight when I taught. It also gave me unexpected data on sex and age differences in use of the written code, as I taught a modified version of the freshman composition class I had taught for several years at junior colleges in California.

3.3 Collection of Data

126 Recording sessions on the river island were conducted
• 124 in individual homes, using a Sony cassette recorder, model TC-92. Two initial recordings were made of older men describing the rice-planting process, using a hand-held microphone. The resulting data were clearly formal register and have been treated as such in the analyses. Subsequent recordings were made using a small clip-on microphone, Sony ECM-16, and produced more natural conversation. Topics ranged from descriptions of living conditions and activities on the island before the coming of electricity and motorized boat transportation, to discussions with teen-agers of whether or not they might remain on the island as adults. The common thread which ran through all the recorded conversations was the distinctive island life. While no formal

126 questionnaire was used, efforts were made to establish
•124 whether or not the person had lived off the island for any
considerable length of time, since it became apparent that
mobility was a factor influencing language change. The approximate age of the speaker was usually revealed in the
course of the conversation. From a total of sixteen recorded
adult conversations on the river island, twelve have been
selected for the comparative analysis of language change and
social factors in the final chapter. These twelve were
chosen to include two men and two women from three natural
age groups, determined from my observations of interaction
in the community. Older adults over sixty-five no longer
worked outside the home regularly and remained on the island
most of the time. Middle age adults, who had growing families,
commuted off the island daily to jobs on the mainland. Young
adults, most of whom were not yet married, engaged in frequent school and social activities with each other. All
[123] recordings used in the analyses include the researcher as
participant, as well as whatever family members happened to
be present. All were made with the knowledge and consent of
the principal speakers.

Originally, the project had been conceived of as
including a comparative analysis of individual speakers'
language use with an outsider and with an in-group member.
[123] It was not possible to record natural conversations between
island residents without the participation of an outsider,

126 but such a range of language use would be highly desirable
124 for inclusion in any comprehensive analysis of language
123 change.[2] Observations of such conversations were made, and some anecdotal information will be included as a supplement to the recorded data. The one recording made without the
114 researcher as a participant is an example of highly formal
126 register; the circumstances of this recording were that an elementary school child took home a recorder at my request and asked her grandmother to record memories of her youth on the island. In effect, the recorder itself acted as a participant, and was the recipient of a carefully rehearsed speech.

In addition to recordings of conversations with
126 island residents, conversations with selected mainland resi-
124 dents were also recorded. From observations made of language used by school children and by some mainland residents encountered at various community activities, it had become apparent that the lower socio-economic group on the mainland retained more creole features in their speech than did island residents. For comparative purposes, therefore, four conversations made with speakers from this sub-group of this black

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[2]Denison (1969, 1971) provides a description of the range of language used by a particular community, in his study of a plurilingual community in the Carnian Alps. His analysis was based on observations made during extended vacations in the community, not recorded electronically, and serves as a model for the allocation of language resources which a given community might show.

126 population in rural Georgetown County are included in the
•124 analyses of linguistic variables and in the comparison of social factors influencing linguistic change. These four recordings include two men and two women in the oldest age group.

Some recordings were also made of a wide range of children in the school setting. Most of these are relatively short stories told by the children or ritual insults exchanged by them at the very beginning or end of a recording session. Because the environmental setting and the kind of speech event differed from that of the adult recordings, these language samples cannot be directly compared with those obtained for adults. A summary of their characteristics will be included in the discussion of the sex, age, and mobility factors which affect language choices. All island children in grades three through six were recorded telling an anecdote or ghost story of their choice; the grammatical features used in these stories can be usefully compared from child to
126 child. These classroom recordings were made as a natural part of my activities as a teacher's aide. Since part of my
[123] classroom duties had entailed helping a small group of non-readers in sessions in which we had recorded the children's own stories for use in reading, working with small groups of children using the tape recorder was an ordinary classroom activity. The typed versions of stories told by the children were sometimes read to the class by the students themselves,

125 attitudes and the children's school performance were made available to school officials in a final report to the Georgetown County Board of Education at the conclusion of my field work. The recording sessions with children utilized the same kinds of recording equipment described above, with the small clip-on microphone again proving most successful. Most sessions were conducted in a semi-private section of the school auditorium, with at least two and no more than five children present for each recording.

125
126

124 All of the data used for the present study come from connected free discourse, recorded in environments familiar to the speakers and using topics of interest to the participants. The experiences of seeing the sun rise through the trees that bordered the river island, feeling the bitter cold of an early morning boat ride across the water, shaking out the sand after a walk through the deeply rutted roads, watching the scrub oaks turn a brilliant red in fall, a dull brown in winter--these experiences which leave traces inside people were as important to an analysis of the language used in this community of coastal South Carolina as were the tracings on magnetic tape made of our conversations. These shared experiences with the people made possible the hours of language activity between us.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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South Carolina
Georgetown

# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

121 The present chapter deals with the social factors of
197 sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the
[123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult
[124] speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic
128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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PROCEDURES

121 The initial task was to compile listings of the Black
124 families on each island. This task was accomplished by interviewing residents of each island. The postal workers among those interviewed were knowledgeable of the names and addresses of the islands' Black families. Black school teachers who live and work on the islands were helpful in estimating the number and ages of children in the families. Elder Black islanders were helpful and very adept at outlining the kinship trees and in detailing the composition of the families. When a list for each island containing the names of at least twenty families had been compiled, the first task was consid red complete. Based upon the available information on family composition, only families which met the study's definition of a family unit were included on the five lists.

124 The second task was to authenticate the composition of the listed families and then to elicit the participation of family units meeting the study definition. Each family named on the lists was coded with randomly assigned three digit numbers. Then slips of paper containing these three digit numbers were produced for each listed family. By island of residence, these numbered slips were dropped into one of five shoe boxes. Each shoe box was labelled to represent one island. All the boxes had covers. The covers

•124 had slit openings in their middle. Each box was throughly shaken after the slips were dropped into them. Before the first slip was drawn and after each subsequent draw the box was shaken. The drawing method was to blindly reach into the box and pick up one single slip of paper. This procedure was repeated ten times for each box. After ten slips had been drawn, the numbers on each slip was matched with the number and corresponding family names on the list for that island. When these ten families had been identified and noted, the slips were returned to the box from which they had been drawn. This overall procedure was repeated for each of the five boxes. The ordering of the boxes and consequently the drawing order corresponded with distance from the mainland. In this scheme, the James Island box was first and the Edisto Island draw was last.

The second task under this set was to authenticate the family compositions of the selected family units. Using the available entries, the researcher showed up at the address or family gaps of the tentatively selected units. At this point the researcher explained his purposes, which [123] was always prefaced by a detailed description of the researcher's family linkage. Then, at what the researcher deemed an appropriate point in the discussion, inquires were made about the composition of the family units. As a result of these inquiries only those units which met the

124 study's unit definition were asked to participate and with their elders' consent, scheduled for later interviews. Those families whose unit structures were outside the study's definition were engaged in extended general conversation during this initial contact, but were not scheduled for later interviews.

TABLE 1

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

| Number of Unit Interviews | Island Unit Resided on |
|---|---|
| | Two trial unit administrations on Johns Island |
| 4 | Four family units on James Island |
| 2 | Two family units on Johns Island |
| 2 | Two family units on Wadmalaw Island |
| 2 | Two family units on Yonges Island |
| 4 | Four family units on Edisto Island |
| 14 units | |

TABLE 2

THE INTERVIEWING TIME LINE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Two weeks | James Island | 24 interviews |
| One " | Johns Island | 12 " |
| One " | Wadmalaw Island | 12 " |
| One " | Yonges Island | 12 " |
| Two " | Edisto Island | 24 " |
| Seven weeks | | 84 interviews |

TABLE 3

124

SCHEMATIC OF UNIT INTERVIEWING PATTERN

| | James | Johns | Wadmalaw | Yonges | Edisto |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grandparents | 1st | 1st | 1st | 1st | 1st |
| Parents | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd |
| Children | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd |

Interviewing Places.--The family gap was the site of the interviews. Interviews were conducted both in and out of doors. The actual sight of the interview was left to the discretion of the interviewee. In some cases the location turned out to be under large oak trees, on porches; other interviews were conducted in parked cars, in open fields and even in row boats.

Interview Pattern.--The group interview was not used. It was not possible to absolutely isolate some respondents (i.e., mothers with young children). However, a concerted effort was made to insure privacy and confidentiality during the interview. This effort was relaxed in the interviewing of children, but children were not interviewed when in close company of adult members of the unit.

124
125

Instrument Pre-Testing.--Two family units from Johns Island were used in the pre-administration of the instrument. As a result of the pre-test inactivities the length of the structured questionnaire was reduced by nine questions. The open response phase of the instrument was

124 deleted in total. The first reducing action was taken be-
125 cause these questions elicited an extremely wide range of responses and was therefore judged as irrelevant and tangential to the experience of the respondents. The second deletion was taken because the complete instrument was too time consuming and tedious to complete.

124 The second major modification was in the method of administration. It quickly became evident that insisting on the absolute isolation of respondents was a hindrance to and heighten the inhibitions of the interviewees. The adopted procedure was to insist on interviewee privacy only to the extents to which privacy was feasible. See Appen-
(125) dix A for study instrument and subject categorization form. A

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

123 The presence of the researcher in the Family Gap ob-
124 viously disturbed the family activities. To counteract this effect the researcher made pre- or non-interviewing visits to each Gap before actual interviews were begun. The purpose of the pre-visits were to acquaint the researcher with the family members (their patterns) and as importantly to have the family get adjusted to the researcher. These visits lasted as long as was necessary for this adjustment to take place. These visits lasting from "day clean" until late in the evening hours provided the

A. [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

123 researcher ample opportunity to explain the nature of the
124 research effort and to alleviate any concerns which were voiced. When the researcher was satisfied that these objectives had been met, the actual interviews were begun.

When all members of a unit had been interviewed, this procedure was repeated at the next Family Gap. When all interviews were completed on one island, the researched moved on to the next island repeating the same procedures until the interview schedule was completed.

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The participation observation interview was used as the data collection method. A structured interview util-
125 izing thirteen questions was administered. Each interview was conducted from a structured format. After the respondent had designated where the interview was to be held, the actual procedure was to engage the respondent in conversation about the family. The focus of the conversations were initially directed at general aspects of the family and as the discussion continued the researched directed the content of the conversation by directly asking each question on the instrument. Respondents were allowed to answer questions in as much detail as they wanted. The researcher followed each complete response with the question "does dat about cover it?" If the respondent said yes, the researcher asked the next question. If the response was no, the

123 researcher asked "waat else need be sai?" and respondents
124 were allowed to complete their answers before the next question was asked.

RECORDING RESPONSE

124 A structured response sheet was used to record re-
126 sponses. This sheet contained a listing of each question and the possible responses. When a response was one of the listed responses, the researcher merely checked that response. When responses were offered for which no previous categories existed, these responses were entered under the category "other" for that question.

At the end of each interviewing day the researcher added those responses in the other category to the list of possible responses. The final activity of the day was to tabulate the responses.

RESPONSE MEASUREMENT

124 Responses for question Number 3 were scaled on a five
125 point design. Twelve of the questions had pre-established response categories. Each question was followed by a list of from three to eight separate response categories. "Other" was the last response category of each question. Responses which did not fit into existing categories made up the other categorical responses (see questionnaire, Appendix A).

A,[See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

•124
125

Schematic of the Scale Measurements

| | Scale | Everytime | Often | Sometime | Seldom | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quest. | (3) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

STUDY CONSIDERATIONS

122 Adjusting to the Sea Island environment was a crucial prerequisite to the successful conduct of this research effort. Even though the researcher is a native speaker of the Gullah dialect a period of adjusting or tuning into this speech pattern was necessary.

These adjustments were expedited by time and by gaining as much exposure to the dialect as possible.

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During the trail administration family members were obviously anxious about being isolated from the family and discussed their anxiety with the researcher. It was apparent that this procedure operated in opposition to a rather free flowing interaction style among family members.

124 Consequently, this procedure was relaxed to some degree during the actual interviews.

123 Had not the researcher been a native of the Sea Islands this research effort would have been immensely more difficult. In part this difficulty could be attributable to the workings of other researchers in this area. In particular, many of the islanders voiced deep concern over the book written by Carawan Ain't we Got a Right to the Tree of Life. These islanders felt this work was by no means an accurate representation of their life style or beliefs. But because of the native heritage of the researcher many families agreed to participate in hopes of the writer being more able to accurately present the ethos of the Sea Island people.

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123

128 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inference was the method of data analysis. The chi-square and the Fisher Exact Test were used to compute significance at either the .05, .01 or .001 level. The following analysis of relationship between the variables island, generation, and sex were conducted:

I Island (1,2,3,4,5) by questions one thru thirteen.

II Generation (1,2,3) by questions one thru thirteen.

III Sex (1,2) by questions one thru thirteen.

IV Island by generation by questions one thru thirteen.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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# APPENDIX

## METHODOLOGY

126 The recordings reflect a variety of speech genres and styles. Samples were recorded around firesites, in vegetable fields, in 'juke' joints, on the backs of trucks, in private homes and at crab hunts. The social stratification of speakers ranges from a prosperous businessman and landowner to a semi-recluse. The samples reflect formal religious oratory, reminiscences, involved story-telling (called 'lies' by the islanders) and heated verbal debates, 'dozen style'.

[124]

123 I was introduced to the Wadmalaw community by natives who were held in high esteem, and was welcomed to live among them and become involved with their daily work and play activities. On my third and last visit, I felt that I had been accepted not as a member to the community (to earn this kind of acceptance one must be born and raised on the island) but as a regularly visiting relative of SOME member of the community. The islanders were cooperative and gave me invaluable assistance in locating consultants who were elderly, long-term natives of the island with little formal education, and who could speak the purest form of Gullah. These requirements were not always reliable indices for descerning the true Creole

123
124

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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123 speaker. Many school-age children between the ages of 10
124 and 16 with formal education used Creole features as frequently as many of the elderly consultants.

124 The following preliminaries were made in preparation
125 for the study:

1. A list of features known to be Creole to keep me alert to Creole construction types.
2. An awareness of conversation topics most likely to have a high probability of eliciting natural responses.
3. A word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants.

124 The word list was not included until my third and
126 final visit to Wadmalaw Island. The list is long and the elicitation is painfully slow and exacting. I soon learned that some of the words on the list were unfamiliar to the consultants, but I was given their equivalent word replacements. For example, Gullah speakers do not often say *bit*, *air*, *coffin*, or *cot*. Instead they use *bite*, *breeze*, *pinto* and *satee*, respectively. Each consultant who aided with the phonology survey was one that I had known and spent a substantial amount of time with over the three year period. Those who were able to read pronounced the words into my tape recorder and I transcribed them on the spot. Others who were unable to read because of failing eyesight or other factors were asked to pronounce the words using different techniques. For example, I often asked questions such as, 'What do you wear on your feet when you go

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



124 bogging?' The consultant would answer, 'Boots.' It often
126 took as long as a week to complete the word list for one consultant.

115 The Consultants

The consultants listed below were all born on Wadmalaw and had resided little or no time on shore.

1. Mrs. Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) is a very gracious widow of seventy-four years. Her assistance in eliciting natural responses from others for word list and syntactic
[122] structures was invaluable. I resided with her and am indebted to her for data recorded in familiar environments.

2. Mr. Henry Gibbs is a ninety-six-year-old gentleman. He remains still very active, loquacious, and alert. His recollections of ex-slave conditions and uninhibited speech was a major contribution to this work.

3. Mr. Ozzie Rivers (Mr. Happi) is a deeply religious seventy-year-old gentleman. He contributed much to my understanding of the phonology of Gullah. His vast store of religious experiences were reminiscent of similar ones dating back to West Africa.

4. Mrs. Annie Brown (Miss Missi) is a lighthearted widow of seventy-six, who leads a very private and secluded existence. I am grateful that she agreed to assist me with

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiɛɛɸ] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to
567 Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times
[782] each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and praying sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority." [22]

•124 Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others.
822 Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the
175 Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the
567 deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

[21] *Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lent, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."*

[22] *It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.*

126 and the taping sessions became a popular way of sharing personal experiences with their classmates. This activity provided unexpected insights into the children's uses of and attitudes toward language. When reading back versions of their own stories which I had typed in standard orthography but which preserved the children's own syntactic patterns as closely as possible, the children habitually "corrected" their original grammar in the direction of more standard usage. This exercise provided strong evidence that the reading activity in the children's minds was associated with the use of standard English. Further evidence for such an association came from my work with a small group of mainland non-readers, all of whom used many creole features in their speech both inside and outside the classroom. Hearing from •125 several teachers that the problem of non-reading boys was widespread, I conducted an informal survey of county elementary schools with the cooperation of the county school administration. This survey indicated that black males who were not able to read at the fifth grade level outnumbered both white males and black females at the same level by a ratio of four to one. Social factors associated with language use patterns for the two sexes are indicated as an underlying cause for this difference in school performance, and will be discussed in conjunction with the different patterns of linguistic change shown by adults in their community. My findings on the possible correlation between language use and

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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Georgetown



125 attitudes and the children's school performance were made available to school officials in a final report to the Georgetown County Board of Education at the conclusion of my field work. The recording sessions with children utilized the same kinds of recording equipment described above, with the small clip-on microphone again proving most successful. Most sessions were conducted in a semi-private section of the school auditorium, with at least two and no more than five children present for each recording.

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124 All of the data used for the present study come from connected free discourse, recorded in environments familiar to the speakers and using topics of interest to the participants. The experiences of seeing the sun rise through the trees that bordered the river island, feeling the bitter cold of an early morning boat ride across the water, shaking out the sand after a walk through the deeply rutted roads, watching the scrub oaks turn a brilliant red in fall, a dull brown in winter--these experiences which leave traces inside people were as important to an analysis of the language used in this community of coastal South Carolina as were the tracings on magnetic tape made of our conversations. These shared experiences with the people made possible the hours of language activity between us.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



TABLE 3

124

SCHEMATIC OF UNIT INTERVIEWING PATTERN

| | James | Johns | Wadmalaw | Yonges | Edisto |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grandparents | 1st | 1st | 1st | 1st | 1st |
| Parents | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd | 3rd |
| Children | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd | 2nd |

Interviewing Places.--The family gap was the site of the interviews. Interviews were conducted both in and out of doors. The actual sight of the interview was left to the discretion of the interviewee. In some cases the location turned out to be under large oak trees, on porches; other interviews were conducted in parked cars, in open fields and even in row boats.

Interview Pattern.--The group interview was not used. It was not possible to absolutely isolate some respondents (i.e., mothers with young children). However, a concerted effort was made to insure privacy and confidentiality during the interview. This effort was relaxed in the interviewing of children, but children were not interviewed when in close company of adult members of the unit.

124 Instrument Pre-Testing.--Two family units from Johns
125 Island were used in the pre-administration of the instrument. As a result of the pre-test inactivities the length of the structured questionnaire was reduced by nine questions. The open response phase of the instrument was

124 deleted in total. The first reducing action was taken be-
125 cause these questions elicited an extremely wide range of responses and was therefore judged as irrelevant and tangential to the exp 'ence of the respondents. The second deletion was taken because the complete instrument was too time consuming and tedious to complete.

124 The second major modification was in the method of administration. It quickly became evident that insisting on the absolute isolation of respondents was a hindrance to and heighten the inhibitions of the interviewees. The adopted procedure was to insist on interviewee privacy only to the extents to which privacy was feasible. See Appen-
[125] dix A for study instrument and subject categorization form. A

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

123 The presence of the researcher in the Family Gap ob-
124 viously disturbed the family activities. To counteract this effect the researcher made pre- or non-interviewing visits to each Gap before actual interviews were begun. The purpose of the pre-visits were to acquaint the researcher with the family members (their patterns) and as importantly to have the family get adjusted to the researcher. These visits lasted as long as was necessary for this adjustment to take place. These visits lasting from "day clean" until late in the evening hours provided the

A, [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

123 researcher ample opportunity to explain the nature of the
124 research effort and to alleviate any concerns which were voiced. When the researcher was satisfied that these objectives had been met, the actual interviews were begun.

When all members of a unit had been interviewed, this procedure was repeated at the next Family Gap. When all interviews were completed on one island, the researched moved on to the next island repeating the same procedures until the interview schedule was completed.

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124 Responses for question Number 3 were scaled on a five
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A, [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

124
125

Schematic of the Scale Measurements

| | Scale | Everytime | Often | Sometime | Seldom | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quest. | (3) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

STUDY CONSIDERATIONS

122 Adjusting to the Sea Island environment was a crucial prerequisite to the successful conduct of this research effort. Even though the researcher is a native speaker of the Gullah dialect a period of adjusting or tuning into this speech pattern was necessary.

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6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## APPENDIX

### THE STUDY INSTRUMENT

•125 I. Grandparents M or P Sex _____ Year of Birth _____

Parents _____ Sex _____ Year of Birth _____

Children _____ Sex _____ Year of Birth _____

II. Where were you born? _____

III. On which Island were you born? _____

IV. Where is the house you were born in? _____

Where is the house you were reared in? same

different

How many rooms in the house you were reared in? _____

V. Did you live with your mother and father? _____

Yes, No, other _____

VI. What other adults lived with you? _____

VII. Who lives with you now? age, sex, number _____

grand parent _____
parent _____
children _____
relative _____
other _____

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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Appendix--Continued

DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

•125 1. Waat kins ob punismen di ys parens use?

a) beetn
b) scoldn
c) beetn n scoldn
d) other

* 2. How oben waz ya beet fer dis tinzs?

a) fightn
b) stealn
c) lying
d) strike parent
e) field chores
f) house n yard chores
g) other

3. How oben waz ya punish a mont?

a) everytime
b) often
c) sometime
d) few times
e) never

4. Wen waz d chilln ta ole fer beetn?

a) make own libn
b) behave respectfully
c) wan own house
d) wen marrie
e) wen twenty-one
f) wen carrie own britches
g) neben too ole
h) other

5. Di bo N gal giz punist d sami?

a) both beet n scold
b) both beet n scold fer different reasons
c) both beet n scold fer same reasons

* 6. How ole waz ya wen ys giz beet ford last time?

a) 14-16
b) 17-19
c) 20-22
d) 23-25
e) 27-30
f) 30 plus

7. Waat waz d kase fr ya last beetn?

a) fightn
b) field chores
c) house n yard chores
d) child care
e) sassi talk

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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Appendix--Continued

•125

* 8. Wen ya waz fitten dmas beetn hov oben?

a) six or less a year
b) one a month
c) three a month
d) one a week
e) two a week

9. Waat d waaze tin a chil can do?

a) field chores
b) house n yard chores
c) sassi talk
d) cheat, steal or lie
e) neglect chilln
f) curse
g) go to creek
h) fightn

10. Ca ya rea y chil nov a dae lik ya rea?

a) less control to dae
b) chilln bold tadae
c) more troble n d chilln face tadae
d) grandparents spoil d chilln nov a dae

11. Do beetn go wete scoldn?

a) talk n beet
b) talk first d en beet
c) haad head mak soft behin

LOVE RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

12. Who di ya turn ta en time ob trouble?

a) family
b) God
c) neighbor

13. Waat feeln waz behin ya parents beetn n scoldn?

a) love
b) teach christian ways
c) to behave right
d) do right tinz
e) so can hab good life
f) mad at me
g) cas I be bad
h) other

---

*Null hypothesis test questions.

123 speaker. Many school-age children between the ages of 10
124 and 16 with formal education used Creole features as frequently as many of the elderly consultants.

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125 for the study:

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7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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Consultant Data Sheet

•125 Name _____ Sex ___ Age _____

Address _____ Race _____

Highest grade level reached in school ___

Schools attended _____

_____

_____

Oldest child in family? Yes___ No ___

If not oldest, what? _____

Parents' birthplace:

Father _____ Grandfather _____
Grandmother _____

Mother _____ Grandfather _____
Grandmother _____

Religion _____

What language besides English is spoken? _____

Father's occupation _____

Mother's occupation _____

Spouse's occupation _____

Other places lived _____

Other places spouse has lived _____

Birthplace _____

Years on Island _____

Spouse's parents' brithplace: Father _____
Mother _____

Maiden Name _____

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina



## Word List

•125 Group 1: [i]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| beet | bear | will | teeth |
| bit | freeze | well | thief |
| bite | sheep | meal | gritty |
| deep | ship | mill | greedy |
| dip | wick | sin | eleven |
| tree | week | seen | |

Group 2: [e]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| late | hair | break | safe |
| let | air | brake | ate |
| made | save | tell | eight |
| mate | cake | tail | lady |
| met | brick | pain | |
| date | wreck | pen | |
| debt | | | |

Group 3: [ɛ]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| get | where | yesterday |
| let | when | like |
| lead | pair | lick |
| met | kick | carl |
| debt | cake | carol |
| there | take | self |

Group 4: [a]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| sort | car | back | wife |
| cart | care | bark | life |
| had | natural | han | lie |
| hard | scrap | hon | lay |
| duck | strap | hon | |
| dark | stripe | marsh | |

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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125

Group 5: [a]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| out | jaw | drop |
| and | start | stop |
| draw | tired | call |

Group 6: [æ]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| fat | stand | that | cat |
| fart | stun | cot | cut |
| bad | man | cart | |
| back | moan | | |

Group 6: [ɒ]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| part | hospital | other | curl |
| pot | crap | rather | main |
| yonder | scrap | rice | mine |
| gander | crop | rise | father |
| what | John | all | further |
| water | jan | | |

Group 7: [ɔ]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| but | born | suck | one |
| put | one | sook | hoarse |
| God | cod | up | boy |
| buck | cud | hock | cousin |
| hook | could | huck | dog |
| now | coffin | hook | dug |
| tuck | sock | gone | |
| took | | gun | |

Group 8: ɑ/ʌ

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| cut | wood | took | buck |
| put | to | tuck | hook |
| putt | bush | pull | took |

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina



•125 Group 9: [o]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| gold | more | hole | nosy |
| goal | mow | home | noisy |
| toe | over | hum | host |
| dough | cover | close | ghost |
| door | broke | | morning |

Group 10: [u]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| boot | pour | soup | moon |
| soot | poor | sup | moan |
| too | mule | look | roof |
| new | use | luke | rough |
| dew | | cool | |

| Group 11: [ei] | | Group 12: [ɛi] | |
|---|---|---|---|
| several | raise | like | tale |
| till | same | tell | |
| rain | | | |

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina



Bimorphemic Clusters

•125

| st | md | ʃt | lt |
|---|---|---|---|
| missed | named | finished | called |
| messed | foamed | latched | smelled |
| dressed | rammed | cashed | killed |

| zd | pt | ft | kt |
|---|---|---|---|
| raised | mapped | laughed | looked |
| composed | stopped | stuffed | cooked |
| amazed | clapped | roughed | cracked |

| vd | nd |
|---|---|
| loved | rained |
| lived | fanned |
| moved | canned |

Monomorphemic Clusters

| st | pt | sp | kt |
|---|---|---|---|
| test | apt | wasp | act |
| post | adept | clasp | contact |
| list | inept | grasp | expect |

| sk | ft | nd | ld |
|---|---|---|---|
| desk | left | mind | cold |
| risk | craft | find | wild |
| mask | cleft | mound | old |

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



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Herskovits and Johnson were not the only advisors chosen by the *Drums and Shadows* team. Among other outside consultants were the anthropologist William R. Bascom, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson, the folklorist Newbell Niles Puckett, the linguist Lorenzo Dow Turner, and the poet Sterling Brown. Three of the consultants—Johnson, Turner, and Brown—were black. Brown was perhaps the most influential upon the Savannah Unit. In his poetry he had already moved away from the pseudo-folk persona of the minstrel-show tradition to an authentic black folk voice. Perhaps the more literary orientation of the Savannah Unit gave Brown greater influence upon them than the social scientists could exert. The Georgia fieldworkers would have been familiar with a tradition in Afro-American literature that extolled—however equivocally—the African inheritance. Alain Locke had spoken ambivalently in 1925 of black Americans as "the advance guard of the African peoples in their contact with Twentieth Century civilization." In the same year Countee Cullen's poem "Heritage" proposed that a black God would better understand the Afro-American's roots in Africa and anomalous position in America. Even earlier, in 1921, Langston Hughes had published a Whitmanesque identification with his African ancestors:

> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
> . . . . . .
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

(126) Muriel and Malcolm Bell, photographers for *Drums and Shadows*, were inspired by their literary reference point to see Robert Lucas, whom they photographed at St. Marys, in the context of Richard Wright's Bigger Thomas. And they saw Katie Brown in the context of William Faulkner's Dilsey.**

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121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture.[41]

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through underbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's 121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of reten- tion, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows* 128 eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal [192] blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole lan- guage that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If [126] the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

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197 121 128 (126) mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accurately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the (177) pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits.**

128 (126) LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

121 128 Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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## *Photographers' Note*

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LANDSCAPES AND NATURAL HISTORY PROVIDED SUBJECT matter for our start into what we thought for a time would lead to careers in professional photography. The first serious project was a series of pictures of Savannah houses and buildings for a history of the city's architecture, a venture that was inadvertently put aside. We had our own darkroom, in which we did our developing and printing. We used a German-made Eastman Kodak, a 2¼ × 3¼-inch ground glass camera called a Recomar. A sturdy tripod and a large black cloth enabled us to stop the lens down to its limit of f/32 and to bring forth a sharp image on the inverted glass screen. The stationary subject permitted ample time to compose our picture; first one of us, then the other made the necessary adjustments from under the black cloth. It was always an interesting maneuver and one that stood us in good stead when we came to the *Drums and Shadows* project.

Mary Granger, our older and interesting family friend, was the unquestioned leader of the Savannah section of the "writers" who were trying to break the depression's grip through the Work Projects Administration of the federal government. It was as district supervisor of the Savannah unit of the Georgia Writers' Project that she told us of her proposed study of African cultural survivals she believed to be extant along the Georgia coast. We were interested and from the outset believed we could photograph coastal blacks using the same technique we had found successful on Savannah architecture. We had seen the Julia Peterkin–Doris Ulmann

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121 collaboration, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, and resolved that our photo-
graphs of the Negroes would be as sharply focused as had
•126 been our Savannah houses. The soft focus of the Ulmann
portraits was not to our liking, nor was the poor quality of
their reproduction. Ulmann's remarkable ability to capture an
attitude and to reflect her subject's character we hoped to emu-
late. We soon learned that to photograph a person, particu-
larly a child, was far removed from making a portrait of an
eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building.

126 Our picture-taking expeditions were always led by Mary
Granger. If our subjects were to be close by Savannah she
would have made arrangements with friends or with members
of her staff who conducted earlier interviews. The usual pro-
cedure was for our leader to engage the subjects in conver-
sation at a spot we had chosen with an eye to light and
126 background. The camera on the tripod and the black cloth
that we were forever ducking under to focus and compose
123 invariably provoked their interest and usually put them at
ease. Mary Granger's confident and cheerful demeanor and
her good sense of humor accounted for the bright, responsive
expressions that show on the faces of many of the older
people. She questioned as she talked, made notes on inter-
esting responses, and often would chant the African song
"Kum Baba Yano," which she had learned from old Tony
Delegal. This never failed to bring a look of incredulity to the
faces of our subjects.

On the island trips and those to distant and remote areas
our arrival was unannounced. Mary Granger was always
ready to reward cooperative subjects or to persuade reluctant
ones to be photographed with an offer of sweet rolls, tobacco,
or old but serviceable clothes, all of which Miss Granger
seemed to have in endless supply.

126 The *Drums and Shadows* photographs have appeared in
any number of publications, the artifacts and the Bowen
128 grave markers more frequently than the portraits. The latter,

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## PHOTOGRAPHERS' NOTE

•126 128 particularly those of Katie Brown, Shad Hall, the young girl at Pin Point, and old Jim Myers, have been used in numerous photographic exhibits in Savannah and elsewhere. When Katie Brown's likeness was on display in a Savannah bank, one of the employees recognized her as a much-loved grandmother. The incident prompted a gathering of members of the Brown descendants—schoolteachers, principals, postal workers, young and old, sons, daughters, grand- and great-grandchildren.

Our contract with the federal government permitted the use of twenty-five of our photographs. We retained the ownership of the negatives and of the rights to reproduce. We were paid two dollars for each print. Most of the reproductions used in this new edition of *Drums and Shadows* were made from the old negatives by Savannahian Jack Leigh, a sensitive and understanding technician and a very able photographer.

The *Drums and Shadows* project became a meaningful episode in our lives. The simple dignity, the presence and pride of the people we photographed won from us lasting respect.

MURIEL BARROW BELL
MALCOLM BELL, JR.

Savannah, 1986



[p. xxxii is blank]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
538 of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Furthermore, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
159 finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered
791 could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

*Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years,
159 and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

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589 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myma introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[533] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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## Chapter 3

782 539 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] IT HAS BEEN more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 212 114 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived [101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

(P. Xi-A)

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

123 872 Because the river island which was the focus of my study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible (126) was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

123 my stay brought contacts with an age group which ranged from junior high school students to young adults in their thirties. More importantly, it gave me a reason for being on the island which was accepted by the community, and which brought many hours of cherished conversation in homes as I shared meals and stayed overnight when I taught. It also gave me unexpected data on sex and age differences in use of the written code, as I taught a modified version of the freshman composition class I had taught for several years at junior colleges in California.

3.3 Collection of Data

• 126 124 Recording sessions on the river island were conducted in individual homes, using a Sony cassette recorder, model TC-92. Two initial recordings were made of older men describing the rice-planting process, using a hand-held microphone. The resulting data were clearly formal register and have been treated as such in the analyses. Subsequent recordings were made using a small clip-on microphone, Sony ECM-16, and produced more natural conversation. Topics ranged from descriptions of living conditions and activities on the island before the coming of electricity and motorized boat transportation, to discussions with teen-agers of whether or not they might remain on the island as adults. The common thread which ran through all the recorded conversations was the distinctive island life. While no formal

•126 questionnaire was used, efforts were made to establish
124 whether or not the person had lived off the island for any considerable length of time, since it became apparent that mobility was a factor influencing language change. The approximate age of the speaker was usually revealed in the course of the conversation. From a total of sixteen recorded adult conversations on the river island, twelve have been selected for the comparative analysis of language change and social factors in the final chapter. These twelve were chosen to include two men and two women from three natural age groups, determined from my observations of interaction in the community. Older adults over sixty-five no longer worked outside the home regularly and remained on the island most of the time. Middle age adults, who had growing families, commuted off the island daily to jobs on the mainland. Young adults, most of whom were not yet married, engaged in frequent school and social activities with each other. All
[123] recordings used in the analyses include the researcher as participant, as well as whatever family members happened to be present. All were made with the knowledge and consent of the principal speakers.

Originally, the project had been conceived of as including a comparative analysis of individual speakers' language use with an outsider and with an in-group member.
[123] It was not possible to record natural conversations between island residents without the participation of an outsider,

126 but such a range of language use would be highly desirable
124 for inclusion in any comprehensive analysis of language
(123) change.[2] Observations of such conversations were made, and
some anecdotal information will be included as a supplement
to the recorded data. The one recording made without the
114 researcher as a participant is an example of highly formal
126 register; the circumstances of this recording were that an
elementary school child took home a recorder at my request
and asked her grandmother to record memories of her youth on
the island. In effect, the recorder itself acted as a participant, and was the recipient of a carefully rehearsed
speech.

In addition to recordings of conversations with
126 island residents, conversations with selected mainland resi-
124 dents were also recorded. From observations made of language
used by school children and by some mainland residents encountered at various community activities, it had become
apparent that the lower socio-economic group on the mainland
retained more creole features in their speech than did island
residents. For comparative purposes, therefore, four conversations made with speakers from this sub-group of this black

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[2]Denison (1969, 1971) provides a description of the range of language used by a particular community, in his study of a plurilingual community in the Carnian Alps. His analysis was based on observations made during extended vacations in the community, not recorded electronically, and serves as a model for the allocation of language resources which a given community might show.

•126 population in rural Georgetown County are included in the
124 analyses of linguistic variables and in the comparison of social factors influencing linguistic change. These four recordings include two men and two women in the oldest age group.

Some recordings were also made of a wide range of children in the school setting. Most of these are relatively short stories told by the children or ritual insults exchanged by them at the very beginning or end of a recording session. Because the environmental setting and the kind of speech event differed from that of the adult recordings, these language samples cannot be directly compared with those obtained for adults. A summary of their characteristics will be included in the discussion of the sex, age, and mobility factors which affect language choices. All island children in grades three through six were recorded telling an anecdote or ghost story of their choice; the grammatical features used in these stories can be usefully compared from child to
126 child. These classroom recordings were made as a natural part of my activities as a teacher's aide. Since part of my
[123] classroom duties had entailed helping a small group of non-readers in sessions in which we had recorded the children's own stories for use in reading, working with small groups of children using the tape recorder was an ordinary classroom activity. The typed versions of stories told by the children were sometimes read to the class by the students themselves,

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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126 and the taping sessions became a popular way of sharing personal experiences with their classmates. This activity provided unexpected insights into the children's uses of and attitudes toward language. When reading back versions of their own stories which I had typed in standard orthography but which preserved the children's own syntactic patterns as closely as possible, the children habitually "corrected" their original grammar in the direction of more standard usage. This exercise provided strong evidence that the reading activity in the children's minds was associated with the use of standard English. Further evidence for such an association came from my work with a small group of mainland non-readers, all of whom used many creole features in their speech both inside and outside the classroom. Hearing from 125 several teachers that the problem of non-reading boys was widespread, I conducted an informal survey of county elementary schools with the cooperation of the county school administration. This survey indicated that black males who were not able to read at the fifth grade level outnumbered both white males and black females at the same level by a ratio of four to one. Social factors associated with language use patterns for the two sexes are indicated as an underlying cause for this difference in school performance, and will be discussed in conjunction with the different patterns of linguistic change shown by adults in their community. My findings on the possible correlation between language use and

125 attitudes and the children's school performance were made available to school officials in a final report to the Georgetown County Board of Education at the conclusion of my field work. The recording sessions with children utilized the same kinds of recording equipment described above, with 125 126 the small clip-on microphone again proving most successful. Most sessions were conducted in a semi-private section of the school auditorium, with at least two and no more than five children present for each recording.

124 All of the data used for the present study come from connected free discourse, recorded in environments familiar to the speakers and using topics of interest to the participants. The experiences of seeing the sun rise through the trees that bordered the river island, feeling the bitter cold of an early morning boat ride across the water, shaking out the sand after a walk through the deeply rutted roads, watching the scrub oaks turn a brilliant red in fall, a dull brown in winter--these experiences which leave traces inside people were as important to an analysis of the language used in this community of coastal South Carolina as were the tracings on magnetic tape made of our conversations. These shared experiences with the people made possible the hours of language activity between us.

123 researcher asked "what else need be said?" and respondents
124 were allowed to complete their answers before the next question was asked.

RECORDING RESPONSE

124 A structured response sheet was used to record re-
126 sponses. This sheet contained a listing of each question and the possible responses. When a response was one of the listed responses, the researcher merely checked that response. When responses were offered for which no previous categories existed, these responses were entered under the category "other" for that question.

At the end of each interviewing day the researcher added those responses in the other category to the list of possible responses. The final activity of the day was to tabulate the responses.

RESPONSE MEASUREMENT

124 Responses for question Number 3 were scaled on a five
125 point design. Twelve of the questions had pre-established response categories. Each question was followed by a list of from three to eight separate response categories. "Other" was the last response category of each question. Responses which did not fit into existing categories made up the other categorical responses (see questionnaire, Appendix A). A

A, [See Category 125, pp. 80-82--Analyst]

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 539 The following texts are included in this study primarily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more [193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fɔ/, the introductory verb /sie/, the future marker /gɔ/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /β/ and /w/; /ɸ/ and /f/; /t/ for initial /θ/ and /ð/; and /ɔ/ and /ɪ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, [126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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128 outside interferences in some tapes made with a group or
539 outside in open fields where birds and other natural noises
•126 interfered with the clarity of the recording. In such cases the notation (...) is used to indicate that a shorter passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

128 Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a single bar: /

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline: ~

English translations of the preverbal markers and the third person pronominal forms often misrepresent the Creole utterance. The following notations are used to symbolize these forms:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (3 ɗn) | third person | masculine | nominative | |
| (3 ʔn) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕn) | " | " | neuter | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | possessive |
| (3 ʔp) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | objective |
| (3 ʔo) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕo) | " | " | neuter | " |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | Present continuative | /dɔ/ |
| (PAC) | Past " | /bɪnɔ/ |
| (T) | Tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (C) | Completive | /dɔŋ/ |
| (E) | Existential | /dɔ/ |
| (Eq) | Equative | /ϕɔ/ |
| (L) | Locative | /dɔ/ |

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

126 The recordings reflect a variety of speech genres and styles. Samples were recorded around firesites, in vegetable fields, in 'juke' joints, on the backs of trucks, in private homes and at crab hunts. The social stratification of speakers ranges from a prosperous businessman and landowner to a semi-recluse. The samples reflect formal religious oratory, reminiscences, involved story-telling (called 'lies' by the islanders) and heated verbal debates, 'dozen style'.

[124]

123 I was introduced to the Wadmalaw community by natives who were held in high esteem, and was welcomed to live among them and become involved with their daily work and play activities. On my third and last visit, I felt that I had been accepted not as a member to the community (to earn this kind of acceptance one must be born and raised on the island) but as a regularly visiting relative of SOME member of the community. The islanders were cooperative and gave me invaluable assistance in locating consultants who were elderly, long-term natives of the island with little formal education, and who could speak the rest form of Gullah. These requirements were not always reliable indices for descerning the true Creole

123
124

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123 speaker. Many school-age children between the ages of 10
124 and 16 with formal education used Creole features as frequently as many of the elderly consultants.

124 The following preliminaries were made in preparation
125 for the study:

1. A list of features known to be Creole to keep me alert to Creole construction types.
2. An awareness of conversation topics most likely to have a high probability of eliciting natural responses.
3. A word list containing minimal pairs for the elicitation of vowels and consonants.

124 The word list was not included until my third and final visit to Wadmalaw Island. The list is long and the
126 elicitation is painfully slow and exacting. I soon learned that some of the words on the list were unfamiliar to the consultants, but I was given their equivalent word replacements. For example, Gullah speakers do not often say *bit*, *air*, *coffin*, or *cot*. Instead they use *bite*, *breeze*, *pinto* and *setee*, respectively. Each consultant who aided with the phonology survey was one that I had known and spent a substantial amount of time with over the three year period. Those who were able to read pronounced the words into my tape recorder and I transcribed them on the spot. Others who were unable to read because of failing eyesight or other factors were asked to pronounce the words using different techniques. For example, I often asked questions such as, 'What do you wear on your feet when you go

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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124 bogging?' The consultant would answer, 'Boots.' It often
126 took as long as a week to complete the word list for one consultant.

115 The Consultants

The consultants listed below were all born on Wadmalaw and had resided little or no time on shore.

1. Mrs. Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) is a very gracious widow of seventy-four years. Her assistance in eliciting natural responses from others for word list and syntactic
[122] structures was invaluable. I resided with her and am indebted to her for data recorded in familiar environments.

2. Mr. Henry Gibbs is a ninety-six-year-old gentleman. He remains still very active, loquacious, and alert. His recollections of ex-slave conditions and uninhibited speech was a major contribution to this work.

3. Mr. Ozzie Rivers (Mr. Happi) is a deeply religious seventy-year-old gentleman. He contributed much to my understanding of the phonology of Gullah. His vast store of religious experiences were reminiscent of similar ones dating back to West Africa.

4. Mrs. Annie Brown (Miss Missi) is a lighthearted widow of seventy-six, who leads a very private and secluded existence. I am grateful that she agreed to assist me with

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiɔɛɛ] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

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•126

Unfortunately our system of notation is inadequate to interpret the Negro's traditional music. For this reason the writers who work in libraries and not in the field, and base their claim of preponderant white influence on book versions and on the singing of students in Negro schools, have the best of the argument. No matter how skillful a musician may be, he is hampered at the start because his interpretation is conditioned by his training and by the limitations imposed by our form of notation.[10] As for the singing of Negro students, it is a known fact that education and folk-music have never been compatible. Under such circumstances the advice given by Thomas P. Fenner in his preface to *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, written in 1873, is the best I know. He tells us "tones are frequently employed which we have no musical characters to represent. . . . It is of course impossible to explain them in words, and to those who wish to sing them, the best advice is that most useful in learning to pronounce a foreign language: *Study all the rules you please, then—go listen to a native.*" In addition to listening to a Negro, I would suggest writing down the words as sung—not as recited. With the best intention in the world the Negro

[10] N. G. J. Ballanta, in an explanation of his idea of the need of a seventeen-tone octave to correctly express African music, tells us why the Western scale is unfit for use in African melodic expression. He believes that "a different system of tuning should be adopted to satisfy the demands of African musical expression, as the values given to notes tuned to equal temperament of twelve divisions to the octave, however much they may be of advantage to the western musician for his system of harmony, do not at all agree with the values given to those same diatonic steps when sung by the African. The same thing is true of Negroes in the United States whose singing of their native songs has a better effect when unaccompanied by the piano than when accompanied. . . .

"Theoretically speaking, Western musicians agree that there are seventeen different sounds in the octave to be provided for; but, by the system known as 'Enharmony,' two sounds are represented by one key known as the sharp and flat to adjacent keys."

Mr. Ballanta goes on to say that "the Africans employ Septimal Harmony in a great majority of cases and there is no reason why they should be made to give way to the Western system of tertian harmony by employing the present tuning of the piano."

In an address made some years ago, Mr. Ballanta stated that "The æsthetic value of the Spirituals arises from the fact that they are conceived and sung in harmony. This fact has baffled many musicians, as the folksongs of other peoples are conceived in unison. The reason is that the Negro in singing, as his African brother, thinks not of a scale which is simply a succession of individual tones, and which forms the basis of the folksongs of other people, but of a chord where there are three distinct and individual tones sounding at the same time, and in combination producing a harmonious effect."

This interesting explanation agrees with what W. E. Ward tells us in "Music of the Gold Coast" concerning the African's amazing ability to carry on "five simultaneous rhythms, the melody and four percussion parts." On St. Simon's Island, three simultaneous rhythms are quite common—the melody, hand clapping, and tapping of the feet or heels on the floor.

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533 .126

never speaks the words of a song as he sings them.[11] To catch what is sung is difficult, but it is the only way that the tricky rhythm of a song can be learned. Any person who wishes to give an authentic presentation must be respectful of the older Negroes' disregard of our rules of spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation, and above all resist the temptation to use a formula. As the editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* say in their preface: "The remarks upon the dialect which follow have reference . . . almost exclusively to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island [South Carolina]. They will, no doubt, apply in a greater or less degree to the entire region of the southeasterly slave States, but not to other portions of the South. It should also be understood that the corruptions and peculiarities here described are not universal, even here. There are all grades, from the rudest field-hands to mechanics and house-servants, who speak with a considerable degree of correctness." These words apply perfectly to the types of dialect found on the Georgia coast, and explain the lack of consistency in the songs of this collection.

533

Few people realize that the slaves—like their African cousins—sang on every possible occasion. Religious ceremonies, as well as work and play, were all conducted to music. Naturally there were times when singing was a solo matter—as over the wash-tub—but the Negroes have always been gregarious (private life as we know it has never been popular among them), and it is no wonder their singing reflects this characteristic. In consequence it is particularly important to know how each of the two or three outstanding singers handles his contribution to the effect produced by the group. It seems to me that Creighton Churchill has succeeded admirably in conveying this idea—but as he frankly says, the whole problem is one of approximation. When it comes to reproducing peculiarities of African music and tones for which we have no symbols, we are out of luck. As Fenner indicates, the best we can do is to listen to an accredited singer.

Those who sing in the traditional manner never appear to take breath when

[11] Syllables are frequently divided arbitrarily to suit the rhythmic needs of a tune. Sometimes the last syllable of a word is attached to the one-syllable word that follows, and whole syllables are occasionally omitted. The slave disliked certain sounds in the English language. Th was difficult for him to pronounce, so was final g, and he dropped an r whenever it interfered with fluency. It is no wonder that a white man cannot compose an authentic slave song, for the transplanted African thought in the speech pattern of his native land, and employed his limited English in that fashion. He also disregarded genders as he did in Africa. On Hilton Head, South Carolina, the dialect of the Negroes sounds—at a little distance—like a foreign tongue because of its curiously different emphasis and intonation. Close at hand, however, the meaning becomes clear enough.

[194]

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533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

533 128 •126 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more (177) than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or ex *cathedra* musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

*Olin Downes*

*New York City*
*February 16, 1942*

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tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

[8] In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 19.
[9] Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.

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123 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
533 so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,[A]) to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.[B]) Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
177 tude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
178 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race
177 since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
178 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]

B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

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## OH EVE—WHERE IS ADAM?

533 [126] In taking down a shout song, you are beset with the difficulty of reconciling the different versions. No leader sings a song twice alike, and no two ever sing exactly the same version; yet the beat, the accent, and the tune remain so stable that leaders are unerringly followed. The words are in truth only the vehicle for carrying along the complicated rhythm. This is beaten out by the heels of the McIntosh County group in a way not approached by any other that I know. Shouters sometimes clap their hands; on St. Simon's they always call for a broom handle, which, when knocked on the floor, provides an extemporaneous tom-tom. In McIntosh County, however, they are so proficient in tapping out the rhythm with their heels that they can dispense with both sticks and hand clapping. With their hands free, they are able to do things descriptive of the text which less skillful groups would not be at liberty to attempt.

535 [539] The shout:

> Oh Eve—where is Ad-u-m?
> Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
> Pickin' up leaves.

is a good example of the combination of dancing and pantomime. After swinging deliberately around the circle, singing the slower part of the chant, the dancers, when the time quickens, go through the motion of picking up leaves. With aprons gathered up and bodies bent, the women add greatly to the interest of the dance. All are amusingly industrious, but the men, without the assistance of aprons, are not quite so convincing in following the action indicated by the text.

533 535 Since the version I have encountered in Glynn and Camden Counties holds to "pinnin' leaves," I am inclined to believe that some McIntosh shouter took an artist's license and substituted "pickin' up" for "pinnin'" for the sake of more varied, more picturesque action. At any rate, the delightful result justifies the less usual interpretation of the Biblical text.

With "Lord called Adam—pinnin' leaves," the movement is faster. The feet are not supposed to leave the floor or to cross each other, such an act being sinful. The shouting proceeds with a curious shuffling but controlled step which taps out with the heel a resonant syncopation fascinating in its intricacy and precision. Over

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## THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song [10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 539

Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

[10] Vol. *I*, record 86-A.

[11] Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.

(567)

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[487]

in her *Journal*, gave several illustrations which show how anything was grist for the Negroes' song-mill. With the rivers affording the only means of travel, it was natural that she should hear rowing songs of all kinds; and on one occasion she had the unique privilege of hearing her own praises extemporaneously chanted by her two Negro boatmen. They described her personal attractions, and amused her intensely by their repeated references to her "wire waist."[4]

Today the Negroes are less inventive, and generally confine themselves to a substitution of names or familiar lines in the old songs, but we can still hear examples of the way they utilized incidents or phrases that struck their fancy. If a captain said: "It's rough going 'round the Horn," the Negroes made up a song about the statement, and we had: "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla gal, Go 'round the Horn!" "Ragged Leevy," a waterfront character of Brunswick, was described in the shanty that bears his name. "Little Johnny Brown, fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound," was so popular among the stevedores that he figured in one of their jolliest shanties; and "Yonder come that *Hessie*" always brings a regretful feeling to those of us who remember the "good old days" on St. Simon's when the *Hessie* was our means of communication with the outside world, and the captain obligingly did our errands.

In our machine age it is inevitable that these work-songs should pass. Before they have entirely disappeared, records should be made of the few examples that have survived.

## SHANTIES

If anyone needs more information about the use of these shanties, I suggest that he apply to either Joe Armstrong or Henry Merchant of St. Simon's Island. Both were at one time leaders of stevedore crews, and both have told me the uses to which the different songs were put. Since I am a land-lubber and more interested in music than in the mechanics of loading lumber and stowing cotton, details concerning the latter have not stuck, while the tunes have—to the last note. Any mistake in describing their application is mine, not Joe's or Henry's.

[126]
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In the early days of the lumber industry, great rafts of logs were nailed together, and—with two or three men in charge—were drifted down the Altamaha to the mills at its mouth.[5] Ships from everywhere came for the sawed lumber. Julia once

[4] *African explorers with more knowledge of the native dialect than their boatmen realized were often entertained in the same manner, but their defects—not their charms—were derisively enumerated.*

[5] *Fanny Kemble mentions in her Journal that on one of her boat-trips from Darien she saw "The river . . . covered with Ocone [river] boxes." She describes them as monstrous square*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
•126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [1] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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121 114 changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

114 Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to sev- [178] eral families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

• 127 Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

121 One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114

127 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

122 113

5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113

6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 123 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 609 113 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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# Acknowledgments

122 My thanks to the University of California at Los Angeles for research support I have received in the past several years, through summer and sabbatical assistance. Funds from the Institute of American Cultures, College Institute Program, Faculty Career Development Program, and the Academic Senate were most generous.

•127 In my search for information on the Gullahs I visited and had correspondence with many libraries. While investigations were not always fruitful, every library staff was helpful. I wish to thank the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; Methodist Church Archives, Wofford College; Baptist Collection, Furman University; Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina; South Carolina Historical Society; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Library of Congress; Cornell University Library; Houghton Library, Harvard University; Historical Society of Wisconsin; Interlibrary Loan staff at the University of California at Los Angeles; and Oscar Sims, Social Science Bibliographer at UCLA.

128 I have received encouragement and suggestions from a number of people. My colleague Ruth Bloch read two important chapters of the manuscript and offered useful suggestions for rewriting. Daniel Littlefield of Louisiana State University read and commented on my chapter on the African slave trade and shared with me his historiographical knowledge of source material. Michael Mullin of California State University, Sacramento, read an earlier draft of the manuscript and offered perceptive comments. My colleague Gary Nash referred me to important source material and read an early version of the manuscript with much care and

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and she deserves my thanks and gratitude. My beloved aunt, Hattie Clark Harrison, who so much looked forward to publication of this book died this year before it went to press. Though we in her immediate and extended family miss her sorely, she is alive in us all. Her legacy of vitality, generosity, and love is a wellspring which continues to empower her "children" with fortitude.

On the professional and personal level, I owe much to Graham R. Hodges. He read the dissertation and the manuscript drafts with interest and thoughtfulness, offering ideas for improvement in my discussion of the colonial black experience and black participation in the War for Independence. Graham's impressive knowledge of these two periods as they affected blacks in the Northeast, informed my own evaluation of the Carolina situation. He was particularly helpful in alerting me to primary and secondary early American sources, from which much can be learned about black activities and the black-white counterpoint. Most of all Graham, thanks for many hours of listening, for cheerful encouragement, and for being a friend.

Finally, for my parents, words of thanks and acknowledgment in no way convey adequately how much is owed. I dedicate this book to them with love, respect, admiration, and gratitude.

[p. xvi is blank]

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121 175 ally moved ministers and planters. Also the Great Awakening of the colonial era touched South Carolina even if it did not linger there for very long. And early Methodists actively tried bringing Christianity to the Gullahs, but were under bans of proscription as an antislavery denomination. Hence, prior to the movement begun by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1829, most slaves working in the fields received their "Christian" instruction from fellow slaves. When slaves accepted Christianity under Methodist and later Baptist tutelage, they embraced it selectively, fusing Christianity with African traditions to create Gullah folk religion. This religion was a means of explaining experiential reality for the Gullahs on sacred and secular levels. If community was the base or substance of Gullah life, spirituality (a more appropriate term, I think, than religion) was the superstructure upon which the foundation was posited.

The final area of investigation in my broadly considered three-tier thematic construct, is resistance—perhaps the most debated issue in the North American bondage experience. There is a tendency to interpret resistance in its strictest sense—as bloodletting or flight to freedom. These are obvious means of rebellion, and from the beginning, African-Carolinians were a restless, insurgent group. This study is a further comment on that spirit of resistance. Yet I primarily delve into what are in my opinion equally meaningful ways of analyzing resistance to enslavement. The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy denotes the end (as far as historical knowledge goes) of concerted efforts at black liberation among the Gullahs. The revelation of the Conspiracy and subsequent debates over the value of religious instruction (since the event was planned under the guise of religion) ushered in, paradoxically, a movement to convert the slave population in South Carolina. From outward appearances the Vesey Conspiracy marked the end of organized black resistance in South Carolina. This is the juncture at which I believe the question of resistance takes on expanded meaning. I attempt to demonstrate that resistance against white power and hegemony was conspicuous in the Gullahs' sense of cultural autonomy, authoritative, creative community-building, and their spiritual disengagement from the slaveocracy's version of Christian teachings. The means and methods of their accomplishment are viewed through the Gullah community and folk religion.

121 127 I have benefited greatly from the works of previous writers. W. E. B. DuBois was among the first to discuss elements of continuity between

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121 the African tradition and the "spiritual strivings" of African-Americans. He was also a pioneer in expressing the historic role and significance of •127 black religion as a means of political protest. And Sterling Brown, another sage of African-American cultural thought, observed over forty years ago, that much could be learned of black life-style and values through studying the folklore of slaves. Brown, one of the earliest interpreters of black thought, viewed folktales, spirituals and narratives as historical documents that spoke "with convincing finality against the legend of contented slavery." Thus more recent scholarship on the slave community, from which my own work draws directly, is part of a tradition begun with the exploratory works of African-American writers of previous generations. Among current scholars, perhaps the most extensive elaboration of the importance of black culture as a means of delving into the 121 114 black mind-set is provided by Lawrence Levine in *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. Levine's seminal work provides an impressive continuum for probing black culture and black thought through analysis of slave folk beliefs, spirituals, and African-American fusion of the sacred and secular. Levine's general discussions of the significance of African traditions and behavior patterns among bondspeople is supported in the particular case of the Gullahs. He debates, as I do, the contention that slaves did not oppose bondage and he maintains that if historians cannot perceive the "sacred universe created by slaves as a serious alternative to the societal system created by southern slaveholders," it is perhaps the historians' problem and not the slaves'.[5]

My book is a regionally limited and more concentrated study involving only the period of enslavement. Levine's work permeates myriad areas of black thought, encompassing bondage *and* freedom, allowing for an emphasis somewhat different from mine and for a greater range of cultural and aesthetic treatment. Bondage takes up only two, albeit important, trend-setting chapters of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. My attention focuses on a full interpretation of one group's spiritual experience in a manner not previously explored. For instance, I see evidence of a strong New Testament ideology and outlook among the Gullahs as they embraced Christianity. Levine does not ignore this impact, but sees more Old Testament messages in general African-American consciousness.[6] Additionally, my work discusses the means by which slaves may have forged African sacred-secular traditions and offers explanations about *how* meanings of religious symbols and rituals related to social processes

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128 gest ways in which Gullahs interpreted Christianity, and how Africanity was integrated into Christianity, into attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I do not argue for direct, fixed, or unchanging transmission of African religion and culture. Yet persistence of traditional beliefs, embedded in a recently created society, is not remarkable. Nor [177] should we assume that traditional African customs and beliefs necessarily disintegrated before Christian and white cultural icons.[12] Still my aim is to demonstrate African-Gullah adaptability in their interaction with another major cultural form, and their capacity for change and meaningful continuity given the realities of new situations.

I rely heavily upon primary sources in this book, although my discus- 127 sion on African culture and cosmology is an exception. Here the empha- 128 sis is on secondary material. This was necessary since I aim to fuse history and anthropology into ethnohistory. It was not always possible to obtain sources directly from the Gullahs. Yet I have tried to articulate their social history by using sources at least derived from the Gullahs. Thus, missionary reports and sketches, spirituals, folk practices and customs, diaries, church minutes, and similar types of records are used extensively. Sources which support interpretations and historical depictions of white attitudes toward religious instruction are also mainly primary. And whenever applicable and possible, I attempted to incorporate current historiographical trends into this study.

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APPENDIX A

# Ethnic Origins of Carolina Slaves

This appendix explains my own tabulations for ethnic origins of Carolina slaves. A valuable source of information for studying African origins was published in four volumes by Elizabeth Donnan. Her works are based on primary sources consisting of ships' records, newspaper advertisements, records of the Royal African Company, the correspondence of Henry Laurens and other merchants, and various documents illustrating the pattern and magnitude of the international slave trade. Donnan's volume on the Southern colonies was particularly useful for examining the slave trade to Carolina because the records of that colony were so well preserved and because white Carolinians made a fetish of regional provenance where human cargo was concerned. From these data we obtain an impression of the coastal origins of many cargoes entering Charleston harbor, and it appears that Africans of the Windward Coast and Senegambia regions provided South Carolina with the majority of its forced laborers for nearly forty years. 127 567 175

Table A.1 represents my calculation of the ethnic origins of slaves entering South Carolina during the middle period of the international slave trade. It was compiled from a tabulation of lists of cargoes published by Elizabeth Donnan. Table A.2 is a rough numerical calculation of slaves identifiable by African origins entering Charleston during the middle period of the trade. Since many cargoes did not indicate size, our estimate for this unknown was based upon the average number of slaves on vessels which did indicate the size of their cargo. Deliberately ex- 175 567 128

[p. 329]

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APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

127 128 178

## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 841 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

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58. Article written by Sancho, a former slave, in the Papers of Hugh A. C. Walker, HSSCC.

59. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10, 22–23; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 122; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 79, 91; Wightman Ledger and Notebook, 1801, Papers of William May Wightman, HSSCC; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 9, 14; Jenkins, *Experiences, Labours and Sufferings*, 102–3, 105–6.

60. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 22–26; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 467.

61. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 156; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 61–62; Jenkins, *Experiences, Labours and Sufferings*, 96–97; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, passim; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64.

62. George, *Segregated Sabbaths*, 69–86; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 80; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 14–15; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–93; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 120–124; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 70–72.

63. Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 124–26; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 2–3.

64. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 93, 145; Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement," 71, 75; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 74, 87–88, 125.

65. The most thorough study is Lofton, *Denmark Vesey*; Also see Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 113–153; Richard Wade, "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Social History* (May, 1964); Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Black Rebellion* (New York: Arno Press, 1969; repr. from 1889 ed.), 215–75; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 49–86; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*; Richard Wade has maintained that the conspiracy never really existed. Wade is refuted by Sterling Stuckey in "Remembering Denmark Vesey," *Negro Digest* (February, 1966); and to a lesser extent by Freehling, in *Prelude to Civil War*, 53–61. Yet John Oliver Killens has made objections to Freehling's and Wade's presentations of the conspiracy, describing their interpretations as distorted. Freehling adopts the language of the slaveholders. He portrays Denmark Vesey as "a powerful unscrupulous man who was given to fits of rage and violence," and as a man who employed a "skillful fusion of the high ideals of the Age of Reason with the ruthless savagery of a barbaric chief." Bibliographic note in Kennedy and Parker. (*Trial*, xiv.) Freehling's characterization of Gullah Jack is also taken from the slaveholder's presentation. The author wrote:

Possessed of tiny limbs, which looked *grotesque* despite his small frame, Gullah Jack had enormous whiskers, which seemed monstrous on the *hulking* Denmark Vesey. No witch doctor ever looked more the part . . . a sorcerer whose bizarre appearance, wild gestures and malevolent glances could terrorize the bravest slave. (55–56).

66. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 45, 58, 63–65, 114–15; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 21, 62, 25. The late Professor Starobin's excellent edition of primary sources related to the Vesey Conspiracy was most useful. Testimony not in the official record but part of manuscript collections, contemporary reactions to the plot, and private letters are contained in his volume. Starobin's edition adds to the body of literature on this little-studied rebellion effort and reveals that some sources related to it have yet to be fully utilized.

(127)

67. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 142; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 25, 50, 61, 64; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 46, 58–59.

68. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 66; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64; Gayraud S. Gilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 57–58.

69. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64.

70. Ibid., 43.

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Laborers*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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128 I am grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Charles A. Ferguson, Gillian Sankoff, and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, for their invaluable ideas, suggestions, and encouragement at various stages of this study. I am indebted also to three people who early encouraged and aided my investigations of Gullah: Edith Trager Johnson, Raven I. McDavid, Jr., and Rebecca Agheyisi. Without Irma Cunningham's [127] earlier dissertation on the syntax of Gullah, the present work could not have been undertaken.

During my field work in coastal South Carolina, many 122 people gave concrete help of different kinds. Through the 123 courtesy of William S. Young, Thaddeus Thompson, Edgar Caddell, and Peggy Walker, I was able to spend valuable time with the school children of rural Georgetown County. In the island community, Prince and Rebecca Washington introduced me to the community and spent hours of treasured conversation with me. My mother, Mildred Mitchell Causey, and her sister, Annie Laurie Bonnette, opened their homes to me whenever needed; I benefited in many unforeseen ways from their years of teaching in the public schools of the state. Another- 128 native of the Waccamaw region, historian and folklorist 129 Charles W. Joyner, was a source of crucial information and

128 insight at several points. My friend and colleague at
127 Winthrop College, Shirley Brice Heath, shared with me the joy of discovery and the pain of facing the unknown; her anthropological field work in up-country black communities
128 was an invaluable source of comparative data. My human and intellectual debt to Nolan Pliny Jacobson, my former professor at Winthrop, is greater than either of us knows.

Throughout my studies at Stanford, three people have been particularly supportive: Jean Beeson, Clara Bush, and Frank Nichols. I thank them for helping me to keep this work in perspective.

122 A Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies during 1974-75 helped support the research and the writing of this dissertation.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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174 [10] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [10] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

174 567 Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing [197] their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1]Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the *sources* of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Cagmi or Coml Negroes called Gwalla.

[2]Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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115 114 Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127] To Foresta H. [illegible]son Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

115 114 533 Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[497] When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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128 lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a
114 note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128 I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena
[127] Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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## PREFACE

THIS STUDY of the social history of the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia, and more particularly of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, is one of three volumes resulting from the coöperative research project concerning Negro culture on St. Helena Island made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. It was originally planned as a brief background study, but, in the search for data, so many valuable manuscript pieces were unearthed from dusty attics, strong-boxes, and long-forgotten chests that it was deemed advisable to lengthen the study into many pages. Later, the archives of the United States Treasury Department were opened for purposes of this research, and for the first time a complete picture of the Sea Islands during the Federal occupation throughout the Civil War has been made possible.

I have attempted to trace the history of one of the largest of the Sea Islands in its relation to the larger history of the coastal area of which it is inextricably a part. I have been concerned chiefly with cultural developments rather than with men and with politics, and I have always sought to discover the historical antecedents of life on St. Helena as it is today. I have brought this history to the close of the Reconstruction Period. The subsequent history of the Island—the struggle of the people to keep their land in the face of poverty, the destruction of their money crop by the coming of the boll weevil and the consequent economic re-adjustment, the prosperity of a few despite these handicaps, the broadening influence of Penn School on the lives of the people—is told in *Black Yeo-*

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121 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the
113 island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

•127 In the preparation of this manuscript I have become
128 greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

June, 1930. G. G. J.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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[For additional information on the author's statistical analysis of his data, see Category 12.]

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121 packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly
115 stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around
his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-
[157] born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big
boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big
dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke"
[567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house,
chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

•128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk
speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names
[192] and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu-
merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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•128 (192) (water), *juba haltuh* (water bucket), *sisure* (chicken), *gombay* (cow), *nyana* (fish), *flim* (pancakes), *mosojo* (pot), *diffy* (fire), *nyam* (eat), *mulafo* (whiskey), and *musongo* (tobacco). Here are *ma-foo-bey* (an expression of surprise) and the expletive *skinskon*. Here are folk narratives of Buh Rabbit, mysterious spiders, magic hoes, landing Ibos, flying Africans, and various supernatural spirits. Here are African songs—*a-shou-tu-goula*, the lullaby *nikki-yimi*, *nikki-yimi*, and the refrain *yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by*. Here is the ballad of Bo-cat, the wife murderer. Here is instrumental music on banjos, bones, drums, and gourds. And here are such dances as the Buzzard Lope, the Camel Walk, Come Down to the Mire, the Fish Bone, the Fish Tail, and the Snake Hip. Here are examples of folk religion in descriptions of Moslem ancestors and African prayer rituals. Here are the chanted *Belambi, Hackabera, Ameela, Mahamadu*, and *Ameen, Ameen, Ameen* during prayers, followed by *Meena, mino, mo* at the end of prayers, and *Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, kum kunka yali, kum kunka tembe*, said before flying back to Africa. Here are river baptisms, and sermons, and guest appearances by Father Divine and Daddy Grace. Other folk beliefs are exemplified in conjure bags and conjure doctors, graveyard dirt, mojoes, such charms as Adam and Eve Root, Black Cat Bone, Lucky Heart, and High John the Conqueror. Here are examples of customary folklore in birth customs and death customs as well as festival celebrations. And here are descriptions of material culture, including folk architecture and such foodways as the use of benne seeds, palm cabbage and palm wine, palmetto cabbage and palmetto wine, peanuts, ashcakes, and African rice cakes. Among the folk crafts produced by black coastal Georgians are baskets, beads, bowls and utensils, musical instruments, walking sticks, and carved wooden spoons.

In its concentration on local folklore *Drums and Shadows* was pursuing a policy encouraged by the national office of the Federal Writers' Project. An agency of the New Deal's Work

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121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture.[1]

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through underbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's 121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of retention, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows* • 128 eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal [192] blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole language that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If [126] the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

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197 mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking
12 "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accu-
128 rately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of
(126) the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the
(177) pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits."

128 LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of
*Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative
(126) photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look
121 at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their
128 surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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121 collaboration, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* and resolved that our photo-
126 graphs of the Negroes would be as sharply focused as had been our Savannah houses. The soft focus of the Ulmann portraits was not to our liking, nor was the poor quality of their reproduction. Ulmann's remarkable ability to capture an attitude and to reflect her subject's character we hoped to emulate. We soon learned that to photograph a person, particularly a child, was far removed from making a portrait of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century building.

126 Our picture-taking expeditions were always led by Mary Granger. If our subjects were to be close by Savannah she would have made arrangements with friends or with members of her staff who conducted earlier interviews. The usual procedure was for our leader to engage the subjects in conversation at a spot we had chosen with an eye to light and background. The camera on the tripod and the black cloth
126 that we were forever ducking under to focus and compose
123 invariably provoked their interest and usually put them at ease. Mary Granger's confident and cheerful demeanor and her good sense of humor accounted for the bright, responsive expressions that show on the faces of many of the older people. She questioned as she talked, made notes on interesting responses, and often would chant the African song "Kum Baba Yano," which she had learned from old Tony Delegal. This never failed to bring a look of incredulity to the faces of our subjects.

On the island trips and those to distant and remote areas our arrival was unannounced. Mary Granger was always ready to reward cooperative subjects or to persuade reluctant ones to be photographed with an offer of sweet rolls, tobacco, or old but serviceable clothes, all of which Miss Granger seemed to have in endless supply.

126 The *Drums and Shadows* photographs have appeared in
any number of publications, the artifacts and the Bowen
•128 grave markers more frequently than the portraits. The latter,

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## PHOTOGRAPHERS' NOTE

126 particularly those of Katie Brown, Shad Hall, the young girl
•128 at Pin Point, and old Jim Myers, have been used in numerous photographic exhibits in Savannah and elsewhere. When Katie Brown's likeness was on display in a Savannah bank, one of the employees recognized her as a much-loved grandmother. The incident prompted a gathering of members of the Brown descendants—schoolteachers, principals, postal workers, young and old, sons, daughters, grand- and great-grandchildren.

Our contract with the federal government permitted the use of twenty-five of our photographs. We retained the ownership of the negatives and of the rights to reproduce. We were paid two dollars for each print. Most of the reproductions used in this new edition of *Drums and Shadows* were made from the old negatives by Savannahian Jack Leigh, a sensitive and understanding technician and a very able photographer.

The *Drums and Shadows* project became a meaningful episode in our lives. The simple dignity, the presence and pride of the people we photographed won from us lasting respect.

MURIEL BARROW BELL
MALCOLM BELL, JR.

Savannah, 1986



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121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial under-
114 standing and the alleviation of friction between the races in
the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
177 these two, since I believe that there are a few important
178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree
of significance of these African heritages is questionable in
view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the
white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that
their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is
relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the
nature and importance of African heritages in our civiliza-
tion, almost everyone would agree that the question is inter-
esting and worthy of study. Such study may not only sat-
isfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the
scientific problem of the processes which go on when two
different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the
• [128] material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no de-
cision as to the African sources of particular traits. She
has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African
culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible
parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia
coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
1940



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## *Acknowledgements*

•128 GRATEFUL THANKS ARE DUE TO MELVILLE J. HERskovits and Guy B. Johnson whose unfailing interest has been an inspiration and whose critical advice and untiring encouragement have been a valuable aid to the project. The project also wishes to thank William Bascom, Sterling Brown, Benjamin L. Hubert, Charles S. Johnson, William F. Ogburn, Newbell Niles Puckett, and Lorenzo Turner for helpful criticism and to acknowledge the outstanding work of Virginia Thorpe, project editor, and Albert Dunbar, project research field worker, in connection with the manuscript.



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## *Notes to the Reader*

128 PRONUNCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS, ELISION, and emphasis play almost equal roles in the Negro speech of this section. Except for the spelling of surnames, dialect in the interviews has been faithfully transcribed. Great care has been taken to try to represent the pronunciation, but to have represented literally the elision and emphasis would have made the text unintelligible to the average non-scientific reader. Therefore the elision has been moderated and the emphasis left to the reader. Diacritical marks have not been used because it was thought it would give the text too foreign an appearance, and apostrophes commonly used in dialect have been discarded for simplification. Many variations in pronunciation occur even in a small area; younger members of a community speak differently from older, the better educated differently from the less well educated. Excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses. Almost universally *uh* is substituted for *er* and *d* for *th*, though there are more exceptions to the latter than to the former. An *h* is nearly always substituted for an *r* following a vowel and *ah* is substituted for the terminal *re;* thus *here* becomes *heah*. This latter spelling is as near as can be achieved, and though the diphthong is present the *e* is very short. In certain cases persons have learned to pronounce certain words correctly while other words of the same type will still be spoken in dialect. *Mother* is a common example of this. The *th* in this word has often been deliberately learned

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128 though the final *er* will still be pronounced *uh*. Initial
194 syllables are often pronounced differently from the same
195 syllable occurring in the middle of a sentence. The pronoun *I* at the beginning of a sentence is almost always pronounced correctly, whereas *I* in the middle of the sentence is usually pronounced *uh*. Thus the same word often varies according to its importance and the need of the speaker for emphasis, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Some of the above mentioned points may not seem worthy of mention to the student familiar with white speech of the same section. But because the white speech has many similarities of pronunciation, it does not make the recorded speech of these studies any less of a dialect nor any less of a variation from standard speech.

128 African parallels will be found in the appendix. These have been grouped according to subjects and the subjects arranged alphabetically and numbered consecutively. Text reference numbers (Arabic) refer to the appendix numbers where pertinent parallels may be found. Where an appendix number is followed by a letter, the parallel under this heading is especially noteworthy. Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns, the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation.

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## INTRODUCTION

175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs in-
178 tensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
[177] delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
•128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of
the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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# Acknowledgments

122 A major portion of this book would consist of names if all the people who contributed in some way were included. Before all others, however, I gratefully acknowledge the people of the Sea Islands, because without their willing cooperation there would have been no book. I am especially indebted to two residents of Wadmalaw Island, Aneatha Brisbane (Miss Myma) and Ida Morris-Hamilton (Miss Ida Mae) for accepting me into their homes and providing me with ties to well-respected island names. Since the islanders know and understand well the meaning of sharing as an inherent part of the extended family, I express my gratitude to the following families rather than to individuals: the Browns, the Williamses, the Pickneys, the Linens, the Jenkinses, the Middletons, the McClouds, the McClures, the Buggs, the Mitchells, the Seabrooks, the Orees, the Smalls, the McDermotts, the Pyatts, the Washingtons, the Mickells, the Gibbses, the Riverses, the Macks, the Ropers, the Higginses, the Simmonses, the Dents, the Fraziers, the Murrays, the Quimbys, the Cummingses, and the Campbells.

000 I wish to thank the Nigerian people from the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio cultures for their tolerance and patience in helping me to learn their languages and folklore traditions. I offer special thanks to the Ihejetoh family, the Udondek family, the Onunkwo family, and the Konyeers family.

128 Several friends, colleagues, and professors at the University of Michigan offered assistance and provided guidance for this book in its embryonic stages. These include Rosie Morant Douglas, who first told me about the Sea Island people while sitting in the undergraduate library one afternoon in 1972, and Faith Mitchell, who accompanied me on my first trip to the island communities. I wish also to thank Richard Bailey, J. C. Catford, Peter Fodale, Lemuel Johnson, Patrick Bynoe,

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# Preface

178 (131) The black inhabitants of the Sea Islands, located off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, have provided researchers with a reservoir of distinctively African and African-American cultural roots. Their unique society has been developed, nurtured, and maintained by the geographical isolation of the islands, the social and economic independence of the islanders, and the marginal contact with residents outside the Sea Island area. These factors have created and fostered an environment within which the inhabitants—West African slaves, ex-slaves, and their free ancestors—have been able to reinforce vigorous traditions characteristic of their culture, and to perpetuate communities with concentrations of African influences paralleled by no other black areas in the United States. Remnants of these African traditions were passed on to the islanders through narrative tales, religious practices, burial ceremonies, language patterns, and other practices, only some of which have been recorded by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists.

177 Today changes are being brought to the islands, and the Sea Island culture is declining under the resulting social pressures. On the one hand, outsiders, particularly white Americans, Arabs, and other foreigners, are moving to the area and in some instances commercializing entire islands. On the other hand, the building of bridges has brought about easier access to many of the islands and better educational facilities and job opportunities for their inhabitants. As would be expected, such forces are motivating a break in cultural traditions, an upheaval of social patterns, and a general disruption of the old norms, all of which are now in some danger of becoming lost.

• 128 This book is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the Sea Island culture and literature and of the Gullah (or, as it is called in Georgia, Geechee) language. Chapter 1 is devoted primarily to a survey of the area and its people. I judge it important to provide a full

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•128 description of the geography, demography, and economic and social history of the region, because only in an environment like that of the Sea Islands could the inhabitants have maintained the level of continuity with African culture that has been recorded (and that surely remains to be recorded).

Chapters 2 and 3 constitute the greatest portion of the book. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the settings in which the tales are told and the telling techniques employed, and sketches of some of the most prolific storytellers. Chapter 3 is composed of Gullah prayers and tales, with translations of some African counterparts. This section may be particularly pleasing to those interested in seeing just how closely the Gullah tales compare with African narratives.

Chapter 4 provides a description of those linguistic features in contemporary Gullah speech which have African parallels. This chapter may be especially useful in helping to delineate features characteristic of Gullah and not characteristic of inland African-American speech or of other speech varieties in the United States. In addition to providing insights into the status of present-day Gullah on the Sea Islands, Chapter 4 is germane to the interested reader's understanding of certain linguistic features of the Gullah speech samples.

121 Most often we get only a retrospective look at a culture after many of its unique features have been lost. One of the great attractions of the Sea Islands for students of the humanities and social sciences is that the expected slow pace of change in remote areas will permit a look into the culture as it undergoes transition. As outside forces erode the traditional social structure of the islanders, every attempt should be made to maintain a record of changing language, attitudes, and oral traditions. And as I hope to show in this book, researchers who come with the right preparation and receptive minds can make their studies as rewarding for the islanders as for the investigators.

121 114 In my own case, I decided that given the wide field of untapped resources in the Sea Island area, it would be wise to undertake my investigation in collaboration with a colleague from a field other than linguistics. Behavioral data, whether dealing with folklore, language, cognition, or their interrelationships, have in the past tended to be rigidly segmented and compartmentalized into folklore, linguistics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology. The needs for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior, however, and for ex-

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128 Louise Rounds Ball, and Kathy Eiseley, who gave me the stimulation and encouragement that I needed to begin the project in 1973.

I have also benefited from the knowledge and insights of several linguists, anthropologists, historians, folklorists, and friends from other universities. Outstanding among these is my mentor and friend Professor Charles Joyner, a native of the coastal area and the author of *Down by the Riverside*. He believed, even when I felt that I no longer believed, that the manuscript would become a book. I also acknowledge others who were kind enough to listen or read drafts of the manuscript, honest enough to provide principled criticism, and most of all committed enough to write out lengthy suggestions on how to improve it. I offer special thanks to Ralph Fasold, Fred Cassidy, Dell Hymes, Orlando Taylor, Ian Hancock, Irma Cunningham, Salikoko Mufwene, Michael Montgomery, Lettie Molter, John Rickford, William Stewart, and Molefe Asante.

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122 The research for this book was supported by several sources; without their assistance, I would never have been able to complete this study. At the University of Michigan I received a Horace H. Rackham Research Award and a summer grant from the Center for African and Afro-American Studies. At Howard University my work received support from the Faculty Research Program in the Social Sciences, the Humanities and Education Program of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs; and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Faculty Grants Program. I was also awarded a WHMM Television De-

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538 so that it will participate in the event by responding to certain cues given by the teller.

The teller's call and the audience's reply are often simultaneous. Clearly they must be distinguished on the printed page, and separating them formally as is done here helps clarify the degree to which the speaker and the audience rely on back-and-forth interplay to develop and perpetuate a rhythmic flow once the tale begins.[24]

• 128 The following notational conventions have been used to provide more information concerning the context in which these tales were told. Double exclamation marks indicate loudness, and triple exclamation marks, extreme loudness. Parentheses enclose indications of nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as long pauses, laughter, eye or hand movements, or meditations. Dashes indicate interruptions or pauses in thought or speech. Ellipsis dots show omissions. A series of hyphens indicates phonological lengthening, as in O-o-o-kay! Italics are used for responses and for emphasis on words or phrases. Square brackets enclose translations or interpolations of words or letters.

538 [264] These tales were told around a fire site at a local store just after nightfall on Wadmalaw Island. Approximately twenty or thirty people gathered, eating crabs and roasting hot dogs while they waited for the storytelling session to begin. The order here does not necessarily reflect the order in which tales were told. Further, some tellers were better performers than others and thus were asked to tell several tales before the session ended.

"The Man and the Skita [Mosquito]" is an extension of the Clever Slave Motif J1114.01 (more commonly known in the United States as an "old marster and John" tale) and Motif H961, Task Performed by Cleverness. It falls vaguely within Tale Type 920 III, Impossible Task.[25] In this tale the philosophical outlook of Ber Rabbit prevails: even when faced with almost insurmountable odds, one can survive not through physical strength but through one's own wit and intelligence.

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538 171 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from
538 the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering,
• 128 false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the
[193] formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix 1 for a transcription of one story into

A, [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

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538 128 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however, no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 171 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

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# Appendix 2

## Buh Rabbit en' de Lawd

539
197
[178]

What follows is the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" from Chapter 3, reconstructed in the Gullah of a century ago. A comparison of the two versions will show how the language has changed in the interim.

•128

I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Mixon Geraty, who suggested and prepared the transcription, for her time, willingness, and patience.

539

One time Buh Rabbit gone tuh de Lawd fuh git mo' ecknowledge, mo' wisdum. En' de Lawd tell Buh Rabbit, "Awright! Uh wan' you fuh fetch me ennyt'ing wuh w'ite. Ennyt'ing w'ite."

Rabbit gone een de fiel', en' 'e gone en' meet Buh Paa'tridge dey dey, 'e hab uh bag, en' 'e tell Buh Paa'tridge: "Uh betchuh all ub you, all ub you ent able fuh full'up dishyuh bag."

Paa'tridge say, "How you mean?"

Run een de bag en' see kin you full'um up."

De paa'tridge 'pread 'e wing, run een de bag en' full'um up. Buh Rabbit pit'um 'cross 'e shoulduh en' cya'um tuh de Lawd. "Awright!" 'E gone sen'um back. Buh Rabbit sen' Buh Paa'tridge back.

"Well, now, Buh Rabbit, Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—uh rattlesnake!" Dainjus!!! 'E pit Buh Rabbit weh 'e dainjus, fuh true!

Buh Rabbit tell'um, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit gone een de fiel' en' fin' uh rattlesnake, en' 'e hab uh cane en' 'e tell Buh Rattlesnake: "Buh Snake, oonuh ent—oonuh ent long ez dis cane." Buh Rattlesnake run 'long 'side de cane.

Buh Rabbit say, "No! Uh yent mean fuh do'um so. Uh wan' oonuh fuh run een'um."

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# Appendix 3

# Phonetic Text: The Soul and the Spirit

539 128 19

The following text is included in this study primarily to show the language in context. It manifests many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of creole languages.[1] The English version following the transcription obscures many of the creole patterns; consequently, a word-for-word translation accompanies each line of phonetic script to illustrate underlying creole constituents such as the complementizer [fə], the introductory verb [sie], the future marker [go], and many other constructions.

This passage reveals specific segmental phonological phenomena, for example, vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for, such English phones as /β/ for /w/; /ɸ/ for /f/; /t/ for initial /ð/ and /θ/; and /ç/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, deviant words, or stuttering. It is extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of interference of birds and other outdoor noises on the tape. In such cases ellipsis dots indicate that a short passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a slash (/).

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline ( ∿∿∿ ).

Hyphens join two or more words run together in the transcription.

193 539 128

English translations of the preverbal markers and the third-person pronominal forms often misrepresent the creole utterance. The following notations are accordingly used to symbolize these forms:

(3 ♂ n) third-person masculine nominative
(3 ♀ n) third-person feminine nominative

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193 (3 ∅ n) third-person neuter nominative
539 (3 ♂ o) third-person masculine objective
(3 ♀ o) third-person feminine objective
•128 (3 ∅ o) third-person neuter objective

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | present continuative | /də/ |
| (PaC) | past | /bɪnə/ |
| (T) | tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (L) | locative | /də/ |

539 di soəl ɛn di speɪt

775 1. lɪsn mi gʊd nɔu / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wöl / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
19 *Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see, the, the, the soul*

2. əβə män go fiom dʊ di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔʔt / ɛn ɪɸ ju βədɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɒl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days,*

4. juə speit /ätə jʊ died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing, your spirit.*

5. juə soəl öp dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛʔ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɒɾi / ɛn däs də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də ɸɛk tu jʊ / jʊ si nɔ nɔ
*the body. And that's the one gone, gone do the effect to you. You see now now*

7. das das βɒɪ ɒɪ sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɒs ä pipũ
*that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

8. dõn biliɸ / sie sie sieiz no guos / iz guos dɛə /bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

9. di ʔärəmobil n tiŋ kɔm / n gɪt dɪ hɒɪβie nɔ / jusidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now, you-see-these, these thing*

10. käɪnə tɛk tu wʊd / äɪ mɛmbə wɔnäɪt / βi βi bɪn ɔut
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we, we (T) out*

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## Chapter 3

782 537 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

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000 19. 1 Cor. 15:53–54.

782 20. "Ain't gonna study war no more" is a reference from an old Negro spiritual. The concept itself comes from several references to war in the Bible, such as Ps. 46:0, Isa. 2:4, and Mic. 4:3.

000 21. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16–27.

22. Job 3:17.

128 23. I am again indebted to Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton, who assisted in transcribing this sermon from a recording made during the church service.

538 24. For further discussion of the call-and-response technique see Grace Sims Holt, "Stylin' outta the Black Pulpit," in *Rappin' and Stylin' Out*, ed. Thomas Kochman
113 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 189–204.

25. The Gullah and African tales given in this chapter are classified according to
538 the scheme set out by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale*
128 (Helsinki: *Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia*, 1961). Motifs and the names and numbers as-
113 signed to tale types are from Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58).

In the search for systematic methods of presenting such paralinguistic features as voice quality and nonverbal expressive phenomena, Ray L. Birdwhistell proposed a system of notation for describing certain sound phenomena, for example, an arrow pointing upward or downward to indicate various pitch ranges. He likewise developed an elaborate notational system for analyzing body motions and gestures, a system that distinguished hip, leg, ankle, shoulder, wrist, arm, and other movements (see Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*). Some of these notations are quite complex, and they are not yet widely used. Here, because the language of the narratives is complex in itself for most English-speaking readers, I decided to eliminate reading handicaps by minimizing foreign symbols that would tend to interrupt the natural flow of the tales.

538 26. For example, Richard Dorson has a variant of this tale in *American Negro Folktales*, p. 114.

000 27. This observation was brought to my attention by Charles Joyner, who is a native of the South Carolina coastal area.

113 28. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands;* Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* Florence M. Cronise and Henry Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider and the Other Beef* (Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969); and Dorson, *African Folklore*.

000 29. The precautionary measures taken here do not assure that the Igbo tales collected were not influenced by other cultures. No culture can be totally without outside influence; I tried only to decrease the likelihood of obtaining tales with non-African origins. Accordingly, I collected the tales from children and adults only in their native tongue. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, those in remote areas have little reason to use it. I also did not ask to hear any particular type of tale, nor put any restrictions on the length or number of tales told by any one person. I asked simply to hear some of their stories.

30. I am indebted to the renowned Igbo writer Obi Egbuna for his observations concerning African folktales and their implications in Igbo society. Any misrepresentations that might remain are, of course, my own.

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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128 sensitivity. Many thanks to Professor Velma Pollard of the University of the West Indies, for sharing with me her impressive knowledge of linguistic patterns in the black diaspora. Discussions with Joseph Holloway of California State University, Northridge, concerning African influences among the Gullahs were productive and stimulating. Although our opinions differ, I believe we learned from each other, and we concur in the belief that there is still much to be uncovered regarding the African impact on African-American life, thought and culture. A special note of thanks to Peter Wood of Duke University. He read two versions of the manuscript and offered his expertise on the African-Carolina experience during the colonial era. Professor Wood's penetrating insights and suggestions lead to fruitful rethinking in a number of areas.

This study began as a dissertation under the direction of Professors Daniel H. Calhoun and Daniel Crowley at the University of California, Davis, and Professor Leon F. Litwack at the University of California, Berkeley. I am particularly grateful for Professor Calhoun's advice and encouragement during my years as his student, and for his continued belief in the worthiness of this subject. Professor Crowley's anthropological input was invaluable. More significantly, whenever the vastness and controversial nature of this project seemed overwhelming, I recalled his comment to me when I first embarked on the project: "You're on to something."

114 The enthusiasm, intelligence and perception of many of my graduate students in the antebellum history and Afro-American history seminars at UCLA was inspiring. In those courses we raised probing questions about religion, culture, community and politics which I hope have made this a better volume. My right hand in the project was Jill Marie Watts. As my research assistant for three years, Ms. Watts' library detective
128 work went well beyond my expectations. For typing and word processing assistance I wish to thank Alesia Barbour, and UCLA's Central Word Processing Center, especially Nancy Rahn. While I received valuable comments, suggestions, and advice, I have also been selective in adhering to recommentations regarding the book. Thus I am fully responsible for any limitations contained herein.

000 Members of my family, as always, were a source of strength. My two children, James and Céleste Creel, never ceased to add color and zest to life. They accepted my preoccupation with unusual patience. My niece, Anita Louise Crawford, was a wonderful surrogate mother when needed,

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and she deserves my thanks and gratitude. My beloved aunt, Hattie Clark Harrison, who so much looked forward to publication of this book died this year before it went to press. Though we in her immediate and extended family miss her sorely, she is alive in us all. Her legacy of vitality, generosity, and love is a wellspring which continues to empower her "children" with fortitude.

On the professional and personal level, I owe much to Graham R. Hodges. He read the dissertation and the manuscript drafts with interest and thoughtfulness, offering ideas for improvement in my discussion of the colonial black experience and black participation in the War for Independence. Graham's impressive knowledge of these two periods as they affected blacks in the Northeast, informed my own evaluation of the Carolina situation. He was particularly helpful in alerting me to primary and secondary early American sources, from which much can be learned about black activities and the black-white counterpoint. Most of all Graham, thanks for many hours of listening, for cheerful encouragement, and for being a friend.

Finally, for my parents, words of thanks and acknowledgment in no way convey adequately how much is owed. I dedicate this book to them with love, respect, admiration, and gratitude.

[p. xvi is blank]

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# *List of Abbreviations*

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| | |
|---|---|
| *AHR* | *American Historical Review* |
| AMA | American Missionary Association Papers |
| BC | Baptist Collection, Furman University, Greenville, S. C. |
| *CAJ* | *Christian Advocate and Journal* |
| HSSCC | Historical Society, South Carolina Conference, Methodist Church Archives, Wofford College, Spartanburg, S. C. |
| *MMQR* | *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* |
| HSP | Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia |
| *SCA* | *Southern Christian Advocate* |
| *SCG* | *South Carolina Gazette* |
| SHC | Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C. |
| SCHS | South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, S. C. |
| SCL | South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C. |
| SPGLL | Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London Letters |

[p. xvii]
[p. xviii is blank]

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121 seem to reinforce the 1970s "slave community" consensus to which previously mentioned (and many unmentioned) scholars contributed so prolifically. Inherent in that consensus is the theme which on some level we all agree: among African-Americans the oppression of bondage bred resistance and active, even if it was not always open, rebellion.

121 The primary methodologies used in structuring this book are comparative and dialectical. A comparative model is adopted because I wish to demonstrate the relationship between African, white Protestant, and 128 Gullah worlds. Thus in Part I the African background is discussed. Here I ask the reader's forbearance. This discussion of the African slave trade, 121 ethnic displacement, and the significance of the African socioreligious legacy, is necessary because these relate to the entire thrust of the book and because my theory regarding ethnic origins and African influences will be controversial, yet I believe, sound in plausability.

I agree with Eugene Genovese that to some extent, "an understanding of the slaves requires some understanding of the masters and of others 128 who shaped a complex slave society."[31] Part II, consisting of two chapters, begins my dialectic of black-white counterpoint and deals with South Carolina up to the War for Independence. One chapter is devoted to missionaries and masters. The next chapter, on the black religious experience, deals with the Great Awakening and that limited group who laid a foundation for acculturation and black-to-black spiritual interaction. Part III continues the black-white counterpoint. Chapter 5 develops concepts of black rebelliousness, and the period of the American War for Independence is crucial. It represents a time of religious liberalism on the one hand and black resistance on the other. Yet the ultimate outcome of the new "republicanism" was retrenchment of old socioeconomic alliances and forces. The black response is rebellion. Immediate white reaction is repression. But on another level white "thinking men" believed in a safer, possibly more successful method of dealing with black recalcitrance. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze and narrate the movements, primarily by Methodist laymen and Baptist planters, to convert the masses of Gullahs. These chapters also interpret Gullah responses to Christianity, slavery, and life in bondage. In Part IV the counterpoint technique is dropped. Throughout this book I attempt to present a picture of plantation life among Gullahs, as well as a view of slave religion and conversion. But Part IV is devoted fully to offering a presentation of Gullah socioreligious culture in a collective setting. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 sug-

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128 gest ways in which Gullahs interpreted Christianity, and how Africanity was integrated into Christianity, into attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I do not argue for direct, fixed, or unchanging transmission of African religion and culture. Yet persistence of traditional beliefs, embedded in a recently created society, is not remarkable. Nor [177] should we assume that traditional African customs and beliefs necessarily disintegrated before Christian and white cultural icons.[32] Still my aim is to demonstrate African-Gullah adaptability in their interaction with another major cultural form, and their capacity for change and meaningful continuity given the realities of new situations.

127 I rely heavily upon primary sources in this book, although my discus-
128 sion on African culture and cosmology is an exception. Here the emphasis is on secondary material. This was necessary since I aim to fuse history and anthropology into ethnohistory. It was not always possible to obtain sources directly from the Gullahs. Yet I have tried to articulate their social history by using sources at least derived from the Gullahs. Thus, missionary reports and sketches, spirituals, folk practices and customs, diaries, church minutes, and similar types of records are used extensively. Sources which support interpretations and historical depictions of white attitudes toward religious instruction are also mainly primary. And whenever applicable and possible, I attempted to incorporate current historiographical trends into this study.

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APPENDIX A

# Ethnic Origins of Carolina Slaves

This appendix explains my own tabulations for ethnic origins of Carolina slaves. A valuable source of information for studying African origins was published in four volumes by Elizabeth Donnan. Her works are based on primary sources consisting of ships' records, newspaper advertisements, records of the Royal African Company, the correspondence of Henry Laurens and other merchants, and various documents illustrating the pattern and magnitude of the international slave trade. Donnan's volume on the Southern colonies was particularly useful for examining the slave trade to Carolina because the records of that colony were so well preserved and because white Carolinians made a fetish of regional provenance where human cargo was concerned. From these data we obtain an impression of the coastal origins of many cargoes entering Charleston harbor, and it appears that Africans of the Windward Coast and Senegambia regions provided South Carolina with the majority of its forced laborers for nearly forty years. 127 567 175

Table A.1 represents my calculation of the ethnic origins of slaves entering South Carolina during the middle period of the international slave trade. It was compiled from a tabulation of lists of cargoes published by Elizabeth Donnan. Table A.2 is a rough numerical calculation of slaves identifiable by African origins entering Charleston during the middle period of the trade. Since many cargoes did not indicate size, our estimate for this unknown was based upon the average number of slaves on vessels which did indicate the size of their cargo. Deliberately ex- 175 567 128

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TABLE A.1

*Number and Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 102 | 32.4 |
| Windward Coast | 90 | 28.6 |
| Gold Coast | 54 | 17.2 |
| Bight of Benin | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 25 | 7.9 |
| Angola (including Gaboon and the Kongo) | 35 | 11.1 |
| Others: Whydah, Bance Island, Isle de Los | 9 | 2.8 |
| Total | 315 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935) vol. 4, passim; and *South Carolina Gazette*.

TABLE A.2

*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Est. Slaves* | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
| Senegambia | 66 | 10,499 | 36 | 5,724 | 102 | 16,223 |
| Windward Coast | 65 | 11,135 | 25 | 4,275 | 90 | 15,410 |
| Gold Coast | 37 | 6,240 | 17 | 2,856 | 54 | 9,096 |
| Angola | 33 | 7,480 | 2 | 454 | 35 | 7,934 |
| Bight of Benin | | | | | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 18 | 3,343 | 7 | 1,302 | 25 | 4,665 |
| Others | 7 | 956 | 2 | 274 | 9 | 1,230 |
| Total | 226 | 39,653 | 89 | 14,885 | 315 | 54,538 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

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cluded from tables A.1 and A.2 are those vessels which indicated only the West Indies as the source of origin. Such listings meant the slaves were purchased in the West Indies from an arriving African cargo, or that the ship had stopped in the West Indies and disposed of most of its African cargo. Cargoes listed as simply from the West Indies were usually quite small and often contained Creole New World-born slaves.

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APPENDIX E

# *Gullah Folkways*

Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

## *Folk Beliefs*

Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

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cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who was born and raised on Johns Island and became one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were interviewing people for the update to this book, Septima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

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•128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) (113) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

533 128 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 216 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

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• 128 WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK the following people for help and support in the publication of this book: Alan Lomax for consistent and continuing encouragement over the years; Myles Horton, who with his late wife, Zilphia, laid the groundwork on Johns Island for the citizenship school program and in the early 1960s encouraged us to make our home there; Ethel Raim for sensitive and skillful transcription of the music; Roger Phenix who helped us record and organize the material for the original book; all of the photographers represented here who contributed their photographs to the project; David Richer, a masterful photographer in Knoxville who has made the prints to be used for publication; Myrtle Glascoe-Greene and the Avery Institute for finding a home in the lowcountry for the original tapes and photographs; all the people on Johns and the surrounding islands who spent time with us helping to shape this new edition.

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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

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## PHOTOGRAPH IDENTIFICATIONS AND CREDITS

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All photographs through page 171 appeared in the 1986 edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* and are by Robert Yellin.

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128 insight at several points. My friend and colleague at
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128 was an invaluable source of comparative data. My human and intellectual debt to Nolan Pliny Jacobson, my former professor at Winthrop, is greater than either of us knows.

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12 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between
197 language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

1.3 Overview

121 Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied
128 in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer fE, a static-locative preposition (to), and the third person singular pronouns se and Em. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in bus
and the sound of the unstressed
vowel in Cuba

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# CHAPTER 2

## THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

### 2.0 Overview

•128 Section 2.1 describes the culture which developed in coastal South Carolina during the period of early European and West African settlement. The history of Georgetown County is summarized briefly in section 2.2, with a fuller discussion devoted to a closed community of West African heritage within this county in section 2.3.

### 2.1 Culture of Coastal South Carolina

175 Among the malaria-infested marshlands of coastal South Carolina, a culture developed between the early and mid-1700's, to which the roots of a distinctive Southern heritage might be traced. As the major port of entry of African slaves imported first from Barbados, and then directly from West Africa, Charleston and its environs provided both a center for acculturation into the ways of the European landowners, as well as a constantly renewed source of contact with West African cultural traditions. Acculturation of the European settlers into the ways of the Africans was inevitable as the population of the Carolina territory became predominately West African in origin by 1720, a dominance lasting

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# CHAPTER 3

## FIELD WORK PROCEDURES

### 3.0 Overview

121 Having been raised in the white community of an ad-
123 jacent county in South Carolina, I recognized early that establishing rapport with the black community in rural Georgetown County on the level conducive to good research would be one of the most difficult parts of the field work for the present study. Accordingly, I sought the advice of others who had done field work in rural South Carolina and in non-European communities in the southwest. Through J.
121 Herman Blake and his colleague, Triloki Pandey, of the University of California at Santa Cruz, I became aware of the concept of action anthropology, first developed in the work of anthropologists from the University of Chicago on the Fox Project in southern Iowa during the forties and fifties.
121 Since this concept has influenced greatly the procedures
128 followed in my field work on Gullah, I will discuss in section 3.1 the major issues addressed by action anthropology and their possible extension to action linguists. Section 3.2 will discuss the field worker's functions within the community, and section 3.3 will describe the collection of data.

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# CHAPTER 4

## LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

### 4.0 Overview

121 The present chapter deals with three grammatical
193 categories chosen to represent the changes now underway in Gullah. The syntactic functions of the three categories--complementizer, preposition, and pronoun--are clearly distinct from each other in this creole. The morphemes used for the creole and standard forms within each category are distinct phonetically from each other, for the most part. Older Gullah texts indicate that variation has been present within these categories for at least the past century; for the complementizer, change to standard forms is almost complete for most speakers in the area studied. For each cate-
121 gory, analysis of the systematic linguistic changes in
128 progress will be presented. Section 4.1 examines the pre-infinitival complementizer, section 4.2 a static locative preposition, and section 4.3 the third person singular pronouns. Section 4.4 summarizes these findings.

### 121 4.1 Complementizer

193 A number of recent papers have presented evidence that many languages have morphemes which function both as

121 case markers and as complementizers (Ferguson, 1970; Moravcsik, 1972a and 1972b; Gorbet, 1973; R. Clark, 1973; Hinds, 1973; Joseph, 1975). Washabaugh (1975) has presented evidence for the existence of similar morphemes in a number of creoles. In order to adequately explore these relationships between the complementizer and other syntactic categories in Gullah, section 4.1.1 will describe the uses of the morpheme fE for the grammatical categories of preposition, complementizer, and conditional marker. Section 4.1.2 will present an analysis of the functions of the pre-infinitival complementizer in Gullah, along with a discussion of the direction of change presently shown by this grammatical category. Section 4.1.3 will summarize historical developments in this category for English and will point to possible universal relationships which obtain between complementizers and case markers in creoles and in fully expanded languages.

193 4.1.1 Uses of fE in Gullah

The particle fE, phonetically [fə], is used as a complementizer in Gullah in pre-infinitival position. This morpheme is also used as a preposition and as a conditional marker on the verb. Examples of the three syntactic uses of the particle fE are given below:

PREPOSITION
Benefactive: (1) but yet I reckon they doing that fE the children wey go to school (S2)

'but yet I reckon they're doing that for the children who go to school'

000 bilong, formerly used as a possessive. As complementizer, bilong introduces purpose and result clauses, and seems to be restricted to non-finite verbs. Another particle long is locative and is used as a more general complementizer in Tok Pisin. Data on relational terms in other creoles is scant as yet, but a search for similar relationships between case markers and complementizers may confirm the existence of important universal processes associated with these grammatical categories.

A recent historical analysis by Lightfoot (1976) of for as used before infinitives in earlier stages of English suggests that this particle remained a preposition throughout the history of standard English, never becoming a true
193 complementizer. Whether or not this claim proves valid for standard English, it should be clear from the preceding discussion that fE in Gullah has been a true complementizer and retains this function longest for the introduction of clauses expressing purposive notions, notions which are associated also with the benefactive preposition fE and the almost extinct conditional marker fE.

4.2 Static-Locative Preposition to

• 128
193 The present section will deal with locative to, which can express both notions of 'movement toward' and 'position at' in Gullah. Its static-locative uses for the notion 'position at' will be examined for utterances such as:

Can we stay to the table?

•128 Variation between to and at for static location is now evi-
193 dent for most speakers, although texts of Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide only two examples of at used for this notion, one of which expresses a temporal rather than a spatial idea. Section 4.2.1 will discuss the functions of locative to in Gullah, 4.2.2 will summarize the history of to and at as locative prepositions in English and for some of the English-related creoles of the Caribbean, while the final section will present an analysis of the changes underway at present for this grammatical category in Gullah.

193 4.2.1 Functions of Locative to in Gullah

Locative relations are probably universally designated across languages, although by different grammatical
000 categories in specific languages. Catford (1968) has discussed the use of different grammatical markers in a variety of languages for indicating spatial and temporal relationships between objects. In Finnish, local case suffixes attached to the noun mark such relations. In Karbardian, a language of the Caucasus, prefixes are attached to the verb following the noun phrase. For French, prepositions before the noun phrase are used, as in English. Locative distinctions which can be made by such markers include non-dimensional notions of location, source, goal, and path; static and dynamic positional notions; and dimensional notions such as surface, interior and exterior. For standard English, a

4.3 Third Person Singular Pronouns

193 This section focuses on the personal pronouns of Gullah. The pronouns for third person often differ from those for first and second person across languages, in distinctions made for gender, place, and levels of politeness. The pronouns used for third person singular in Gullah are the subject of the present discussion. Usage for this grammatical category is not entirely stable in other varieties of English, especially in appositional and conjunctive structures where a pronoun marked for objective or accusative case often appears in subject position. Considerable variation is exhibited in Gullah at present in all forms used for third person singular. Only usage of single pronouns is included in the present study; examples of double pronouns such as he and I have been eliminated from consideration because they would require a more detailed consideration of their use in standard English than can be provided here.

• 128 193 Evidence from other English-related pidgins and creoles will be presented in section 4.3.1 and from historical stages and dialectal varieties of English in section 4.3.2 to show that the variation exhibited by the third person singular pronouns of Gullah is systematic and characteristic of a creole, not an historical dialect of English. Section 4.3.3 will discuss pronominal variation in Gullah.

193 The forms for the personal pronouns in Gullah found

19 creolized speech. Even though it is a difficult form to distinguish phonetically and the unaspirated form occurs in other modern dialects of English, ee as used for masculine subject was included in the Gullah analysis because I believed from the beginning that this was the basic subject form in all genders, and I wanted to see how long it persisted relative to other forms. As a masculine subject form, ee is counted in positions where it receives some sentence stress and would not be unaspirated in standard English.[8] The distribution given in Table 3 A indicates that this form persists very late for all subject forms, regardless of gender. For the speaker whose speech is most creolized (Speaker 2), some uses of standard it occur in object position while none occur for subject. Seven speakers who use predominately standard it in object position retain uses of ee for neuter subject. English, like other Indo-European languages, makes no distinction in the nominative and accusative cases for neuter pronouns. It is significant that Gullah has such a distinction early and keeps the distinction between ee for neuter subject and Em for neuter object until relatively late. This difference between Gullah and English is additional evidence for the creole origin of Gullah. The different order in which the pronouns of Gullah and those of Guyanese change toward the standard lends sup-

---

[8] I am indebted to Richard Janda and to Shirley Hicks for checking my phonetic analysis of these forms.

A. [For Table 3, see Category 193, p. 100--Analysis]

# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

121 197 The present chapter deals with the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the [123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult [124] speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic 128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

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128 the mobility patterns of the two sexes in the mainland community and on the river island. Section 5.4 will discuss the relationship between these social factors and the linguistic variation described in Chapter 4. A final section will provide a conclusion and brief summary of the findings of this study.

## 5.1 Sex of Speaker and Language Use

121 128 Because the existence of sex differences in language use has been one of the most thoroughly documented findings of sociolinguistic studies over the past two decades, a brief summary of these findings will be presented in 5.1.1. Data from the present study, which differ in important respects from data of earlier studies, will be presented in 5.1.2.

### 121 5.1.1 Previous Studies

When the present study was begun, it was expected that women would use more standard forms than men of comparable age and socio-economic status. For the island community, this generally proved to be the case. In the mainland community, however, women in the oldest age group used significantly more creole and nonstandard variants for the three grammatical categories analyzed than did men in their group. Previous studies have generally found that females use more standard forms in their speech than men of their age and social class. Fischer's study (1958) in a New England

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

•128 My chairman Dr. Ernest D. Washington really made this research possible. His guidance and patience ultimately underlie the completion of this dissertation. I valued the expertise and input of the other committee members, Drs. Johnnetta B. Cole and Gloria I. Joseph.

To the Sea Island families I offer my sincere indebtness. While I can not cite all the families who should be named, I must mention these families: Burns, Smith, Brown, Magwood, Gadsen, Blake, Seabrooke, Choice, and Washington.

It is the Godly wisdom and strength of my grandparents Martin and Carrie Burns that I relied on so heavily in conceptualizing the spirit of this effort. My mother Marie B. Smith, sister Theodosia, and brothers Theodore and William provided the reflective references I needed in completing this task.

114 I am indebted to my wife Debra, and children Samantha and Nestor whom lived through the ordeals of this dissertation with me. Without the support of Ruth, Craig and Corey Washington this effort would have been immensely more difficult.

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•128 Finally to Don and Dona Ojeda, and to their children Nestor, Mario, and Maria I am eternally indebted for the comparative references they provide.

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124 Consequently, this procedure was relaxed to some degree during the actual interviews.

123 Had not the researcher been a native of the Sea Islands this research effort would have been immensely more difficult. In part this difficulty could be attributable to the workings of other researchers in this area. In particular, many of the islanders voiced deep concern over the book written by Carawan Ain't we Got a Right to the Tree of Life. These islanders felt this work was by no means an accurate representation of their life style or beliefs. But because of the native heritage of the researcher many families agreed to participate in hopes of the writer being more able to accurately present the ethos of the Sea Island people.

128 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical inference was the method of data analysis. The chi-square and the Fisher Exact Test were used to compute significance at either the .05, .01 or .001 level. The following analysis of relationship between the variables island, generation, and sex were conducted:

I Island (1,2,3,4,5) by questions one thru thirteen.

II Generation (1,2,3) by questions one thru thirteen.

III Sex (1,2) by questions one thru thirteen.

IV Island by generation by questions one thru thirteen.

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V Island by sex by questions one thru thirteen.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

I a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_0$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

II a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_0$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

III a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_3$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

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DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

The research is not clear on how discipline is applied in extended family situations. In households in which grandparents are present there is more opportunity for value transmission. One result may be less variation in discipline behavior across generations. The extended family structure no doubt adds to the chance for value conflicts to occur. However, the high cultural status accorded Sea Island elders may tend to negate the chance for the occurrence of value conflicts. It is also likely that younger Sea Islanders whose values conflict with their parents may

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## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

861 The results reported here are on the use of physical discipline. In this review it must be emphasized that use of physical discipline is by no means exclusive; but rather is but one type of interaction in the overall discipline pattern. Verbal discipline interactions are very much a dimension of the broader pattern. To regard the use of physical discipline as the only or even as the dominant interaction to the neglect of other is a serious error in judgement.

•128 The data organization and analysis represented in Tables 4, 5, and 6, are the one by one organization (1-1-1-1-1) where each one represents one Island.

128 861 VARIABLE OF ISLAND

A Chi Square was not computed on question one, because all respondents reported use of physical and verbal discipline. Question one was, "Waak kin ob punishment di ya use?" A .02 level of significance was found between the variable of island and question two, "How oben beetn fer dis?" The responses were: <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. The Chi Square value was found to be 40.46 with 8 degrees of

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 57]

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TABLE 4

(1-1-1-1-1) ISLAND

| Variables | Chi Square | df | Critical Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Island by Question 2 | 18.69 | 8 | 18.17 | .02 * |
| " " " 3 | 40.40 | 16 | 39.29 | .001 |
| " " " 4 | 19.39 | 20 | 31.41 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 5 | 5.13 | 8 | 15.51 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 6 | 10.22 | 16 | 26.30 (.05) | NS * |
| " " " 7 | 34.84 | 20 | 31.41 | .05 |
| " " " 8 | 19.66 | 16 | 26.30 (.05) | NS * |
| " " " 9 | 42.40 | 24 | 40.27 | .02 |
| " " " 10 | 9.35 | 12 | 21.03 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 11 | 11.08 | 12 | 21.03 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 12 | 4.49 | 8 | 15.51 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 13 | 27.60 | 28 | 41.34 (.05) | NS |

*Null test question

TABLE 5

(1-1-1-1-1) GENERATION

| Variables | Chi Square | df | Critical Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Generation by Question 2 | 15.36 | 4 | 13.28 | .01 * |
| " " " 3 | 17.74 | 8 | 15.51 | .05 |
| " " " 4 | 114.74 | 10 | 29.59 | .001 |
| " " " 5 | 61.78 | 4 | 18.46 | .001 |
| " " " 6 | 2.96 | 4 | 9.49 (.05) | NS * |
| " " " 7 | 3.89 | 5 | 11.07 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 8 | 26.73 | 8 | 26.12 | .001 * |
| " " " 9 | 11.25 | 12 | 21.03 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 10 | 11.10 | 3 | 9.84 | .02 |
| " " " 11 | 34.80 | 6 | 22.46 | .001 |
| " " " 12 | 44.82 | 4 | 18.46 | .001 |
| " " " 13 | 44.38 | 14 | 36.12 | .001 |

*Null test question

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TABLE 6

(1-1-1-1-1) SEX

| Variables | Chi Square | df | Critical Value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex by Question 2 | 2.11 | 2 | 5.99 | NS * |
| " " " 3 | 41.26 | 4 | 18.46 | .001 |
| " " " 4 | 11.28 | 5 | 11.07 | .05 |
| " " " 5 | 2.73 | 2 | 5.99 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 6 | 8.80 | 4 | 9.49 (.05) | NS * |
| " " " 7 | 15.28 | 5 | 15.09 | .01 |
| " " " 8 | 15.42 | 4 | 13.28 | .01 * |
| " " " 9 | 5.76 | 6 | 12.59 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 10 | .07 | 3 | 7.82 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 11 | 5.04 | 3 | 7.82 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 12 | 3.37 | 2 | 5.99 (.05) | NS |
| " " " 13 | 13.57 | 7 | 14.07 (.05) | NS |

*Null test question

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freedom (df). The critical value was 39.29. Forty-one percent of the Yonges Island, and 37.5% of Edisto respondents said that they were beaten for a social behavior <u>everytime</u>. On the near islands, only 4.2% of the respondents indicated the <u>everytime</u> response. Consistently 66.7% of the James and 83.3% of the Johns Island respondents selected the <u>often</u> response. The responses were somewhat consistent across the islands in the percents saying they were beaten sometime. From James to Edisto, these percents were: 29.2, 8.3, 16.7, 29.2.

The relationship between the variable of island and question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beetn?" was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The responses were: <u>Fourteen to Sixteen</u>, <u>Seventeen to Nineteen</u>, <u>Twenty to Twenty-two</u>, <u>Twenty-three to Twenty-five</u> and <u>Twenty-five to Thirty</u>. The Chi Square value was 10.22 at 16 df, the critical value was 26.30, the highest percent (25%) of respondents who indicated that their last beating were between 14-16 years were residents of Edisto and Wadmalaw. Twelve point five percent of the other islanders agreed. Over 57% of the islanders said beatings ended between 17-23 years. Six point three percent of the James Islanders said beatings were continued into the 25-27 range.

The relationship between the variable of island and question eight, "Wen ya wax gitten d mas beetn, how oben?"

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was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The Chi Square value was 19.66 while the critical value at 16 df was 26.30; the responses were: Six or less times per year, one time a month, three times a month, once weekly, twice weekly. None of the James Islanders said physical discipline was metered out as infrequently as six times a year. In contrast 16.7% of the Johns, Yonges and Edisto Islanders said beatings were this infrequently. Four point two percent of the James, and 8.3% of the Wadmalaw respondents said beatings during their peak periods were as frequent as twice weekly. None of the respondents on the other islands said beatings were this frequent. Over 68% of all the islanders indicated that the frequency of beating was between one to three times a month.

TEST OF THE ISLAND NULL
HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

1. Question two, "How oben beatn fer dis?" was used to test $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$. This question is a measure of the relationship between the frequency with which use of physical punishment followed asocial behavior and island affiliation. The Chi Square value was 18.69, while the critical value at 8 df was 18.17. This relationship was significant at the .02 level. With a .02

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significance level, $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ was rejected in favor of the alternative $H_1$: $M_1 \neq M_2$.

2. Two tangential tests of this $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ were conducted. Questions six and eight were used for this purpose. Question six, "Hew ole ya wan ya git d last beetn?" is in essence a measure of the relationship between the duration of use of physical punishment and island affiliation. As such this relationship was considered as a tangential measure of the Null Hypothesis. The Chi Square value for question six and island affiliation was 10.22, while the critical value at 16 df was 26.30 (.05). In this case the chance hypothesis was uphelded.

3. Question eight, "Wen ya waz gitten de mas beetn, how oben?" was a measure of the frequency of beetns during peak disciplinary stages and island affiliation. While this relationship was a more direct measure of the Null Hypothesis than question six it was still a tangential test. The Chi Square value was 19.66, while the critical value at .05 with 16 df was 26.30. The Null Hypothesis was upheld. The two tangential tests supported retention of the Null Hypothesis. However because of the directness of the first test and the determined significance power (02), the Null Hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative $H_1$: $M_1 \neq M_2$.

4. Although the most direct test of the relationship between

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island affiliation and use of physical punishment was significant at the .02 level, the alternative hypothesis was upheldeb with some reservation. This caution is warranted because the majority of the island relationships were nonsignificant. For example parents across the five islands indicated that both sexes received the same punishment (question 5). Similarly, there were nonsignificant relationships between island affiliation and: (a) the boundaries of asocial behavior (question 9), (b) use of both beating and scolding in discipline (question 11), and (c) the generations across the islands indicated similar problems in rearing today's children in the traditional mold (question 10).

VARIABLE GENERATION

Significance was determined at the .01 level for the relationship between variable of generations and question two, "How oben beetn fer dis?" The responses were <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. Chi Square was computed at 13.36 with 4 df. The critical value was 13.28. Forty-six point four percent of the children indicated they were punished <u>often</u> and <u>sometime</u>. While 14.3% of the parents indicated punishment was <u>sometime</u> and 60.7% said <u>often</u>. Conversely, 28.6% of the grandparents and 25% of the parents said they were punished <u>everytime</u>. Only 7.1% of the children indicated they were punished <u>everytime</u>.

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•128 861 At the .05 rejection level the relationship between the variable of generation and question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beatn?" was significant. The responses were: Fourteen to Sixteen, Seventeen to Nineteen, Twenty to Twenty-two, Twenty-three to Twenty-five, Twenty-seven to Thirty, with 4 df the critical value was 9.49, the Chi Square value was 2.96. Twenty-five percent of the grandparents and 10.7% of the parents said beatings were terminated between 14-16 years. Fifty percent of the parents and 39.2% of the grandparents said beatings end between 17-19 years. Thirty-five point seven percent of the grandparents and 39.4% of the parents indicated beatings were continued after the youngster reached 20 years.

The relationship between question eight, "Wen ya was gitten d mas beatn, how oben?" and the variable of generations was significant at the .001 level. The responses
861 were: six or less a year, one a month, three a month, one a week and two a week. Twenty-eight point six percent of the grandparents said they were beaten six or less times per year, while only 3.6% of the parents shared this frequency pattern. Sixty point seven percent of the grandparents, 46.4% of the parents and 39.3% of the children shared the one beating per month pattern. Seventeen point nine percent of the children and parents reported beatings as frequently as one per week. Three point six percent

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861

rejected in favor of the alternative $H_2$: $M_1 = M_2 \neq M_3$.

3. Significant generational differences in discipline behavior and attitudes were clearly noted. As a matter of fact nine of the generational relationships were significant. Five of these relationships were significant at the .001 level. It is extremely clear that the generations differ in application of and in attitudes about discipline. There were however, nonsignificant differences across the generations relative to: (a) the age at which children are no longer beaten (question 6), (b) the causes of the last beating (question 7), and (c) on the boundaries of asocial behavior (question 9).

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VARIABLE OF SEX

The relationship between the variable of sex and question two, "Hov oben beetn fer dis?" was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The responses were: <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. The critical value was 5.99 at 2 df the Chi Square was 2.11. Sixteen point two of the males and 32.4% of the females said the <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio was used by their parents. Fifty-four percent of the males and 59.6% of the females thought physical discipline often followed asocial acts. More males (29.7%) selected the <u>sometime</u> reaction ratio than did the females (77%).

The relationship between the variable of sex and

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question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beetn?" was nonsignificant. The responses were: Fourteen to Sixteen, Seventeen to Ninetoen, Twenty to Twenty-two, Twenty-three to Twenty-five, and Twenty-seven to Thirty. The Chi Square value was 8.80. The critical value at 4 df was 9.49. Twenty-seven point three percent of the females and 4.3% of the males said they received their last beating between 14-16 years respectively. Thirty-nine point one percent and 48% of the males and females said their last beatings were between 17-19. Twenty-four point three percent of the females said they were beaten after age 20. This compares to 66.5% if the males who were beaten after age 20.

The relationship between the variable of sex and question eight, "Wen ya was gitten d mas beetn, how oben?" was significant at .01. The responses were: Six or less a year, one a month, three a month, one a week and two a week. Only 5.4 percent of both sexes said beatings during peak periods were as frequent as twice weekly. Seventeen percent of the females said they received six or less beatings per year, which compares to a 2.7 percent for males. Thirty-five point one percent of the males and 59.6 percent of the females said beatings were no more frequent than once a month. Seventeen percent of the females and 35.1 percent of the males reported beatings as frequent as three times per month. Weekly beatings were reported by 21.6% of the

128 861 males and 9.4% of the females.

TEST OF THE SEX NULL
HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

128 86 Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

1. This was a measure of the relationship between the variable of sex and use of physical punishment. The rationale which applied to the use of questions two and eight in the above two cases also applies here. Question five, "Bo n Gal beet d sami?" was also used in this test. In this case question five is the most direct measure of the relationship between sex and use of physical punishment. Under question five the relationship was nonsignificant at .05. The critical value with 2 df was 5.99, while the Chi Square value was 2.73. The relationship was also nonsignificant under question two, the Chi Square value was 2.11 with 2 df the critical value was 5.99 at the .05 level of significance.
2. The relationship was significant under question eight. The critical value with 5 df was 13.28, while the Chi Square value was 15.42. The level of significance was .01. Because the direct and one of the tangential test were nonsignificant, the $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ was upheld.
3. Only four of the relationships between the sex of the respondent and discipline practices and beliefs were

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significant. The broad inference is that male and female Sea Islanders are closely agreed in their discipline attitudes and behaviors. They were not agreed however relative to the question of the causes of punishment.

4. This relationship was significant at the .001 level. Males tend to indicate that fighting was the primary cause of punishment, while females indicated chores as the prime cause. The sexes were not agreed (.05) about the age at which children are too old for physical punishment. However the dominant tendency was for the sexes to be agreed. Enlight of the eight relationship in which there were nonsignificant differences between the sexes, the null or chance hypothesis was retained.

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| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | bɪnɔ | bɪn | dɔ | STEM |
| 12 | | | 6 | 4 | 10 | | | | 4 | 26 |
| 7 | 1 | | *10 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 13 | | | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 10 |
| 4 | | | *6 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 6 | 8 | 30 |
| 14 | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 12 |
| 15 | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 16 | | | | | 6 | | 2 | 3 | | 21 |
| 17 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 15 |
| 18 | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 19 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 6 |
| 20 | | | *5 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| 21 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 8 | 12 |
| 10 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 26 |
| 6 | 1 | | *9 | | 2 | 6 | | 7 | 5 | 25 |
| 22 | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 24 |
| 24 | | | 4 | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 3 | 12 |
| 8 | | | 5 | | | | 2 | 5 | 7 | 22 |
| 5 | | | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 21 |
| 3 | | | 5 | | 1 | | 5 | 9 | 7 | 23 |
| 23 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 35 |
| 2 | | | *8 | | 5 | | 1 | 5 | 10 | 30 |
| Totals | 2 | 0 | 69 | 11 | 62 | 27 | 35 | 70 | 71 | 378 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

*-s* = third person singular verb
*-ed* = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
*-ing* = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb *to be* excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.1
OUTPUT OF TWENTY-ONE SPEAKERS

[128] The numerals in the columns represent the number of times each speaker used the given forms over a period of time. For example, within a limited time span, speaker number 2 used thirty bare stem verbs, the pre-verbal marker /dɔ/ ten times, and /bɪn/ five times. He used some form of the English verb *to be* eight times, but included in these times are at least four occurrences of *was* and /bɪn/ uttered in conjunction as in *I was bin there*, or used in a non-standard construction such as *I was come out the house* 'I came out of the house.'

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| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *-s* | *-ed* | *be* | dɔz | *-ing* | dɔŋ | bɪnə | bɪn | də | STEM |
| 12 | | | *6 | 4 | 10 | | | | 4 | 26 |
| 7 | 1 | | *10 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 13 | | | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 10 |
| 14 | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 12 |
| 17 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 15 |
| 18 | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 20 | | | *5 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | 29 | 7 | 30 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 5 | 85 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

*-s* = third person singular verb
*-ed* = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
*-ing* = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb *to be* excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.3
PRE-MESOLECTAL SPEAKERS

there is little data to indicate movement in the verbal suffix *-s* category. There are only two tokens for the whole group and each of these tokens is an example of faulty concord produced by a husband and wife. The other nineteen speakers adhere to the Creole pattern where there is no subject-verb concord at all.

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193

Linguistic changes in other categories are obscured in the distribution. To normalize the findings and to give greater accountability to the data, Table 2.1 is divided in order to separate those speakers who show greater familiarity with English from those speakers who show greater retentions from the Creole. Of the twenty-one consultants, fourteen reveal features more characteristic of the basilect, and these fourteen are represented in Table

115

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| | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | bine | bin | de | STEM |
| Basilectal | 2 | 0 | 60 | 6 | 48 | 24 | 48 | 79 | 102 | 440 |
| Pre-mesolectal | 3 | 0 | 87 | 21 | 90 | 33 | 9 | 51 | 15 | 225 |

TABLE 2.4
PROPORTIONATE OUTPUT OF TWENTY-ONE SPEAKERS

Values obtained by extrapolation of data in Tables 2.2 and 2.3.

•128 193 [115]

2.2. Though the division is not clearly defined, the remaining seven speakers are considered pre-mesolectal because their speech patterns indicate greater movement from the preverbs /de/, /bɪn/, bine/ and /dɔŋ/. Equal useage of both English and Creole markers, suggesting a mesolectal speaker, was not apparent in the sample. The data from Tables 2.1 through 2.3 are summarized in Table 2.4. Here, the proportionate useage and frequency of occurrence of basilectal and pre-mesolectal forms in the total population are shown. For example, in proportion to the total population, the speakers in Table 2.2 use /bine/ five times more frequently than those in Table 2.3. These data were obtained by extrapolation. The specific pattern of movement and direction of change in individual categories can only be revealed by discussing particular variants.

## 2.1. The Verb Stem

The numerals in the verb stem column represent the total number of times an uninflected verb is used by a

128 a speaker. The difference in that number and the figures
193 in the preverbal and postverbal columns would reveal the frequency with which the verb appears in the absence of a marker. Cases where the stem count does not exceed the cumulative categorical count are cases where one or more English or Creole forms appear in the absence of a stem verb.

Table 2.1 shows a significant number of verb stems used by all consultants. Plausible reasons for the use of verb stems in such great frequency are that they express both tense and aspect, occur with all pre-verbal markers, and occur independently in nominal constructions. For
193 example, the following constructions were obtained by asking the consultant to produce semantic equivalents of: *I shell peas daily, I am shelling them now, I shelled them yesterday, I have been shelling them all day, I have finished shelling them, I had finished shelling them a long time ago.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔɪ ʃɛlɛm | 'I shell them' (tenseless) | (1) |
| ɔɪ dɔ ʃɛlɛm | 'I am shelling them' | |
| ɔɪ bɪn ʃɛlɛm | 'I shelled them' | |
| ɔɪ bɪnɔ ʃɛlɛm | 'I have been shelling them' | |
| ɔɪ dɔn ʃɛlɛm | 'I have shelled them' | |
| ɔɪ bɪndɔn ʃɛlɛm | 'I had shelled them some time ago' | |

193 The fact that Creole verb stems have not been replaced
177 by standard English inflections indicates that it is more natural to retain an invariant verb stem than to acquire a new rule for a different system of marking. Consequently,

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121 pronouns were tested because sex reference is generally
193 marked in English by these forms.

The corpus included twenty speakers selected from the Island, ranging in age from ten to ninety-six years. A quantitative survey was taken of the pronominal distribution for each speaker.[7] Nine were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and on the range of pronouns used. These nine consultants are among the ones who assisted in the verb study as well.

Though the concern of this chapter is third person singular pronouns, Table 3.1 is presented to show the distribution for a range of pronominal possibilities in Gullah.

193 All of the following variants are used by the nine
(115) consultants, though all are seldom used by the same consultant:

GULLAH THIRD PERSON SINGULAR CASE PRONOUN VARIANTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Nominative*** | ***Variants*** | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i hi | 'he' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i hi ʃi | 'she' |
| *neuter* | ɪm i ɪt | 'it' |
| ***Objective*** | | |
| *masculine* | ɔm i hɪm | 'him' |
| *feminine* | ɔm i ʃi hɜr | 'her' |
| *neuter* | ɔm i ɪt | 'it' |
| ***Possessive*** | | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i ɪz hɪz | 'his' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i ʃi hɜr | 'her' |

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the distribution and percentage of occurrence of each variant. Nichols' study
[128] on pronominal variation in Gullah, undertaken on a neigh-

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| | PIRST PERSON | | SECOND PERSON | | THIRD PERSON | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S | P | S | P | S | P |
| NOMINATIVE | ɔɪ / mi (I / me) | βi (we) | uno / ju (you) | jɔl (y'all) uno / ju (you) | M, F, N } i (he) | dɛm (them) |
| OBJECTIVE | mi (me) | | | | M, F, N } ɔm (him) | |
| POSSESSIVE | | -uon (own) -sɛf (self) | ju / -uon (you) (own) / -sɛf (self) | -uon (own) -sɛf (self) | M, F, N } i-uon | dɛm (them) -uon (own) -sɛf (own) |

The pronouns are described phonetically because Gullah speakers use forms which do not have English counterparts. Some forms were selected from among others because of their frequency of occurrence. For example, /una/ marking second person singular and plural has parallels in Igbo and Jamaican Creole (see Turner 1949 and Bailey 1966). /i/ and /ɔm/ are general markers for third person nominative and objective cases. The practice of not distinguishing gender is paralleled in Igbo, Gã, and Yoruba (Turner 1949).

TABLE 3.1
PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN GULLAH

•[128] boring island in Georgetown County, revealed similar results for third person pronouns, though I altered her phonetic symbols to conform with my system of marking:

*Nominative*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | i | hi | ɪt | |
| *feminine* | i | hi | hɔz | ʃi |
| *neuter* | i | hi | ɪt | |

*Objective*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | ɔm | ɪt | hɪm | |
| *feminine* | ɔm | ʃi | hɔz | |
| *neuter* | ɔm | i | ɪt | |

*Possessive*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | i | hi | hɪm | hɪz | |
| *feminine* | i | hi | ʃi | hɪz | hɔz |
| *neuter* | i | | | | |

(Nichols 1976:84)

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193 i it em 'He hit it' (7)

Variant forms and their frequency of occurrence offer a clue to the stages of pronominal acquisition in Gullah. Following the model that Bickerton outlined for Guyanese (128) Creole, I divided each stage of development into three groups consisting of forms representing, in each case,

1) masculine, feminine, and neuter subject /
2) masculine and feminine possessive /
3) masculine, feminine, neuter objects,

respectively. The data for third person singular pronouns suggest on the whole that the language is decreolizing but not as rapidly as some have predicted. There is a 193 progression from the system first noted by Turner (1949: 197 227):

im im im / im im / em em em

While each speaker displays variation in the choice of pronouns, a compilation of the MOST dominant forms reveals that the consultants in this study maintain a genderless pronominal system:

i i i / i i / em em em

A similar study of linguistic change in Gullah was undertaken recently quite independent of my own. The study reveals identical findings:

> On the basis of both distribution across categories and frequency of occurrence, the two basic creole forms for Gullah third person pronouns of singular number are here identified as oo for both nominative and possessive cases and em for objective case. (Nichols 1976:101)

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194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 539 The following texts are included in this study primarily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more [193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fe/, the introductory verb /sie/, the future marker /go/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /ɸ/ and /w/; /ɸ/ and /f/; /t/ for initial /ð/ and /θ/; and /e/ and /ɪ/ for /e/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, [126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

128 outside interferences in some tapes made with a group or
539 outside in open fields where birds and other natural noises
126 interfered with the clarity of the recording. In such cases the notation (...) is used to indicate that a shorter passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

128 Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a single bar: /

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline: ~

English translations of the preverbal markers and the third person pronominal forms often misrepresent the Creole utterance. The following notations are used to symbolize these forms:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (3 ɗn) | third person | masculine | nominative | |
| (3 ʔn) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕn) | " | " | neuter | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | possessive |
| (3 ʔp) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | objective |
| (3 ʔo) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕo) | " | " | neuter | " |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | Present continuative | /da/ |
| (PAC) | Past " | /bɪna/ |
| (T) | Tense indicator | /dɪn/ |
| (C) | Completive | /dɔŋ/ |
| (E) | Existential | /da/ |
| (Eq) | Equative | /da/ |
| (L) | Locative | /da/ |

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S 121 193 regarded BASILECT as that speech variety which is farthest from standard (#10, the acrolect). MESOLECT has been used to refer to that variety falling approximately midway (#5). All intermediate varieties may be recognized by the prefixes *pre-* or *post-*. These terms, however, should be understood to represent gradations of a speech continuum with one grade merging into the other in a manner similar to a color spectrum. They are not to be regarded as separate entities (see Bailey 1974, DeCamp 1968, Bickerton 1975). Cunningham (1970:67) says the past progressive results from a combination of *been* + *da* + /bɪnə/. It is S [128] written /bɪnə/ in this study. The slash marks (/ /) are used to represent broad phonetic rather than strictly phonemic transcription.

S 193 3. The *-ing* morphemes appear in the basilect, but generally in relation to /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* as the progressive aspect marker.

A 121 193 4. For opposing arguments see Krapp (1924), McDavid and McDavid (1951). For arguments for a creole origin see Stewart (1967), Dillard (1972), Rickford (1974), and Bickerton (1970).

A 193 5. Black dialect consultants 25, 26 and 27 assure me that the *-s* suffix is used consistently to mark all persons and numbers by some speakers.

S 193 6. For more detailed discussion, see Cunningham 1970.

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɔ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island

## Acknowledgments

122 In the twenty-five years of research represented in the collection of slave songs, 128 from which the comparatively few examples in this book have been culled, aid has been given me that words can never repay. Without the help of its many friends, this music of the Georgia Sea Islands could not have been preserved. Two of its admirers gave generous support in the four frightening years following 1930. One provided the funds needed to continue the work when the chastened Negroes would do for a quarter what they will not do today for a dollar; the other contributed her time, thought and general assistance.

114 I wish that the names of all who have shared in this work could be given, but 115 over a period of years I have become indebted to so many associates that it is inadvisable to mention more than those whose coöperation has produced far-reaching results.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Parsons of Lakeville, Connecticut, and Wassaw Island, and the late Augustus Oemler of Savannah and St. Catherine's Island, gave me in February, 1909, my first opportunity to hear the singing of primitive slave songs on the coast of Georgia.

In later years the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jones, of Sea Island, furnished an opportunity to hear similar songs on Sapelo Island.

The friendly interest of the late Mrs. Clifton of The Ridge, McIntosh County, made me acquainted with the "ring-shout," which is so rarely seen, even by Southerners, that few realize "shouting" is a religious dance of African origin, and not a loud cry.

The Misses Dent, of Hofwyl Plantation, on the mainland in Glynn County, generously shared their knowledge of the songs that descendants of their family's slaves have been encouraged to preserve.

In Camden County, Mr. Chacey Kuehn, of Satilla Pines and New York City, gave valuable help in locating the best singers in the neighborhood of Tompkins, Burnt Fort, and Jerusalem.

The late Howard E. Coffin never lost an opportunity to share with others his delight in the slave songs. The applause of the cosmopolitan audiences he assembled at

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114 Salem County, New Jersey, where they found sanctuary among the Friends.[4] One of the stations of the underground railroad was located in our community, and the consideration shown the runaway and manumitted slaves caused them to settle there in such numbers that by 1840 they needed, and built, a large two-story church, and, after emancipation, still another. In my childhood they so greatly outnumbered the white voters that we had a colored overseer of the roads. At that time there was no lack of spontaneous music and laughter among them. However, in the late eighties, when a railroad was put through their village, the sophisticated Philadelphia Negroes were enabled to show the country cousins that they were hopelessly out-of-date. Then it was that the dull but stylish hymns of the white man supplanted those of the old régime, and standardized behaviour became the rule.

114 533 I did not hear the slave songs again until I visited the coast of Georgia in 1909. As we all know, opportunity rarely knocks more than once, and this time I took steps to insure that the songs should not escape me. Herein, I believe, rests my right to know something about them.

The Negroes frankly say that it was a good thing I arrived on St. Simon's when I did, and I know that if I had been there years earlier I could have saved many priceless songs which are now lost. These primitive songs—like the carvings of Africa—had been ridiculed, and the Negroes were ashamed to sing them in the presence of strangers. It took considerable brain-cudgeling to find a way to overcome their feeling that the traditional mode of expression was peculiar and old-fashioned, and to show the singers that many white people recognized its beauty.[5] As can be seen from the photographs illustrating this book, these colored people have regained faith in their birthright—and I hope it will last.

Another question asked me is the reason for avoiding the term "spiritual." To-(128) day it is applied to almost any religious song in Negro dialect, regardless of its age or

[4] *From the probated will of the Quaker, John Fenwick, it is evident that in 1683 there was one "Black" too many in our settlement. He disinherited his "grand childe Elizabeth Adams totally . . . except the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgresceen against him, me & her poore father, by giving her true repentance & forsakeing yt Black yt hath beene the ruine of her . . ." About 12 miles south-east of Salem is a town called Othello and a few miles farther east is Gouldtown where Elizabeth and her "blackamoor" are said to have located.*

[5] *For years I tried to think of a way to rekindle interest in the old songs. In the dark of a wintry four A. M., I awakened with the full-blown answer: form a society and admit only those who could sing in the old way. The plan was nothing but good common sense—and it has worked.*

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114 origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps 175 supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

[6] Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.

[7] Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.

[8] Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro

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533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

533 128 126 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more (199) than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or ex cathedra musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

Olin Downes

*New York City*
*February 16, 1942*

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave (533) songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of (128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of (171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what 761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song: As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(787) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence old me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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## PREFACE

THIS VOLUME is one of three which have grown out of a study of Negro culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, made under the joint auspices of the Institute for Research in Social Science of the University of North Carolina and the Social Science Research Council. *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., contains a comprehensive treatment of the whole round of life on St. Helena Island today, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, sets forth the historical antecedents of the culture of the sea island region. 12 14 (122)

The present volume deals with certain major aspects of the folk culture of St. Helena Island, namely, dialect, folk songs, and folklore. The section on dialect attempts to describe the Gullah dialect traits. The section on folk songs describes the status of folk songs on St. Helena Island today and then digresses at some length upon the question of the relation of American Negro music to English and American folk music. The general reader may be disappointed in such a discussion, but I feel that this is the time and place for it to be put forth. Mr. Ballanta's excellent collection entitled *St. Helena Island Spirituals* makes it unnecessary for me to publish additional spirituals. At the same time, his work, with its insistence on the African origin of the various characteristics of the Negro spirituals, makes it imperative that someone point out that there is much to be said for a white ancestry for the music of the spirituals. This I have attempted to do, the result being somewhat supplementary to Mr. Bal- 128. 128 114

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•128 114 lanta's contributions, and at the same time something of a note of caution to those who are too quick to ascribe to Africa the peculiarities of American Negro folk music.

The final section sketches briefly the folklore of St. Helena Island, with enough illustrative material to lend concreteness to the outline. It should be read as supplementary to the larger work, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, by Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons, published by the American Folk-Lore Society in 1923.

It would be proper to include in the present work an account of the customs, folkways, and mores of the Islanders, but since these are ably treated in T. J. Woofter, Jr.'s, *Black Yeomanry*, I have omitted them in order to avoid duplication.

128 [127] I am indebted to numerous persons on St. Helena Island for generously contributing folk songs, folk tales, and other folk material; especially to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn School, for facilitating the collection of data in many ways; to Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, for reading the section on dialect and making valuable suggestions; to Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson, of the University of Mississippi, for reading the entire manuscript and making critical notations, some of which I have incorporated into the work; to Professor Harold S. Dyer, Head of the Department of Music, University of North Carolina, for reading the section on folk songs; to Miss Katharine Jocher, of the Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, for assistance in preparing the manuscript for the press; to

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Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the study of St. Helena Island, for constant interest and advice in the work; and to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a summer at Triuna Island, Lake George, where the preparation of the manuscript was begun. 128

G. B. J.

Chapel Hill
July, 1930

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[15]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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194 comes *laak*, *spark* is *spaak*, and *palm* is *paam*. These flat *a* sounds are merely survivals of English dialect speech.[16] They are still found in England, and they are common among the low-country white people in South Carolina.[17] Their frequency gives a flat tinge to the whole Gullah dialect.

In words like *father*, *water*, *watch*, the *a*, not being affected by an *r* or an *l*, is pronounced practically the same as in standard English, although local and individual variations occur, ranging from the flat *a* of the type mentioned above to the broad *a* of *father*.

(*a*, as in *hat*)

Many words which in the standard language have this sound of *a* have in Gullah the broad *a*, as in *father*. Acoustically this sound is about the same as the *o* in *hot*, *pot*, etc. Thus we hear *mon*, *bock*, *plont*, *robbit*, *foctry*, for *man*, *back*, *plant*, *rabbit*, *factory*. This *a* sound gives some strange effects when used with words having the flat *a*. Thus *daak mon* for *dark man*, *maash lon* for *marsh land*. Occasionally *back* is pronounced *beck* [pɛt]. In England the prevailing sound of *a* in these words was broad, with a sprinkling of narrow *a* in the southern counties.

[128] In order that the general reader may not be disturbed over phonetic symbols which mean nothing to him, I have not used any symbols other than the conventional alphabet. However, by means of bracketed words I have tried to describe the various sounds accurately, so that any phoneticist may translate them into his system if he desires. A word inclosed in brackets indicates the vowel sound meant in a certain spelling. For example, the statement that "*cost* is pronounced *caust* [hool]" means that the vowel sound *au* is to be pronounced exactly like the *au* in *haul*.

[16] See *English Dialect Grammar*, Chap. I, also pp. 30-32, also index under various words having this *a* sound. Hereafter this work will be referred to in footnotes as *E. D. G.*

[17] *Pas* and *mas* for *pa* and *ma*, *maash* for *marsh*, and many others are frequent.

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*Consonants*

194 [128] The points wherein the consonants in the dialect differ from the standard language will now be indicated. For simplicity I am taking the consonants in alphabetical order rather than classifying them as liquids, labials, gutturals, etc., as is sometimes done.

*b.* This consonant is sometimes omitted in the medial position in words such as *nummuh*, number, *rammle*, ramble, *grumlin*, grumbling, etc. Similar pronunciations are found among uncultivated whites, who inherited them from England. Wright says, *b* "hardly ever occurs in any of the dialects between *m-l* or *m-r* in such words as *bramble*, *thimble*, *chamber*, *number*."[31]

In some words medial *b* is changed to *v*. Thus *navuh*, neighbor, *lavuh*, labor.[32] A *b* is nearly always found in chimney: *chimbly*.[33]

*c.* This consonant has generally remained the same as in standard English.

*d.* In a few words *d* has become *j*: *ijuh*, idea, *jew*, dew, *jues*, dues, *Injun*, Indian, etc.[34] Medial *d* is omitted in some words, e. g., *bunnle*, bundle, *cannle*, candle, *chillun*, children, etc.[35] Final *d* is omitted in a great many words where *d* follows *n* or *l*, as in band, bind, blind, fold, bold, hand, land, wind, etc. This is common among American white people and was brought over from the

[31] Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 135.

[32] Gonzales reports these in his glossary in *The Black Border*. They are not at all common on St. Helena. A parallel is found in the widespread English dialect pronunciation, *marvel* for *marble*. See Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 135.

[33] Very common in England.

[34] *Cf.* Wright, *Dialect Grammar*, p. 231, for identical tendency in English dialect.

[35] The same is true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177] [128].

*Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox*, *t'ree*

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192 may be obtained by a statistical analysis of the largest published glossary available. Gonzales[93] has listed nearly 2,000 of the words most commonly used in the dialect in the Edisto Island region. If these words be divided arbitrarily into appropriate classes, the following distribution results:[94]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Standard English words pronounced in standard way or as in English dialect of 18th century | 92 per cent |
| II. | Corruptions and mutilations of standard English words (some of these corruptions are no doubt of English dialect origin) | 6 per cent |
| III. | Archaic and obsolescent English words | 2 per cent |
| IV. | African words | Less than 0.5 per cent |

### *A Partial List of Archaic and Provincial English Usages Surviving in the Dialect*[95]

•128
192 The following list includes the most common archaic and provincial English words found in the dialect. A prolonged study would reveal several others, perhaps, but these are the most common. Few, if any, of these, however, occur exclusively in the Gullah, for in various other parts of this country many of these words survive either among Negroes or white people or both. Some are not used on St. Helena, as far as I can ascertain. The list is composed of words not now in general use, and words in general use but having an archaic meaning in the Gullah.

[93] *The Black Border*, Glossary, pp. 287-340.

[94] This distribution also holds good for Whaley's glossary of 1,500 words. Jones' glossary is relatively short, and most of his words are found in Gonzales' list.

[113] [95] For tracing the paternity of various Gullah words, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and the *N. E. D. (New English Dictionary)* are invaluable.

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
• 128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
538 of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Souther Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114]

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121 113 *manry* by T. J. Woofter, Jr. Other special aspects of the island culture, such as the Gullah dialect, folk songs, and folklore, are presented in the third volume, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, by Guy B. Johnson.

127 128 In the preparation of this manuscript I have become greatly indebted to many persons. To name all of those who have assisted me in obtaining data or in putting me on the trail of old plantation records would make a long list. I am grateful to each of them. I am especially indebted to Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, South Carolina, who has generously lent me all of his family papers bearing on the study and who has carefully gone over my manuscript; to Mr. A. S. Salley, Jr., secretary of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, who very kindly made the records in his office accessible for purposes of this study and who has made many valuable notations on my manuscript; to Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, principals of Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, of St. Helena Island, who have graciously facilitated the collection of data; to Professor J. G. de R. Hamilton and Professor R. D. W. Connor, of the History Department of the University of North Carolina, and Dr. Katharine Jocher, assistant director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, who have carefully read the manuscript; and to Dr. T. J. Woofter, Jr., director of the St. Helena project, who has sympathetically guided this study to its completion. I am also indebted to Mr. George Foster Peabody and the Corporation of Yaddo for a delightful summer at Triuna Island, on Lake George, where much of this manuscript was written.

G. G. J.

June, 1930.
Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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# *Tin City*

EASTWARD FROM SAVANNAH IN WEED-GROWN FIELDS lies Tin City, born of the depression and nurtured by the lean years that have followed. The little settlement, with its uncertain lanes winding through a maze of grass and tall shrubbery, stretches out over two hundred acres of land where long ago slaves labored in the black muck of rice fields.

To the west and south this land is touched by the ragged fringe of Savannah; to the north it sweeps away to the murky waters of the Savannah River. In 1819 the city of Savannah condemned the wet-culture rice lands and attempted to build up the unhealthy, low-lying acres with leaves and trash. With the passing years the place has been marked with peculiar ridges and mounds, the result of this building-up process. A wild growth of tall greenery covers the land.

About 1929 Louis Ellis, an old Negro who had been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent, secured permission from Savannah to settle on the land. His shack of discarded tin and his patch of a garden soon attracted other poverty stricken Negroes, and around him grew up a small community, self sufficient in its rent-free houses and its produce of garden and river. Although some of the settlers have abandoned the community and only about twenty remain, Tin City still leads its own independent existence. Within its precincts the fresh atmosphere of a country district prevails, for here and there a clump of chinaberry trees or an oak tree spreads shade, rows of sugar cane and

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## *Sapelo Island*

131 SAPELO ISLAND IS ONE OF THE CHAIN OF "GOLDEN Isles" lying along the Georgia Coast. The word Sapelo was
103 derived from "Zapala," the name used by the Indians when the island was a favorite hunting ground for the tribes that had given up much of the mainland to the Spaniards and
172 later to the English. Among the landmarks that recall colorful historical episodes are Indian mounds, tabby ruins of colonial days, and the remains of a house built by Jean Berard Mocquet, Marquis de Montalet, a French Royalist who immigrated to Georgia from Santo Domingo about 1797.

000 Plantation life flourished on Sapelo in the early nineteenth century. Here Thomas Spalding conducted one of the most extensive agricultural enterprises in the coastal section. The "big house" on the south end of the island was a spacious tabby mansion, so strongly constructed that the original walls are still standing and form the nucleus of the present dwelling. The island, with the exception of a number of Negro homesteads, is now the property of Richard Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but, although many improvements and changes have been made, much of the atmosphere of the early days has been preserved.

464 Industrial activity is concentrated in the central portion of Sapelo, where there is a sawmill that gives employment to many of the islanders. Nearby are the company houses, a
368 post office, and a store. Several Negro churches and a dance hall are located elsewhere on the island.

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# *St. Simons Island*

•131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a [351] grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

[296]

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
133 only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
177 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
569 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

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# Preface

178 The black inhabitants of the Sea Islands, located off the coast of
• [131] Georgia and South Carolina, have provided researchers with a reservoir of distinctively African and African-American cultural roots. Their unique society has been developed, nurtured, and maintained by the geographical isolation of the islands, the social and economic independence of the islanders, and the marginal contact with residents outside the Sea Island area. These factors have created and fostered an environment within which the inhabitants—West African slaves, ex-slaves, and their free ancestors—have been able to reinforce vigorous traditions characteristic of their culture, and to perpetuate communities with concentrations of African influences paralleled by no other black areas in the United States. Remnants of these African traditions were passed on to the islanders through narrative tales, religious practices, burial ceremonies, language patterns, and other practices, only some of which have been recorded by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists.

177 Today changes are being brought to the islands, and the Sea Island culture is declining under the resulting social pressures. On the one hand, outsiders, particularly white Americans, Arabs, and other foreigners, are moving to the area and in some instances commercializing entire islands. On the other hand, the building of bridges has brought about easier access to many of the islands and better educational facilities and job opportunities for their inhabitants. As would be expected, such forces are motivating a break in cultural traditions, an upheaval of social patterns, and a general disruption of the old norms, all of which are now in some danger of becoming lost.

128 This book is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the Sea Island culture and literature and of the Gullah (or, as it is called in Georgia, Geechee) language. Chapter 1 is devoted primarily to a survey of the area and its people. I judge it important to provide a full

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# 1

# The Social History and Organization

539

Me old building e de leak,
and me soul e got fe move:

*There is a leak in this old building (body),*
*and my soul has got to move:*

## Topography

131
133

The Sea Islands, commonly known as the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking communities, extend along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia to the tip of Florida. Isolated by expansive marshlands, turbulent streams, and massive rivers, some islands are several miles from the coast of the United States. Estimates indicate that there are as many as a thousand islands along the coastline, though many of them are small and unfit for human habitation.[1] The habitable ones vary in size. St. Helena, for example, covers only 15 square miles, while Wadmalaw extends for 43. Sandy Island, still not connected by bridge to the mainland, is estimated to be 50 square miles; Edisto is about 72; and Johns Island, the second largest island in U.S. waters, is approximately 100.[2]

131

The Sea Islands of South Carolina, on which most of this study is based, extend on the north from Sandy Island near Georgetown to Port Royal, St. Helena, and Daufuski on the south. Sandy Island is traditionally included among the Sea Islands of South Carolina because it is culturally similar to the coastal islands; it is, however, a freshwater

[p.4]

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131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and developmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult
[491] in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being
[311] caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

113 114 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

127 113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

122 113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

123 113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.

609 113

## Chapter 1

131 113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

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# Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African-American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of significant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

248 249 567 177 178

The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peoples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

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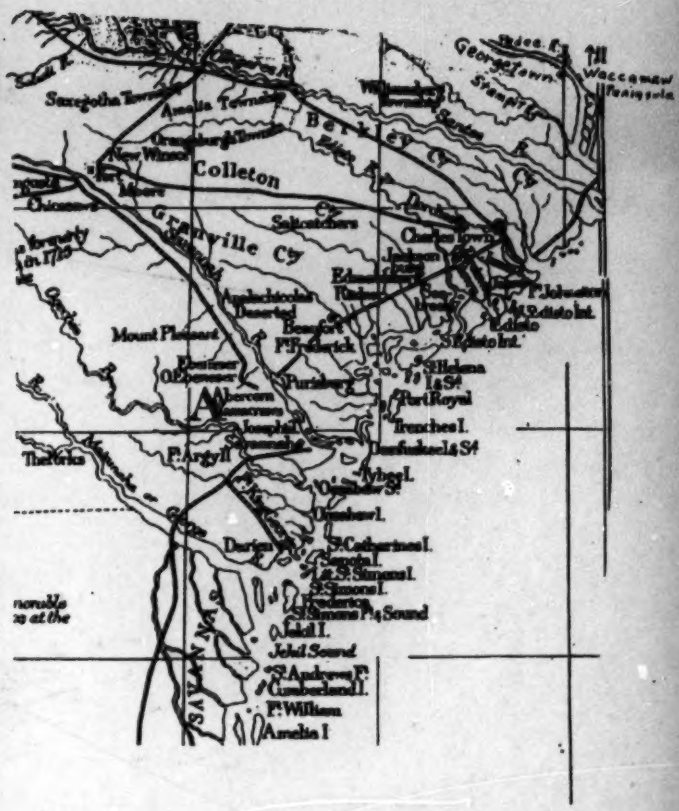


*Map of the Sea Island Region. (From the South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, vol. 27, no. 4 [October 1926], 189.)*

[p. 16]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
•131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a sung.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

• 131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

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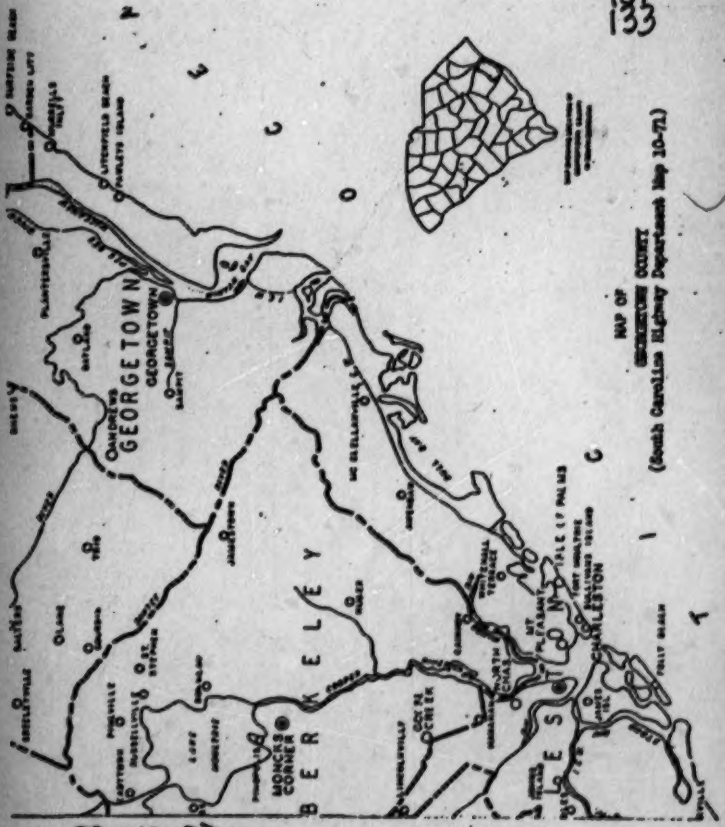
[P. 143-A]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

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(P.143-B)

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



# CHAPTER I

## AN ECOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTEMPORARY SEA ISLAND SOCIETY

### LOCATION OF THE ISLANDS

131 The five Sea Islands stretch along the Atlantic Sea Coast, south of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. The [491] Ashley River Bridge completed in 1922 connects the nearest sea island, James, to the southern tip of the city of Charleston. James Island is about two miles from Charleston.

131 133 The Wappo (Stono) River separates James from Johns Island by way of the Maybank Highway; Johns is five miles from Charleston. The Wadmalaw Creek separates Johns from Wadmalaw Island. Wadmalaw's eastern body gulfs around the south easterly tip of Johns Island. On the north westerly side, the Wadmalaw Sound separates Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. Yonges Island (also known as St. Paule Island) is neighbored on its north westerly side by the communities of Hollywood, Ravenal and by Megget to the northeast. Many native islanders ignore the distinction and consider these communities as part of the large island.

Edisto the most distant island is forty-two miles from Charleston. The Edisto beach area located on the southern tip of the island sits in the Atlantic Ocean. Edisto is the largest of the Sea Islands.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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133

3. *Map Showing the Sea Islands*

[p. xxxii]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505] water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484] towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully [137]
wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 195
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune 103
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen 131
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, [175]
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



131 584 195 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]

133 195 The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens, rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 134 [491] [489] 491 [484] These geographic conditions have also made for the isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.

[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
•(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these
(491) a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Foreword

133 The Sea Islands are low and flat, and they have a beauty beyond
137 description. When I was a child growing up in the South Carolina lowcountry, we used to take Sunday afternoon drives. If we went down from Charleston across the Ashley River and Wappoo Creek onto James Island and then across the Stono River onto Johns Island, we saw great live oaks leaning dreamily over the road. I remember (or perhaps I imagine) that their low branches, almost hidden by gloomy, gray moss, seemed to enclose the road into long miles of gray tunnel. Here and there we passed through swampy lowlands. I was told that in such places snakes and alligators (and haunts and plat-eyes) were lying in wait for bad little boys and girls. The tangled vines and underbrush had a menacing and sinister beauty. Here and there, too, the oak-lined avenue was broken by fields and pastures. Mules and cows dozed and switched flies
•[132 under a torrid sun. Rainfall seemed an ancient memory: there were spots where the grass sometimes seemed to have abandoned the effort to be
000 green. And here and there families of black people waved from the porches of small, gray, weather-stained cabins. Shouting children and barking dogs chased one another across neatly swept yards. I can still recall the fresh clouds of fragrance wafted in from the nearby salt marsh and the soft sound of pine needles rustling in the breeze.

133 Atlantic waves break upon a series of barrier islands all along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Tidal streams and inlets, draining an intricate system of shallow, marsh-filled coastal lagoons, separate them from the mainland and from one another. From Waties Island in the
133 mouth of Little River near the North and South Carolina line south past
103 the wide beaches and thick dunes of the Grand Strand; past Pawleys and North islands to Georgetown; from South, Cedar, and Murphy islands to Cape Romaine; down past Bull, Capers, and Dewees islands and the Isle of Palms to Charleston; from James and Johns, past Kiawah, Wad-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[108] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

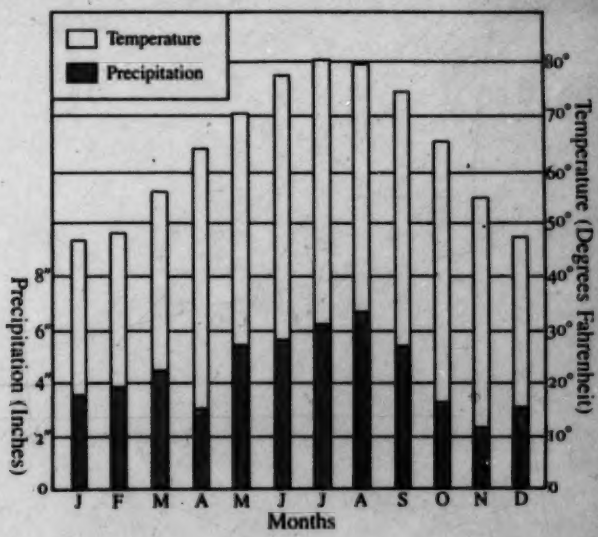
133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and developmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult
[491] in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•132 Figure 1. Climatic Overview of the Sea Islands and Adjacent Coastal Areas




Rainfall is moderate, averaging about 50 inches per year. The temperature throughout the region usually ranges from 45 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit; the recorded extremes are 2 and 103 degrees Fahrenheit. *Source:* Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston
or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts
and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice,
indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flo
ed well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial p
on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of
casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging
from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400
Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county con-
tained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al.
1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



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That was what you call a cyclone. It was first called an autumn storm. But that was a cyclone. There has been several since that one, but none quite like that one. But I remember it well... I was about eleven years old then. It was the storm of (18)93, and it started on a Sunday morning. Still, Miss, I could tell you about it as well as if it happened just yesterday.

The weather looked hazy, just a little hazier than it looks right now. My mother, she was in church. My father was a member of the Baptist church down the road... I was the eldest boy of several children. We, in addition to one of my uncles from Hart, were living near where those Davis boys live now far in the corner section. My uncle Oliver, and Benjy Hart's eldest son, Lonza, came over Sunday after the old people ... to pass the day with me. Well, my mother left me home to cook dinner. Whereas, I told the visitors, I said: 'Some men say, "Man, my wife is not home." They often say, "I'll starve, because there isn't anything here to cook."' But, young lady, I cooked dinner for them. I didn't wait until they came from church. So I took charge; I prepared a feast for my uncle, my nephew and myself. And the later it became, Miss, the weather began to close in. The sun was shrouded with clouds and it began to drizzle rain.

Just after Yatta came home—I called my mother Yatta. Her name was Liza, but you know, I was reared by the old people then when one's mother was called such-and-such. I won't speak of it now. I called her Yatta. Well, she came home a little before the old man. She came in dripping from the rain. Then, a while later, my father appeared on the horse. I could see him coming with the umbrella over him. And young lady, as the evening wore on, the sun hung lower, heavier and heavier in the sky. (Narrative continues at length.)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



The weather not only abetted the insects in their destruction of the cotton crops, but sometimes itself brought ruin. In 1819 James Hamilton Couper was found recording in his plantation book, "In the Spring, the Cotton was very generally destroyed by Frost," and "On the night of the 14th Oct^r. a sharp white frost destroyed about 70 acres of cotton at Hopeton."[41] In 1823 he wrote:

> The crop was set in good time; and was unusually promising until the excessive rains which commenced about the middle of July. These rains continued nearly two months, and occasioned the cotton to drop nearly the whole of the middle & under crop. The upper crop in quantity and maturity promised well, but from the diseased habit which the plant had acquired never opened.[42]

In 1826 he wrote, "This is the only cotton crop since 1818 which has not been cut off by spring freshes, early fall frosts, or gales of wind," and the following year he again recorded, "A very high fresh which occurred about the end of May nearly destroyed the Cotton in Carr's Is." There were heavy rains again in 1828 and 1829, and in 1830 "a very severe Hail Storm was so destructive to the cotton crop, that the failure . . . was nearly entire." With this year, Couper left off recording his observations on crops, but in a letter to his son in 1855 he wrote, "We have had a glut of rain during the week; and as was to be expected the cotton is shedding freely. Three fourths of the Cotton crops are destroyed by the August rains."[43]

in embryo, as the energetic planter . . . has already done." He doubtless refers to dusting the plants with a mixture of Paris Green, rosin, and damaged wheat flour.

[41] Hopeton Plantation Book. [42] *Ibid.*

[43] Couper-Wylly Letters, August 23, 1855, James Hamilton Couper to Hamilton Couper.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir
133 Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un-
248 usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of
132 some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by
[731] caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

248

## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Tin City*

131 EASTWARD FROM SAVANNAH IN WEED-GROWN FIELDS lies Tin City, born of the depression and nurtured by the lean years that have followed. The little settlement, with its uncertain lanes winding through a maze of grass and tall shrubbery, stretches out over two hundred acres of land where long ago slaves labored in the black muck of rice fields.

To the west and south this land is touched by the ragged fringe of Savannah; to the north it sweeps away to the murky waters of the Savannah River. In 1819 the city of • 133 Savannah condemned the wet-culture rice lands and attempted to build up the unhealthy, low-lying acres with leaves and trash. With the passing years the place has been marked with peculiar ridges and mounds, the result of this [137] building-up process. A wild growth of tall greenery covers the land.

361 About 1929 Louis Ellis, an old Negro who had been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent, secured permission from Savannah to settle on the land. His shack of discarded tin and his patch of a garden soon attracted other poverty stricken Negroes, and around him grew up a small community, self sufficient in its rent-free houses and its produce of garden and river. Although some of the settlers have abandoned the community and only about twenty remain, Tin City still leads its own independent existence. [137] Within its precincts the fresh atmosphere of a country district prevails, for here and there a clump of chinaberry trees or an oak tree spreads shade, rows of sugar cane and

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove
•133 Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
(342) ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
(363) streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
777 foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Grimball's Point*

361 GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

162 A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast • 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

115 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task [787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. 787 A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[50] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Foreword

133 The Sea Islands are low and flat, and they have a beauty beyond
137 description. When I was a child growing up in the South Carolina lowcountry, we used to take Sunday afternoon drives. If we went down from Charleston across the Ashley River and Wappoo Creek onto James Island and then across the Stono River onto Johns Island, we saw great live oaks leaning dreamily over the road. I remember (or perhaps I imagine) that their low branches, almost hidden by gloomy, gray moss, seemed to enclose the road into long miles of gray tunnel. Here and there we passed through swampy lowlands. I was told that in such places snakes and alligators (and haunts and plat-eyes) were lying in wait for bad little boys and girls. The tangled vines and underbrush had a menacing and sinister beauty. Here and there, too, the oak-lined avenue was broken by fields and pastures. Mules and cows dozed and switched flies
[132 under a torrid sun. Rainfall seemed an ancient memory: there were spots where the grass sometimes seemed to have abandoned the effort to be
000 green. And here and there families of black people waved from the porches of small, gray, weather-stained cabins. Shouting children and barking dogs chased one another across neatly swept yards. I can still recall the fresh clouds of fragrance wafted in from the nearby salt marsh and the soft sound of pine needles rustling in the breeze.

133 Atlantic waves break upon a series of barrier islands all along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Tidal streams and inlets, draining an intricate system of shallow, marsh-filled coastal lagoons, separate them from the mainland and from one another. From Waties Island in the
133 mouth of Little River near the North and South Carolina line south past
103 the wide beaches and thick dunes of the Grand Strand; past Pawleys and North islands to Georgetown; from South, Cedar, and Murphy islands to Cape Romaine; down past Bull, Capers, and Dewees islands and the Isle of Palms to Charleston; from James and Johns, past Kiawah, Wad-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting, Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle. Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story. They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[p. xxviii]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

•133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one
491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# 1

# The Social History and Organization

539

Me old building e de leak,
and me soul e got fe move:

*There is a leak in this old building (body),*
*and my soul has got to move:*

## Topography

131
•133

The Sea Islands, commonly known as the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking communities, extend along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia to the tip of Florida. Isolated by expansive marshlands, turbulent streams, and massive rivers, some islands are several miles from the coast of the United States. Estimates indicate that there are as many as a thousand islands along the coastline, though many of them are small and unfit for human habitation.[1] The habitable ones vary in size. St. Helena, for example, covers only 15 square miles, while Wadmalaw extends for 43. Sandy Island, still not connected by bridge to the mainland, is estimated to be 50 square miles; Edisto is about 72; and Johns Island, the second largest island in U.S. waters, is approximately 100.[2]

131

The Sea Islands of South Carolina, on which most of this study is based, extend on the north from Sandy Island near Georgetown to Port Royal, St. Helena, and Daufuski on the south. Sandy Island is traditionally included among the Sea Islands of South Carolina because it is culturally similar to the coastal islands; it is, however, a freshwater

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and developmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult
[491] in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

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| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands
361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States.
• 133 Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive
139 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more
373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few
226 "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
226 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving
• 133 because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
538

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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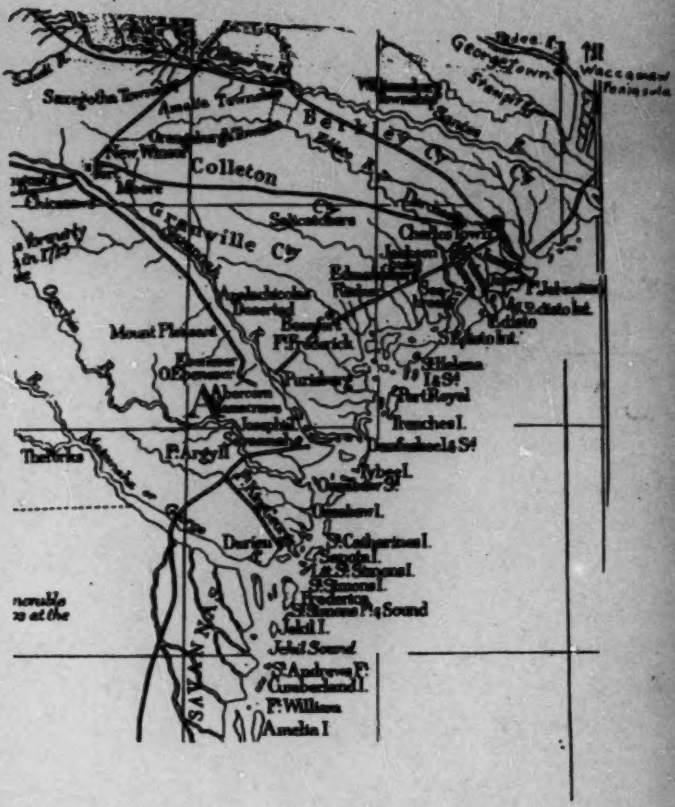


*Map of the Sea Island Region. (From the South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, vol. 27, no. 4 [October 1926], 189.)*

[p. 16]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*Gullah and the Carolina Lowcountry. (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 327]

[p. 328 is blank]

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders MM23
South Carolina
Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
•133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[MA] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
744 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
346 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

• 133

[491]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

•133
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[p. xix]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

179 464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

177 491 Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah (178) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

133

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

133
226

[p. 210]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

133
226

[p. 218]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

133
226

[p. 231]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

Georgetown

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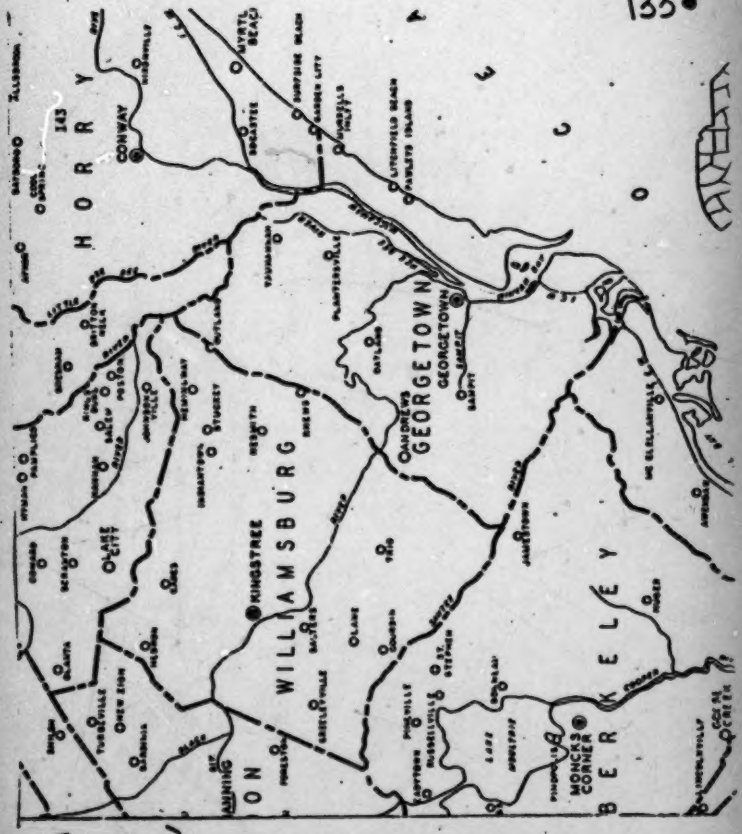
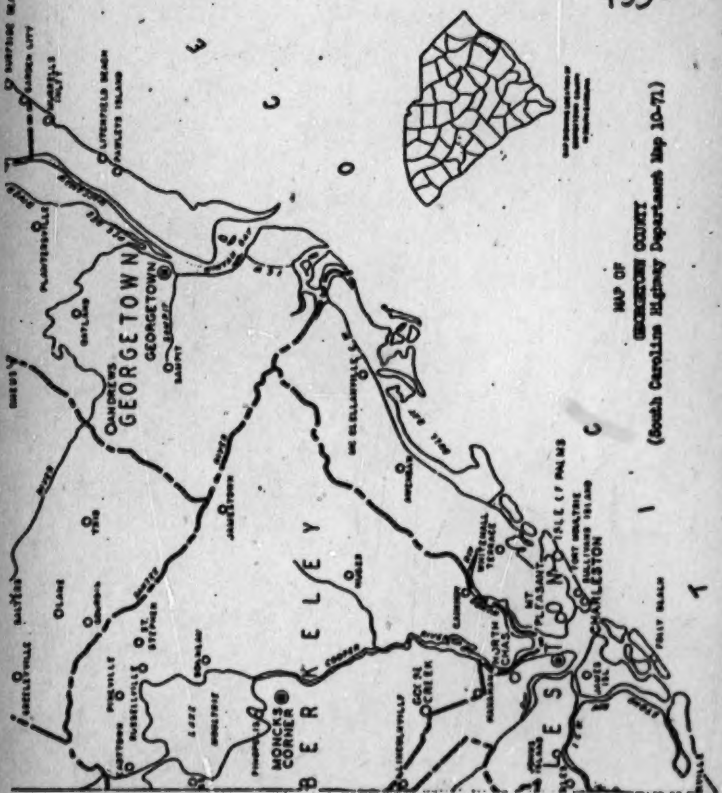



[P.143-A]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

102
131
133




(P.143-B)

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



# CHAPTER I

## AN ECOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTEMPORARY SEA ISLAND SOCIETY

### LOCATION OF THE ISLANDS

131 The five Sea Islands stretch along the Atlantic Sea Coast, south of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. The [491] Ashley River Bridge completed in 1922 connects the nearest sea island, James, to the southern tip of the city of Charleston. James Island is about two miles from Charleston.

131 The Wappo (Stono) River separates James from Johns •133 Island by way of the Maybank Highway; Johns is five miles from Charleston. The Wadmalaw Creek separates Johns from Wadmalaw Island. Wadmalaw's eastern body gulfs around the south easterly tip of Johns Island. On the north westerly side, the Wadmalaw Sound separates Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. Yonges Island (also known as St. Pauls Island) is neighbored on its north westerly side by the communities of Hollywood, Ravenal and by Meggot to the northeast. Many native islanders ignore the distinction and consider these communities as part of the large island.

Edisto the most distant island is forty-two miles from Charleston. The Edisto beach area located on the southern tip of the island sits in the Atlantic Ocean. Edisto is the largest of the Sea Islands.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

## CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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3. Map Showing the Sea Islands

[p. xxxiii]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

*A Section of Beaufort District from Mills, Atlas of South Carolina (1825)*

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
584 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
195

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
195 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes
[491] have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of
[489] capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
[484] must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

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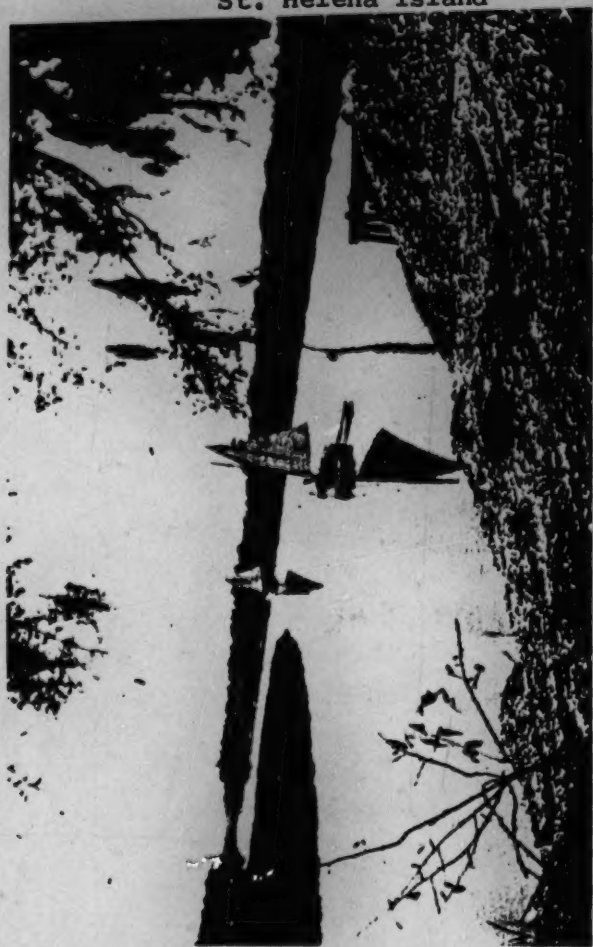

A TIDAL CREEK ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

[facing p. 24]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in
133 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in
248 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un-
132 usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by
[130] caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

248

## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[13] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

[13] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and devel-
[491] opmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected
491

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
584 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
175

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
175 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
•134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
[491] makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
(489) bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
(484) must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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land and attracted immediate attention, for Great Britain was at that time importing annually 600,000 pounds of indigo from France at the rate of about £150,000 sterling. The following year Parliament allowed a bounty of 6 pence a pound on indigo from the British colonies, and indigo culture at once grew in the favor of South Carolina planters. By 1754 the export from Charles Town had reached 216,924 pounds, and on the eve of the Revolution it had mounted to more than a million and a half pounds.[7]

175
249

Indigo had become, next to rice, the most important source of wealth in the province. Moses Lindo, a London Jew and expert indigo sorter, had done more to stimulate the growth and the excellence of the dye than any other man in South Carolina.[8] As surveyor and inspector-general of indigo for South Carolina, he taught the planters to distinguish the grades and to improve the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the dye. The prices were usually excellent, ranging generally from 4 to 6 shillings a pound.

A light, dry soil was best suited to indigo culture; hence it was cultivated in considerable quantities on the Sea Islands. During the colonial period both the annual and perennial plants were grown. About 1760 Governor Glen wrote that the plant most frequently used in South Carolina was the annual, the sort generally cultivated in the West Indies.[9] The perennial, however, was less trouble

[134]

[7] *Year Book*, City of Charleston, 1883, pp. 402-403.

[8] B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, chap. III.

[9] "A Description of South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 203. George Milligan, writing in 1763, quotes "an ingenious planter" as saying that there was in the province a great variety of seed, "and from every sort good indigo may be made but none answers so well in this colony as the true Guatimala." Carroll, *op. cit.*, II, 533.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[50] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut[54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta.
115 Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[38] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.'"

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and vis-
177 itors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
• 136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
569 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by 241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, 227 clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare 262 expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

> [136] The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A, [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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000 side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large
252 sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse.
224 The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels, skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

224 Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country
.136 seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

825 The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

463 In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family
[178] members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

91 Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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539 191 Miss Beckwith is evidently right in assuming that this form of amusement represents "the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts."

192 Discovering an unsuspected connection with Africa in words which sound as though they might be English, but really aren't,[43] provides almost as much satisfaction as finding new songs or dances. Conservative Negroes still retain many of these words—particularly in the old songs—and such are passed on to Dr. Turner in the hope that he may know their meaning. From his *West-African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah* I have learned much that has been an enigma to me in the past, but even Dr. Turner is puzzled by "giffy," which on Sapelo means damp. Years ago I heard the great blue heron in the marshes called "Poor Joe," and judged his lean body had given him his name. Not at all. *Podzo* is the name of a similar heron in Africa. We call a certain type of southern tortoise a "cooter." In the neighborhood of Timbuctoo its near relative is called a *kuta*. When I first visited the Georgia coast I heard the name "tackies" applied to the small wild horses found on the salt marshes of the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.[44] Now I find that *taki* is the West African name of a horse. The same with the "tabby" houses built for the slaves out of old oyster shells, sand, and cement (made from burning live oyster shells in pine cribs built for the purpose). In Africa the name for a house of similar construction is *tabax*. When a Southerner hears the word "tote" he knows that it means to carry; a very similar word, *tota*, from the Congo, means to pick up. Southern children know the "joggle board," or see-saw, but they do not know that the name comes from the West African word, *dzogal*, meaning to rise. In the old days you asked a colored woman where to find her husband. If she said at the "jook," it meant that he was in the rather ungodly place where drink was sold and good women were not supposed to go. According to the Vocabulary, *dzug* means "to misconduct oneself" and it is easy to see how "jook house," in the Gullah dialect, derived its name. In *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth tell us that Africa possessed an instrument known as the *banjar* made of a large gourd

[43] *By this time I should be wary of laughing up my sleeve when the Negro uses such words—but white people are like this. My last nugget was found through Mrs. Cate's keen sight. I had told her of the amusing application of the horse breeder's term "in foal" to the condition of one of my singers. With a fresh eye, she spotted in Dr. Turner's* Gullah Vocabulary *the word "en(in)to le" meaning "pregnant."*

[44] *These hardy little horses are said to be descendants of those left by the Spaniards in the* [illegible]*irteenth century.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
569 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
[493] a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[562] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[23] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[136] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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planters felt the pinch of hard times. A late, wet spring might defer planting until there could be no hope of maturing an average yield before frost. Had the spring been propitious, an unseasonable frost might blight the plant and decrease the crop. Excess of rain or drought might retard the crop or the plant might develop a disease. When the crop was made and ready to be gathered, a storm or hurricane might blast the labor of a year. When the crop was gathered and baled ready for market, economic conditions at home or abroad might reduce the price so low as to plunge the planter into debt. 248

The diseases to which sea-island cotton were subject, blight, rust, and "blue," were generally considered as arising from some defect in the soil.[36] They could be removed, or at least considerably remedied, by thoroughly draining the land and applying the proper fertilizer at the proper season. But the plant louse, cut worm, and the leaf worm, or caterpillar, as it was commonly known, could not be so easily combated. The plant louse was practically a yearly pest which planters fought by cultivation, attempting to raise a plant hardy enough to withstand the attacks of the insect. The cut worm often appeared in wet seasons and on low lands insufficiently drained. James Hamilton Couper recorded in his plantation book when commenting on the crop for 1818: 248 136

The cut-worm was so destructive, until the 18th. of May, as to have killed the cotton, as soon up, with the exception of the high parts of the old & new fields. They were universally found in the East River Field. It is believed that the Fresh, which covered the fields from the 5th. to the 21st. of March was the cause of their appearance in such numbers.[37]

[36] Allston, *Sea Coast Crops*, pp. 14, 15.
[37] Hopeton Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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The weather not only abetted the insects in their destruction of the cotton crops, but sometimes itself brought ruin. In 1819 James Hamilton Couper was found recording in his plantation book, "In the Spring, the Cotton was very generally destroyed by Frost," and "On the night of the 14th Oct^r. a sharp white frost destroyed about 70 acres of cotton at Hopeton."[41] In 1823 he wrote:

> The crop was set in good time; and was unusually promising until the excessive rains which commenced about the middle of July. These rains continued nearly two months, and occasioned the cotton to drop nearly the whole of the middle & under crop. The upper crop in quantity and maturity promised well, but from the diseased habit which the plant had acquired never opened.[42]

In 1826 he wrote, "This is the only cotton crop since 1818 which has not been cut off by spring freshes, early fall frosts, or gales of wind," and the following year he again recorded, "A very high fresh which occurred about the end of May nearly destroyed the Cotton in Carr's Is." There were heavy rains again in 1828 and 1829, and in 1830 "a very severe Hail Storm was so destructive to the cotton crop, that the failure . . . was nearly entire." With this year, Couper left off recording his observations on crops, but in a letter to his son in 1855 he wrote, "We have had a glut of rain during the week; and as was to be expected the cotton is shedding freely. Three fourths of the Cotton crops are destroyed by the August rains."[43]

in embryo, as the energetic planter . . . has already done." He doubtless refers to dusting the plants with a mixture of Paris Green, rosin, and damaged wheat flour.

[41] Hopeton Plantation Book. [42] *Ibid.*

[43] Couper-Wylly Letters, August 23, 1855, James Hamilton Couper to Hamilton Couper.

248
132
(136)
(242)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in
133 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un-
248 usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of
132 some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed b
[131] caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

248

## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•137
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492

XVI. Julius Bailey and ox cart at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-U]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Tin City*

131 EASTWARD FROM SAVANNAH IN WEED-GROWN FIELDS lies Tin City, born of the depression and nurtured by the lean years that have followed. The little settlement, with its uncertain lanes winding through a maze of grass and tall shrubbery, stretches out over two hundred acres of land where long ago slaves labored in the black muck of rice fields.

To the west and south this land is touched by the ragged fringe of Savannah; to the north it sweeps away to the murky waters of the Savannah River. In 1819 the city of 133 Savannah condemned the wet-culture rice lands and attempted to build up the unhealthy, low-lying acres with leaves and trash. With the passing years the place has been marked with peculiar ridges and mounds, the result of this [137] building-up process. A wild growth of tall greenery covers the land.

361 About 1929 Louis Ellis, an old Negro who had been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent, secured permission from Savannah to settle on the land. His shack of discarded tin and his patch of a garden soon attracted other poverty stricken Negroes, and around him grew up a small community, self sufficient in its rent-free houses and its produce of garden and river. Although some of the settlers have abandoned the community and only about twenty remain, Tin City still leads its own independent existence. [137] Within its precincts the fresh atmosphere of a country district prevails, for here and there a clump of chinaberry trees or an oak tree spreads shade, rows of sugar cane and

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
•137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap
342 tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
351 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden, fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One,
115 through natural ability, has held the office almost from the founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *White Bluff*

•137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
361 directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff, eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
361 Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491] set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
162

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

HARRIS NECK

115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical 137 foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

115 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task [787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. 787 A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
•137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here
(491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
•137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[3] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[35] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

"One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a
535 long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[36] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people
491 on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
• 137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
[164] very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Foreword

133 The Sea Islands are low and flat, and they have a beauty beyond
•137 description. When I was a child growing up in the South Carolina lowcountry, we used to take Sunday afternoon drives. If we went down from Charleston across the Ashley River and Wappoo Creek onto James Island and then across the Stono River onto Johns Island, we saw great live oaks leaning dreamily over the road. I remember (or perhaps I imagine) that their low branches, almost hidden by gloomy, gray moss, seemed to enclose the road into long miles of gray tunnel. Here and there we passed through swampy lowlands. I was told that in such places snakes and alligators (and haunts and plat-eyes) were lying in wait for bad little boys and girls. The tangled vines and underbrush had a menacing and sinister beauty. Here and there, too, the oak-lined avenue was broken by fields and pastures. Mules and cows dozed and switched flies
[132 under a torrid sun. Rainfall seemed an ancient memory: there were spots where the grass sometimes seemed to have abandoned the effort to be
000 green. And here and there families of black people waved from the porches of small, gray, weather-stained cabins. Shouting children and barking dogs chased one another across neatly swept yards. I can still recall the fresh clouds of fragrance wafted in from the nearby salt marsh and the soft sound of pine needles rustling in the breeze.

133 Atlantic waves break upon a series of barrier islands all along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Tidal streams and inlets, draining an intricate system of shallow, marsh-filled coastal lagoons, separate them from the mainland and from one another. From Waties Island in the
133 mouth of Little River near the North and South Carolina line south past
103 the wide beaches and thick dunes of the Grand Strand; past Pawleys and North islands to Georgetown; from South, Cedar, and Murphy islands to Cape Romaine; down past Bull, Capers, and Dewees islands and the Isle of Palms to Charleston; from James and Johns, past Kiawah, Wad-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

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| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands
361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is
133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive
• 139 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more
373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*Brick Baptist Church, St. Helena Island, S.C. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

[p. 254]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*Gullahs and the Carolina Lowcountry. (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 327]

[p. 328 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. xix]

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B.Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.xxi]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

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931

## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a (804) task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.23]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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# 2. THE STORM

# *THE PRESENT*

[p.34]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

# IS PASSING OVER

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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# 6. AIN'T YOU GOT A

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

# RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?

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# *PROGRESS ON JOHNS ISLAND*

[p. 139]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 185]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p 234]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

12. The Cabin

[facing p. 80]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully [137]
wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 175
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune 103
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen 131
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, [175]
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues. 491 248 175

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 361 175 248 423 175 (137)

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old 175 248 (243) (244)

[p. 191]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIX. Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii- AA]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

XXI. Artie and Enoch Jones at St. Marys

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[following p. xxxii-cc]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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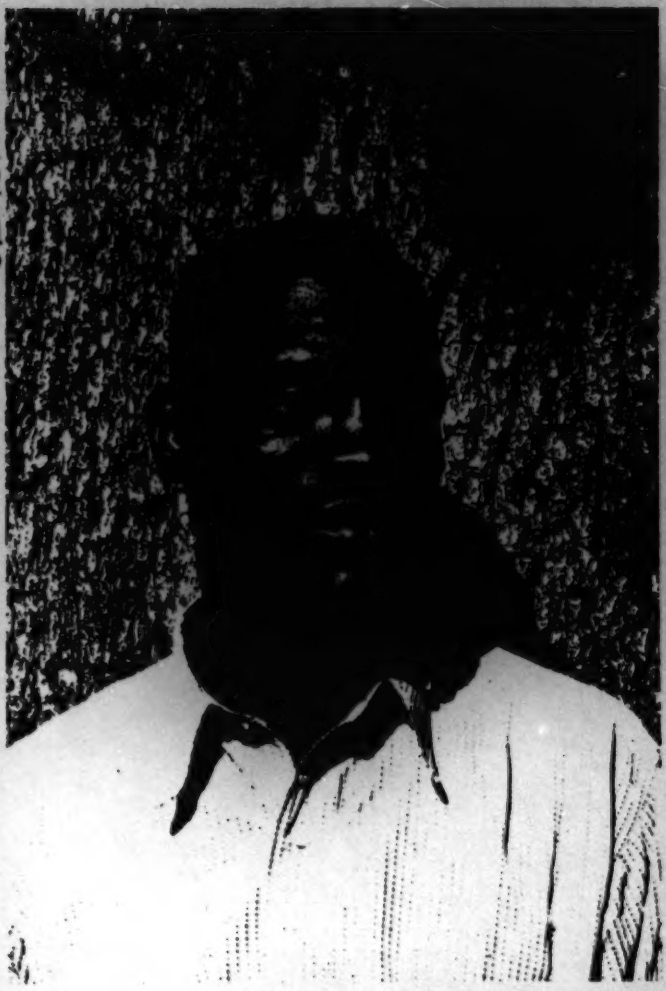

XXII. Robert Lucas at St. Marys

[following p. xxxii-DD]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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XXIII. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[following p. xxxii-EE]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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XXIV. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[Following p. xxxii - FF]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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V. Julian Linder at Brownville

[Following p. xxxii-E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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VI. James Collier at Brownville

[following p. xxxii -E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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VII. Tony Delegal at Ogeechee Town

[following p. xxxii-G]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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VIII. Woman and baby at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii - H]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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IX. Girl at Pin Point

[following p xxxii-I]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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X. Boy at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-J]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XI. Lewis McIver, fisherman at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-k]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIII. Alec Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii-M]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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XIVa. Rachel Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii-N]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVb. The Andersons' granddaughter at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-O]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVc. Woods worker at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-P]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•142
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XVa. Katie Brown with Flint

[Following p. xxxii-Q]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVb. Katie Brown with pestle and mortar

[following p. xxxii-R]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVc. Cuffy Wilson and granddaughter at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-S]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVd. Nero Jones at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-T]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIa. Shad Hall at Hog Hammock, Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-V]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIb. John Bryan at Raccoon Bluff, Sapelo

[following p. xxxvi-W]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIIb. Ryna Johnson, her daughter and son-in-law at Harrington, St. Simons Island

[following p. xxxii-Y]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIIc. Ben Sullivan at St. Simons Island

[following p. xxxii-Z]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. 363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. 366 The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37a, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[3] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
•142

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



181 skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

[p. 19]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Josephine is an avid storyteller. She, like most Sea Island women, continues to wear a headwrap.

[p. 42]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted Williams is known for his ability to tell a good story.

[D.48]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Myma, who has lived her entire life on Wadmalaw Island, befriended the author and introduced her to the ways of the island and its people.

[p. 61]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me. Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 had the dark full lips which some people call "blue lips" because of
• 142 their defined darkness and smoothness. They are the kind of lips that never need lipstick, but I have seen her take one of her children's graphite pencils, scratch it against a surface to make the point soft and blunt, and rub it across her lips to accentuate their darkness. In spite of having had five children, she still had an excellent figure, and a figure is important to Sea Island men. Her rounded posterior filled out her jeans and made all of her clothes hang just right. She told me once that
159 she was not sure it was an advantage to a woman to be built the way
836 she was, because if she had not had, in her own words, "such a big
142 ass," maybe the men would have left her alone, and she would not have got pregnant when she was fourteen. She reflected on that state-
832 ment for awhile, took a long draw from her cigarette, and then amended it by saying, "Hell, who knows what I would have done?" She had always liked men as much as they seemed to like her, she finished by saying, and she probably would have got pregnant anyway.

159 I concluded that her attractiveness emanated not only from her looks but from her style and manner as well. She had a natural, inborn sophistication and presence that any *Vogue* model would envy. I showed her a copy of *Vogue* once, along with *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ebony*, and asked if she would like a complimentary subscription to one for Christmas. She flipped through *Vogue* and commented that she had no place to go to wear the kind of "shit" the models displayed; she browsed through *Essence* and said it had too much fancy cooking, and the only food that tasted good to her was cowpeas and bone; she read through *Cosmopolitan* and said it seemed to be about white women wanting sex, and hell, she got enough of that without reading about it. She finally settled on *Ebony* because she liked the pictures of Billy Dee Williams.

In spite of her language and outward hardness, there was something about Ida Mae that made her very feminine. Perhaps it was the way she held her cigarette, the way she walked, or the way she smiled just enough to show a glint of her gold tooth. Perhaps it was the
159 coyness with which she captivated a man's attention, any man's, that
832 made the more respectable women of the community dislike her and the more respectable men, especially the older ones, want to get close enough to her to smell her perfume, maybe inadvertently brush against her, or at least get into a position to see her back action as she walked away. I even overheard a deacon in the church comment to her one

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Hairwrapping is an ancient African tradition that survives on the islands.

[p. 115]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Richard Linen reminisces about the past and about how "thing change up now."

[p. 134]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[868]

Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

[p. 154]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Sam Polite, the Praise House elder. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Susannah of the Oaks Plantation. From the Penn School Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

[p. 253]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Laura M. Towne, Dick, Maria, and "seeker" Amoretta, February 1866. From the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library.)*

[p. 306]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 2]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 19]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of
527 July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of
535 all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that
534 we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side,
535 two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.24]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.26]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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[p.32]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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[p.36]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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[p. 39]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

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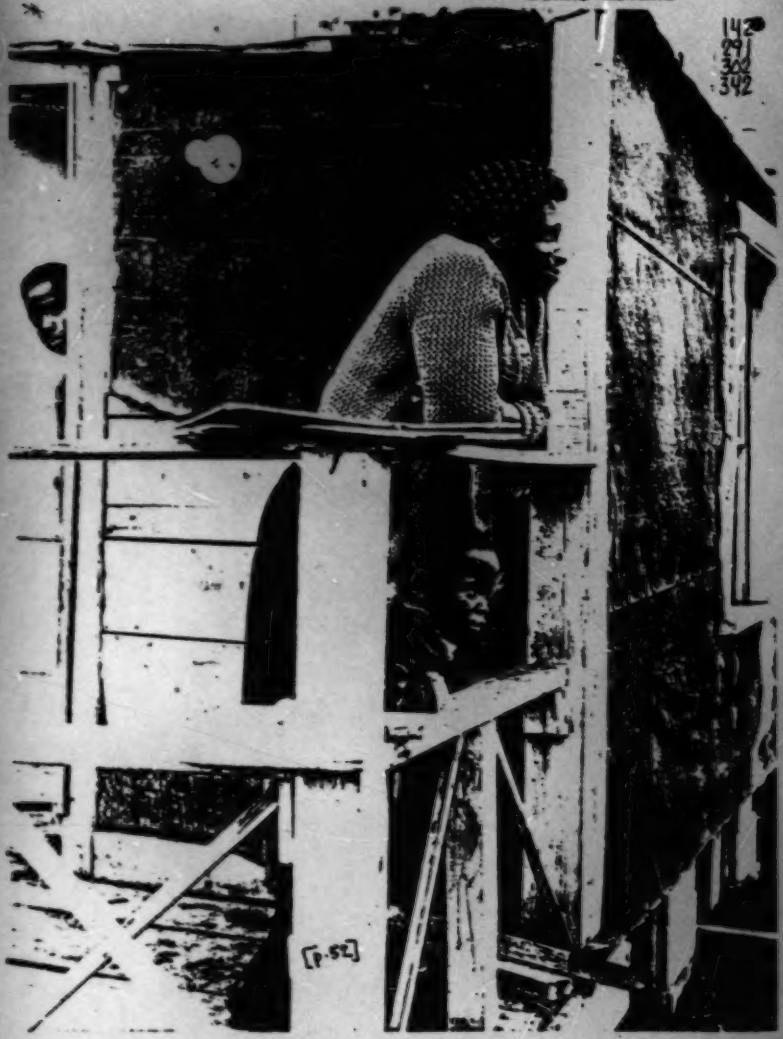

[p.52]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159 511 434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159 [511] But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up—hard time and good time—all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

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[5.5]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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[p. 55]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## IT'S TOUGH TO RAISE FIVE CHILDREN—SURE IS

I get married to the church. And I had the reception in Robbie Fields' store. They had wine and piccolo playing, and dancing. I danced once. But I couldn't dance 'cause my dress was too long. Long white dress, white shoes and white veil 'cross my hair. Lot of people came to the church and lot of people at the store. They had as much in the yard as was in the store, couldn't come in. I guess 'round about three hundred head. Big wedding.

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We was young children, growing up together. I met him long time ago, but I didn't realize that was to be my husband today. I remember he was picking the potato on the farm and I had to go work that morning and he

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 584 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 404 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of (855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.58]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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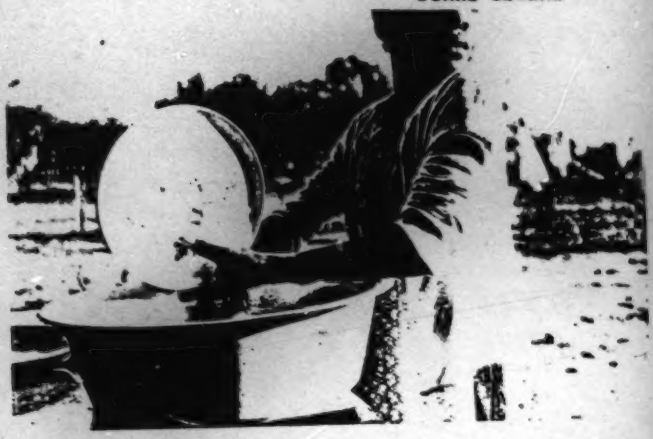

*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

**ALL US WORKS**

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I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

159
(513)

Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p. 60]

159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.

159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job—wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.66]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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[p. 69]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.73]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

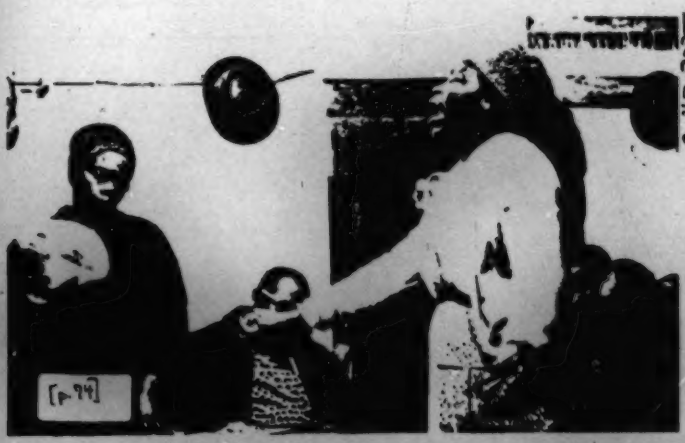
The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 864

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. John Smalls*

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## GOOD MORNING WARRIORS

Good morning Warriors!
How y'all feel?
I'm feeling special alive.

I just rise to tell you all my aim
And whole heart's desire.
My desire is to go the whole way.
I give thanks for being brought
Not from just last December
But from an infant birth.

I can say, "Are we yet alive
To see each other's face."
Thank God for His redeeming grace.

Since last January
Rocky was my road,
Tedious was my journey.
What troubles have I seen,
What conflicts have I passed.

If I had ten thousand tongues
It wouldn't be enough
To give thanks to Thee
Who took my feet out of the miry clay
And put them on a solid rock.

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[p. 80]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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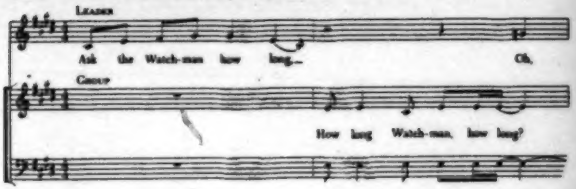
*Mrs. Jamie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

## ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.
Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

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Rev. James Grant

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

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796

Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# 4. TALKIN' 'BOUT

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# JOKEY

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# A GOOD TIME

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# TIMES

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1980) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Hunter*

**WHAT YOU GONNA DO?**

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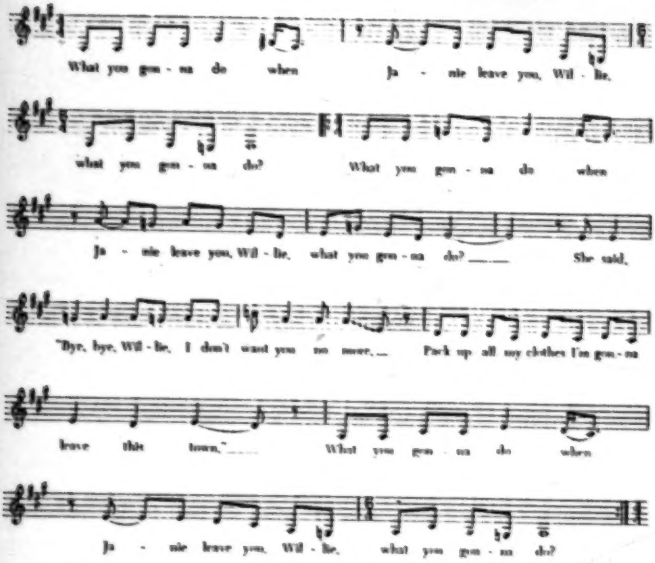


What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, baby, I don't want you no more",
Sitting here crying, Janie, please don't go,
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, Willie, I'm putting you down,
Pack up my clothes I'm gonna leave this town",
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

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SOLO: Annie?
GROUP: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
GROUP: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he game?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

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*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## YOU IS ABEL CHILDREN AND I'M A CAIN

829

There ain't but two race. Two brother children. If you don't work with me I ain't work with you. You can't do without me and I can't do without you. You may don't want me to your table, but you can't do without me. Cain and Abel—you is Abel children and I'm a Cain. So I got to work with you and you got to work with me. Ain't but two race, and there ain't but two place to go—that's Hell and Heaven. If you miss that, you just forever done. That's all.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

**FREEDOM IS WORSE**

177

Really to me, freedom is worse in New York than it is on Johns Island. Because on Johns Island the white people are honest in letting you know that they don't want you to associate with them. In New York, if we go to a hotel and want a room, there's no segregation, they just ain't got no rooms.

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# 6. AIN'T YOU GOT A

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?

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# *PROGRESS ON JOHNS ISLAND*

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(177)

And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

159 873 641 666 185 We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 666 Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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185
159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
871 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
[661] The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
159 when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
871 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
197 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
185 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
[875] outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to
make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing,
those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being
so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Maggie Russell*

## ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

159 You see that house through the bushes? That's Jenkins Point, where I used to live. They had houses built on the plantation for black people to live in because that was the people that worked for them. Now there are no black people living over there on Seabrook.

I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

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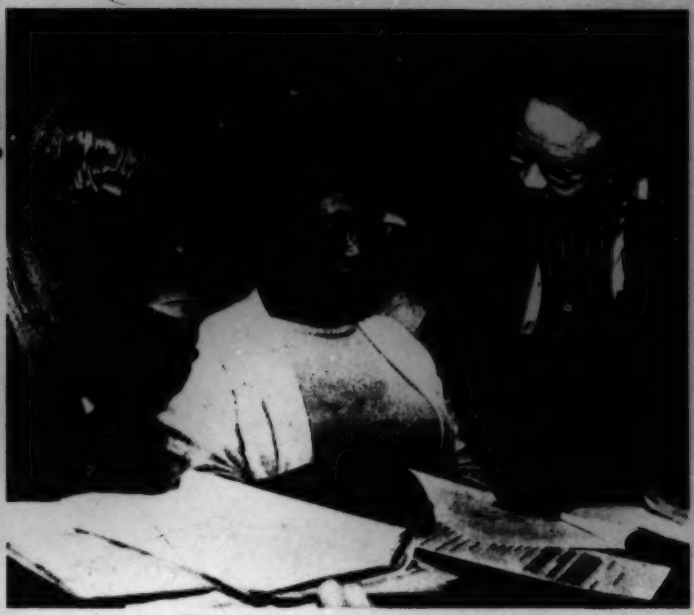

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need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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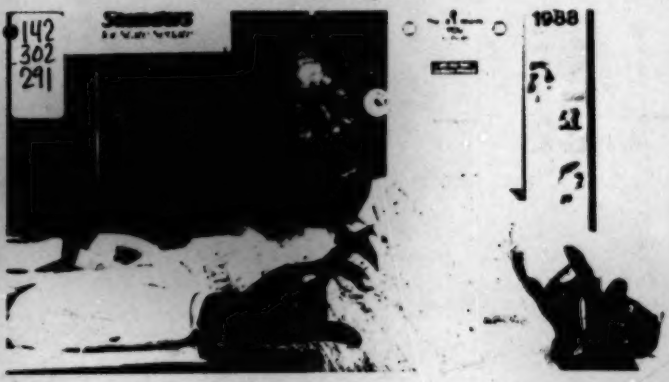
I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.



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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## I DON'T MIND TALKING ABOUT WHAT I SEE

893 The school situation is still one that really bothers me—especially St. Johns High School. The school has 660 students and seventy percent of those students are on free or reduced lunch. These are black children from Johns and Wadmalaw islands. Ten percent of the students go on to college and I'm not concerned about them, but I am concerned about the ninety percent of these black children who cannot go to college, who do not have skills to develop self-sufficiency, and who have to go through school for four years, finish high school, and then have to go right back and either do domestic work, go to Kiawah Island and make beds, go to Kiawah Island and clean yards, or go to Kiawah Island and wash dishes. It doesn't make sense.

I feel very frustrated by what's happening to our children on Johns Island today. They're saying they have to go to James Island if they want to learn a trade. I'm against that. And so that's my fight with the school system. If you have a curriculum that's not meeting the needs of these students, something is wrong.

I would like to get on the school board, but they won't put me on there. They think I'm radical. I'm not radical. I'm just very candid about what I see and I don't mind talking about what I see.

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871 the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their
641 community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns.
666 Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide lead-
185 ership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander
[875] to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

871 Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teach-
875 ers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima
185 Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

641 The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the
871 origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a
185 vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recogni-
[668] tion. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a
[875] teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school, and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

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*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYTHING IS CHANGED NOW

I still vote. I want to vote for right, but I don't get it. My mother always told me, "You see somebody that jump, you jump too. Cause you, one, can't do nothing. Among the majority, your word just go for nothing." But the people gave us our right, seems like they take our right from us. But it don't stop me from vote. I still vote for the President.

And everything is changed now. The world so tough today.

The older people sang "I Will Overcome" because they had a hard time. They had to row boat to go to the city and carry their peas and corn and potatoes, rice and things. They had a hard time, living and raising their children. Them people had to work with their children on their back. Rebeltime people were mean. But God changed those people. That's a just God. He don't walk knock-kneed. Those oldtime foreparents was something else, I tell you. And one of these days they were able to overcome. They were able to buy the land. Money was scarce, but they had a chance to pay a dollar or two dollars for a piece of ground.

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ME. I DON'T LIKE TO PRETEND

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At first I thought people won't want to hear this kind of song. But after I went to Atlanta, Georgia, I was very pleased. I was happy. Everybody was so nice. And I enjoyed myself. That's the first time I ever leave Johns Island to go sing.

Going off, it made me learn a lot. You see a lot of people. You enjoy yourself. People treat you so nice. They really make me feel like I'm something special. That time we went to Seabrook, my picture was in the paper. The lady I work for daughter, she get the picture. She call and say, "Tootsie, you're a celebrity. Your picture's in the paper."

You know, I like to be me. I don't like to pretend. If I go off, I'm not going to pretend that I'm somebody else. I'm going to be me! My children and grandchildren are happy. They're happy to know that their grandmommy go off and sing and picture been in the paper. So I'm happy, too. I didn't realize days past and gone that things was going to work out like that.

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The best trip I had was when a busload went to Washington from Wesley Church. Rev. Goodwin went and everyone was like one big family. The bus driver took us around and showed us different places. We had a good time. On Sunday morning, we did a church service at the festival.

I really wish we could get some more programs off from here. That's something I been looking forward to. If just once a year, you just get away on some kind of program. I like to see friends I've made in different places. And when I go, I don't want to rush off. After we sing, I want to sit around and listen to other people sing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

177 484 When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

142 302 291 524 352 353

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 22]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 222]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 224]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## CULTURE IS AN INBRED THING, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE FED

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I think the culture has a better chance to survive if you have some control over it. That has been my dream to try to make sure people have an economic base, and then you can go back, then you can sit around and talk about parents and grandparents. But if somebody is sitting around hungry and you're gonna tell them about some damn culture, it don't make any American sense.

So what it is that some of us have been about is you can upgrade peoples' health care, you can upgrade their housing, if you can upgrade their education, then they themselves begin to look at their own history, because they have some leisure time to look at it.

Culture is an inbred thing, it's in there, but it needs to be fed. The best way to feed it is to make sure you got some of the basic necessities to survive.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 228]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

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524

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island

• 142
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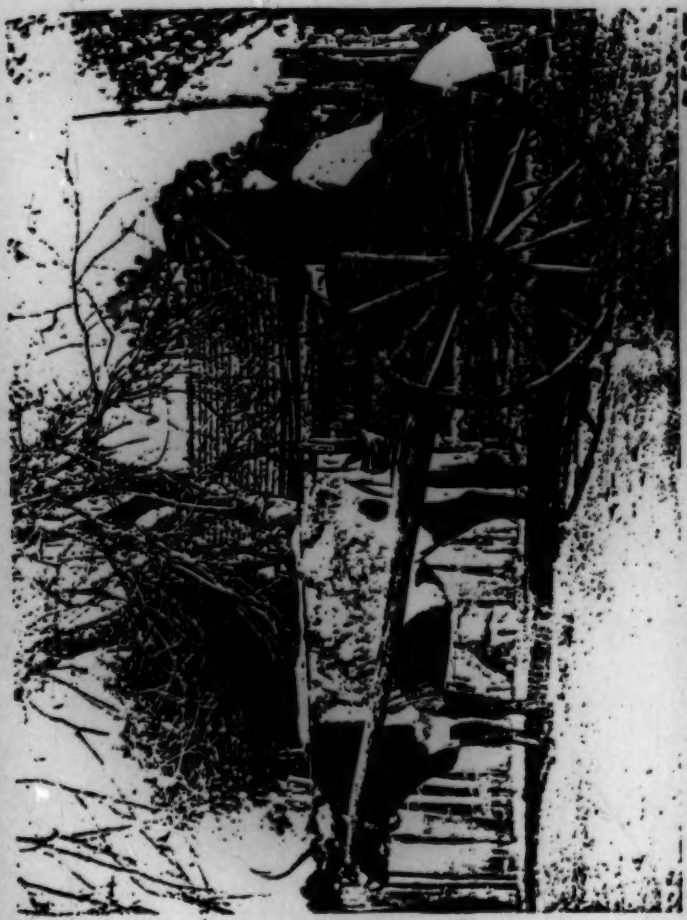
2. Old Polly Goodwine

[facing p. iii]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



Liverpool and His Ox-Cart (Barn, St. Simon's, ill.8—Dind, Darien, 1938)

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442
443

[facing p. 32]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142
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5. Bessie Cuyler

6. Oscar Massie, an African-born Slave

[facing p. 33]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

•142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) A and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and [538] belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms.

538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] *Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.*
[39] "*The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello,*" April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, *June 14, 1930.*

A. [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analysis]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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8. *Beating Rice in Darien*

[facing p. 49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142
302
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9. Snools

[facing p. 64]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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10. Suny

[535]

11. Snooks Doing: "Juka Dis, Juka Dat"

[facing p. 65]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

•142
291

15. Joe Singing: "Good-Bye Everybody," with Ben in the Background

16. Bessie, Deeply Absorbed in the Singing

[facing p. 97]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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18. A Bronze Head Dug up at Ife in 1938

19. Its American Counterpart

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20. An Iron Gate Latch Made by Willy Rogers

21. Alligator Carved by Lonnie Davis

[facing p. 117]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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535

24. Margaret, on the Left, Demonstrates the Correct Position of Arms and Feet in Shouting

[facing p. 144]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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291
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26. Julia—Who Does the Buzzard Lope

[facing p. 160]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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27. Gertrude

[facing p. 161]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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29. Suryanna

[Facing p. 199]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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30. Julia Teaching the St. Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

[facing p. 192]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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291

31. "Cap'n" Joe

[facing p. 193]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533
461
142
291

32. St. Simon's Sandy Singers

[facing p 224]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

33. Jancy Jackson, Born at Kelvin Grove, St. Simon's, in 1826—Died in 1936

34. Milly Polecat, the Witch Doctor

[facing p. 225]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

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[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A. [For Illustrations 18 &19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
839 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
• [144] more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
567 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
581 "poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
[165] ing until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 319.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was [304] snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, [151] which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[27] When he laughed be bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he 115 had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, be- 754 tween chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a [759] root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, [758] added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh [759] right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.

(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on
(152) hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
(533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

674 anybody view uh face aw lay deah hans on uh[31] wuz sho a
682 pity.[36]
764 "Ebrybody wuz at duh fewnul. Come frum miles roun tuh pay deah las respecks tuh a po wife murduhed by uh huzbun on Friday duh thuteent.

"Duh body wuz brung frum duh unduhtakuh's pahluh straight tuh Sweet Fiel ub Eden Chuch at duh Pint. Chuch so crowded yuh caahn hahdly see duh coffin up in front. We sing hymns, an den wen duh singin hab die out an yuh could heah jis a lill hummin heah an deah, somebody stan up an say, 'Catherine De Lanzy wuz a sistuh ub duh Lawd.' 'She sho wuz,' somebody else say. 'She wuz a chile ub Jesus an she walk in duh way ub righteousness.'

"Dis staht off duh whole congregation an deah mustuh bin neah a hundud people git up an gib testimony bout Catherine's goodness. Some people cry an scream wen dey tell duh
• [152] congregation wut a fine uhmun she bin.

"Den duh remains wuz took tuh duh cimiterry neah duh chuch an buried. Duh whole time we sing hymns an sway tuh duh soun uh duh music. Ebrybody tro a hanful uh dut in duh grabe an[38] wen duh grabe digguhs fix duh moun, we put some uh Catherine's tings on duh top. Deah wuz a lill flowuh vase wid duh bottom knock out, an a lamp chimney, an some puhfumery bottles, an duh pitchuh she made ice watuh in jis fo Bo-Cat tuk uh off.[47] Den duh ministuh nounce dat duh fewnul suhmon wuz tuh be preach at duh annyul memorial wen dey pray fuh ebrybody who die durin duh yeah.[43] An den das all an we wehn home."

"Why was Limerick De Lancy called Bo-Cat?" we asked.
551 "Deah ain no signifcunse tuh dat. I hab a frien dat ebrybody call Friday but[20] uh name is Lula. I hab a cousin name Augus Bond an a son name May Bud simply cuz he wuz bawn in May. One uh muh brothuhs wuz call Baby Head cuz at birth he wuz a tiny baby wid sech a great big head.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



of the cotton gin. On the Sea Islands indigo planters marked time and clung to their slaves, although their new relationship with Great Britain cut off their monopoly of indigo profits. Shortly, a new commodity, sea island cotton, proved to be a vastly profitable substitute for indigo. There was never a question as to whether or not slavery would survive in South Carolina and Georgia.[18]

175 (567)

Postwar South Carolina settled back into a system of slavery which was unbending in its oppression. Signs of brutality and harshness were clearly visible. One 1785 traveler was awestruck by the natural beauty of the state, but also mused on how quickly "heaven's best gifts" were forgotten, "as well as the bountiful giver." Upon visiting a structure jocosely referred to as the "sugar house," the observer was repulsed by what he saw. Here Charleston slaves were punished. The place contained "dreadful machinery" on which slaves were confined and suspended. "I marked the scourge which was tinged with human blood and other apparatus of more than savage barbarity." More revolting than the "machinery" said the observer, was the "viewing bench" designed for "such spectators as chose to regale themselves with a view of the agony of suffering humanity." How was it possible, wondered the traveler, that "a people who have just risen up from the struggles of virtue and liberty should be so insensible of their inestimable blessings . . . as to consign to sining and dispair creatures like themselves and to triumph in their destress." Another example comes from Georgia. Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush noted that on the Sea Island plantations of Pierce Butler, the overseer, Mr. Mitchell, whipped slaves "til they laughed."—"Pain," said Rush, "changed to pleasure."[19]

175 567 (152)

Whatever mechanisms of escapism prompted this "hysterical" reaction to whipping, it is doubtful that pain was turning to pleasure as the usually sensitive Dr. Rush believed. But the statement represents more than an ignorant comment about an oppressive system, since the incident took place on a Butler plantation. This latter fact demonstrates the limitations inherent in viewing bondage from what may seem to be a redeeming ideology—paternalism. While Butler himself can probably be considered as close to any planter in representing "paternalism," this only reveals the inadequacy of the term in describing master-slave relationships. He was known for buying slaves in family units and for trying to keep them together on his plantations. He was also remembered by his old house slaves for having been a caring master. But Butler was often absent, and

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[48] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

175 797 797 567

Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

175 797 567

The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

175 797 152 786

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
797 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
•152 grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
186 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural" means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
797 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices. The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
175 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
177 anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
178 Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state. In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to tradi-
175 tions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
797 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. A. C. Jenkins*

## ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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•152

I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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## SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism,* and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs,* shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition* and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made,* either by

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[152] [113] *"For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

*"Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

[113] *"At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 423, 424, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

*"Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

[177]

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
179 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
•152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
178 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs.""[11] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[12] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
(522) it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(529) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[11]With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
(113) Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[12]Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[12]See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
(113) Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

181 However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
177 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing some-
thing that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
(123) indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

181 Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
177 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[a] It seems to me that the attitude of the
• 152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[a] Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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181 need of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the
190 words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vul-
152 gar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of
186 their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contempt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

181 Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9)[A] that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

[7] As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.

[8] From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantations.

A. [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 64--Analysis]

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MOONLIGHT–STARLIGHT

53 In *Slave Songs of the United States*, the origin of a song similar to "Moonlight–
(764) Starlight" is attributed to St. Simon's Island by Colonel Trowbridge, who is quoted as saying "that it was sung at funerals in the night time—one of the most solemn and characteristic customs of the Negroes." Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes
764 a "buryin'" that took place at the Butler Plantation in 1839:

Yesterday evening the burial of the poor man, Shadrach, took place. I had been applied to for a sufficient quantity of cotton cloth to make a winding-sheet for him, and just as the twilight was thickening into darkness I went with Mr. —— [Pierce Butler, her husband] to the cottage of one of the slaves . . . a cooper of the name of London . . . who was to perform the burial service. The coffin was laid on trestles in front of the cooper's cottage, and a large assemblage of the people had gathered around, many of the men carrying pine-wood torches, the fitful glare of which glanced over the strange assembly. . . . Presently the whole congregation uplifted their voices in a hymn, the first
(53) high wailing notes of which—sung all in unison, in the midst of these unwonted surroundings—sent a thrill through all my nerves. When the chant ceased cooper London
(782) began a prayer, and all the people knelt down in the sand, as I did also. . . . When the prayer was concluded we all rose, and, the coffin being taken up, proceeded to the people's burial-ground, when London read aloud portions of the funeral service from the Prayer-book. . . . The service ended with a short address from London upon the subject of Lazarus, and the confirmation which the story of his resurrection afforded our hopes. . . . When the coffin was lowered the grove was found to be partially filled with water—naturally enough, for the whole island is a mere swamp, off which the Altamaha is only
• (152) kept from sweeping by the high dikes all around it. This seemed to shock and distress the people, and for the first time during the whole ceremony there were sounds of crying and exclamations of grief heard among them . . . and so we returned from one of the most striking religious ceremonies at which I ever assisted.

When Margaret, one of my star shouters, was buried a few years ago at Kelvin Grove, in the old slave yard on the marsh, I too was shocked to see the coffin lowered into the water, but in this instance such an occurrence was taken as a matter of course.

53 Of all the primitive songs this is the most plaintive as well as the most impressive:

Moonlight–Starlight
O-o-h [12] Moonlight
Believer what's the matter?
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)
John lay the body to the tomb
O-o-h—let me go!
John lay the body to the tomb
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)

[12] Sung with the lips closed. The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 786 152 159 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of religious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 159 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 786 787 159 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said, "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
[533] observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consid-
eration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
[128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
[171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
[152] edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his
[782] rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the con-
gregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with
a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence
[787] told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried
the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin'" begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [264] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[171] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

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764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
993 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[115] Baptist Church was located.

764 At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
•152 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
[167] ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

764 M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
171 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers, there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[167] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Qualterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my husband died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me
[123] if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the con-
666 stitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.

While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women
153 ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read
666 and write.

After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that
185 I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

758 islands. In the absence of medical people, the islanders
759 have historically maintained and relied on home remedies.
[757] Because home remedies were the only form of medicine avail-
757 able these practices have continued, particularly among the
older population who have been more deeply rooted in its
use.

To the outsider these practices and medical beliefs
may seem absurd. The practices however have gained the at-
tention of trained medical persons who are on the island
cataloging these remedies.

759 At the extreme or the most proficient practioners of
the home remedy art are called "Hand Workers." Perhaps the
most widely known practitioner of this art was the late
Dr. Buzzard of Beaufort County, South Carolina. People
from all over the nation come to the islands in search of
the Hand practitioners. They come for potions, cures,
advice and to have old hands renewed.

A Christian people, these practitioners in no way up-
hold the sterotypical images commonly portrayed in the
literature. These practitioners generally attribute their
skills as holy gifts which through dedicated practice and
study, their art has been refined to meet the needs of their
patients.

[153] Mentally these practitioners have stored extensive
[757] files of illness-cure remedies. These mental files are

759 usually a work accomplished over a seventy-year span.
759 Discarding dsyfunctional potions and retaining those which
757 work, those practitioners claim their greatest skill is that of memory. An oral people, who rely heavily on the remembered word, practitioners claim that they are simply extraordinarily adept in this process. This ability enables them to recall those remedies which were of proven effectiveness in similar cases.

757 It is difficult to accurately gage how effective this practice has been. Nevertheless one measure comes through examining the health habits of islanders. First the is-
[759] lander would try the family remedy for an illness, if this does not work medical doctors are consulted, if the illness
[178] persists then the hands practitioners are sought. The continued existence of these practices on the islands suggests that these latter practices are effective.

759 Hand Practitioners - What They Can Do

Practitioners are regarded as having the ability to perform effectively in the following areas:

1. Heal the physically sick.
2. Bring and change the luck element.
3. Change the habits or doings of wayward people.
4. Unite man and woman in pleasant relationships.
5. Protect the body from harm.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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175 567 794 796 797

At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

175 567 796 797 786 535 533

Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

> . . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 787 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SHOUTING FOR A BETTER DAY

796 533 786 Every Sunday night these people have meeting at Moving Star Hall. Every December 24th they have what we call a Christmas watch night meeting, and every December 31st, a New Year's watch. They sing from twelve o'clock until day clean.

They know the tune, they're ready to shout. They're giving praise to the great Supreme Being who have stood by them in the past days from slavery up to this present. Just to hear these songs remind us of our hardship. Those songs are the ones that made them happy, made them go through those hard days—the days when they didn't have a place to live of their own, didn't have a piece of land of their own, and were living on a plantation.

786 796 These people are hard-pressed people, and they are optimistic enough to believe that there are better days coming. When they get into these religious shouts, they feel so happy until that's all they can do but shout. The motions go into the hands and into the feet and they start clapping, and you can't keep them sitting—not when they start clapping, brother. They feel so happy 'til they got to shout. People sixty years and seventy years old clap and shout and jump all over the floor without falling down.

786 796 • 154 These people are trying to satisfy themselves, satisfy their soul. It's the only place they could be happy because life is so hard and sometimes there are any number of persons who do not know where the next meal is coming from. They can't talk back if they go on the farm regardless of how mean they were treated. Sometime their task they had was overburdening. Sometimes somebody watching them that they didn't have a chance even to stoop. They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting.

*Mr. John Smalls*

## 796 786 ANYTIME YOU COME, YOU IS IN

We don't charge nothing to come in Moving Star Hall. Moving Star Hall are free, and the door are open for each and every one. Whether you are white, whether you are dark like myself, or different color, come in. If you can preach, come on. We all preach. Don't say, no, you can't come up to this table. You can preach, pray, or testify. If you want speak, anything you want say, you got the opportunity—we give it to you.

'Cause we know we are in God hand. God made *all* of us. Don't make a few and somebody else made some; God made all. So I am happy to meet you all.

I hear the white madam say a while ago she glad we let 'em come in. "No, don't worry with that, Madam. Anytime you come, you is in. Bring friend, whatever; you's in." So sing, shout, get happy. But don't fall out!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



439 437 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 • 156 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in 596 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family communities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and peo- 621 ple remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to 596 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called 423 "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the 607 primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island communities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a (423)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 554 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 554 871 (177) I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior. (177) Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## WHEN MY LORD CALLS ME I MUST GO

159 567 The last time Lady Butler saw Liverpool she told him that he must be here when next she came to America. His reply was: "When my Lord calls me I must go." On one of her yearly visits to Darien, she gave him a rose to wear in his buttonhole, and called him "the last flower of the Butler flock." When she saw him again, she found that the rose had miraculously become a perennial from the five and ten cent store. To the paper rose he attached the tribute she had paid him!

Liverpool was loyalty itself to the family of his master, and the same can be said of Dan Wing, who went to England with his mistress, Frances Butler Leigh,[8] when she married the Dean of Hereford Cathedral. Dan and Liverpool, both mentioned in Mrs. Leigh's *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation* (1866–1876), were keenly interested in what she had said about them. When I asked Liverpool about his display of insubordination, of which she tells, he said—with a chuckle—that his head had been cut by Mr. N., the overseer, because of "back-talk." However, Mrs. Leigh apparently pardoned his outbreak, for he proudly showed me the photograph of herself which she had given him.

567 •156 No one, least of all the descendants of the slave-owners, could wish for a return of the institution, but a system that could produce such fine characters as the Caters' Dembo, the Kings' Neptun', his son Clarence,[9] the Butlers' Dan and Liverpool, and "Miss Sis" Clifton's Mary Covington—born soon after freedom—and many other Negroes I could name, must have had its redeeming features. I know it will be said the system had little to do with their development, that it was the individual. Maybe so, but after reading everything I can find concerning our ante-bellum Negroes I wonder why there are not more who are outstanding characters today. Per-

[8] The daughter of Fanny Kemble and the mother of Alice, who became Lady Butler.

[9] Clarence's death, a couple of years ago, was a great loss to our community. He was a good man and an excellent singer.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



haps it is true that certain plantation owners were of a superior type and provided a superior example; or was it that the education received by the slaves was better suited to their needs?

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to weep like a willo' moan like a dove
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
When my Lord calls me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 10

# *Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phenomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these [533] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, foreboding, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly [157] demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of demoralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical 761 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation experience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to 775 the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gullahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its [171] 000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife beliefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

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[867]
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[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

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794
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(871)
(802)

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

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[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

2: Jones-Jackson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For additional information on informants, see Category 115.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 topics was reflected in his playful, jesting performances. Personality, however, is not necessarily woven into an individual's personal delivery style, because extremely reserved and nontalkative people may tell tales which are lengthy, raucous, and sometimes even bawdy. The ways in which various narratives can be treated and presented are best illustrated by discussing some individual storytellers, their personal histories, the types of stories they tell, and their method of presentation. From this information the reader may more fully appreciate the range of styles falling within the Sea Island tradition.

•159 538 *Mr. Ted Williams*, in his late forties, is a family man and one of few blacks to own a substantial amount of land on Wadmalaw Island. Along with farming that land, he owns and runs a local grocery store. As a young man he left the island to try city work, "but I didn't stay. I always think about home. I always want to come back home. And I always wanted to work for myself."[12] Mr. Ted is an influential deacon in his church, and in this capacity he participates widely in fund-raising drives and other community activities. He is a very sociable person; he likes being around people and is a welcome visitor to any home. As a deacon he is a weekly speaker before the church congregation and knows well how to inspire and excite people. His seemingly natural public speaking skills are easily carried over to his skill and ability in telling a good tale. Mr. Ted has no preference for types of folk narratives; his repertoire ranges from the humorous exploits of a scheming buzzard to serious oratory on the design of the universe. He is known best not for a particular subject but simply for his ability to tell a story, a "good lie." I found his personal style probably the most effective of all in eliciting audience participation. Once he began a tale, he was an enthusiastic teller. He amused his listeners by walking around, joking, laughing, and inspiring everyone to become involved with his story. Because he seemed to enjoy performing, any tale he told was welcomed by his listeners. He was playful and constantly teased the audience by saying that this was his last tale, and he would not tell another one. Likewise, he was a catalyst to other tellers, who often tried to imitate his style and vied with him in trying to tell the best tale. Few matched his technique, though some told more intricate stories.

Mr. Ted usually stood when he began a tale and seldom sat down until it was finished. When he did sit, it was only for a moment, and even then some part of his body was in constant motion. His hands

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted Williams is known for his ability to tell a good story.

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159 538 were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale. [201]

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was contemporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community. [193]

*Mr. James Oree* is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

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ative person, once he decides that he wants to "waste" his time with you. During the period that I spent on the Sea Islands, he was always helpful but agreed to tell stories to me only at the request of the lady next door, whose encouraging words were, "You know some old-time story, so tell she some!" And some very excellent ones he told! He was quite the comedian, and all of his tales were humorous and lively (see "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter"). Even when he attempted a serious tale, it seemed to come out funny.

Like Mr. Ted, however, he had a unique personal delivery which captivated his audience and caused them to respond well to his style of expression. For example, he always took his time to tell a story, and the leisure and sheer idleness with which he spoke were part of his uniqueness as a good storyteller. As is characteristic of most Sea Island tales, his stories were series of action-packed episodes. Yet he never stood up, walked around, or moved unless he felt compelled to do so to emphasize some point. In fact, during most of his telling time, he sat with his eyes half closed, as if contemplating the character's next move. At times he seemed to be unaware of an audience; he seemed instead to be carrying on a dialogue as though he were one of the characters himself. For example, instead of introducing direct speech with the formulaic verb *say*, Mr. Oree often pretended to be the characters and simply spoke their dialogue. His ability to modulate his very deep bass voice to take on the character and speaking habits of various participants in a story seemed to be one of his most artistic techniques, adding life, zest, and interest to his tales. But even more effective was the deliberate casualness of his style, which kept the listeners hanging on every word.

There was very little actual description in Mr. Oree's tales—he used very few words, in fact, and thus even fewer long sentences. Yet the listeners were seemingly able to intuit the details of his story from the description that he did give and the slow, contemplative manner in which he told the tale. He used more ideophones than many of the other tellers, and he was also extremely adept at producing certain sounds. For example, this is the way Mr. Oree represented the caution in Ber Rabbit's steps as he tries to manuever past a hunter with a gun in an open oat field:

> Rabbit jump. . . . [He closed his eyes and contemplated, swaying back and forth as if counting to himself.] Rabbit jump. . . .

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> [Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy*, you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

[201]

538 The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

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Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

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•159 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though
539 Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his
[177] tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr.
[592] Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by
[171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Is-
539 landers', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

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159 539 style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

159 538 During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point [201] with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

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159 538 ingly in order to permit the listeners to reflect on the content of his narrative; whatever his reason, it was a highly effective technique. During his long pauses, older members often offered a word of encouragement, such as "Tell em, Henry." Mr. Henry would reply, "Shore [sure]! I remember that good as yesterday!"

Like most good Sea Island narrators, Mr. Henry used a highly emotional oratorical method that tended to stimulate and excite his listeners. He frequently used repetition and parallel constructions, with mesmerizing effects. For example, he often spoke of the days of his youth, a time when he lived and worked on a plantation. The simple words "We ben living over there . . . on the white people place . . . the white people place" alone on the page can never capture the emotion of his phrasing or show his grave expression as he paused to reflect. The words had apparently brought to mind untold memories, so many that he felt compelled to repeat the phrase again softly and more deliberately, as if each word had history in itself.

In addition to his various uses of repetition, Mr. Henry would often actually shout out with passionate anger, joy, or excitement. To his exclamations, older members would respond with equal fervor. He would call out the name of a responding member and ask, for example:

> "Myma, you ain't know what I bina talk about, do you?"

The respondent (Myma in this case) would reply:

> "Yeah man! Shore I bina know!"
> "Huh?"
> "Yeah! Yeah!"
> "But this one here [pointing to a younger member] ain't de know. E [he] ain't even ben born yet."

Appropriately to his topics, Mr. Henry's language had formal overtones even in casual utterances. Thus he retained the elements characteristic of a creolized Gullah speech: one pronoun for both masculine and feminine subjects, a range of preverbal markers, few if any morphological inflections, the introductory or formulaic verb *say*, and other features of the creole tradition (see Chapter 4). [193]

159 *Miss Deeley* would not reveal her age, nor would she consent to being recorded or permit me to use her last name, but she is one of the most prolific women storytellers that I encountered. She is fifty or

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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice
[264] cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and
[262] other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
589 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

528 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
528 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat
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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[MI] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[MH] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to par-
[MB] ticipate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("uinmmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
538 of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Further-
159 more, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
791 finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

*Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years,
159 and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

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•159 present wife. He admits to directing appreciating glances at a fine-looking woman even today, but says that a look is the extent of his appreciation.

Mr. Mickell attended elementary school on Johns Island, but because he had to work to help support his family, he was forced to quit school during the elementary grades. Yet he has done well for himself. He was in the navy and has worked on various jobs from handyman to longshoreman. He now lives a rather tranquil but satisfying life, with a degree of comfort slightly more sumptuous than that of many islanders.

159 538 Mr. Mickell is a gifted storyteller. Many of the tales I heard him tell have direct parallels with some told in Nigeria (see "Ber Rabbit and the Lord"). His speaking style is as characteristic of Sea Island speech as the other informants'. He speaks very rapidly with a very high pitch and tone. In fact, I sometimes found it extremely difficult to understand him when he became engrossed in a narrative. The problem with interpretation was not with his vocabulary, though he knew many old words with African origins; the problem was primarily a phonological one. The rhythm, tempo, and stress with which he pronounced the English words is really one of the most outstanding characteristics of contemporary Gullah speech. Though I had difficulty adjusting to his delivery, the audience composed of speakers born and raised on the Sea Islands had no problem at all, as would be expected.

I found Mr. Mickell's most distinguishing feature to be his use of gestures and repetition. A rapid rate of speaking, sustained high pitch, and strong rhythm are characteristic of the community. Mr. Mickell, however, spoke more quickly than others. The rapid speaking style was enough in itself to create excitement, but the method by which Mr. Mickell used repetition, whether in words or phrases or in parallel structure, helped to intensify the excitement in his rapid series of action-packed episodes. In one tale, for example, he described how a king snake is able to kill other snakes. He conveyed the striking manner in which the king snake coils itself around its victim through a series of words repeated rapidly in succession, "Wrap up, wrap up, wrap up." To illustrate this action, he made his hands into fists and rolled them rapidly over and over in front of him, completing the coiling gesture with a "psssup" to indicate that the victim is completely immobile within the coils. To show how the king snake stretches its victim and shatters its spinal cord in one quick motion, Mr. Mickell

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159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from
524 him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma*, is my closest
123 link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still
342 standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
[365] of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no
[514] electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene
123 lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

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159 one of her friends, who accused her of taking some tobacco which Miss Myma clearly could not have taken. Her friend attacked her viciously and called her some scandalous names. With each insult Miss Myma replied, "You de right, darlin," or "Sho will, honey," or "I know you ben tell truth for sho, baby." Finally, the friend looked rather foolish, throwing out insults and having them accepted so calmly. So, clearly feeling unfulfilled because she had not had the satisfaction of arousing Miss Myma to any angry word play, she left kicking up dust and looking back over her shoulder as she stalked down the sandy lane from Miss Myma's house. I had seen Miss Myma at her best in heated arguments over far smaller issues before; thus I asked her in amazement why she had not retaliated and defended herself forcefully. She took her pipe from her mouth, shook it in the direction her friend had taken, and replied thoughtfully that that particular woman was a fool, and she left fools in the hands of the Lord.

159 Miss Myma was apparently in her mid to late seventies when I met
123 her. She told me that she "forget" how old she really was, but she could come close if I could tell her how old some of her childhood friends were. In spite of her age, she remains one of the most active people on the island. She taught me to crab, net, and fish. In fact, I caught my first dogfish while fishing on the banks of an island stream. The thing actually had feet and barked like a dog when I caught it on the hook. When I asked if the fish were edible, the children standing on the bank laughed at my ignorance before they said no.

Every day was an exciting day with Miss Myma. We got up around six o'clock and drove the fifteen or more miles to James Island to get a cup of coffee. Miss Myma liked to ride, and I loved the invigorating smell of the Sea Island morning air. If we were going to the creek that day, we would gather our gear beforehand. If we were going "bog-
159 ging" for crabs, which was Miss Myma's preferred way to catch them, we would get our sticks and go to the creek after the tide had gone out.
123 Bogging for crabs is hard work; one even needs specific shoes for this
226 venture. When the tide goes out, many crabs are left in the various nooks and crannies of the creek bank and bed. The stick is used not only for support but to prod into holes to scare out the crabs. When one is found, it is provoked into clamping onto the stick and then pulled up and dropped into a large bucket. If the crab is ornery and refuses to clamp onto the stick, the stick is used to hold him down. He is picked up from the back and his two front claws are quickly clamped together;

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159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
226 out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
226 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving
133 because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
538 Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little
538 nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleeping times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never understand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways, dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
123 gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538] she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
159 year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit
123 the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter, who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I
757 had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

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159 chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me.
123 Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field
157 behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

159 In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

142 Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had
159 nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that
[302] was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the
[132] reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first
[301] got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

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159 had the dark full lips which some people call "blue lips" because of
142 their defined darkness and smoothness. They are the kind of lips that never need lipstick, but I have seen her take one of her children's graphite pencils, scratch it against a surface to make the point soft and blunt, and rub it across her lips to accentuate their darkness. In spite of having had five children, she still had an excellent figure, and a figure is important to Sea Island men. Her rounded posterior filled out her jeans and made all of her clothes hang just right. She told me once that
159 she was not sure it was an advantage to a woman to be built the way
836 she was, because if she had not had, in her own words, "such a big ass," maybe the men would have left her alone, and she would not
142 have got pregnant when she was fourteen. She reflected on that state-
832 ment for awhile, took a long draw from her cigarette, and then amended it by saying, "Hell, who knows what I would have done?" She had always liked men as much as they seemed to like her, she finished by saying, and she probably would have got pregnant anyway.

159 I concluded that her attractiveness emanated not only from her looks but from her style and manner as well. She had a natural, inborn sophistication and presence that any *Vogue* model would envy. I showed her a copy of *Vogue* once, along with *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ebony*, and asked if she would like a complimentary subscription to one for Christmas. She flipped through *Vogue* and commented that she had no place to go to wear the kind of "shit" the models displayed; she browsed through *Essence* and said it had too much fancy cooking, and the only food that tasted good to her was cowpeas and bone; she read through *Cosmopolitan* and said it seemed to be about white women wanting sex, and hell, she got enough of that without reading about it. She finally settled on *Ebony* because she liked the pictures of Billy Dee Williams.

In spite of her language and outward hardness, there was something about Ida Mae that made her very feminine. Perhaps it was the way she held her cigarette, the way she walked, or the way she smiled just enough to show a glint of her gold tooth. Perhaps it was the
159 coyness with which she captivated a man's attention, any man's, that
832 made the more respectable women of the community dislike her and the more respectable men, especially the older ones, want to get close enough to her to smell her perfume, maybe inadvertently brush against her, or at least get into a position to see her back action as she walked away. I even overheard a deacon in the church comment to her one

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•159 832 afternoon, while buying a soda at Mr. Ted's store, that she had on a mighty fine-looking dress and it was sho' hitting her in all the right places. She turned, gazed into his eyes just a split second longer than what was respectable, flipped a few ashes from her cigarette on his shiny black shoes, smiled ever so slightly, and walked away. He watched her as she moved out of his eyesight. Then he hitched up his pants, put both hands in his front pockets, and asked the Lord to give him strength.

159 123 Late one Saturday afternoon I walked up the lane past the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house to visit Ida Mae. She lived in a two-room shanty with three of her five children. The two older girls had lived with her mother since they were born. There were no children yelling and screaming outside, however, so I thought Ida Mae was not home. I started to leave when she popped her head out of her bedroom and said, "Hi, Pat." I was lonely, so I was glad to find her in. I asked her why it was so quiet, and where the children were. She said she sent them down to her mother's house to spend the night. When I asked her why, she replied, "Ain't you business, but I de spect company soon, and when he de come, you go have fe leave." I said that was okay. We sat on the broken steps in front of her shanty and chatted about general things, children, school, work, people on the islands.

She asked about my husband and if he didn't get jealous with me running around down there. I said I didn't think so, that I had really never given him a reason to be jealous. She replied that men never needed a reason to be jealous, that they were jealous by nature and it was to a woman's advantage to keep them that way. She asked what I was doing on the islands every year, and what Africa had been like, and if the men loved big-butt women there as much as men did here. I told her that I was trying to reconstruct Africanisms, and yes, the African men loved big-butt women as much as Sea Island men did. In fact, I told her that my female friends in Nigeria had teased me because my rear end was not as round as theirs, and I had retaliated by saying that was true for me, but the Sea Island women still had behinds that would put theirs to shame. She laughed and said she was glad I told the bitches that.

She offered me a cigarette. I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't smoke. Then she offered me a shot of whiskey; again, I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't drink. Then she offered me a joint; I thanked her and said I didn't smoke pot either, and wondered where

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she had got it. She turned, studied me a moment, and said, "You ain't de drink, ain't de smoke cigarette, ain't de dulge in pot. What de hell you do for fun? You de Jehovah Witness or something?" I laughed and told her I liked to travel, write, and come down there to visit her. She shook her head and replied that I must lead a sad life if coming down there was what I called fun.

As we sat talking and gazing out at the dusk and incoming fog, she asked me if I remembered the time I had gone with her to work in the field tying tomatoes. We laughed and reflected on that day. She had told me that if I really wanted to go I had to get up around six o'clock, put on some long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and borrow one of Miss Myma's wide straw hats. I could hardly sleep that night thinking I would oversleep and miss the truck. Miss Myma woke me up, though, and cautioned me for the fifth time that it was too hot in the fields, that some people had had sunstrokes, and that I should stay there with her until Ida Mae came back in the evening. For the fifth time I said no, I wanted to go. When I arrived at Ida Mae's house dressed in my tomato-tying clothes, she grinned at me and asked if I had brought anything for lunch. I said no, so we walked down to Mr. Ted's store, and I bought some Vienna sausage and crackers. Then we stood by the highway until Dan Seabrooke came along in his truck and picked us up to drive us the ten or so miles to the tomato patch. Once we got there, we piled out and were each given strips of twine and told to take a row. I took one between Ida Mae and one of her friends because they felt that between the two of them, they could help me keep up.

Tying tomatoes is a monotonous, tiring, backbreaking job. Some of those rows were more than a mile long. A stick had been hammered into the ground to support each plant. We took the twine and tied the plant to the stick near the base, in the middle, and at the top. Each plant was about a foot from the next, and when we had tied one plant to its stick, we moved on to the next one, and the next one, and the next one, and the next one until we reached the end of the row. When we reached the end of one long row, we turned around and started back down another long row. It took a while for me to get the hang of what to do, and thus I found myself falling behind the others in the field. Ida Mae stopped tying her row and started tying my plants in front of me, so that when I got up to that point I could skip to where the rest of the people were. Around ten o'clock I was tying as fast as I could and sweating profusely. I did not think I could make it until noon and finish at least half a day, but Ida Mae told me if I could tie just until I reached

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159 the big Angel Oak down on the end it would be noon and I could rest.
123 That consoled me. She said that when our shadow was directly under our feet on the row we were tying it would be twelve o'clock. When that happened, true enough, the whistle blew and we stopped, walked back to the truck, took turns getting cool drinks of water with a dipper from the cooler in back of the truck, got our lunches, sat down, ate, and rested.

One o'clock came only too quickly, three came too slowly, and five o'clock quitting time not quickly enough. The temperature rose to more than 103 degrees, and there was nothing between the sun and my head but Miss Myma's straw hat. I will always be grateful to Ida Mae for her help that day. She tied her row and most of mine, but I could at least tell Miss Myma that I had made a day! I would treasure that day and that ten dollars as among my most demanding achievements.

159 As we sat and continued to wait for Ida Mae's company, I re-
123 minded her of her summertime addiction to card playing. When she did not catch a truck to go to the fields, she spent the day, from sunup
525 to sundown, with her card-playing buddies. They took turns buying a nipping bottle to help them get through the day. I met her when she came to play cards one day under the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house and Miss Myma took me out to meet her and her friends. I think I enjoyed these people more than any other group on the Sea Islands. When they played cards, they played for money, and for keeps. They invited me to play once; I accepted and lost twenty dollars my first game. After that, I just sat and listened. I learned that Ida Mae could outplay and outcurse any of the men. In addition, she could match them word for word playing the dozens. Once a card-playing friend asked her to scramble him some eggs for breakfast. She replied, "I ain't you wife." He said he knew that, but he still wanted some eggs. She answered, "I ain't you maid." He said he would pay her to cook them. She replied, "With what? I de win all you money." Then he said, "Well, I pay you with something else then." She answered, "You ain't got nothing else I de want." He said, "Well, you de come on and de go with me and you de see what I got." She burst into laughter and said, "What for I ben go with you, you ain't know what fe do with me if you de get me!"

159 Now we sat on in the dark. Eventually we saw the lights from a car
123 coming up the lane; the car stopped in front of the shanty, and a tall attractive man got out and, as was customary, handed her a half gallon of ice cream as a gift. Since I already knew him, and also knew that he

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159 was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down
[123] the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her
159 father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head
of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice.
596 Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for
spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at play-
[538] ing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115 *Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy* (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

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159 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She
761 finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood
123 outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women
[562] do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr.
[775] Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely
[805] wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

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cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who was born and raised on Johns Island and became one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were interviewing people for the update to this book, Septima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
(468) Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue community organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
(489) Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the island. The resort developments and the new small
(241) businesses offer some employment, but farming,
(198) long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
311 declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
433 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

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87 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, previously all white, became the high school for all
563 island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with
(691) the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County
(668) School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

• 159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

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•159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

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Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island.

[545]

The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.

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Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston low-country, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

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The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN PEACE DIDN'T DECLARE

567 My grandmother was Hannah Seabrook. She raised me up and told me a lot about Rebel Times. Old Hannah Seabrook was a cooker and a washer. Her first husband got sold. Yes sir! They sell my father's daddy. Sell him for money.

When my father was coming up he used to have to go see what old Master wanted him to do. He was just a boy and couldn't do none of that heavy work. So the old Master would have him shine he shoes. One day he found some finger marks on 'em and knock my father down the stairs. Good thing I wasn't living in those days--you would of had to kill me first. But that was in the time when peace didn't declare.

567 When the war came through, my daddy, Cyrus Jenkins, was just a
197 young boy. That time he was in the creek--had to dig the mud and mud the field for what they gonna plant that year. My daddy just up and ran off with the Yankees. He followed the Yankee until peace declared. My grandma didn't see him for four years. When he come back Grandma went to the depot. When she see her one son she drop her little bit of clothes and bind the son. That's right, had only one raggedy soldier coat and nothing else but that.

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

567 **SHE TAKE THE SCRAP AND MAKE**
159 **A LITTLE DRESS FOR ME**

I born in 1878, the twentieth day of November. I was my ma's seventh child. Everybody run for give me name. I grow up in the white people house. I do the small things--I could thread needle for grandma, man. And they make me a little dress, you know. I even wash the Missus' feet. That's right, sir! That's right! Wash her feet in the basin. And when she was the only dressmaker 'round the village, she take the scrap and make a little dress for me.

My grandma had a scarf handkerchief--a white handkerchief she brought from Rebel Time, and when she died I tie he head with that. That's right. Yes ma'am!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Belle Green*

**WE ALL TWO WORK**

•159 I in my seventy-two. Then on the twenty-seven day of next year in August coming, I'll turn seventy-three years old.

When I married to Levy Green I was young. Me and him was married two years when the 1911 storm come. We raised on Johns Island--Levy home at Burden, the Clemmens' plantation, and my home is miles go down on that side. We didn't raise no children. I ain't got anybody. All my people dead out.

We all two work. I does work on the farm, in the field. Hoe work. Cabbage and white potato. We get three dollars a week. After I come down here I start to work with one man, and then I get so unpleasant and unfeeblish, he tell me, "If you can't work, I wouldn't look for you to work." I just give up. So painful old people now.

Levy used to work all about on the farm. He would take care of me if it the last thing he would do. Bus used to carry him all about to work. Then after he couldn't work no more, he give up. They put him on, you know--help. Wasn't much, but yet they put him on and we live by that. All of that done gone through. But I is a person don't complain. If I have anything I don't complain; if I have nothing I don't complain. It's no use. I just go on what God give me.

I thought I would done gone before Levy, 'cause I was the sickest one all the year through, but you see God took him and left me. Levy say, "Anna, don't you worry at all 'cause I going where Jesus is. Don't tell none I going, but I just go walk out."

I say, "Man, walk out where? Where you going?"

"I ain't going stay here no longer. You best try to go to the store and see if you can get something for your Christmas, 'cause I ain't go be here."

I say, "Man, hush your mouth; you talk like you don't know what you say."

He say, "I know what I say. By next Sunday I gone."

I say, "You can't know that. God only one know that."

He say, "All right then, you'll see." And he did so too. He died the fourth Sunday December, 1963.

I didn't know how old he is, but he tell me before he died, "I was born in 1880, December the twelve day." He live to be eighty-three. He was a good little man. Good little man. I have to say so 'cause I know. I sure miss him. He was all I had in the world.

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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

•159 735

There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

(135) (465)

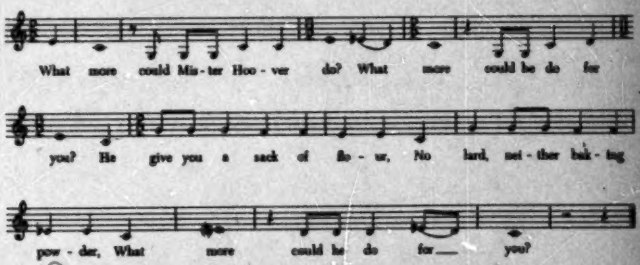
159 735 432 434 435

We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

159 735 657

Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533) (539)




(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

159 735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 735 657 [465] The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735 657 462 241 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 [262] [243] Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 432 226 434 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

735 291

[redacted]

[p.97]

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Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

**WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF**

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
435 got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
443 miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
438 your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
231 cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it, And
251 they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
438 corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice.
388 And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

252 Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
251 Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
226 cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
294 mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

•159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain,--climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things--automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with (493) oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn 735 flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. 178 Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody 262 kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way 178 to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share 'around to the next brother.

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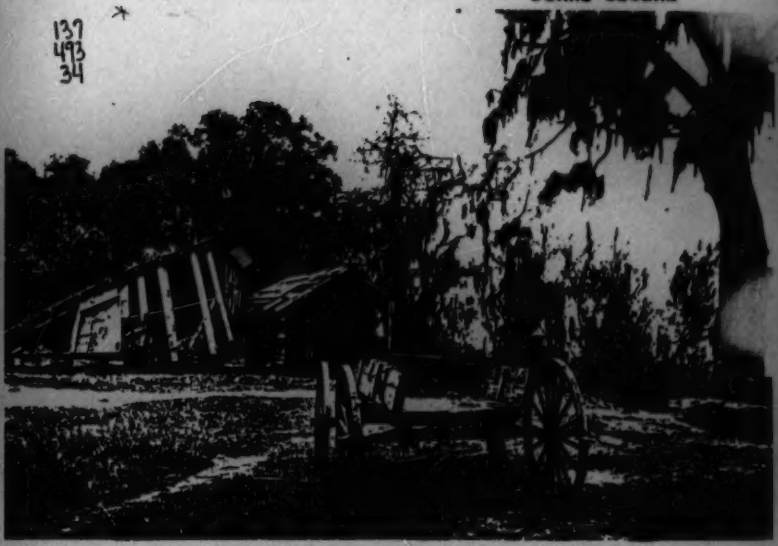

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

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## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yestir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

(804)

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

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*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

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I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

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I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

(243)
(859)

Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

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(529)

That's the way I come up in this world.

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*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 527 535 534 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 535 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side, two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

142 291

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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

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535

When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller-Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.

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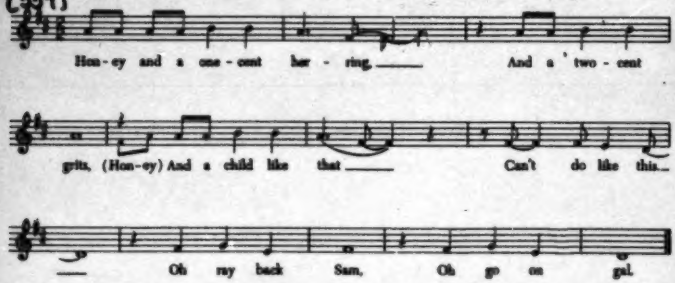


So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground.
46 Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the
241 cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the
(492) Devil! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road
(412) and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise
577 up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

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Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

**EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION**

•159 787 [164]

I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

159 781

Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

•159
957 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine—herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsoy weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour
752 some water in the basin—put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dan-
[237] gerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on. Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you burn them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that—draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole—fiddler crab? We
757 use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something else—I can't 'call the name—and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that
825 for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People
759 couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Belle Green*

## ALL MY OWN GONE

159 Sometime I stand here in the nighttime, ain't but me in one little room to sing. Then I study, you know, my mind run across, and he run on the old man. I just stop, sit down, and me heart get full. The other day I couldn't eat no supper. Me heart fill, and I feel full up the whole afternoon. Couldn't do nothing. I just maybe could of get a little bit wood then.

Now I can't testify like I used to. 'Cause I ain't able. My heart been bad for so long. I just trying to hold up. But they know me; all they at Moving Star Hall know me. I full of fire too. I been way down, but the Lord lift me up. Make me feel good the week out. I just pray to make my voice come back. Give me my voice back as I does been, one time before I die.

(657) When you get an old woman, and you can't go, the government take care of you. That's what got me today. Government got me.

Threescore and ten, that's seventy years I come to this day, but I ain't got much more. So I'm trying to be as close to the Man as I can now. But thousands and thousands have gone. All my own gone. Just a branch now, like a tree put out branch.

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Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I DON'T HAVE ONE DAY HOME

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That's what I'm doing now—working in a kitchen. I get up around five o'clock now, get on my clothes, wash my face and wash up, and I'll go to the back yard and feed chicken. From that I come back and clean up my house, and get out in the road and catch a ride and go to work. And I get to work I take off my coat, my hats, put on a apron and a hat, and go upstairs and get towels, and I wash those towels and put 'em on the line and come back in, start to clean rooms, make up beds. Then after I done do all that, then I come in the kitchen, get something to eat, and home I go. Well sometime I be waiting from three to four hours catching a ride.

I come back do a little work home, and leave from there to go on down to the Progressive Club and stay down there until about nine-thirty, ten o'clock, when it's a clear day. But when they having these party we don't leave 'til two and three in the morning. Get up next morning, go back on the job again. I don't have one day home.

On Sunday, go to church. I get up in the morningtime, get wash up and go outside feed my chicken and water 'em, and take my feet and go on down to the club and open 'em up. I be there around 'bout 'til eleven-thirty, catch a ride and go to church.

Come from church, I'll come back home and get dinner, and from there I go to the society meeting. Then the same Sunday evening we go to the hall to prayer meeting.

I don't have but a couple hours in everything I'm doing. But when I leave from home and come to someone house, like I here with you all now, I'm resting. And when I go home there's no rest. Something there for to do. Ain't nobody pushing me 'round; I'm pushing myself. I see it to do and I got it to do, so I just do it.

I don't care how hard I work in the day, if I get my night rest, it just like I ain't work that day. I get up that next morning, I don't feel it. But what put me down if I don't get my night rest. I get tired and don't feel like going. If I go to bed 'round seven-thirty, eight o'clock, I get up the next morning I don't feel nothing.

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Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

•159 226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em-out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] [227] [824] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

[432] [434] I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

159 461 If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get (826) your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

159 512 My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

159 I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my nineteen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

**I DO MY OWN WORK NOW**

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The first work I used to do was work on our own farm. I worked to help my father because they really had a hard time to raise us, and we just had to go out and do what we could to help in them days. We had to plant a garden.

Then my daddy was a fisherman, and I began to go in the river along with him and he teach me how to throw net, so I finally learn how to. And

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159 226 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for (335) myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now. I'm working at a block and pipe company—making door lintels and window (484) lintels, all different kinds of stone.

(434) The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four (241) weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159 511 434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159 [511] But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up—hard time and good time—all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

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I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn, it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

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The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is very different now.

There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

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'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
584 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
401 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of
(855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## IT'S A SMALL PLACE, BUT I RATHER HAVE ALL MY FAMILY TOGETHER

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I lost my house, a seven-room house, but I feel like it is the Lord's will. 'Cause I was burning oil stove from '41 up to now, and this have never happen to me before.

One day I went to work. I wash Tuesday night and leave a tubful of clothes for my daughter who always takes care of the house, and I told her to hang the clothes out. So she take my little battery radio in the yard under the tree, and she was hanging up the clothes, and when she look up, she saw smoke. She ran back to the house, but she couldn't even get in; the fire knock her back. She remember one of my little grand was sick in the house, and all she could do is run in the house and grab her. My son Johnny grab the rest of the children and take 'em over to my neighbor house and somebody call me.

One of my neighbor call me on my job, and my lady brought me home, must be about seventy mile an hour. I didn't feel so bad then, 'cause I thought fire engine would save at least some the furniture, but then I could see the housetop was falling in.

Then when everybody was together talking, I was sitting off by myself on Moving Star Hall, was thinking what would be best. I didn't feel like going anywhere far from the neighborhood. I have different friends offer me to come stay with them, and Mr. Jenkins, the place I raise on, he had a little empty house there, but I didn't want to go there either. I always want to be close to my meeting—Moving Star Hall.

So my neighbor, Nancy Field, she give me this little place she had built for the Florida people when they come. Those Florida people, they come 'round every year for season to pick tomatoes and thing, and she kept that little place for them. They just stays in it for a season—they'll stay any kind of where, you know.

It's a small place, but I rather have all my family together. If all of us have to sleep in one bed, I rather have all together. She kept manure and corn and all such of things in there, and all the rat been in there, but I was happy for it. I just get out and by my children, daughters, son, husband,

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159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.

159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job--wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THE STRUGGLE HAS COME WITH ESAU

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He's a self-made man—what you call pulling up by your own bootstraps. Everybody here live practically on the same level, but Esau is in a class all by himself.

When we first came to Johns Island in '36 I saw there was a future for Esau. He used to come to me for night teaching. I taught him, right here in my house, to continue his English and grammar and reading. Then, when he stopped coming here, he went to night school at Burke in the city and developed and increased his knowledge. 159 873

There's not another one here like him. I knew his father. He belonged to this church, but his father was not that type of person. He was the kind of "you doing too much, Esau . . . ." You know. 159

We have a civic organization here on Johns Island and Esau is the president. He's tried to let other people take over, but we elect somebody, he serve maybe three months and give it up, and Esau just have to take it back over again. That's why he's stayed in office so long. Others become discouraged and quit. But he hasn't ever become discouraged. He just work on through. 159 575

There's always two groups when somebody like Esau builds himself up—one that appreciates and another that doesn't think too well of it. I think now most everybody sees what he's done and I don't think he has 159 578

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159 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his
578 own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 There's been a great awakening through television and through the
197 news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

159 **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**
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Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[189] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

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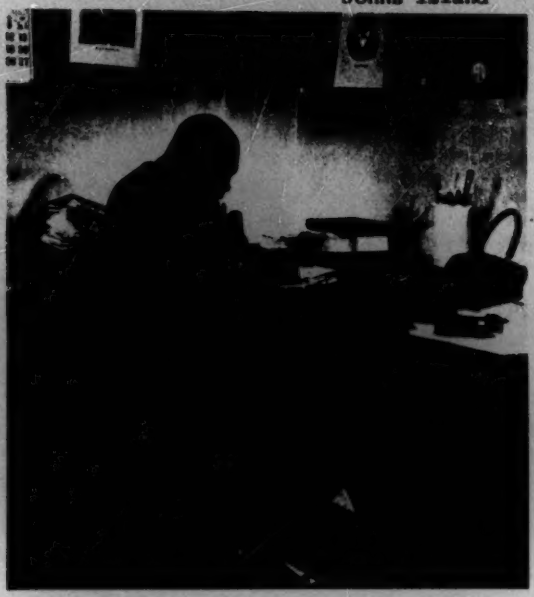

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**THEY PAINTED IT BLACK**

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

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And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

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159 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army, one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 159 185 893 ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING

[465] [241] I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

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159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together.
It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start
(241) with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought
432 the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

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159 or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday
177 speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that
[432] helped me to educate most of my children.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

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682 Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood,

159 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any
171 money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should
682 not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1949 a pro-
185 gressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

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On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em—dum-de-dum-dum-dum—right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 873 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 873 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

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We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 (666)

Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**"MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"**

159 666 871 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**WE'RE NOT FOR SALE**

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 871 661 185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

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159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
87 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
(661) The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
159 when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
87 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
197 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
185 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
(875) outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to
make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing,
those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being
so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
177 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
185 know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing
[661] to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
159 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
494 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
177 —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
888 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
893 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
474 Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
692 somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
666 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask, "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
474 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together. 159 185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands. 159 345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive (526) (873)

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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
526 something to twenty.
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Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
576 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
576 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
159 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN
159 IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT
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We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

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159 185 813 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in some of these lawyers' offices.

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 185 197 813 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island—I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race—because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

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159 185 873 177 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $600 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 443 474 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of 159 185 voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you 178 got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

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*Mrs. Maggie Russell*

## ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

●159 You see that house through the bushes? That's Jenkins Point, where I used to live. They had houses built on the plantation for black people to live in because that was the people that worked for them. Now there are no black people living over there on Seabrook.

I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

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*Mrs Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the con-
666 stitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.
153 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read
666 and write.
185 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experi-
177 ence that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in
159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the
186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth
178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having,
197] such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of
[536 Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing
883] her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

EXAMPLES OF DAILY ROUTINES OF SEA ISLANDERS

512
•159

Sister Carrie.--I can't help but turn around. Sister Carrie at 77 is up at 6:00 A.M. these days. During the school season all the children in the community stop at her gap to warm themselves by the fire and eat the pastries she prepares for them. A great grandmother, Sister Carrie has raised thirteen children. In reflecting on her fifty-one year marriage, she says "da women ta dae ain't wife lik on ma dae. Ca'n member but one dae I ain't had supper steamn hot an d table fer ma husbin." What Sister Carrie did not include was that during those years her day started at 4:30 A.M. By 5:30 A.M. breakfast had been prepared and she was on her way to the fields. She worked the field until 2:30 P.M. when she stopped and headed home to prepare the supper meal. After the evening meal and when the dishes had been cleaned Sister Carrie spent the remaining hours either sewing or shelling beans until the light disappeared. At which time, the family gathered for evening prayer as the final act of the day.

159

D ole Decon.--Decon Eugene at eighty-three years still breaks his ground with mule and plow. He begins his day at 5:30 A.M. and ends when there is just no more light to work by. The decon has raised eleven head of children, all of whom are away in New York. He and his wife live close to their land, only when tragedy becons are they away. In

159 telling why there are not more of his generation around now to keep company he says "en d last years I ca'n waak lik I en d past. Dey'll be many mo ob ma time round here da dae, butbiln d white man's bridges and railroad kill musa us out. Wen dem come from d railroad waak dey body was dead. I tri ta tel dem ta lern to make lik waak, but dey mules n at age fifty dey waz tiad ole men. Oderwize dey'll be many mo ob ma people wete me tadae."

159 461 Reverend Gripe.--The right Reverend Gripe differentiated between human and inhuman labor. Born in 1893, this man refused to work for the large white farmers. He worked and maintained his own land, but when there was an extra penny in "fightin d white man field" he refused. Once he went to lime house store (Captain Limehouse, the head of a powerful family in the area) to buy steak meat. Captain Limehouse a noted nigger whipper asked "where a nigger git steak money?" The six foot three inch two hundred plus pound Reverend Gripe replied "by not waakin ya fields," at which Limehouse laughed and dismissed the Reverend as crazy. Taking insult the Reverend jumped in his new Nash automobile and went then and thereafter to the city for his steak meat.

177 RACE RELATIONS ON THE ISLANDS

Now with bridges and interconnecting paved roadways

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me
56 how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa.
[159] Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's
567 appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of
754 her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old
159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land,
175 and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her
[683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in*
[171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

·9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

533

533 786 152 159 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of religious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 159 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 786 787 159 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said, "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
786 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
• 159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull' him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
(529) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bar!
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bar!
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bar!
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bar!
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bar!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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794 796 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

175 •159 [533] [291] [829] This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533 539

I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

159 567

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

197 567

159 533

Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## WHEN MY LORD CALLS ME I MUST GO

•159 567 The last time Lady Butler saw Liverpool she told him that he must be here when next she came to America. His reply was: "When my Lord calls me I must go." On one of her yearly visits to Darien, she gave him a rose to wear in his buttonhole, and called him "the last flower of the Butler flock." When she saw him again, she found that the rose had miraculously become a perennial from the five and ten cent store. To the paper rose he attached the tribute she had paid him!

Liverpool was loyalty itself to the family of his master, and the same can be said of Dan Wing, who went to England with his mistress, Frances Butler Leigh,[8] when she married the Dean of Hereford Cathedral. Dan and Liverpool, both mentioned in Mrs. Leigh's *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation* (1866–1876), were keenly interested in what she had said about them. When I asked Liverpool about his display of insubordination, of which she tells, he said—with a chuckle—that his head had been cut by Mr. N., the overseer, because of "back-talk." However, Mrs. Leigh apparently pardoned his outbreak, for he proudly showed me the photograph of herself which she had given him.

567 152 No one, least of all the descendants of the slave-owners, could wish for a return of the institution, but a system that could produce such fine characters as the Caters' Dembo, the Kings' Neptun', his son Clarence,[9] the Butlers' Dan and Liverpool, and "Miss Sis" Clifton's Mary Covington—born soon after freedom—and many other Negroes I could name, must have had its redeeming features. I know it will be said the system had little to do with their development, that it was the individual. Maybe so, but after reading everything I can find concerning our ante-bellum Negroes I wonder why there are not more who are outstanding characters today. Per-

[8] The daughter of Fanny Kemble and the mother of Alice, who became Lady Butler.

[9] Clarence's death, a couple of years ago, was a great loss to our community. He was a good man and an excellent singer.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 764 (574) The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

(539)

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

● 159 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33) A one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

(533) (539)

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analysi]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
492 calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
493 a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
562 file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

481 When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
793 not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months. In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

23 After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

23 It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[551] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their
484 residence since and before the turn of the century. While many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

•16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth - versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island communities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial composition, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically distressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth, as is shown in Table 2.

The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to major commercialization and to developmental pressures from the exclusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Islands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4). James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white. Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total population of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A. [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Table 2. Racial Breakdowns for Five of the Carolina Sea Islands

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| *Year* | *Population* | *Edisto* | *James* | *Johns* | *Wadmalaw* | *St. Helena* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | Total | 1,948 | 3,058 | 3,264 | 2,054 | 4,626 |
| | Black | 1,693 | 2,419 | 2,826 | 1,813 | 4,458 |
| 1940 | Total | 1,955 | 3,913 | 3,534 | 1,858 | 4,266 |
| | Black | 1,717 | 2,709 | 2,633 | 1,607 | 3,961 |
| 1960 | Total | 1,589 | 13,872 | 6,252 | 2,326 | 6,048 |
| | Black | 1,306 | 4,168 | 3,260 | 1,980 | 4,994 |
| 1970 | Total | 1,374 | 18,969 | 7,530 | 2,024 | 5,718 |
| | Black | 1,115 | 5,217 | 3,104 | 1,719 | 4,278 |
| 1980 | Total | 1,345 | 27,719 | 9,296 | 2,440 | 8,134 |
| | Black | 1,124 | 6,173 | 3,975 | 1,935 | 4,934 |

*Source:* U.S. censuses of population.

paratively remote, do not show any significant population changes. In the late 1970s Edisto Island had only 19 persons per square mile dispersed over a 72.6-square-mile land area. The 1980 census revealed a population of 1,345 persons—another slight decrease. Edisto's population remains predominantly black (84 percent). Its slow growth is attributed to the lack of incorporated areas, of major manufacturers, and of essential services such as water and sewer.[17]

Wadmalaw Island, situated between Johns and Edisto, is rural in nature and like Edisto has exhibited very little in- or out-migration. In 1970, 85 percent of the people were black, and this figure had dropped only to 79 percent in 1980. Even though 80 percent of the housing is occupied by owners, Wadmalaw is ranked second in the region in economic distress. It has no water or sewer services, and its only industry
[464] is Metal Trades, which provides services primarily for ship repair. Most of the inhabitants are laborers, farmers, and fishermen, though
[463] there are an increasing number of professional persons who have returned home to the island to work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on.[18]

563 The addition of more whites is not precipitating an erosion of the traditional social and racial composition of most of the Sea Island communities. They remain isolated, with predominantly black popula-
[161] tions. Only the most readily accessible islands, particularly James,

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 241 (178) [464] In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah 464 177 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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lies in 1728. The first rector was Lewis Jones who served in that capacity until 1745. Jones painted a bleak picture of life on the frontier. "The inhabitants are mostly poor planters of corn, pease, rice and a good many of them living at a great distance from each other," he wrote in 1728. There were at that time sixty-two families in the parish, thirty-nine of whom were Anglican, twenty-one Presbyterian, one Independent, and one Anabaptist. At that time only 170 slaves lived in the entire parish, and hence they were a minority, an atypical situation for early Carolina.[9]

The parish had no school although a few families had private teachers. As for the Negro slaves, Jones admitted in 1728 that "no care" was taken in Christianizing them. The reason, he cited, was due to their frequent removal to other areas, since Spaniards and Indians plagued the frontier, carrying away slaves. As a result, the number of St. Helena slaves decreased rather than increased from 224 in 1727 to 170 in 1728, while the entire colony's black population was over 20,000 in 1727.[10] Several possibilities may explain the disappearance of slaves. Spaniards provided a safety valve and chance for freedom. Indians may have done the same or may have simply attempted to decimate the white people's black labor force. Proximity to freedom and the paucity of whites must have intensified slaves' expectation of obtaining liberty. If later developments are any indication, slaves took advantage of these opportunities and the removal of slaves from the area represented white efforts to prevent this. The pattern continued until the Spanish and Indians were pushed back by the settlement of Georgia.

But the Sea Island region received early missionary attention for the slaves from another Anglican source. Thomas Bray (1658–1729/30) was the chief organizer of the three Anglican missionary efforts—the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), established in 1699, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), formed in 1701, and the Associates for Dr. Bray, established in 1723/24 and reorganized in 1729–30. Bray's first concern was Christianizing blacks and Indians. But he also shared, with Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, an interest in improving the lot of prisoners in England. With encouragement and financial support from high places, Bray and a group of sympathizers attempted to put a missionary plan into operation, hence the founding of Bray's Associates. Because Thomas Bray and a number of Associates became involved in plans to found Georgia, it was determined that the southern missionary movement should begin near Savan-

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff,
361 eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road
are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which
they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and
361 built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with
blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors
and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491] set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at
the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger
church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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Georgia

# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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## Demography

175 [103] The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Europeans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves and their free descendants.[10] Not many whites or Europeans inhabited the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 162 567

175 567 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importation from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African population. The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14] [178]

175 162 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
(175) munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
[161] 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

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161 position, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically dis-
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161 jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
177 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Is-
179 lands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4). A James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
162 lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

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Table 2. Racial Breakdowns for Five of the Carolina Sea Islands

| Year | Population | Edisto | James | Johns | Wadmalaw | St. Helena |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | Total | 1,948 | 3,058 | 3,264 | 2,054 | 4,626 |
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| | Black | 1,306 | 4,168 | 3,260 | 1,980 | 4,994 |
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| | Black | 1,124 | 6,173 | 3,975 | 1,935 | 4,934 |

*Source:* U.S. censuses of population.

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Wadmalaw Island, situated between Johns and Edisto, is rural in nature and like Edisto has exhibited very little in- or out-migration. In 1970, 85 percent of the people were black, and this figure had dropped only to 79 percent in 1980. Even though 80 percent of the housing is occupied by owners, Wadmalaw is ranked second in the region in economic distress. It has no water or sewer services, and its only industry is Metal Trades, which provides services primarily for ship repair. Most of the inhabitants are laborers, farmers, and fishermen, though there are an increasing number of professional persons who have returned home to the island to work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on.[18]

The addition of more whites is not precipitating an erosion of the traditional social and racial composition of most of the Sea Island communities. They remain isolated, with predominantly black populations. Only the most readily accessible islands, particularly James,

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building [505] materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some 775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

•162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see 567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39] 175 567

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that: [162].

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41] 175 (567)

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries 175 567 794 [177]

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175 567 797 [795] After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association missionary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Baker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 795 794 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District [162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29] [567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

APPENDIX C

# Baptist Churches

TABLE C.1

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| *Churches* | *Constituted* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* |
|---|---|---|---|
| * 1 Euhaw | 1745 | 43 | 841 |
| 2 Beach Branch | 1759 | 65 | 132 |
| 3 Healing Springs | 1772 | 7 | 143 |
| * 4 Pipe Creek | 1776 | 38 | 287 |
| 5 Treadaway | 1776 | 6 | 66 |
| 6 Columbia | 1780 | 2 | 115 |
| * 7 Black Swamp | 1786 | 11 | 294 |
| 8 Great Saltcatcher | 1793 | 59 | 127 |
| 9 Barnwell | 1803 | 13 | 126 |
| 10 Springtown | 1803 | 66 | 244 |
| *11 Beaufort | 1804 | 239 | 1,292 |
| 12 Rosemary | 1804 | 11 | 114 |
| 13 Willow Swamp | 1805 | 0 | 34 |
| 14 Union | 1805 | 7 | 220 |
| 15 Little Saltcatcher | 1807 | 21 | 50 |
| *16 St. Helena | 1809 | 138 | 536 |
| *17 May River | 1811 | 36 | 621 |
| 18 Beulah | 1811 | 0 | 20 |
| *19 Prince Williams | 1813 | 70 | 140 |
| 20 Steep Bottom | 1814 | 3 | 44 |
| 21 Cypress Creek | 1814 | 41 | 144 |
| 22 Double Ponds | 1825 | 1 | 58 |
| 23 Philadelphia | 1827 | 9 | 75 |
| 24 Kirkland | 1827 | 12 | 162 |
| 25 Black Creek | 1827 | 69 | 111 |
| 26 M't Pleasant | 1828 | 4 | 38 |

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[p. 337]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



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TABLE C.1 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| *Churches* | *Constituted* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 3 Mile Creek | 1829 | 29 | 64 |
| 28 Matlock | 1830 | 0 | 33 |
| 29 Bethesda | 1830 | 8 | 30 |
| 30 Steel Creek | 1830 | 23 | 71 |
| 31 Joico's Branch | 1831 | 3 | 30 |
| 32 Ebenezer | 1831 | 3 | 21 |
| 33 Coosawatchie | 1832 | 34 | 196 |
| 34 Beach Island | 1832 | 0 | 38 |
| *35 Hilton Head | 1832 | 86 | 212 |
| 36 Sardia | 1833 | 14 | 33 |
| 37 Pleasant Prospect | 1833 | 0 | 43 |
| Total | | 471 | 6,805 |

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 23, 1833, 11, BC.

TABLE C.2

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1842*

| *Churches* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* | *By Whom Supplied* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | . . . No Report . . . | | W. A. Lawton |
| Beach Branch | 0 | 71 | E. Estes |
| Healing Springs | 1 | 104 | D. Peeples |
| *Pipe Creek | 12 | 131 | I. Nicholes |
| Treadaway | 1 | 31 | H. D. Duncan |
| Columbia | 17 | 141 | L. M. Brown |
| *Black Swamp | 13 | 278 | George Kempton |
| Great Saltcatcher | 18 | 130 | James Fant |
| Barnwell | 2 | 140 | D. Peeples, M. Shoares |
| Springtown | 0 | 183 | L. B. Brown |
| *Beaufort | 152 | 1,947 | R. Fuller |
| Rosemary | 0 | 111 | D. Peeples |
| Union | 8 | 240 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Little Saltcatcher | 0 | 70 | George Walker |
| *St. Helena | 61 | 762 | W. Hall |
| *May River | 30 | 888 | W. A. Lawton |
| *Prince Williams | . . . No Report . . . | | L. G. Bowers |

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



| Churches | Number Baptized | Membership | By Whom Supplied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deep Bottom | 1 | 33 | C. J. Robert |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 37 | I. Nix |
| Philadelphia | 4 | 87 | L. M. Brown |
| Smyrna | 3 | 207 | M. Shoares |
| Black Creek | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Mount Pleasant | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| St. John's | 1 | 3 | George Walker |
| Matlock | 0 | 9 | (No Pastor) |
| Bethesda | 0 | 57 | William Baxley |
| Steel Creek | 19 | 131 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Joico's Branch | 25 | 73 | H. D. Duncan |
| *Coosawhatchie | . . . No Report . . . | | H. D. Duncan |
| Beach Island | 5 | 189 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Friendship | 0 | 66 | (No Pastor) |
| *Hilton Head | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sardia | 9 | 34 | John Youmans |
| Pleasant Prospect | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sandy Run | 11 | 61 | J. Fant |
| Gent's Branch | 9 | 32 | (No Pastor) |
| Beaver Dam | 1 | 43 | John Youmans |
| M't Temperance | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Long Beach | . . . No Report . . . | | J. Munch |
| Beulah | 14 | 51 | J. Fant |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | 20 | W. Price, B. Ferguson |
| Mount Aaron | 2 | 33 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Three Lower Runs | 2 | 39 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 0 | 76 | (No Pastor) |
| Total | 421 | 6,508 | |

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*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1842, 16, BC.

TABLE C.3

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

| Churches | Baptized | Black Members | White Members | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | 8 | 442 | 32 | 474 |
| Beach Branch | 12 | 70 | 64 | 140 |
| Healing Springs | 0 | 23 | 31 | 54 |
| *Pipe Creek | 20 | No Breakdown | | 179 |
| Columbia | 0 | No Breakdown | | 146 |

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



TABLE C.3 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

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| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Black Swamp | 10 | 259 | 64 | 323 |
| Great Saltcatcher | 0 | 43 | 106 | 149 |
| Barnwell | 1 | 71 | 3 | 105 |
| Springtown | 8 | 73 | 107 | 180 |
| *Beaufort | 32 | 2,477 | 196 | 2,673 |
| Rosemary | 3 | 20 | 98 | 118 |
| Union | 6 | 148 | 39 | 187 |
| Little Saltcatcher | 4 | 17 | 162 | 179 |
| *St. Helena | 16 | 866 | 34 | 900 |
| *May River | 25 | 510 | 30 | 540 |
| Steep Bottom | 9 | 54 | 38 | 92 |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 14 | 46 | 60 |
| Philadelphia | 9 | 120 | 10 | 130 |
| Smyrna | 7 | 223 | 43 | 266 |
| St. John's | 0 | 6 | 30 | 36 |
| Matlock | 20 | 26 | 70 | 96 |
| Bethesda | 9 | 11 | 91 | 102 |
| Steel Creek | 2 | 64 | 11 | 75 |
| Joico's Branch | 0 | 1 | 57 | 58 |
| *Coosawhatchie | 29 | 258 | 38 | 296 |
| Beach Island | 19 | 22 | 38 | 60 |
| Friendship | 0 | No Breakdown | | 90 |
| *Hilton Head | 1 | 106 | 2 | 108 |
| Black Creek, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 104 |
| Pleasant Prospect | 5 | No Breakdown | | 57 |
| Sandy Run | 17 | 44 | 56 | 100 |
| Gent's Branch | 0 | 7 | 38 | 45 |
| Beaver Dam | 0 | 1 | 40 | 41 |
| Long Beach | 3 | 12 | 75 | 87 |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 25 |
| Mount Aaron | 0 | 3 | 37 | 40 |
| Lower Three Runs | 1 | No Breakdown | | 38 |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 8 | No Breakdown | | 47 |
| Round O | 0 | No Breakdown | | 48 |
| Great Swamp | 0 | 15 | 18 | 33 |
| Blackville | 0 | 15 | 55 | 70 |
| Sand Hill | 10 | No Breakdown | | 35 |
| Bedon's | 0 | No Breakdown | | 44 |
| Peniel | 12 | No Breakdown | | 66 |
| Mount Olive | 2 | 6 | 17 | 23 |

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

**BAPTIST CHURCHES** 34[1]

| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cypress Chapel | 0 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| Bethel | 0 | No Breakdown | | 12 |
| Beulah | 0 | 25 | 7 | 32 |
| Total | 308 | 6,052 | 1,805 | 9,282 |

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*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands. These churches claimed 4,918 members out of a total black membership return of 6,052. Most of the 4,918 blacks were members of the Sea Island congregations at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River, and Hilton Head.

*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1851, 20, BC.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



175 French Huguenot families were in their number and were allowed to use the Book of Common Prayer in a French version (Rogers, 1970:20). The early landowners were usually sons of English and French planters in the Charleston area, trying their luck in the northern frontier. To the west of Georgetown proper, in what is now Williamsburg County, townships were established by Scots-Irish and Welsh settlers. Scots were frequently merchants and officeholders in the district. From such a mixture, it is safe to assume that it was not always the standard English dialect of southern England which was spoken by the European landowners and their overseers to the West African slaves. The McDavids (1951) and others have noted the preservation of seventeenth century English dialect forms in isolated Gullah-speaking areas.

175 562 (162) Very early in the history of the Georgetown district, Africans outnumbered Europeans. Federal census figures of 1830 indicate that 1,940 white persons and 18,000 persons of color (both slave and free) resided in the district (Wikramanayake, 1973). An important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which constituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite. A Grand Jury Presentment in Georgetown for the fall term of 1835 reported

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 the largest of the Sea Islands.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION[1]

•162 A total of 44,340 people live on the five Sea Islands. Approximately 48% of this population is Black. Nearly 65% of the White Sea Islanders reside on James, the most densely populated island. James is the only island on which Whites are the clear cut majority. This case is increasingly reversed as distance from the mainland increases.

The detailed population description for each island is as follows:

James Island's total population is 24,197. There are 11,880 males and 12,317 female residents. Five thousand and twenty-eight of James Island's residents are Black. The median age of people on James Island is 23.9 years. Over 42% of the population is under eighteen years old and 4.4% sixty-five years old and over.

Seven thousand five hundred and thirty people live on Johns Island. Over four thousand of these residents are White. About 41% of this population is Black. The median age on the island is 20.7 years, 5.4% are 65 years and over. Children under eighteen years old are 45% of the total population.

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, General Population Characteristics, South Carolina (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971).

•162 Wadmalaw has 2,024 people. There are 963 males and 1,061 females. The median age is 19.6 years. Forty-seven point three percent are under eighteen years and 6.8% of the island's people are 65 years old and over. Over 90% of Wadmalaw's population is Black.

Yonges (St. Pauls) Island has 9,235 residents; 6,314 of this total are Black. The median age is 19.9 years. Forty-six point five per cent of the population is under eighteen years and 6.7% 65 years old and older.

Edisto has 1,374 residents. There are 672 males and 702 females. The median age is 19.7 years. Nine per cent of this community is 65 years and over, 46.1% are under eighteen years old. One thousand one hundred and fifteen of Edisto's population is Black.

BLACK SEA ISLAND FAMILIES

361 Black islanders generally live on the inner acreage of the islands. This pattern exists and has been maintained for a number of reasons: (a) a strong agricultural history in which farmers built homes on or close to their planting acreage, (b) long term economic deprivation where Blacks could not afford new homes which in part contributed to (c) the generational building habit of constructing newer dwellings either close to or as extensions of existing houses.

[175] With the exception of (imported) Black city and military

000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA
ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

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464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

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•162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

434 While the median annual income of rural families was $6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was $2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under
434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median
592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had
464

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.* In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals.**

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[177] *Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled sperrit*."

[162] *St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rosa B. Cooley, who went there in 1906. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

**St. *Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
561 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
561 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(349) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"
—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
(283) a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
(162) there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[34] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
561 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
(164) for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[34] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1820 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



The proportion of whites to blacks remained practically the same during these three decades, the whites being 15.8 per cent of the total population in 1840 and 16.8 per cent in 1860.

Even with such a small percentage of whites in the population, there were, as Mrs. Capers suggests in 1791, social classes among the whites. There were three general classes with various shadings of social differentiation between them: the "genteel," the middle class, and the poor. Some of the "eminent planters," of whom Mrs. Capers spoke, belonged to the gentry. They were the ones whose sea-island cotton sold at the top prices. They educated their sons in England in the days before the Revolution and afterward in South Carolina or in the North. They spent the hot summer months at a health resort; they had their hunting clubs and their literary societies. They entertained on their plantations and at Beaufort and Charleston.

The middle class was composed chiefly of the overseers and trades people, although no strict line was drawn between classes. It sometimes happened that an overseer was himself a planter and a member of the gentry. Even on St. Helena Island there were storekeepers who sold small supplies to the planters and traded with the slaves. The agent for the Federal Government found a German storekeeper on the Island in 1861 who had taken considerable quantities of cotton in payment of debts which he claimed some of the planters had allowed to accumulate.[18]

It has often been claimed that St. Helena's Parish con-

[18] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



000 death rate for the whites in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1840 was 23.2 per 1,000 and for the blacks 32.3 per 1,000.[84]

567 The data available showing the ratio of births to
163 deaths in the slave population of the sea-island region are
165 likewise meager. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book records the births and deaths on his plantation from 1845 to 1860, as follows:

BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON WEEHAW PLANTATION, 1845-1860[85]

| Year | Births | Deaths | Increase | Decrease |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1845 | 21 | 24 | .. | 3 |
| 1846 | 17 | 20 | .. | 3 |
| 1847 | 28 | 16 | 12 | .. |
| 1848 | 21 | 25 | .. | 4 |
| 1849 | 22 | 20 | 2 | .. |
| 1850 | 26 | 9 | 17 | .. |
| 1851 | 18 | 19 | .. | 1 |
| 1852 | 25 | 20 | 5 | .. |
| 1853 | 29 | 22 | 7 | .. |
| 1854 | 24 | 20 | 4 | 4 |
| 1855 | 25 | 59 | .. | 34 |
| 1856 | 27 | 11 | 15 | .. |
| 1857 | 22 | 40 | .. | 18 |
| 1858 | 28 | 14 | 14 | .. |
| 1859 | 20 | 18 | 2 | .. |
| 1860 | 31 | 20 | 11 | .. |
| Total | 384 | 357 | | |

Beginning in 1845 with approximately 252, the slave population of Weehaw plantation showed after sixteen years an increase of births over deaths of 27, giving an increase of 10.7 per cent in the slave population. The number of deaths was highest in 1855 when an epidemic of whooping cough and measles among the children brought the number up to 59 and lowest in 1850 when

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] The high death rate is probably accounted for by the fact that planters usually included stillbirths in the numbers of deaths.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567
163
165

only nine died. The number of births was greatest in 1860 with thirty-one and lowest in 1846 with only seventeen.

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Some idea of the child-bearing period of the slave women on St. Helena Island may be obtained from records in the John E. Fripp papers. One record gives a list of births from 1802 to 1860. Of the twenty women whose child-bearing records seem to have been complete, two women had ten children each; one, nine children; two, eight children; three, seven children; one, five children; four, four children; four, three children; and three, two children. It is possible to ascertain from the records at what age ten of these women first bore a child. Die, who was the youngest mother in the group, was fifteen when her first child was born; Jenny was seventeen; Daphney, eighteen; Jane, Judy, Matilda, Olive, and Martha, nineteen; Doll, twenty; and Hetty, twenty-two. Four of Hetty's ten children died in infancy as did four of Olive's eight children. The others lost from one to two children each.

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### PLANTATION PROFITS AND LOSSES

James Hamilton Couper, who administered the James Hamilton estate for forty years, often said that the estate realized a higher percentage of profit on an investment in Schuykill River bonds issued by the city of Philadelphia than it did upon an investment in 600 slaves and 1,500 acres of Georgia seacoast farming land.[66] Data for a tract of 800 acres of this estate raising sea-island cotton have been preserved as follows:

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
[164] very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

**EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION**

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782
[164]

I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

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781

Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

175 Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
561 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
[342] sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
[114] their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
[243] particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

175 I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
561 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
243 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
[164] all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
184

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 offered his services to another planter in that vicinity at
758 $1.25 a head.[51] On St. Helena Island at least four of the planters were doctors.

567 Negroes seem to have been especially susceptible to cholera, "peripneumonia," and dysentery, or bloody flux,
•164 as it was most commonly called. When once cholera appeared among the Negroes, it usually could not be controlled until several had died. In 1852 and again in
[165] 1854 cholera swept off many of the best slaves on Louis Manigault's plantation on Argyle Island, Georgia. After
[734] these losses, Manigault bought 771 acres of "high land" on the Georgia main which he used partly for cholera camps and for the summer residence of the Negro children.[52] In 1855 when about fifty cases of cholera appeared among James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation Negroes, he wrote to his son in alarm, "The causes I cannot discover, they [the Negroes] live at various settlements, are employed in every kind of work, and have the same food."[53]

Couper considered "peripneumonia" almost as alarming as cholera.[54] "Peripneumonia" was the ante-bellum term for pleuropneumonia, a combination of pleurisy and
[165] pneumonia. Although it did not occur in epidemics, it was nearly always fatal to the slaves. Although dysentery did not always appear among the plantation Negroes in a severe form, in 1857 Henry A. Middleton, Jr., lost forty of his people on Weehaw plantation, near Georgetown, from an epidemic of this disease.[55] After the epidemic,

[51] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 166.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 143.
[53] Couper-Wylly Papers, March 9, 1855.
[54] *Ibid.*, April 13, 1857.
[55] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[56] 567 164 (758) (743)

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

> To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[56] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On
862 Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[62]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
(164) as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[62] *Ibid.*

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 657 797

the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

175 657 797 75 064

Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

175 657 585

To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. 363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, 366 and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[3] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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115 (351) the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
• (165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
(764) hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
(783) long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[62]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
(753) Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[16] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[62b, 62c] He
(567)

* *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
•165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
862 plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[63]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
.165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
[164] as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[63] *Ibid.*

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between 1833 and 1850. Within a period of five years William Jenkins lost three infants in succession.

Data for the comparison of the death rate of whites and Negroes in the ante-bellum period are meager. The death rates for Charleston from 1830 to 1845 are as follows:

COMPARISON OF WHITE AND BLACK DEATH RATES IN CHARLESTON*

| Year | Deaths Per Thousand | |
|---|---|---|
| | Whites | Blacks |
| 1830 | 25.4 | 25.0 |
| 1831 | 21.4 | 26.3 |
| 1832 | 19.2 | 18.1 |
| 1833 | 18.2 | 17.9 |
| 1834 | 23.8 | 22.7 |
| 1835 | 23.2 | 21.5 |
| 1836 | 24.6 | 51.0 |
| 1837 | 21.1 | 21.4 |
| 1838 | 54.6 | 30.3 |
| 1839 | 33.4 | 25.6 |
| 1840 | 19.7 | 21.5 |
| 1841 | 15.2 | 22.3 |
| 1842 | 19.9 | 20.9 |
| 1843 | 16.4 | 30.4 |
| 1844 | 14.4 | 23.1 |
| 1845 | 18.9 | 20.6 |

The death rate of the whites was highest in 1838 when 54.6 persons per 1,000 died due to an epidemic of yellow fever, and lowest in 1841 when only 15.2 per 1,000 died, with an average for the sixteen years of 23.1 per 1,000. For the blacks the death rate was highest in 1836 when 51 per 1,000 died from an epidemic of cholera, and lowest in 1833 when only 17.9 per 1,000 died, with a general average of 24.8. The general average for the whites was lower by only 1.7 persons per 1,000 than the general average for the blacks. At the same time the average

* J. D. B. DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 294.

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000 death rate for the whites in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1840 was 23.2 per 1,000 and for the blacks 32.3 per 1,000.[64]

567 The data available showing the ratio of births to
163 deaths in the slave population of the sea-island region are
•165 likewise meager. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book records the births and deaths on his plantation from 1845 to 1860, as follows:

BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON WEEHAW PLANTATION, 1845-1860[65]

| Year | Births | Deaths | Increase | Decrease |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1845 | 21 | 24 | .. | 3 |
| 1846 | 17 | 20 | .. | 3 |
| 1847 | 28 | 16 | 12 | .. |
| 1848 | 21 | 25 | .. | 4 |
| 1849 | 22 | 20 | 2 | .. |
| 1850 | 26 | 9 | 17 | .. |
| 1851 | 18 | 19 | .. | 1 |
| 1852 | 25 | 20 | 5 | .. |
| 1853 | 29 | 22 | 7 | .. |
| 1854 | 24 | 20 | 4 | 4 |
| 1855 | 25 | 59 | .. | 34 |
| 1856 | 27 | 11 | 15 | .. |
| 1857 | 22 | 40 | .. | 18 |
| 1858 | 28 | 14 | 14 | .. |
| 1859 | 20 | 18 | 2 | .. |
| 1860 | 31 | 20 | 11 | .. |
| Total | 384 | 357 | | |

Beginning in 1845 with approximately 252, the slave population of Weehaw plantation showed after sixteen years an increase of births over deaths of 27, giving an increase of 10.7 per cent in the slave population. The number of deaths was highest in 1855 when an epidemic of whooping cough and measles among the children brought the number up to 59 and lowest in 1850 when

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] The high death rate is probably accounted for by the fact that planters usually included stillbirths in the numbers of deaths.

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only nine died. The number of births was greatest in 1860 with thirty-one and lowest in 1846 with only seventeen.

Some idea of the child-bearing period of the slave women on St. Helena Island may be obtained from records in the John E. Fripp papers. One record gives a list of births from 1802 to 1860. Of the twenty women whose child-bearing records seem to have been complete, two women had ten children each; one, nine children; two, eight children; three, seven children; one, five children; four, four children; four, three children; and three, two children. It is possible to ascertain from the records at what age ten of these women first bore a child. Die, who was the youngest mother in the group, was fifteen when her first child was born; Jenny was seventeen; Daphney, eighteen; Jane, Judy, Matilda, Olive, and Martha, nineteen; Doll, twenty; and Hetty, twenty-two. Four of Hetty's ten children died in infancy as did four of Olive's eight children. The others lost from one to two children each.

### PLANTATION PROFITS AND LOSSES

James Hamilton Couper, who administered the James Hamilton estate for forty years, often said that the estate realized a higher percentage of profit on an investment in Schuykill River bonds issued by the city of Philadelphia than it did upon an investment in 600 slaves and 1,500 acres of Georgia seacoast farming land.** Data for a tract of 800 acres of this estate raising sea-island cotton have been preserved as follows:

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567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
837 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
(144) more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
567 life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
581 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
"poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
(165) ing until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
888 ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
538 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
891 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older genera-
[212] tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
•166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
891

167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167 MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND
166 NONSTANDARD VARIANTS
484
193
184

| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

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[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
891 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older gener-
[212] tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
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| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

562 484 184 193 older island residents, mobility does not seem to influence language use to any great extent, when comparing island residents with each other. When comparing island women and mainland women, however, the greater mobility of island women may well be related to their greater use of standard forms. Among middle aged men from the island, mobility seems to be a factor in the greater use of creole forms by Speaker 12, who refused to commute to a job which prohibits his return to the island nightly. His use of creole features is twice that of Speaker 11, who spent some years working in Washington, D. C. In the younger group, the woman who has been least mobile uses more creole features than Speaker 14, who clerks regularly in a mainland store. Similarly, the young man (Speaker 15) with least mobility reflects this in his speech, when compared with Speaker 16, who works as a waiter in a resort motel during the tourist season. Sex of speaker appears to outweigh degree of mobility as an influence on language use, but within sex, mobility seems to be a contributing factor.

• 167 Over and above language use, mobility is an important factor in the population patterns of rural Georgetown County. In a report on Population and Economy in the region encompassing the county, concern is expressed about the migration patterns of younger black residents to northern cities. During a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970, 76.8 percent of black males and 72.6 percent of black females between

167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat-
[197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

## 5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

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175 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it
423 was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

[578] As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even
•167 their young children to be sent away as servants so that
735 they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

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towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

● 17

[For additional information on cultural trait distribution, see Category 171.]

● 17

[For additional information on the history of slavery in Georgia, South Carolina and the coastal Sea Islands, see Category 175.]

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.17

g *Nassau says of the West Coast natives:* "Lately a fellow missionary told me that in a conversation with certain natives, professed Christians, they admitted their fear lest their nail-clippings should be used against them by an enemy, and candidly acknowledged that when they pared their nails they threw the pieces on the thatch of the low roof of their house."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 104.*

h *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* ". . . witches and wizards try to obtain hair, nail-clippings, or a piece of cloth long worn by the person whom they desire to injure."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 65.*

i "*Ekanem, witness for prosecutor, stated on oath:* 'I remember Ofuo Afaha Eke telling me that Tomkpata had come to his mother in a dream and cut off some of her hair. So next day she went to him and said that he must restore her soul.' Ofuo Afaha Eke, sworn, stated: 'Tomkpata is my elder brother, I complained to him that my mother had dreamed a dream in which she saw him cut off her hair with scissors. From this we knew that he was trying to snare her soul.'"
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 122.*

11. *Charms and bad luck signs, house and property*

a *Burton says of Dahome:* "Every house has its 'fetish' hanging up, and every man has a 'fetish' charm about his person. There is a devil fetish for driving away evil spirits, and another for bringing good luck."
*A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome,* II, *361.*

b *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "An *onde* for the protection of the person is worn on the body, being tied round the wrist, neck, or ankle, or placed in the hair. Others, for the protection of property, are fastened to houses, or tied to sticks and stumps of trees in cultivated plots of ground. In consequence of their being tied on to the person or object they protect, the word *edi*, which really means the act of tying or binding, has now the meaning of amulet or charm, just as

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•17 in Ewé the word *vǒ-sesa* (amulet) is derived from *vǒ* and *sa*, to tie or bind."

171 *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.*

c *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "Charms and amulets of various kinds are greatly used by the Yorubas. The Bale, or head-chief, of Ogbomosho, being of a particularly nervous and superstitious nature, had not only a number of tutelary gods guarding the threshold of his dwelling, but had laid in the ground, from one side of his compound to the other, chains and other charms to render each person who approached him powerless to do any evil. Charms for the protection of property are fastened to the houses, etc. They may consist of sticks, stumps of trees, etc."
*Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 123.*

d *Beckwith says:* "Other acts are to be avoided lest they pay the penalty of death to the immediate family. Never add to a house or cut down an old tree."
*Black Roadways, p. 87.*

12. *Charms, medicinal*

a *Delafosse says of the African in general:* "Belief . . . in the power of amulets and talismans is legendary among the Negroes. There is not one of them, whatever his religion, who does not wear on his body several 'gris-gris,' of which one is to preserve him from such and such a malady, a second from the evil eye."
*Negroes of Africa, pp. 236–37.*

b *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "Another word sometimes used to express amulet is *ogun*, which, however, more properly means medicinal preparation, poison, or magical drug."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.*

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "We had not been long in her hut before we noticed the iron arm-band she wore. It was, we knew, a '*tapu*'—a magical preventive which, in this instance,

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•17 25. *Drums, manufacture of*

a *DuPuis says of Ansah:* "The large drums were carried on the heads of men, and beaten in that posture; but the small ones were slung as kettle drums. These added to calabashes and gourds filled with shot or small stones, concave bits of iron, and striking sticks, will give an idea of the national taste in harmonic matters."
*Journal of a Residence in Ashantee, p. 43.*

b *Ellis says of the Gold Coast:* "Drums are made of the hollowed sections of trunks of trees, with a goat's or sheep's skin stretched over one end. They are from one foot to four feet high, and vary in diameter from about six to fourteen inches. Two or three drums are usually used together, each drum producing a different note, and they are played either with the fingers or with two sticks. The lookers-on generally beat time by clapping the hands."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 326.*

c *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*, the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 181–82.*

d *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Generally the drums are of the usual African type, made of a hollowed-out log with a more or less crudely carved foot, its head of animal skin being attached to pegs inserted into the body of the drum, just below its upper end. The drum-head is tightened by driving these pegs into the drum until the required note is sounded, since by this method the skin is stretched to produce the desired tone. Ordinarily the attachment of the head to the pegs is by means of strips of the skin itself; in some forms, however, a cord attachment is used. A small barrel drum, the only one of its kind observed, about eight-

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•17 een inches high and twelve inches in diameter, and which does not have a foot, is used in the Sagbatá rites. The other more conventional drums range from two feet in size to a length of five feet and more."
*Dahomey*, II, *318*.

171 e *Moore says of the Mandingo:* ". . . with him came two or three Women, and the same Number of Mundingo Drums, which are about a Yard long, and a Foot, or twenty Inches diameter at the Top, but less at the Bottom, made out of a solid Piece of Wood, and covered, only at the widest End, with the Skin of a Kid. They beat upon them with only one Stick, and their left Hand, to which the Women will dance very briskly."
*Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa, p. 64.*

f *Ward says of the Bakongo country:* "The natives were drumming on a goat-skin stretched tightly across the mouth of a hollowed-out log, and dancing round a fire lighted in their midst, one man singing a refrain, while others took up the chorus; and the mingled sound of the voices and the distant beating of other drums in neighboring villages helped to keep me awake."
*Five Years with the Congo Cannibals, p. 68.*

g *Beckwith says:* "The beating of the gombay drum is a familiar accompaniment of death."
*Black Roadways, p. 83.*

26. *Drum Messages*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "A great deal is heard in Africa about the wonderful way in which news can be passed on over great distances in an incredibly short space of time. It has been reported that the news of the fall of Khartum was known among the natives of Sierra Leone the same day, and other equally wonderful instances are quoted to show that the native has some extraordinary rapid means of communicating important events. It must, however, be remembered that most of the instances that one hears quoted are incapable of verification, and would, moreover, probably be found

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171 c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "There appear to be at least three great festivals which are held by the Talense in connexion with the crops and harvest."
*The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, II, *358–59.*

d *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:*—"At the time of new yam planting, people came from far and near to beg protection and increase for their crops and herds. On such occasions the brow of the chief priest is bound with a fillet of white cloth, which may not be taken off till the time of sacrifice comes round again. He marks all the people with white chalk, as a sign that they have attended the festival and asked the blessing of the genius of the pool."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 38.*

•17 39. *Hoe, magic*

a *Rattray repeats a Hausa folk tale:* "When he struck one blow on the ground with the hoe, then he climbed on the hoe and sat down, and the hoe started to hoe, and fairly flew until it had done as much as the hoers. It passed them, and reached the boundary of the furrow."
*Hausa Folk-Lore Customs, Proverbs, Etc.*, I, *74–76.*

b *Rattray tells an Ashanti folk tale:* "The Hoe turned over a huge tract (of land). Then they stopped work and went off, and the Porcupine took the hoe and hid it. And Kwaku, the Spider, saw (where he put it). He said, 'This hoe that I have seen, to-morrow very, very early I shall come and take it to do my work.' Truly, very, very, very early, the Spider went and got it; he took to his farm. Now, the Spider did not know how to make it stop, and he raised his song:

'Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa.
Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa,
Gyensaworowa.'

And the Hoe, when it commenced hoeing, continued hoeing. And it hoed until it came too far away. Now it reached the Sea-god's water. Thence it came to the Land of White-men-far, and the White men took it, and looked at it, and made

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•17 does not depend, as that of much other sculpture does, on elaborate superficial decoration scratched upon a weak and vaguely realized mass. There is rarely a sense of overdecoration or pretense, a feeling of inner rottenness, as though, one could squash the whole fabric between the hands, or scrape off its ornaments at a stroke. Surface decorations there may be in profusion, but they are based upon a firm foundation and integrated with it, to form an unyielding and immovable structure."

171 *Primitive Negro Sculpture, p. 37.*

e *Kingsley says of the West African:* "He cuts from a tree a moderately thick branch which he carves into a rude resemblance of the human figure; usually these figures are simply cylindrical pieces of wood, from ten to fourteen inches in length and from three to four in diameter. Two or three inches from one end, which may be called the top, the stick is notched so as to roughly resemble a neck, and the top is then rounded to bear some rough distant resemblance to a head."

*Travels in West Africa, p. 510.*

f *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "It is quite impossible to understand the spiritual conception and the god-idea of these natives unless we possess a knowledge of that peculiarly personal system of society out of which it has evolved and developed; and we recognise that the gods are but the shadows or spirits, so called, of mortals. They are rude but perfect pictures of the very worshippers in whose own human image they have been either kneaded out of clay or carved out of wood."

*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 433.*

g "Not so the barbarian, however. With him the Ju-Ju or emblem is no child's play, no mere outlet for a state of activity which he is not particularly desirous of, not even a safety-valve by which the accumulated steam of his pent-up emotions might escape, but a matter of life and death, connecting, as it does, one to the other, *i.e.* himself and household to the household in the spirit. To natural man this

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others (like it). That is how many (European) hoes came among the Ashanti. Formerly it was only Kotoko, the Porcupine, who had one."
*Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales, p. 43.*

40. *Hog, sacrifice of*

a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "When they come to the Grave, which is generally made in some Savannah or Plain, they lay down the Coffin, or whatever the Body happens to be wrapt up in; and if he be one whose Circumstances could allow it (or if he be generally liked, the Negroes contribute among themselves) they sacrifice a Hog."
*Dark Roadways, p. 79.*

41. *Images*

a *Cruickshank says of the Gold Coast of Africa:* "They also mould images from clay, and bake them. We have seen curious groups of these in some parts of the country. Upon the death of a great man, they make representations of him, sitting in state, with his wives and attendants seated around him."
*Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa, p. 270.*

b *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "The head is sometimes of wood, rising like a cone; the mouth extends from ear to ear, and is garnished with the teeth of dogs, or with cowries to represent teeth; the eyes are also represented by cowries. The arms of the figure are invariably immensely long, while the legs are short and the feet large."
*The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 42.*

c *Guillaume and Munro say:* "He is especially fond of giving a flashing regard to the eyes by inserting beads, shells, stones or bits of metal."
*Primitive Negro Sculpture, p. 29.*

d "Constructed like a building of solid blocks, a typical negro statue is itself a solid, a full, substantial block, set with convincing, massive reality in its own space. Its effect

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•17 49. *Sewing on clothes*

a *Puckett says of West Africa:* "In West Africa one dare not sew his cloth while it is on his body lest his relative die."
*Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 405.*

50. *Serpents*

a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "The snake is the 'baddest of all,' anyone will affirm, but as there are seldom to be found snakes in Jamaica today this takes one back in the history of obeah to the days of *ob*, to the voodoo, and the Obeah Man of the past who carried 'A staff carved with snakes or with a human head on the handle, a cabalistic book and a stuffed snake.'"
*Black Roadways, p. 122.*

b *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "Reptiles, snakes, and crocodiles particularly are much more utilised as emblems, simply, it is to be presumed, because they are more in evidence in the forests and rivers of the Delta than any other species of animals, consequently must have appealed to the natives as the most convenient and suitable repositories for the ancestral manes."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 317.*

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of Dahomey:* "The next personal spirit or force we are to describe is one less esteemed than feared. It is called Dą, which signifies 'serpent.' What is the power of Dą? All serpents are Dą but not all serpents are worshipped. Quintessentially, Dą represents the principle of mobility, of sinuosity. 'All things which curve, and move, but have no feet, are Dą.'"
*An Outline of Dahomean Religious Beliefs, p. 56.*

d *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro:* "The most prevalent types of *winti* among women in particular are those associated with the snake, and since these enter into all the categories of *winti*, we list them after the gods of the Sky and Earth. Of these we have *Dagowe, Papa, Vɔdɩ, Hɛ̃-grɔ, Aboma, Aninine, Alado, Sinero, Korowena, Kwenda, Tobochina,* and *Cheno.* The term *Dagowe*

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•17 often serves, in the town, as a generic term for all the snake spirits, though the *Dagowe*, snake, properly speaking, is one of the constrictor group found in the colony, and is believed by the natives to inhabit both land and water. This is, of course, good observation on their part, for this characteristic of all snakes of the boa type is well-known. Not all snakes are sacred, yet no one will kill a snake."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 63–64.*

c *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "Each great Ibibio Juju man is supposed to keep one such serpent familiar in his house, in the 'bush' where secret rites are celebrated, or in some place by the waterside. It is called Kukubarakpa, and, by virtue of this agent, much of the magician's power is said to come to him. The possession of a snake is also supposed to bring riches, though its magic is thought to be of no avail during the season of storms."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 17.*

171 51. *Serpents, dream of*

a *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "A snake seen in a dream implies a host of enemies seeking to destroy the dreamer's life. Nightmare is caused by the visitation of an evil or it may be antipathetic spirit."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 147.*

52. *Sneezing*

a *Puckett says of the Ewe:* "Sneezing is regarded as a bad omen by the Ewe tribes of Africa because it indicates that the indwelling spirit is about to quit the body, affording an opportunity for a homeless spirit to enter in and cause illness. A similar belief leads the Calabar natives to exclaim, 'Far from you!' when a person sneezes, with an appropriate gesture as if throwing off some evil."
*Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 453.*

53. *Spider stories*

*Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "Though few tales have been recorded, these play an impor-

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171 c *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "The usual reverence is paid by the members of a clan to the animal or plant from which the clan takes its name. It may not be used as food, or molested in any way; but must always be treated with veneration and respect. The general notion is that the members of the clan are directly descended from the animal, or plant, eponymous."
*The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 100.*

d *Ellis says of the Tshi:* "With some races the reverence originally felt for the deceased ancestor, and in later times transferred to the animal for which he was named, culminates in the animal being regarded as a tutelary deity, and consequently a being to be worshipped and propitiated by sacrifice; but in other cases—and this is almost always the case with the family divisions of the natives of the Gold Coast—an abstention from the use of the flesh of the animal whose name the family bears, is sometimes the only remaining sign of any feeling of reverence or respect."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 206.*

e *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "An illness may be caused by . . . an unconscious violation, arising out of the fact that a man's mother had never told him the name of his true father, and consequently he had been observing food taboos which were not his own and had been neglecting to observe those which were his, since, as we have seen, these personal food taboos are inherited from the father."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 59–60.*

•17 66. *Teeth, children born with*

a *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Children born feet first or with teeth or any deformity were also destroyed, on the ground that they were incarnations of evil spirits."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 290–91.*

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b *Thomas says of the Ibo of Nigeria:* "Not only twins, but many other children are, or were, exposed because of some circumstance connected with their birth or development. For example, a child born with teeth is regarded as a monster who will bring misfortune on its father—perhaps the belief may be that it will devour him. . . ."
*Anthropological Report on the Ibo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria*, I, pp. 10–11.

67. *Twins*

a *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "Twins, and the child born after twins, who is called *Dosu*, and children born feet foremost, are in a category by themselves, and they are often spoken of as *ogri*, . . . bad."
*Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 42.

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "And twins were allowed to die or were deliberately killed by being enclosed in a pot or ant-hill. For the Ibo hold the common belief that the birth of twins is an indication of the disfavour of the spirits, and a punishment, possibly of adultery. Twin-births are regarded as non-human, and it is a common belief that the *chi* or accompanying soul of a twin is the *chi* of an animal. After the birth of twins a diviner is consulted to ascertain which spirit or ancestor had been offended, and sacrifice is offered to appease his wrath."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, p. 291.

c *Nassau says of Africa:* "All over Africa the birth of twins is a notable event, but noted for very different reasons in different parts of the country. In Calabar they are dreaded as an evil omen, and until recently were immediately put to death, and the mother driven from the village to live alone in the forest as a punishment for having brought this evil on her people.

"In other parts, as in the Gabun country, where they are welcomed, it is nevertheless considered necessary to have special ceremonies performed for the safety of their lives, or, if they die, to prevent further evil."
*Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 206.

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### *Moslem Jihad and Ethnic Displacement*

•17 European demand for slaves exacerbated a process of ethnic displacement already occurring in Upper Guinea. The mountains of the Futa Djalon were a transitional point between Islamic Western Sudan and the Upper Guinea Coast. The Futa Djalon massif was an irregular triangle, the base of which began at the Upper Gambia River with the apex extending just north of present-day Sierra Leone. Mountainous country extended south of the Futa Djalon so that a continuous range provided a watershed from which a number of Upper Guinea rivers flowed, including the Senegal and the Niger. Previous to European coastal contact, migration, population displacement, and assimilation, mostly the result of efforts to spread Islam, affected geographical ethnic groupings and patterns. Moslem Fula, Susu, and Mandingas occupied the Futa Djalon with some non-Moslem ethnic groups, while other Sudanic groups continued west, settling beside peoples already inhabiting the coast. By the time of Portuguese contact, non-Moslem coastal peoples were virtually surrounded as well as somewhat infiltrated by a large semicircle of Moslem traders with a number of hinterland groups sandwiched in between (in the rain-forest regions).[21]

In Senegambia Mandingas were the most powerful if not most numerous ethnic group and the first to meet Portuguese seamen in the fifteenth century. Hence they began the barter in slaves, gold, and ivory in exchange for European goods. So-called pagans were the first victims of the trade. By the time of British presence in the Gambia region, victims included littoral groups such as Wolofs and to a far greater extent, Djolas. Other smaller, inland non-Moslem ethnic peoples such as the Patcharis in the Middle Gambia Valley, Baasaris in the Upper Valley, and Bambaras were also mentioned in chronicles as contributing to slave coffles. In the seventeenth century the Wolof kingdom was located between the Senegal River south to the Gambia River and extended inland. By the eighteenth century some Wolof leadership accepted Islam while the common people continued their traditional beliefs. Djolas were independent longtime residents of the coastal areas between the Gambia and Cassamance Rivers and their communities spread a distance of one hundred miles inland. Even at the leadership level Djolas physically resisted Mandinga dominance and Islamic religion. They were also among the few groups who refused to be predatory participants in the Atlantic slave

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•17 trade. Djolas' simple manners and customs, loose tribal organization, and decentralized government made them easy prey for the European-backed, domineering, highly politically structured Moslem Mandingas. Thousands of Djolas filled the holds of British slave ships. Fulani inhabitants of the Gambia were, like Mandingas, followers of the Koran and by the sixteenth century were vassals of the latter. They planted crops, tended Mandinga cattle, leased their territory, and occasionally joined Mandinga merchants in wars against ethnic groups to procure slaves. Mandinga-Fulani interdependency probably goes farther than common religious ties to explain why large numbers of Fulani were not sold into slavery as compared with Djolas and Wolofs. Another large ethnic group of the Senegambia was the Seraculeh. They were actually a northern branch of Mandingas who engaged in slaving in the Upper River Division of the Gambia Valley.[22]

175 Besides obeying the Koran's edict to make war on "non-believers," black Muslim traders followed a custom of general acquisitiveness stimulated by European labor demands. Moslem Africans were enslaved for petty as well as major crimes and offenses. Walter Rodney has maintained that prior to the Atlantic trade most crimes were punishable by fines and few groups practiced capital punishment. The slave trade heightened rivalries and intensified a pattern of class exploitation.[23] This insight is supported by Francis Moore, a contemporary observer who remained on the Gambia River from 1730 to 1735. Moore noted that some Mandinga merchants journeyed inland and might not return with slaves for twenty days. But in referring to the littoral trade he observed:

> Besides the slaves which merchants bring down, there are many bought along the river. These are either taken in war, as the former are, or else men condemned for crimes, or else stolen, which is very frequent. . . . Since this slave trade has been us'd all punishments are changed into slavery; there being an Advantage on such condemnations, they strain for crimes very hard . . . every trifling crime is punished in the same manner.[24]

Rulers and elites perpetrated the trade against the general population, often whether Islam was professed or not. Occasionally mistakes were made and a noble would be enslaved, as in the case of Job ben Solomon. He was a wealthy Fula of the Gambia region who crossed the river with a coffle of slaves that he intended to sell for his father. Ben Solomon was caught by Mandinga merchants and sold to a Captain Pike of the ship *Arabella*, the same person with whom ben Solomon had bartered for his

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indicating existence in the other world and eventual rebirth. Life was a continuum and the sign of the four moments of the sun symbolized "spiritual continuity and renaissance" via its spiral journey. The crossing of the four solar moments, spacially like a Greek cross and similar to the Christian cross, was not introduced to the BaKongo by early Christianity. Long before the arrival of Europeans, this geometric statement, the Kongo Cruciform, adorned funerary objects and in other ways reflected BaKongo aesthetic perceptions of their relationship to the world. Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet have brilliantly demonstrated this through BaKongo visual traditions in Africa and the New World.[14] 171

Belief that one's spirit consciously existed after death was also common. "New" Africans, once they learned English, found reinforcement in Christian principles taught by white ministers, that everyone possessed a soul, apart from one's human form, with its own destiny. In certain ways African concepts were more complicated. Mende believed that each mortal had a *personality-soul*, or spirit existence, where the "vital force of the individual resided." This *personality-soul* left the flesh at death and took on full spiritual form. One who was a good person in earthly life continued as a good *personality-soul*. Those who led an evil life likewise became demonic as well as immune to antiwitch medicines. Golas and other neighboring groups referred to the soul as the "heart" which also stood for the mind. One's actions were directed by the "voice of his heart" which persuaded and guided individual behavior. Each living being possessed two hearts—one good and one bad—each trying to influence the other. Death destroyed the body but did not affect the soul, or "heart." The dead would awake, arise, and join their departed relations and friends at a common place of abode. A further example of immortality is provided by Akan tradition. Akan peoples believed that each person's guiding spirit, the *okra*, departed at death, indicating completion of earthly destiny. The *okra* returned to God to justify its existence on earth, but was also capable of appearing again in spirit form among the world of the living. The *okra* was considered the real self—in a sense, one's conscience—and was thus responsible for human behavior whether good or evil.[15]

Bantu peoples probably had the most elaborate and complex system of afterlife beliefs which were central to their religious traditions. Humans were double beings, consisting of an outer and inner entity. Each entity in turn had two parts. One part of the outer being, the shell, was 17

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17 visible. At death it was buried and rotted. The second part was invisible and could be "eaten" by bad medicine, *kindoki*, but helped by good medicine, *minkisi*. The inner being's two parts were both necessary for continued existence. One signified personal life and although expressions differed among groups, there was commonality in meaning. Some Bantu peoples expressed the personal entity as *kivuumunu* (breathing). Other expressions were *mwela* (breath), *kiini* (shadow), *moyoo* (life), *mpeeve* (spirit, wind) and *nsala* (soul or principle of life). *Kivuumunu* was the agent of life and breath, hidden and protected from black medicine. Death could not destroy it. The second part of the inner being, the *belly*, was different. It took food which had to be provided for the entity to continue living. Both contributed to continued existence, one through breath and the other through nourishments. In the world of *mpemba* (land of all things white), the dead, via powers commensurate with the goodness of their previous earthly life, were expunged of earthly acquired impurities and reentered the world as reincarnated spirits (in grandchildren) or as immortal *simbi* spirits.[16] Notions of the afterlife practiced by BaKongo peoples and their neighbors and reinforced by similar beliefs among other Africans parallel some Gullah "Christian" ritualistic customs of death and burial, as discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Spirits of the deceased ancestors constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries in African cosmology. They were bilingual in a sense, speaking the language of humans and that of the spirits and God. Still they remained a part of the human family, returning to share meals occasionally and appearing to certain elder members of the household. The living dead knew the needs and desires of their clan members and had access to channels of communication with God. The spiritual status and availability of the living dead facilitated their being approached more than God for concerns of life and for protection. The importance which departed members of the family occupied in African spirituality has been termed "ancestor worship." But modern African writers have denounced this phrase, first introduced by Herbert Spencer. These scholars insist that communion with deceased members of the family (via prayers, honorific offerings, interpretation of dreams and unusual events) was not "worship" but symbolic fellowship, respect, and veneration.[17]

Ancestor reverence was basic to Bantu belief systems perhaps because of the significance of lineage and kinship to societal structure and gover-

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nance.[18] The absence of mandatory secret societies as a means of maintaining corporate linkage and community loyalty points up the significance of kinship and lineage in a monarchial system such as that practiced by peoples of the Kongo region. Clan loyalty was paramount. If *Nzambi* ruled, reproved, and in the final analysis ordered the world according to divine design, ancestors superintended, rewarded, and welcomed the dead into their subterranean village. Ritually, BaKongo spiritual behavior was concatenated to ancestor devotion, not to *Nzambi*, though the spirit world consisted of forces unleashed by *Nzambi*. Among the most powerful of these were deceased elders of the clan, called *bakulu*—white spirits who roamed the earth (in woods, streams, and villages) and resided in the subterranean "world of no evil." Vital to ancestor reverence was the belief that discarnate human spirits maintain interest in their people after passing to the unseen society where they guard traditions and activities of the living. If family herds were squandered, ancestors took note and punished. If drought threatened the family herds, old chiefs in the spirit world might take pity and send rain. The power of ancestral spirits was commonly recognized.[19]

Belief in ancestoral spirits, in life after death, and in the significance of that future life gave funeral and burial rites a central place in African existence. Sick-bed attendance and a fitting send-off were essential observations of this rite of passage. Death halted routine activities when marriage or other rites did not. Failure to properly observe the death ritual could either implicate one in that death, or bring ill will to the erring clan member. The curse of the dying was much dreaded. In the American South, as noted by Herskovits, Bastide, Thompson, and others, black cemeteries represent a special historical relic. For here one finds the clearest, strongest visible examples of memories of African-inspired customs. African reverence for departed members of the family and group remained a factor in Gullah religious life even after they accepted Christianity. Gullah regard for deceased family members could not have equalled the homage paid to these spirits by Old World or "New" Africans. Still, spirits of the dead had to be reckoned with, and slaves believed they took the form of either good or evil supernatural forces. Vengeful spirits of the dead were those wronged during their lifetime, or "on easy" spirits perhaps indicating bewitchment, or they were the ancestors of outside families or groups. Hence in keeping with

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In 1734, as a direct attack on SPG activity among the slaves, the planter-controlled South Carolina Assembly passed a law prohibiting slaves from leaving plantations on "Sundays, fast days, and holy days" without a ticket. Since few bondspeople were given passes to attend worship, and clergymen were not normally allowed in slave cabins, the law was a serious setback for the already languishing missionary movement. Peter Wood has discussed "mounting anxiety and patterns of control" on the part of whites in the 1730s, as the black, foreign-born slave population around Charleston expanded dramatically through importations. This apprehension was increased as planters also associated religious instruction with rebelliousness. An insurrection plot uncovered in Antigua in 1736 fed Carolina planters' fears and their belief in the ill effects of the Society's endeavors. The conspiracy was widespread and accounts stated that many of the leaders were literate, having been taught by Anglican clergy.[20] 175

But it was the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and two subsequent abortive uprisings that brought home the issue for white Carolinians. The Stono uprising began in St. Paul's Parish, twenty miles from Charleston. It gained momentum as the rebels headed farther south for Spanish St. Augustine, gathering recruits as they went. White Carolinians were especially enraged by the fact that notices posted by Spaniards offering freedom to runaways could be read by slaves who had received instruction from Society missionaries. The New Negro Act passed in 1740 curtailed the Society's freedom to teach slaves to read and write English. It was the biggest setback for the Society's program thus far.[21]

Still the Society persisted in more settled regions, though not with unified enthusiasm. While most legislation following the Stono Rebellion was repressive, it was also intended to reduce the incentive for revolt. In 1740 Alexander Garden, South Carolina Commissary for the Bishop of London, made a proposal. He suggested placing young, Carolina-born slave boys, ten or twelve years of age, under full Society tutelage for two years. Once trained, these youths would return to the plantations as religious school masters, adequately prepared to instruct slave children and adults in the neighborhood. Garden insisted that the most effective method was to have a teacher come from the slaves' own numbers. "As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children, or from young to old." Garden confidently asserted that in twenty years, "knowledge of 17•

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• 17 the gospel among the slaves . . . in general (excepting those newly imported) would not be much inferior to that of the lower sort of White People, servants and Day Labourers . . . either in England or elsewhere."[22]

In 1743 the "Charleston Negro School," was opened by Commissary Garden where a few slave children were taught catechism and elementary education. The school functioned after Garden's design, and the Society convinced the colonial government to support it. Society missionaries had always maintained that the key to obedient servitude was promulgated on the "principle of conscience" generated by instruction in Christian doctrine. They argued that while slaves continued in "darkness," planters could "expect at best an eye service from them and such obedience as proceeds through fear." Garden also had insight into the power and appeal of a *black-to-black* effort in Christian instruction and the pliability of young minds.

The school operated for about twenty years, but was finally closed when no suitable teacher was found upon the death of the old one. It did not have a lasting impact on the black population of Charleston. But the school is part of the religious revitalization movement called the Great Awakening and is discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, establishment of the Negro School perhaps represents the SPG's most significant though unsuccessful effort to bring Christianity to the slaves.[23]

### *Baptists and Other "Dissenters"*

The Fundamental Constitution of Carolina identified the colony with principles of religious toleration, although the proprietors quickly added a clause proclaiming the Church of England as the "National Religion," and empowering the governing body with a right to levy taxes to support it. Still, early Carolina offered more religious freedom than England or any other American colony except Rhode Island. One of the Carolina proprietors, John Archdale, was a Quaker and served as governor of the colony between 1694 and 1696. Although the Society of Friends was never a large denomination in South Carolina, Quakers were an important part of over 2,000 Dissenters by 1700, out of a white population of about 4,200 people. George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, never reached South Carolina when he journeyed to America, but did travel to North Carolina in 1672. Although not against slavery, Fox encour-

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aged benevolence toward slaves and encouraged Quakers to instruct their slaves in Christianity. Yet most Quakers followed a policy of excluding blacks from meetings even though they may have provided religious instruction.[24] 170

Presbyterians and Baptists immigrated to South Carolina in the 1680s, settling in Charleston and nearby areas. Encouraged by the promotional campaign which the colony's proprietors initiated, two wealthy groups of English and Scottish Presbyterians settled in Carolina. The first Presbyterian church, the Circular Church, was organized in Charleston by 1690. Like early Baptists who settled in Carolina, Presbyterians were Calvinists who practiced the doctrine of election and restricted church membership. Hence, they did not actively engage in programs of slave conversion.[25] Yet despite their Calvinism, early Baptists had divergent view about doctrine which separated them from other independent denominations and which later led to adoption of evangelism that included their slave population. 175

The name "Baptists" or "Anabaptists," given to the adherents of this particular denomination, has deceptive connotations. It was not a self-chosen name but one attached to the denomination by enemies during the Reformation. Baptists asserted that infant "sprinkling" was not warranted in the scriptures, and was thus contrary to the principle of voluntary action in religion, hence inviting corruption. These Christians made baptism on a profession of faith a condition of church fellowship. This, along with their denial of the validity of infant baptism and adherence to total immersion, did more than anything else to place Baptists at variance with other denominations. Yet rejection of infant baptism did not occupy as prominent a position in Baptist belief as opponents gave it. Baptists' most uncompromising religious position was their belief in the absolute authority and sufficiency of scripture and a regenerate church membership (principles which all evangelical sects ultimately embraced). This meant applying scripture to details of doctrine, practice, and daily life. Those Baptists who owed their origin to English Puritanism, and who rejected the medieval evangelism in the Augustinian tradition, strongly believed in Calvinism, especially predestination. (They were called Particular Baptists.) Puritan-oriented Baptists, led by William Screven, moved from Maine in 1683 and settled in Charleston at the same time that another group of similar persuasion arrived from England. By 1699 the two groups had emerged and formed one church. Quarrels and infighting over lead-

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labor shortage. Obviously, religious enthusiasm did not interfere with a proslavery attitude. As a substantial Carolina planter, Jonathan hoped to continue increasing his holdings. But the price of land was high and for Jonathan "avenues of mobility in the Carolina social order were clogged." Thus when Georgia legalized slavery in 1751, Jonathan Bryan settled there that same year.[34] 175

Georgia's founding was closely tied to creating a place for the unfortunate. This, along with the religiosity expressed by the Trustees, Bray Associates, and others involved (like the Wesleys and Whitefield) in the colony, may explain the first slave code. Once slavery was established, a clause supporting religious instruction of slaves was part of the code. Masters were required to address their slaves' spiritual welfare. Slave labor on Sundays was forbidden, and owners were obliged to see that slaves be gathered "at some time on the Lord's Day for Instruction in the Christian Religion." Thus the slave code emphasized the master's Christian duty toward bondspeople. It was a policy most owners ignored on the one hand, and within five years the code was rewritten along the South Carolina model (not surprisingly, since many Carolinians and West Indians settled there), and the religious instruction provision was deleted. On the other hand, this early legal support for Christian instruction, supported by Bryan and others, probably contributed to a more liberal attitude regarding this issue in Georgia. This is most evident in events which led to the establishment of the African Baptist Church at Savannah, which was formed under the leadership and pastorship of Jonathan Bryan's slave Andrew. In South Carolina, a black man named David George probably set up the first black Baptist organization in the South, at Silver Bluff near the Savannah River, between 1773 and 1775. Yet following the disruption caused by the War for Independence and George's removal to Nova Scotia, the Silver Bluff Church found a more hospitable environment in Georgia, becoming the First African Baptist Church at Augusta (just twelve miles away).[35]

Thus by the time of the War for Independence, there were several black preachers in the Lowcountry. Their movements were proscribed, they were frequently persecuted, and their contact with slave masses was negligable. Often they preached to whites or to mixed audiences. Still, they represent the beginnings of an emerging African-Christianity. Most of them either came under the influence of George Whitefield's preaching or were converted to Christianity by those preaching a message sim- 17.

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•17 ilar to that of the enthusiastic evangelist.[36] Hence it was primarily a small acculturated group of blacks who took in the Great Awakening, while the countryside swelled with new Africans. Within this sociocultural tug-of-war, Africans and American slaves formed their communal outlook and clung to those features of life which provided a sense of identity, personhood, and autonomy.

### *Old Ways Die Slowly*

The steady stream of Africans pouring into the Carolina Lowcountry, and the lack of a meaningful imparting of the Christian religion could not help but reinforce an African cultural and spiritual presence. In the country and island parishes especially, whites lived among a foreign-born servile labor force. Ministers were not only exasperated by the resistance of planters to having their slaves converted, but even more frustrated by the problem of communicating with Africans. First was the challenge of language. "Those brought up among us," wrote one early Society missionary, "are both civilized and speak good English . . . whereas those that are brought hither from their own country, except a few that come very young, seldom or never speak good English."[37]

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197 African slaves lived, worked, and socialized among each other. Their lack of exposure to English and concentration on developing a mode of communication among themselves undoubtedly slowed the process of learning a totally foreign tongue. Gullah language was being created during the colonial decades and the lengthy period of African slave trading. This was also happening elsewhere, such as in the Savannah region, where Africans imported mainly through Charleston were laboring in the country and island reaches of Georgia. As long as Africans remained isolated and their numbers greatly reinforced, language was a problem. Bray Associate missionary Joseph Ottolenghe (an Italian Jew converted to Christianity), provides some insight into the problems and difficulties encountered in the seacoast region. In a letter to the Associates, he reminded them of the impediments faced by "primitive Christians" in olden times, but added that they faced no "Hindrancies, & great Difficulties" which compared to the instruction of African slaves:

> The formers understood ye language of ye instructors, & if not persons were appointed skill'd in ye language of ye novices; whereas our Negroes are so ignorant of ye English Language, and none can be found to talk in their own, yt

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it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends p[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[18] 170 197

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[19] 175

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication: 175 197 539

| *BUDDY QUOW* | A Key to Buddy Quow |
|---|---|
| Was matter Buddy Quow? | What is the matter Brother Quow? |
| I ble Obesha bang you, | I believe the overseer has beaten you, |
| You tan no sabby how, | You look I don't know how, |
| Dah Backrow Man go wrong you, | That White Man has wronged you, |
| Buddy Quow, | Brother Quow, |
| Dah Backrow & | That White Man & |

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Marrant was at first well received at his mother's home. But soon persecutions began anew. The youth was pained because no one in his family cared the slightest for religion, and did not even wish to say grace at mealtime. When his mother also grew impatient with him, the disheartened boy left home and headed into the Georgia wilderness. His trials with the Indians are another story. But his life was spared, for he successfully converted his "executioner," converted the king's daughter and "cured" her of an illness. Marrant remained with the Indians for nearly two years, eventually returning to his family. He served with the British navy during the War for Independence and even saw his old Cherokee benefactor, who marched along with General Clinton in the seige of Charleston. The two friends greeted each other warmly and conversed, but Marrant was shipped out the next day. John Marrant eventually went to England, became a minister, was patronized by another Whitefield convert, the Countess of Huntingdon, and eventually went to Sierra Leone as a colonist.[56]

Marrant represents one type of black convert who came under the suasion of Whitefield's evangelical preaching. He was literate, urbane, free-born and far removed from the rural, isolated experiences of the majority of African-Americans. He was also "awakened" at a young, impressionable age. Marrant's high living and Dionysian activities may have created an unconscious sense of guilt which the magnetic presence of Whitefield brought to the surface. Marrant's belief that Whitefield was looking directly at him as he announced his text was perhaps also a function of the boy's feelings of guilt. But the evangelist reportedly possessed an enrapturing sense of presence, thundering voice, and extemporaneous preaching style that swayed audiences. He also had a manner of looking around the crowd with his intense blue eyes. Add to all of this the fact that one of Whitefield's eyes was permanently misfocused (or crossed actually), and it presents a rather formidable picture. Eyewitnesses stated that instead of a distraction the misfocused "squinting" eye was an attraction.[57] It is possible then, that Whitefield was looking elsewhere when he appeared to have fastened his eyes on young Marrant. But of course, a black youth at the meetinghouse with a French horn, preparing to "blow," was not exactly an inconspicuous sight. The seasoned evangelist had had enough disruptions of sermons to spot troublemakers, and knew how to unnerve them, expecially one so young and vulnerable.

John Marrant apparently did not hear Whitefield's sermon, and after that 1769 encounter they never met again. Yet it was the Methodist's

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message which won over black converts like Marrant. Whitefield was not a theologian in a strict sense—although he did produce a theology of sorts. Indeed he spoke against the clergy's erudite learnedness. Rather than a teacher, he was a preacher, and saw his role in a prophetic sense. He shunned speculative theology and organized religion. His authority was the Bible, at least certain doctrines from it. But he rarely preached from the Bible. His message was simple: all humankind is guilty of sin and must ask forgiveness, immortality comes through regeneration and rebirth through Jesus Christ. Inherent in his sermons, which probably appealed to blacks, was his stress on the mercy and love of Jesus Christ and his emphatic renditions of the benefits of divine grace. His insistence that God "was no respector of persons" found attentive ears. Whitefield's traveling companion, William Seward, noted the numerous occasions in the North when blacks became "greatly affected" by the evangelist's sermons, "especially when our brother invited the poor Negroes to touch Christ by faith, whereby they would gain freedom from the slavery of sin and satan." Whitefield's insistence that "God intends salvation for Negroes" probably struck a responsive chord for some accultured blacks, both slave and free.[58] His message was one of offering blacks incorporation into the Christian spiritual family, of providing them with a spiritual identity. For a group defined out of American social institutions and laboring under restrictions of racism, it was a comforting, appealing overture.

The directness of Whitefield's vision of rebirth and his invitation for blacks to expunge the "devil" from within was one manner of appeal. He often began his sermons with a rendition of his own conversion. Additionally, his sense of caring, his abortive efforts to begin a "Negro school" in the North, and his attack on the treatment of slaves also indicated that the evangelist was at least an ally. While cultural and spiritual differences prevented others from addressing blacks, Whitefield's people's religion emphasized commonality. His capacity to simplify "divine truth" and present biblical narratives and the Gospel message in clear, vivid fashions gained him a black audience. The following excerpt summarizes his message and method when addressing black people. In this case it is the slaves of the Jonathan Bryan household:

> Welcome to Christ's fold . . . This is a mystery . . . for unsearchable grace . . . would Jesus Christ take you . . . even you dispised Negroes and join you in one fold with is people? Oh what manner of grace is this? Would he lift you . . . from the dust, you beggars from the Dunghill, from the depths of vile

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freedom is demonstrated in a letter written by Stephen Bull to Henry Laurens in March, 1776. "It is better," he wrote, "for the public and the owners, if . . . deserted Negroes . . . be shot, if they cannot be taken." This measure would, Bull hoped, "deter other Negroes from deserting." Such was not the case. In the Southern region, prospects of liberty took on new meaning for some Lowcountry slaves. British occupation of coastal Georgia began in December 1778 after an aged slave guided the British in a surprise attack, and continued until July 1782. Charleston was literally battered into submission in May 1780. The British kept lists of blacks given certificates of freedom signed by General Samuel Birch, British commander of New York, and allowed to leave America in 1783. These inspection rolls are useful evidences of social history. They contain names of blacks, ages, a brief description, former owners, and length of time away from owners. While the majority of the South Carolina slaves on these lists are from Charleston, most of whom left during the seige, there are also listings of slaves from the region south of that city:

Brass Watson (30), scar on forehead, slave of John Day, Charleston.
Nancy (his wife) (30), 2 small children, slaves of Mr. Quince, Wilmington, N. C., left 7 years ago.
MaryAnn (23), very small, formerly owned by Thomas Cooper, Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Mellia Marrant (30), squat wench, property of John Marrant, near Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Amelia (6), child of above.
Ben (4), child of above.
Michael Thomas (18), of Richard Garret, Beaufort, S. C., left 7 years ago.
James Brown (21), belonging to William Williamson, Black Swamp, left 4 years ago.
Sally Beauman (25), fine wench, of Thomas Beauman of Beaufort, left 4 years ago.
Lampson Miles (12), fine boy of John Miles, Indian Lands, left 5 years ago.
Sam Hutchins (26), property of Wm. Harden, Indian Lands.
Sara Jones (33), stout wench of Richard Stevens, Port Royal, S. C.[12]

So reads the "Book of Negroes," as the British army approved passage from America for those slaves with their certificates of freedom signed by General Birch. The lists indicate that a number of the "elderly" and "worn out" former bondspeople had nevertheless somehow gotten to New York in anticipation of freedom. Black women figure prominently in the lists, some of whom had been behind British lines, or away from own-

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●17 ers, for a number of years. Many either brought their children with them or formed partnerships after flights, giving birth to children behind British lines, that is, born free. The existence of this "Book of Negroes," with large numbers of South Carolina slaves on the lists, refutes claims that the War for Independence little affected the black population in the Lowcountry. Also, the lists demonstrate bondspeople's sense of autonomy in familial matters, and what E. P. Thompson, in another context, characterizes as representing "symbolic authority." Many did not give the surname of their masters as their own, making their detachments from previous status as complete as possible.[13] Furthermore, we find few African names on the inspection lists. Except for an occasional Cudjo or Mingo, most slaves have English names. Perhaps this represents a demarcation line between those slaves who decided to cast their lot with the British and less assimilated, African-born slaves, who remained in the swamps and woods of coastal Carolina and Georgia, becoming part of the groups that plagued the region after the War for Independence.

Among those who took refuge with the British in New York was Boston King. Although King was the son of favored slaves on the Waring
[567] plantations in the Sea Island region, this was not a mitigating factor in his bondage. He was apprenticed to a carpenter at sixteen who was a cruel man, and King "suffered many hardships." On one occasion he was falsely accused of stealing nails. "For this offense," wrote King, "I was beat and tortured most cruelly, and was laid up three weeks before I was able to do any work." King's owner's objections and his threats to break the apprentice agreement led to fairer treatment for a time. But another incident occurred for which the young man anticipated "severest punishment." It was 1780, and the war between Britain and the colonies provided the safety valve King needed. Though "much grieved at first," to reside among strangers, King nevertheless "determined to go to Charles-Town and throw myself into the hands of the English," who received him "readily."[14]

For the first time Boston King "began to feel the happiness of liberty." Despite many dangerous exploits that year, as well as a bout with smallpox, King managed to stay in British service and joined the crew of a man-of-war bound for New York in 1781. His adventures and hardships continued, culminating in capture by Americans while serving on a British pilot boat. King was taken to New Brunswick, and though well-treated, he longed for the freedom he had briefly known with the Brit-

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ish. The resourceful young man managed his escape to British-occupied New York, and was one of those who "received a certificate from the commanding officer," General Birch, setting sail for Nova Scotia in 1783.[15]

Boston King and the loyal blacks left New York with great expectations, most of which went unrealized. But that first winter, "the work of religion began to revive" among the black colonists, thankful for their deliverance from bondage. Throughout his war exploits, King had prayed fervently for deliverance. In his many close encounters, King's most earnest supplications were expressed when he was back in bondage in New Brunswick. He thought of nothing but freedom: "I called to remembrance the many great deliverances the Lord had wrought for me and besought him to save me this once and I would serve him all the days of my life." It was a promise not immediately fulfilled, for King was occupied by more practical concerns. Yet the Nova Scotia experiences, the hardships the black colonists endured, and the racism at the hands of white loyalists drew the little black band together and King soon became their spiritual leader. For both Boston King and John Marrant, early exposure to missionary activity, early visionary spiritual experiences, positions of acculturation, together with their unusually eventful lives and deliverances all contributed to lasting commitments to Christianity and subsequent call to the ministry.[16]

To alleviate anxiety over absconding property and fear of uprising, some whites advocated that slaves be armed in the South with a promise of freedom as was occurring in the North. In South Carolina, bondspeople were used in many ways during the war, but they were never armed. David Ramsey, a Philadelphian who moved South after marrying the daughter of Henry Laurens, at first considered slaves "too dastardly" to fight. Defections to the British army notwithstanding, Ramsey believed that "abject submission had destroyed every spark of courage in their breasts." Others disagreed, and thought slaves quite capable as soldiers, as indeed they had proven on previous occasions in South Carolina. General Moultrie, a South Carolina planter, continuously urged from the battlefields that slaves be employed as soldiers by his state, especially since they were already fighting in the British army. John Laurens also argued for use of black troops, but his minority proposal was quickly defeated. But even Ramsey changed his mind as British forces prepared to blockade Charleston. Arming slaves probably would not have saved the city from the long-costly seige, because blacks thought it safer to

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freedom. It came in Charleston. As John Lofton points out, Santo Domingo provided a practical example of a successful black revolt, the age offered a philosophy, while natural inclinations and oppression supplied a rationale.[29] By 1822 ideology and leadership were present. The record shows that legions of slaves in the Lowcountry, hoping to spur a statewide insurrection under the contagion of freedom, prepared to take by force what was rightfully theirs. The rebellion strategy was formulated and formented under the guise of an African-Christian association in Charleston known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This strategy and the rebellion's leadership reflected the composition of slave society in coastal South Carolina and the spiritual orientation of the insurrectionists. Indeed, the attempted rebellion embodied militant aspects of two religious traditions. It was closely linked with the Methodist Church but was to be carried out under a mystique of African supernatural forces. Moreover, the relationship with African religious tradition may have been the strongest bond among the insurrectionists in their designs. In the Lowcountry, the real language of egalitarianism came from Christian ideology. This did not always translate into support for emancipation, although some whites, for a time, broached the issue. More significantly, the liberal trend led to black exposure to Christianity on a level not previously experienced. Although some slaves may have accepted Christianity just as it flowed out of the white man's mouth, many did not. This latter group used the Christian religion to help provide the genius of their liberation struggle.

### *Slave Religion in the Postwar Lowcountry*

In the Lowcountry, early black exposure to Christianity was largely the work of those previously influenced by George Whitefield, and of postwar Methodists. Although a member of the Anglican clergy, Whitefield, as previously discussed, was not popular with the established church in South Carolina. His staunchest followers were within dissenting congregations. The English evangelist was particularly effective among Puritan-Baptists because of his Calvinist stand on scriptural authority, regenerate membership, and justification by faith. The first Lowcountry extension of the Old England Baptists was the establishment of a church at Euhaw in 1746, for the benefit of communicants who moved their habitations south to these Indian lands and to Edisto Island. Other churches were

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organized and preceded by missionaries who set up preaching places in the Beaufort district and in the Savannah River area. The novelty of Baptist views on baptism and church membership were so different from other traditions that they attracted much attention and at first ensured ostracism in the Sea Island region. The Baptist mission at Beaufort was organized into a church in 1800. But upwardly mobile Baptists did not immediately gain respectability from the Episcopalian community. The Reverend Henry Holcomb lived in Beaufort and served the Baptist Church there for a number of years before and after the War for Independence. In a letter he discussed early attitudes toward the Baptists:

> The principal inhabitants of Beaufort though possessed of learning, wealth and talents, were with a few honorable exceptions, strangers to true religion, and strongly prejudiced against the Baptists. The doctrine of regeneration they treated with contempt; and baptism, if we understand the meaning of the word, had never been administered in their vicinity. If ever I felt the ensnaring fear of men, it was then, but . . . God and truth were on my side. . . . Several "fellows of the better sort" made attempts to turn ministerial exercises into ridicule . . . stealing my Bible . . . while I was administering the Lord's Supper.[30]

Yet Sea Island Baptists overcame initial prejudice, and Episcopalians (postwar Anglicans) grew accustomed to witnessing baptizings in the Beaufort River. Contrary to Episcopalian apprehensions, baptismal rites were administered with the greatest solemnity, and even Baptist church services contained none of the evangelical enthusiasm that characterized Methodists at that time. Leading citizens eventually converted to the Baptist faith. Episcopalian acceptance was probably influenced by Baptist economic success. Before the War for Independence, Baptists were already on the list of Sea Island "aristocracy", rivaling Episcopalians in wealth consisting of land and slaves. This occasioned intermarriage between the once rivaling denominations. One of the most illustrious Baptist ministers of South Carolina, Richard Fuller of Beaufort, came from an Episcopalian lineage which included colonial Indian fighters, legislators, and signers of the Declaration of Independence. The Fuller family owned several Sea Islands and hundreds of slaves. The Lawton-Robert family, Baptist converts from the Huguenot sect, migrated to South Carolina from France. They organized the little Black Swamp Church upon acquiring properties at Robertville (between Beaufort and Savannah). Robertville became one of the wealthiest areas in South Carolina and the Lawton-Roberts were among the most prominent families in the Low-

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country. Other affluent Baptist-Episcopalian members of the slavocracy in the Sea Island region included the Bosticks, the Elliotts, the Popes, and the Fripps. Thus the stigma attached to Baptists subsided. By 1812 the once dissenting faith was a respectable form of worship in the Sea Islands. Lowcountry Baptists had always identified with planter interests and with slaveholding. The Reverend Holcomb lived long enough to see "the flower of Beaufort filling their seats at the Lord's table" for communion at the Baptist Church.[31]

When George Whitefield appealed to planters for religious instruction of slaves, Baptist compliance may have been more forthcoming, in some cases, than among other denominations. His remonstrances did not seem to diminish Puritan-Baptist attraction to his preaching. Whitefield, after all, was a slaveholder himself. Thus in isolated pockets of coastal Carolina and Georgia, preaching to blacks did occur and had obvious results around the time of the War for Independence and afterwards.

As previously discussed, the first organized black religious gathering under Christian auspices in the South was at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, between 1773 and 1775. That occurred on the estate of planter and Indian agent George Galphin, through the efforts of a Connecticut Baptist named Wait Palmer. David George, one of Galphin's slaves, was a convert of Palmer's, and was appointed elder over the little band of eight after being instructed in that office. David George was greatly influenced and encouraged by a black Baptist preacher named George Liele (also called George Sharp). Liele, under the guidance of Georgia white Baptists, had become a practicing exhorter. His master, Henry Sharp, a deacon of the Burke County church where Liele was "called," freed his slave, although Liele continued on with the white family. In his capacity as a preacher George Liele ministered to various plantations as well as to whites and blacks in his own church near Savannah. Liele's master, a loyalist, fought with the British and was killed. Liele remained with the British during the Savannah occupation.[32]

When the War for Independence began, slave owners prohibited ministers from visiting the plantations, fearing that information about the war, especially Dunmore's and Clinton's freedom offers, would cause black defection. With ministers no longer visiting, David George, who had experienced a call to preach under the ministrations of Liele, took over the little church, then numbering about forty. When the British overran the seacoast region, American patriots, Galphin among them,

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ican Methodist General Conference at Christmas 1784, negative reaction was so strong that the rules were suspended at a June conference in Baltimore in 1785 on behalf of the entire church. Nevertheless, some emancipationist sentiment continued. In 1795 ministers meeting in Charleston signed an agreement which recognized slavery as "evil" and condemned "patrons of slavery as well as holders of slaves." Chastizing each other for "strengthening the hands of oppression," the signatories agreed that those of them who owned slaves should emancipate them immediately if permitted to do so by law. Where legal strictures prevented manumission, it was decreed that slaves "ought to be compensated for their labor and willed free." They further resolved that those acting otherwise thereby forfeited both their seat in the Conference and their Letter of Ordination. This was the basis of the 1796 "Articles of Agreement Amongst the Preachers" signed by many conference members in both regions. However, no account of the agreement was published in the Minutes, and as the action was binding only on those who signed, it carried little weight. When the second meeting of the whole church occurred in 1796, General Conference's language regarding slaveholding was conciliatory. It affirmed that it was "more than ever" convinced of the "great evil" of slavery, but actually retreated from the previous stand. Rather than deny membership to slaveholders as previously mandated, the new "anti-slavery" stand accepted them into the church after a preacher had spoken to them "freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery."[30]

Thus the Methodist church, though attempting to engage in Christian instruction of the slaves in some areas, took a compromise position on slavery. Many Southern Methodists bought and sold slaves. They were not proscribed for it by the episcopacy, and most were not troubled by conscience. Yet quarrels did develop over slaveholding, even in Charleston. In 1794 William Hammett, in charge of the Charleston Methodist Church, was himself a slaveholder. Yet he was still harassed and accused of negligently giving passes to blacks so they could "traverse the town at any hour of the night," and "turned out of the pulpit" as a consequence. The minister was able to overcome the incident and continued serving local Methodists. Yet he found that opposition came from another quarter as well. Hammett faced criticism and abuse from his own denomination for being a slaveholder. In 1795 the issue created tension and anger although the church majority stood with Hammett. Still some members,

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.17 disgusted with the bickering, united with the Episcopal church. The controversy motivated Hammett to pen his private thoughts on slavery in his journal:

> I cannot think the trade justifiable on general principles, but in a country where the custom has been handed down from generation to generation, and where free people cannot be hired as servants, and servants are necessary, it is as innocent to hold as to hire slaves.[51]

Hammett's further contemplation centered around a position that in the future would provide a major New Testament theme for slave sermons and a rationalization for slavery:

> . . . we see then St. Paul, did not enjoin on Philemon to emancipate Onesimus who was at the time of his conversion a runaway slave, and this appears evident from the original *Doulos* signifying vassalage or slavery, tho' it is sometimes applied to service in general. St. P. sent him back to his Master to remain, or that the Master should receive him for *ever*. . . . If slavery under every circumstance was an evil, or a sin, Paul would have enjoined on Philemon to emancipate but all he recommends is treatment of a lenient kind, to treat him "as a brother," converted and received.[52]

Both the Old and New Testaments spoke to the actual practice of slaveholding. Pauline justification used by Hammett was in keeping with the thrust of the latter and passages from St. Paul were frequently read to slaves. The biblical example fitted conveniently into the schema of submission so much a part of the Christianity taught to plantation slaves in the antebellum period. Hammett's position also represents the dualism which characterized those who supported slavery yet claimed slaves were spiritually equal. Paul enjoined Philemon to treat Onesimus as he would his closest kin, and one does not normally enslave "a brother." Jesus was silent on the subject of slavery, except for using the master-slave relationship in a pedagogical sense. It was the letters of Paul which contain specific instructions on master-slave duties. Proslavery advocates also upheld bondage by noting that God's "chosen people" were slave owners.[53] Early slaveholding Methodists such as Hammett found ample scriptural justification for their practices.

Yet other Methodist ministers preaching in the South took a different position on slavery. An incendiary document written in the form of an appeal to the inhabitants of Charleston was the handiwork of a resident Methodist preacher named John Phillips. Phillips had been Hammett's

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leading accuser in the 1795 quarrel in the Charleston Church over slavery. The "appeal" was written in Charleston in 1796 while Phillips was still in the city. It was published in New York where the author had removed himself from harm's way. Phillips had been arrested and physically abused by Charleston authorities and citizens for public preaching, for teaching Christianity to slaves and free blacks, and for his antislavery views. The pamphlet denounced the "injustices" perpetrated by slaveholders and prophesied their doom. The author of the tract labeled Charleston masters "thieves" and "men stealers" who ranked with the "vilest characters" in scripture, the Sodomites. He attacked Charleston slaveholders for varied reasons, but especially on the slave trade and the lack of religious instruction. Phillips insisted in his preface that he had such "an entire aversion to war, that if the slaves could obtain their liberty by it, I would, *if possible*, dissuade them from it." Yet his unequivocal position came close to predicting violence: 170

> And you say, you did not bring them to this country, and . . . blame and condemn those who did; but inasmuch as you perpetuate their crime in keeping them in ignorance and in perpetual slavery, . . . fitting out vessels in this port for the slave trade . . . soliciting that the trade may be opened again, prove, that you are men of like evil dispositions with those who first put this villainous and unnatural practice into execution . . . why do you insist on their being kept ignorant that they may be obedient? . . . Is this Republicanism? Is there not some fraud here? . . . If you have divine authority for what you are doing, whom or what do you fear? . . . Why do you introduce club law instead of equity? . . . Is it not more than probably that the very slaves you are now training up in sin and ignorance, and securing as a portion for your children, will be the very instruments of their, if not your destruction? . . . Are not the owners become the servants of servants. . . . Thus the head is become the tail, according to the saying of Moses in Deuteronomy.

The Phillips pamphlet was sent to Charleston, adding more fuel to an already volatile situation. Hostile white citizens were aware of the 1784 General Conference statement, the 1796 "Articles of Agreement," and the manumission activity in the Northeast and Upper South. Thus the association of early Lowcountry Methodism with antislavery attitudes was not without foundation, though such sentiment was not pervasive. Still, proclamations like Phillips' kept whites on the alert for Methodist depredations against "public safety."[54] 175

In 1802 a mob assembled in Charleston after news reached "leading citizens' that antislavery literature had arrived for the South Carolina

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slaves met in unsupervised assemblies for Methodist class meetings after 175
their withdrawal from white churches. One black leader even stated that the African Church "met for this very purpose," but that in 1820, when a group from the Anson Street Church was "taken up," plans were temporarily shelved. Vesey and his closest associates, two of whom (Ned Bennet and Peter Poyas) were deacons, used weekly class meetings to discuss revolutionary passages in the Old Testament, as a forum for deploring the African-American condition and as a means to convey the political implications of the national debate over slavery. "He read to us from the Bible, how the Children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt from Bondage," confessed Rolla Bennett, one of Vesey's trusted who broke under pressure. Others proclaimed similar statements. The slaves' situation was compared with that of the Israelites. Favorite passages were from the book of Zachariah, especially the fourteenth chapter. Vesey and Poyas interpreted the chapter as predicting the doom of those who had enslaved or fought against God's chosen, and in this instance they substituted their own race for the Israelites. "My man," insisted Peter to one of the recruits, "God has a hand in it. We have been meeting for four years and are not betrayed."[66]

The harsh justice and strict moralistic tone of the Old Testament was also adopted by the slaves. None was to be spared. Vesey "read from the Bible where God commanded, that all should be cut off, both men, women and children," confessed one of the recruits. And the leaders insisted that "it was no sin for us to do so, for the Lord had commanded us to do it." Still some followers objected to the killing of women and children. The leaders would not hear, answering "what was the use of killing the louse and leaving the nit." Total destruction was not only prudent, but in keeping with the Word of God. Other recruits, similar to those in the 1816 Camden conspiracy, wondered about the ministers, believing that they at least should be spared. But white preachers were considered especially guilty. Vesey commanded:

> Ministers were to be killed except a few who were to be saved and showed the different passages in the Bible from which Denmark preached (& the rest) and they were to be asked, Why they did not preach up this thing (meaning the passages on liberty & C) to them before. . . .[67]

One such passage was from Exodus. The first chapter deals with en- 17
slavement of Jews by the Egyptians, as undeserved a bondage as that of black servitude. Another favorite was Exodus 21:16:

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•17 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

Slave religious leaders also had many questions to put to ministers about the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah, which seemed apocalyptic in the wake of Santo Domingo and the 1820 controversy over admission of Missouri as a slave state. The first two verses read:

> The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.
> And I will set the Egyptians against Egyptians, and they shall fight every one against his brother and everyone against his neighbor; city against city and kingdom against kingdom.[68]

Some conspirators who became informants after the death of the leadership and capture of many stalwart followers, told the Court of the biblical analyses which Vesey and Poyas employed. Rebel leaders likened their struggle and compared their chances of success to the biblical narrative in which the Jews took the Canaanite city of Jericho. The poorly armed Israelites conquered the city with the help of a harlot and through divine intercession. The relationship between the seige of Jericho and the planned slave rebellion was more than coincidental as far as black Methodists were concerned. The assistance reportedly expected from certain "low life" undesirable white men in Charleston and the belief that God was working on their behalf emboldened the followers. Vesey's reading of the scriptures was well known. "He studied the Bible a great deal and tried to prove from it that slavery and bondage is against the Bible," said one witness. Another witness, a white youth who frequented Vesey's business, related that "all his religious remarks were mingled with slavery."[69]

Thus the fears and apprehensions of slaveholders were not without foundation. A literate, skilled, but oppressed black leadership, armed with the militant nationalism and spiritual example of Mosaic law, could easily transpose their situation and parallel it with that of the ancient Jews. But Denmark Vesey and his cohorts used more than scripture recitation to inspire rebellion. He reportedly told timid slaves the story of Hercules and the wagoner as a means of boosting their courage. Such a parable convinced Rolla Bennett to join:

> I was one day on horseback going to market when I met him on foot; he asked me if I was satisfied in my present situation; if I remembered the fable of Her-

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cules and the Waggoner whose waggon was stalled, and he began to pray, and Hercules said, you fool put your shoulder to the wheel, whip up the horses and your waggon will be pulled out; that if we did not put our hand to the work and deliver ourselves, we should never come out of slavery.[70] 170

Thus Vesey appealed to slaves through a kind of Greek rationalism as well as through his knowledge of the Bible. Biblical recounting of the struggle against bondage provided a major ideological weapon with which to reach the urban slaves who accepted Methodism. Yet even the most edifying features of the adopted religion would not be entirely acceptable or understood outside of the urban milieu. And even in the city the old ways died slowly. Many in the Methodist Church were African-born, nearly all of them slaves and not living in the "privileged" circumstances of the leadership. Hence, Vesey needed to draw partly on an African spiritual heritage. Vesey may have known of Boukman, the vodun high priest in the Santo Domingo revolt. Boukman used African religion as a conspiracy medium even before Toussaint joined the insurrection. Under a banner of the African god of revenge, he and his thousands of followers began the rebellion that brought terror to whites, freedom to slaves, and independence to the black island.[71] Similarly, in South Carolina the real spiritual force that bound the majority of known insurrectionists from Charleston to the country region, from the mainland to the islands, was the African priest Gullah Jack. 175

Jack, the slave of Paul Pritchard, and, like Vesey, a member of the Hampstead Church, reportedly advocated the rebellion when the black church members were first harassed and abused in 1818. Thus his association with the conspiracy was of the longest duration along with the original six first executed. If Denmark Vesey was the chief theoretician and Peter Poyas the arch plotter and organizer, then Gullah Jack was the religious embodiment of the movement. Jack's influence over the slaves did not derive from his role in the African Methodist Church but from his service as priest and doctor. He was African-born, a little man with "small feet and hands" whose trademark up to the time of his capture was a set of huge black whiskers. To avert capture after discovery of the first attempted revolt, Jack removed this symbol of his power. Jack headed the Gullah Society and his activities and recruiting efforts occurred in and outside of Charleston. As a force within the movement, he was well known among all the slaves. The arch-conspirators told recruits that they would be immune from death or injury at the hands of whites through Gullah Jack's potion and power. One follower related:

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•17 Edwin C. Holland of Charleston published a widely distributed pamphlet which contained the expressed opinions of those who denounced religious practices of African-Americans:

> We are exposed to still greater perils, by the swarm of *MISSIONARIES*, white and black, that are perpetually visiting us, who, with the Sacred Volume of God in one hand, breathing peace to the whole family of man, scatter, at the same time, with the other, the fire-brands of discord and destruction, and secretly disperse among our Negro Population, the seeds of discontent and sedition. It is an acknowledged fact, that some of these religious itinerants, these apostolic vagabonds, after receiving the charities which the philanthropy and open-hearted generosity of our people have bestowed, have, by the means of Tracts and other modes of instruction, all professedly religious in their character, excited among our Negroes . . . a spirit of dissatisfaction and revolt. . . . Those . . . acquainted with the nefarious plot know, how blasphemously the word of God was tortured, in order to sanction the unholy butchery . . . and what a powerful agency was put into operation by the *dispersion* among Negroes, of religious magazines, newspaper paragraphs and insulated texts of scripture. . . . Religion was stripped of her pure and spotless robe, and, panoplied like a fury was made to fight under the banners of . . . Conspiracy.[90]

Many whites associated the African Methodist church, Christian instruction, and antislavery agitation with the rebellion attempt. Others saw African religion as the root cause of the conspiracy. Gullah Jack had pitted the gods of Africa against the Christian god. Even though Jack's courage failed him, revealing to his followers the vulnerability of his power and spirituality, his influence on the salves was frightening and incredulous to the court:

> But no description can accurately convey to others, the impression which the trial, defence and appearance of Gullah Jack made on those who witnessed the workings of his cunning and rude address.[91]

Jack feigned ignorance until brought face to face with his accusers. In that situation his countenance instantly changed and "his wildness and vehemence of gesture, and the malignant glance with which he eyed the witnesses who appeared against him, all indicated the savage, who indeed had been caught but not tamed."[92] The "taming" of the "savage" and efforts to destroy the slaves loyalty to a "foreign" belief system occupied the minds of a few South Carolinians.

The depth of the planning and belief that the conspiracy covered most of the black coast accounted for the disproportionate terrorism and brutality. The Court employed the term "implicated" loosely. Aside from

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the leadership it included anyone with a weapon, anyone "named" with a horse or means of obtaining one, those "named" who met at Bulkey's farm, or who had been in the company of those with weapons and powder. Many families were affected. None was allowed to mourn or to recover the bodies. The July 26 executions were the most horrendous. Twenty-two men were brought to the gallows with the entire city watching. At the execution ground confusion ensued and a slave boy-child was trampled to death by horses. Another boy, white, watched the hanging from the safety of a third floor window of his King Street home. Later he described the spectacle as "a sight calculated to strike terror in the heart of every slave." It was a cold-blooded warning to would-be insurrectionists. But the death agony in the black community continued. On July 30, six more were executed. Additional men were thusly sentenced, but the stench of death began to sicken even white vengeance and these last thirty-six slaves were banished. The final victim to die for attempting to raise the insurrection was on August 2 when one William Garner was caught in Columbia where he had fled following the arrests.[93] It was a reminder of the power of the state and tenacity of slavery. Black leadership had fallen. The black Methodist church was destroyed. And in the eyes of many, African spiritualism had failed the test of service and invincibility against white might and white religion.

Despite apparent failings, many slaves were still tied to old ways, although drawn to the dominant religion as well. In both systems of belief they envisioned a means of attaining their heart's desire—liberty. But the immediate reality indicated that most whites were no more prepared to view Lowcountry slaves as spiritual siblings than as political equals. Yet at this time slaves may have decided that freedom would not come by the sword. The chances were too slim, the risks too many, and the price too dear. Much of the Old Testament militancy faded among the slaves familiar with its tenets. For the majority, who perhaps didn't fully grasp the association, it was not difficult to incorporate into their spiritualism a New Testament ideology which prophesied equality for all and the dignity of the sufferer. New Testament tenets became for them one banner under which to pursue their continued vision of freedom.

The Vesey Conspiracy prompted a lengthy debate and for a number of years afterward the subject of religious education was controversial in South Carolina. Most slave masters in the Lowcountry grew more adamant than ever in resisting Christian instruction of slaves. But among

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tage in argument over those of our Northern Brethren . . . whose objection to our system is partly founded on the deficiency of religious instruction." If said instruction and subsequent conversion were "more genuinely diffused," Pinckney assured, "our national character would be relieved from its only real opprobrium."[6]

C. C. Pinckney's address before the South Carolina Agricultural Society typified the concern of a few planters to make the masses of bondspeople culturally visible for the first time. While reminding slaveholders of their duty to provide spiritual and religious instruction to their slaves, his overriding argument in favor of Christianizing efforts centered on protection of the institution and a countermeasure support system against the influence of leadership in the slave quarters. Christianity, with its concepts of sin and rebirth, could conceivably contribute to the bondspeople's developing a sense of vulnerability and prostration. So long as slaves remained a somewhat foreign and even mysterious mass of laborers, outside the realm of human interest on the part of whites, such slaves were a threat. As Christians however, sharing the same beliefs and spiritual orientation as their masters, blacks would eventually come to feel part of the total society. To imbibe white religion as taught by the new wave of missionaries would, in the mind of Pinckney and others, allow slaves to accept their subservient role in society, making them not only physical dependents but spiritual and psychological dependents as well.

Pinckney's call for bringing Christianity to the slaves was a significant departure, coming as it did from a wealthy, highly recognized planter and politician. This was the first time a large group of South Carolina planters were addressed on the subject by an individual whose respectability was national and whose interests coincided directly with their own. Pinckney's method of approaching the issue was employed by others later. He saw the result of Christian conversion primarily in idyllic terms—happy, docile, "spiritually uplifted" darkies, and a peaceful plantation, free from theft, runaways, and bereft of artful means to avoid labor. The appeal also liberated the slaveholders from a sense of guilt—if they happened to have one—regarding their right to hold slaves. Pinckney reasoned that the doctrines of the Old as well as New Testaments upheld slavery and that scriptures, "if properly taught," would never undermine the slave system. Naturally, the best way to ensure "proper" instruction was to have "Southern men with Southern principles" as teachers. Fi-

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•17 nally, Pinckney's attempted evocation of the planters' sense of "moral duty" as patriarchs had its place. Certainly a thoughtful minority wished to view themselves in this light and Pinckney came as close to epitomizing the term of patriarch as any South Carolina slaveholder could. He gently admonished his listeners with a solemn if pharisaical appeal to conscience: "Is there no room for apprehension of future responsibility before a tribunal whose Judge has expressedly directed the dissemination of his doctrines?"[7]

Hence arguments aiding the erosion of resistance to slave conversion focused particularly around pecuniary concerns, desirability of public peace, a more submissive black population, and justification of slavery by holy writ. Appeals to cultural enlightenment and the slaves' spiritual ameloration were of no consequence without the overriding rationale of a profitable economic venture. The sanction this slaveholding statesman gave to religious instruction paved the way for certain missionaries to go, unmolested, among slaves of the coastal region. Pinckney, supported by at least a small segment of influential slaveholders and clerics, had thrust the issue into the open. From there the South Carolina Methodist church adopted the idea as its own.[8]

The denomination long associated with antislavery activity in South Carolina and often blamed for stirring slave unrest had an opportunity to absolve itself. South Carolina Methodists became pioneers in the Christianizing effort. Despite Pinckney's boast, Methodists were the *only* denomination in 1829 that declared itself ready and able to send "laborers into the field" at the request of planters. Methodist leaders either took a cue from C. C. Pinckney's encouragement by both his public blessing and his employment of a missionary on his own plantations, or quite likely, Pinckney worked with the clergy in introducing the volatile issue to the Lowcountry master class. At any rate, in 1830 the South Carolina Conference organized a department specifically for the purpose of conducting missionary work among the slaves, pledging to "take up the cross" of preaching to African-Americans.[9]

South Carolina Methodists had not ignored plantation slaves before 1829 but neither did they especially seek them out as they did in the urban sector during early years of the connection. In the Lowcountry south of Charleston only a mere smattering of white Methodists resided, and consequently few slaves in the region were exposed to the denomination. In the Charleston District of the nearly 6,000 black Methodists

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around the time of Vesey's Conspiracy, most were slaves. But the up-country, frequented by circuit riders and stimulated by numerous revivals, contained the majority of the state's 18,460 black Methodists at the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Thus the coastal plantations, especially in the Sea Islands, were the main target areas during the thirty years of Methodist religious efforts among the bondspeople of South Carolina, and parts of Georgia.[10]

When the South Carolina Methodist Conference met in February 1830, its Missionary Society produced a stirring report entitled "The Southern Slave Population." Authored by James O. Andrew, a slaveholding bishop from Augusta, Georgia, the document noted the lack of missionary service to slaves and lauded the attention and encouragement given by C. C. Pinckney. More significantly, the report indicated a rising concern within the Southern Methodist church. In 1831 Andrew's report was published in the national Methodist journal, indicating that a movement was under way in the regional jurisdiction of the South Carolina Conference. Bishop Andrew acknowledged that in the face of "so many obstacles," a long period of negligence had characterized Methodist attitude. Yet he insisted that the Methodist church was not unmindful of the so-called irreligion of the slaves:

> We saw the efforts made to send the Gospel to distant Pagans, and we heard of the success of those efforts with much gratification. But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity and to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency, and longed to see put into operation such an instrumentality as should extensively and successfully, carry the Gospel to the large and increasing slave population.[11]

The difficulties and magnitude of the undertaking had until recently hindered the Church's commitment Andrew reported. But a new day was dawning. Of late, the Church was "cheered and strengthened" and much gratified by the expressed advocacy of the renowned C. C. Pinckney. The South Carolina Conference considered the words of so "notable and respected" a Carolinian to be a "valuable and powerful auxiliary" in the work undertaken. Speaking on behalf of the Methodists' missionary branch, the slaveholding bishop reiterated even more strongly themes pounded out by Pinckney: the "moral baseness" of un-Christian slaves had to be combated. Among bondspeople, stated Andrew, "the tender

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since this regulation took place within a religious context, ostensibly under the rubric of Christianity. High and low seats in Gullah society assumed a meaning different from African Poro-Sande society. But the function of regulation and community control was still present. The Gullahs reserved the "low seat" for those who betrayed community interests by divulging "the secret of stealing," undoubtedly from the master. This demonstrates the seriousness of solidarity among the people. Thus picking up the benne seed was reserved for the worst of crimes "according to their view of the crime." While the Methodist missionary believed the slaves had incorrect ideas about who should be punished, slaves themselves were using an internal logic with little reference to Protestant conceptions of sin. This Gullah interpretation of sin was at variance with their Christian instruction. A sense of contrition for the safety and peace of the plantation or out of fear of the Christian God was not a motivating issue. For the Gullahs, moral guilt fell on those who forsook socioreligious authority and loyalty in the slave quarters. The presence and influence of black leadership was also revealed as the "punishments" were administered by a "priest." This implies no relationship to the Christian church to which some of the slaves belonged. Missionary Turpin believed the rites strangely akin to Catholicism. Obviously they were not. But in West Africa Poro-Sande priests and priestesses were responsible for administering justice and punishment. Thus this role had some cultural-historical continuity. Slaves saw nothing incongruous about adopting elements of Christian religion and adapting those to aspects of their traditional spiritual heritage still serviceable in the New World setting.

The penance for the "sin" of divulging the secret of stealing was no brief activity, but a rather trying feat. A "gentleman" residing on Bull's Island informed Turpin that an individual usually could not pick up all the scattered benne seeds in one night. And "if it was not done in one night they had to continue until they did it." Thus while the benne seed ritual was not comparable in degree to African punishments instituted by the Poro Council for community crimes, there is a symbolic reference. While representing a form of censure for erring members, it was not the way "Christianized" slaves were expected to interpret the concept of "sin." Turpin stated in his report that having to contend with "all this superstition and ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism," he had added few church members. Nor, reported Turpin,

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did he strive to do so, "but rather . . . to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict."[28]

Planters in the May and New River Mission region were offended by statements implying that they tolerated practices such as the one Turpin discussed. Sea Island Baptists felt under attack for not instructing black converts in "true" principles of Christianity and for baptizing slaves without scrutinizing their religious life. Turpin was smarting from the cold reception he received from planters. Turpin did in fact infer that some planters were aware of and permitted un-Christian practices among slaves baptized as Baptists. It was after all a "gentleman" of the Island who had explained to Turpin the workings of the benne seed penance he had observed. Methodist unpopularity among Sea Island planters was recognized at the Missionary Society Headquarters. Soon after the report was circulated, Turpin was removed from the May and New River Mission, and assigned to the John and Wadmalaw Islands Mission in the Charleston District. Turpin insisted, however, that he did not intend to discredit the planters. Nor, he said, did he mean that planters knowingly sanctioned "corrupt" practices among the slaves. Turpin merely wished to point out how irreligious so-called converted slaves were. Through the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, he made a somewhat cynical apology, which undoubtedly did little to assuage the ire of Sea Island planters:

> But it [the report] appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons, notwithstanding though, it has been said that I have "shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it was hit the Episcopalians." If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended, I feel it my duty to heal the wound.[29]

Turpin had indeed offended the planters, especially his comments on the slaves' lack of "truly religious" training, despite Baptist church membership. He believed that the "converted" slaves made a mockery of Christianity. These slaves who "scarcely ever saw the pastor" of their church were members of the First African Church in Savannah. Andrew Bryan's nephew, Andrew Marshall, was the pastor. In 1830, church membership was 2,417. Although a black church, whites were responsible for control and for the conduct of its members. Whites came to the

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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

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that cotton did not lie around or be stored after picking since too much exposure injured the product. Some overseers worked the slaves at night and on Sundays. The rawness and wetness of the weather did not deter managers and planters from ordering all "available" hands out to the fields. Though work in the gin house was considered "light" work, this "cotton barn" offered little relief from cold and dampness. The air inside was so unhealthy that slaves preferred the openness of the fields. Workers breathed flying lint and dust during the long hours as they labored in standing positions.[43]

The labor had a telling effect on the slave women's physical health. A callous attitude developed toward needs of pregnant women, postpartum illnesses, infant care, exhaustion and exposure to inclement weather. Bondswoman Susannah, in relating to Laura Towne, the tragedy of having all three of her living sons sold away, mentioned that she had actually had twenty-two pregnancies. Another defiant Gullah woman who worked in the house was beaten frequently by order of the mistress and retaliated by bringing "not one nigger" to Maussa. Another woman was buried up to her neck in earth as punishment, a few days after she had given birth to a stillborn child. Laura Towne, who saw signs of illtreatment, recorded various accounts:

> On this place, the Oaks, Loretta showed me her back, arms and breasts today. In many places there were ridges as high and long as my little finger and everywhere marks of the whip. She said that her children had been killed in her by whipping. She says it was because when "heavy with child," she could not do the full task of a field hand. I suspect also being rather apt to resist and rather smart in speaking her mind, poor thing. She has suffered terribly and it is no wonder that she is more indifferent about her clothes and house. . . . She says this was "de cruelest place."

Loretta lived on the plantation of Daniel Pope, a member of the Sea Island Baptist "aristocracy" who "gave no shoes, salt, molasses, nor Sunday clothes . . . neither would he allow the field hands any meat, nor permit them to raise pigs." In the year before the Civil War Pope determined to make the people work as much as possible, "so he kept them in the field from morning till night and lashed them every day."[44]

Francis Kemble noted on her visit to the Georgia Sea Islands that the principal hardships fell to the lot of the women. She wrote of her first visit to the "Infirmary":

> Women lay prostrate on the floor, without bed, mattress or pillow, buried in tattered and filthy blankets. . . . I stood in the midst of them, perfectly unable

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to speak. . . . Here lay women expecting every hour the terrors and agony of childbirth, others who were groaning over the anguish . . . of miscarriages—here lay some burning with fever, others chilled with cold and aching rheumatism on the hard cold ground, the draughts and dampness of the atmosphere increasing their sufferings, and dirt, noise, and stench, and every aggravation of which sickness is capable, combined in their condition.[45] 17 567

Conditions among the female population affected Kemble deeply. She spent much time trying to alleviate deprivation and discomfort. For her concern she faced the resentment of Pierce Butler, who considered her interfering with plantation "discipline." An antislavery Englishwoman, Kemble claimed she married Butler without knowledge of his human property. Their divergent views caused dissension between them. On one occasion, Kemble wrote of Butler's reaction to the petition of a group of slave women: 175 567

Mr. _____ was called out this evening to listen to a complaint of overwork from a gang of pregnant women. I did not stay to listen to the details of their petition, for I am unable to command myself on such occasions and Mr. _____ seemed positively degraded in my eyes as he stood enforcing upon these women the necessity of their fulfilling their appointed tasks . . . as a *duty*.[46]

The conditions of labor under the "peculiar institution" hindered longevity and a natural increase in birth rate survival among the slaves. Both races paid in different ways because cotton planters did not usually attend to their estates personally, and because they too often judged managerial quality by the magnitude of cotton profits. But illegal imports still contributed to the increase in slaves. The last slave vessel to arrive in the Sea Islands, the ship *Wanderer*, was in 1858. Sea Island planters had opposed reopening the slave trade in South Carolina in 1803, apparently because it might have decreased market value of their own slaves at a time when these planters were economically vulnerable. However, after the close of the African trade to North America in 1807, and the rise of Sea Island cotton, planters engaged in smuggling. Illegal importations continued to contribute to the native African population.[47] Even more significantly, many American-born slaves were only one or two generations from African ethnicity, because many were imported into the Sea Islands during the last two decades before the War of Independence.

Thus Methodist missionaries found very oppressed but tightly knit communities of African-Americans still clinging to patterns of social behavior and modes of worship, largely a mystery to whites, having devel-

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It is not only the duty of the missionary to catechize the children and preach to the adults, but also to visit the sick and aged, and it is here that many a triumph has been achieved for his Lord. Many a dark and benighted soul has been brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Here, too, does he frequently prepare himself for the exercises of the pulpit, for it is here that he learns the way to the negro's heart, and becomes acquainted with his ideas of God and religion. The negro knows that his minister is not ashamed to enter his smoky cabin, to take him by his rough and toil-hardened hand, and talk to him about the way to heaven, or to kneel beside his bed, offer prayer in his behalf, and to pour into his heart the consolation of God's word. It is this that frequently takes his heart captive, and binds him to the cross.[41]

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Here then was the religion of the warm heart at its spiritually redeeming best among the Gullahs. A disarming warmth of feeling, an effort to bridge, spiritually at least, the gap between black and white, slave and free was to serve a definite purpose. Such acts, seemingly prompted purely by human kindness, deeply affected the Gullahs, so unaccustomed to being objects of concern among whites except in matters related to labor. Gradually, the more seasoned missionaries like Chreitzberg began to stimulate a "change of heart" in the slaves. Especially affecting was the adaptation of some sermons and lectures to the daily lives and fortunes of the Gullahs. Hence they came to identify elements of Christianity with their own circumstances. Skillful variation of preaching methods, coupled with a fraternal spirit which the missionaries demonstrated toward the Gullahs, was effective. By the mid-1840s a goodly number of slaves had "professed" their conversion to Christianity under Methodist tutelage.

Missionaries such as Chreitzberg took full advantage of opportunities to service their black congregations in the hope of winning more converts. Below Chreitzberg describes the value to be derived from officiating at a Gullah night funeral:

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"What" says the not-to-be-disturbed-at-night Pastor of a Chapel of Ease, "put yourself to the trouble of burying a *dead* negro?" Why not? We have unsuperable objections to burying a *living* one, but see no reason why the last sad office of the Church should not be performed over the remains of the black man. Has he no affections, are there no weeping friends to be consoled. . . . But apart from this, may not the living be effectually warned? When the dead man lies before them in all his helplessness, stricken down in his prime and (as in this case) suddenly called to the final account,—what better time to read to them a lesson on the uncertainty of life.

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These were golden opportunities for the missionary. The entire plantation gathered to see a body laid to rest in "its narrow house." The preacher first consoled the sorrowful widow, bidding her to trust God, "the husband of the widow and father of the fatherless." He then addressed the dead man's fellow servants on the necessity of preparing for death: "In a word I preached Jesus and the resurrection, and by the glimmering of the lightwood fire, was the burial service read and the body committed to the dust." Upon leaving the plantation late that night, the missionary was moved by thoughts which were probably not very different from thoughts which the slaves who had just witnessed the burial might have, "thoughts on life, on life's duties, on life's end: of the wants and woes of the world."[62]

Once again the missionary capitalized on an opportunity to involve himself in the black community and the slaves' experience. His efforts to share in and add meaning to life and death among the bondspeople helped make him a presence in the quarters even if he came but twice a month. He was, for his caring, often looked upon fondly. Although the missionary represented the same forces of oppression as did the master, the slaves perceived the spiritual arm of the dominant society as perhaps its one redeeming quality, a contradiction to serve the slaves' interests. Still the fondness was more on an individual level. A well-meaning Methodist like Chreitzberg was accepted though all he preached and taught was not. From the slaves' vantage point it was unwise to completely relinquish that which had previously provided spiritual solace and replace it with something new and as yet untried. For missionaries able to secure access to plantations, spiritual rewards might be inspiring if short-lived. Through catechism, "class meeting," and carrying out of pastoral duties, Methodists experienced some triumphs for Christianity. Missionaries never succeeded in dethroning black leadership and felt that this influence continually created obstacles to Christian conversion.[63] Nevertheless, Methodists proved to be relentless in the dissemination of their doctrines. As Gullahs grew more attentive to the preachers' words, they discarded the incongruous and discordant features of the instruction and fashioned the religion of slaveholders into something peculiarly their own.

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One of the most significant effects that Methodism had on Gullahs was in the creation of the religious music of these slaves. Some scholars argue that the actual source of Gullah religious songs can be traced to Methodist hymns and tunes sung at camp meetings. Certainly Methodist

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hymns were adopted by the Gullahs and other slaves. Francis Asbury traveled the seacoasts of Georgia and South Carolina frequently. While he gained few white converts, he was impressed with the black response to his preaching. During the Civil War, musicologists and others, fascinated by Gullah songs, noted that what was sometimes called a "Negro song," was of white origin, especially the so-called religious songs. But to these white melodies, the Gullahs added their own "spirit and relish," giving a "peculiar individuality and nationality" to the music. Thus it is pointless and probably inaccurate to insist that whites and blacks did not create sacred music together when they worshipped together. Such was the case at camp meetings and revivals. Still these gatherings were not as common in the Lowcountry as they were elsewhere. Some writers argue that the camp meeting was distinctly a pineland and upcountry institution. Although evidence indicates that a few camp meetings were held in the rice communities—the hinterlands of the Sea Islands—we find no record of its presence on any of the islands. The influence of the domestic slave trade, black-white cultural borrowing, and diffusion were all factors in the creation and development of African-American music. Nevertheless, a unique continuity in religious songs can be found in the Sea Islands and coastal lowlands. There were indeed two types of religious music among the Gullahs who adopted Christianity: those songs and hymns learned from white religious instructors and mainly Methodist in origin, and those representing the product of the Gullah's own creativity and imagination, generally referred to as spirituals or prayer songs.[44]

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The primary influence of Methodist preachers on the development of spirituals was in providing Gullahs with raw material for their songs. From past spiritual traditions these African-Americans inherited a mysticism, sense of drama, and creative antecedents that aided them in expressing and interpreting through song the apocalyptic and miraculous elements of biblical narration already rich in symbolic imagery. Also, New Testament biblical lore was not unlike the Gullahs' own oppression and suffering. From the Sea Islands in 1843, A. M. Chreitzberg provides examples of the spontaneous creation of spirituals. In delivering his message, the missionary enforced the concepts of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the meeting, the group was "much affected" by a "soft female voice" singing:

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CHAPTER 7

# *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

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Lizzy, Excommunicated, running away and insolent to owner.
Charles, Excommunicated, stealing corn and breaking into corn house.
Nell, Excommunicated, theft.
Joe, Excommunicated, drunkenness and running away.
Bacchus, Suspended, selling whiskey in violation of the law, publically punished for it in stocks.*

. . . All de time, dey'd lick you. After dey'd like 'em until de blood come out, den dey'd rub de red pepper and salt on 'em. Oh, my God! Kin you say dem as done such as dat aint gone to dere reward? My uncle was whip so he went in de woods, an' live dere for monts. Had to learn de independent life. Mr. Aldridge was de overseer. Old Mr. Aldridge gone now. But dere can't be no rest for him. Oh my God no!**

## *"Christian" Masters*

In 1845, concerned clergymen called a three-day meeting in Charleston, inviting planters, ministers, and statesmen to discuss religious instruction of the slave population. A "chief mover and supporter" of white Baptist activity in the Sea Island region was St. Helena patriarch William Fripp. Fripp reported that on St. Helena Island "the gospel has

*Committee on Discipline, *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 8, 1842, 34, BC.
**Solbert Butler, former slave, in George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 Parts, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972) II (1), 162.

[p. 217]

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•17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

175 797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 [795] Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

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175 rian and former pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Washington, of which both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson were members. He left the Washington Church to accept a pastorship in Savannah and there heavily engaged in evangelical preaching. The impact of Baker's sermons was reportedly felt along the entire seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina. Wherever he preached a steady stream of converts came forth. His was not a mass revival since the seaboard white population was sparse. But hundreds attended the protracted meetings which Baker conducted in "the little sea coast towns and villages" mainly inhabited by planter aristocracy. And his sermons reputedly "moved whole communities." Baker wrote in his autobiography that his South Carolina efforts led to "important results" in places such as Gillisonville, Grahamville, Robertville, May River, and Beaufort. The meetings at Beaufort he deemed "the most remarkable." There was no Presbyterian church so Baker preached alternately in the Baptist and Episcopalian churches. "Oh, what blessed meetings we had!" he wrote. Baker preached three times a day "to full houses," and the numbers "hopefully converted amounted to about eighty."[17]

In regard to the number "hopefully converted" in Beaufort, Baker apparently took only white converts into account. Another section of Baker's autobiography quotes the Episcopal minister as stating that there were "two or three hundred conversions in Beaufort under Mr. Baker's ministry," consisting of "a number of whites," seventy of whom presented themselves for confirmation at the Episcopal church, and "very many blacks," who united with the Baptists.[18] Thus at least some of the slaves from the town of Beaufort participated in the Baker revival.

•17 At the time of Baker's appearance the two houses of worship in Beaufort were described by one of thier "eminent laymen" as "little better than masonic lodges." The churches had the form of godliness but were "destitute of its power." The "layman" observed that "frequenters of the race-course and the theater found their places at the communion table," and that not even the duelist was excluded. Baker was credited with stimulating religious enthusiasm among "decadent" members of the planter class. An observer of the 1831 revival noted that in at least one instance derision of Baker's mission was transformed into contrition. Notice of Baker's services was sent from house to house. The announcement was received at a whist club during their weekly meeting. The notice was read aloud "amidst shouts of merriment." The group ridiculed the reli-

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gious meeting and decided to attend, "confident of their ability to withstand all the preacher's snares." They attended Baker's meeting and found themselves "overcome" by a force stronger than they, and stripped "of the armour wherein they trusted." Before the revival ended, eight of the party of eleven "were found sitting at the feet of Jesus." One became a bishop, and another a presbyter of the Episcopal church.[19]

Word of the spiritual awakening in Beaufort District was carried to other parts of the state and even attracted coverage in national religious presses. The Methodist *Christian Advocate and Journal* printed an article illustrating the pitch of regeneration fervor aroused in Beaufort. The correspondent, one of those converted, stated that "no one can conceive who was not present," the effects of the revival on the resort town. Schools were closed, businesses, shops, and stores were shut—even politics were forgotten. The church was "filled to overflowing—seats, galleries, aisles, exhibited a dense mass of human beings from hoary age to childhood." Yet despite the multitude, "breathless silence" prevailed, broken only by the preacher's "reproving, persuading, imploring, thrilling" voice. Crowds reportedly came forward, and fell prostrate at the feet of the altar, as the musical voices of hundreds rose over the kneeling multitude. The scene was compelling, related the participant-observer, and "it was not in human hearts to resist the influence that awoke its sympathies, and spoke to its purest and most elevated feeling."[20]

Residents insisted that Baker was responsible for bringing new life to many Lowcountry churches. This rebirth was most visible in Beaufort. Citizens there claimed that even twenty years later there was a "a higher moral and religious tone, and a more intelligent and consistent profession of Christianity maintained."[21]

The Beaufort Baptist Church recorded a sizable white membership increase over a period of about ten years following Baker's appearance. And the augmentation of black members was unprecedented. According to membership lists, only 62 whites united with the church from 1804 (the year of its establishment) to 1831. From July 1831 to October 1840, 110 whites joined the congregation. Thus the majority of Beaufort Church's over 2,000 member increase from 1831 to 1840 consisted of black converts. Increases at other Beaufort District Baptist churches participating in the revival, though not as impressive, were nevertheless considerable compared to the majority of other churches in the Savannah River Baptist Association.[22] Thus, emerging zeal in some of the Baptist churches

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•17 in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

175 797 Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, long-time residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

175 569 797 Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white [195] membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

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cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo.

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### *"Christian" Slaves*

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave:

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> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading

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Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading

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to the slave galleries be moved to the outside so that the two races would not have to pass each other, or use the same entrance when they met to worship God in common.[37] One can thus imagine the disdain that "gentle" white folk felt at being in close quarters with field slaves.

Some whites considered it a dangerous practice to allow slaves to leave plantations to attend church no matter what their status. Thomas Fuller, Episcopalian brother of the venerable Richard, reported on the state of religious instruction at the Charleston Meeting. Fuller complained that the habit of black church members descending upon the town of Beaufort was deplorable:

> Removed as so large a number are, every Sunday from the control and discipline of the plantation, and impossible as it is for the Church to know and control their conduct, they use their liberty in ways and for purposes adverse to their morals. Nothing seems to me more essential in order to their becoming a religious people, than that they be subjected to the supervision of the plantation, of the minister of a Church, that will investigate and correct their wrong views and bad habits. . . . It is owing, I think, to the want of religious instruction and discipline on the plantations, that the influence of religious instruction and the spirit of subordination among the negroes is so little seen and felt.[38]

Baptist planters themselves recognized and attempted to confront these problems. As church memberships increased, a means of superintending the widespread congregation and keeping slaves on the plantations was needed. Black church members were organized into plantation associations under the jurisdiction of the church.

These "black societies" were the nucleus of the Gullah socioreligious community. They existed even before preaching stations were established and were reportedly religious bodies which slaves entered into voluntarily, although the nature and origin of these societies was unknown. Methodist missionaries found them already organized and a hindrance to Methodist authority among the slaves, especially when their practices were under the rubric of Christianity. In 1833, John Field, a St. Helena planter, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned to the island. Speaking for himself and "others," Field expressed his disapproval of the societies, and of the slaves' association with the Baptist Church on St. Helena. According to Field, the slaves who joined the church were "almost entirely under the control of Negro leaders." The Methodist missionary's preaching on the island prompted "constant ap-

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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•17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even
181 more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations. Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also
17 a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong
567 related by Sam Polite:
533 I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we
[539] wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:

> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[58]

17 Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt.
567 John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never "licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman, Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging. Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for kindness.[59]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

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lak white man's," that is, with no marks of the whip. "Talk o' lick um sar?" answered one slave when queried about floggings, "yes, sar, nebber did noffin but lick um sar." He insisted that they were whipped when they didn't work and "when we work, hard lick um all same sar." A "devil" for cruelty was Alviro Fripp who "before he got religion use to cuss and cuss and cuss." But when he joined the Baptist church, he could no longer cuss, "so he used to lick 'em instead." The "richest man on St Helena," Edgar Fripp, was reportedly the meanest, and his temper knew no bounds at "full moon." He also worked his slaves all night in full moon at cotton-picking time. The Gullahs went out of their way to avoid him for if a hat was not tipped quick enough or a bow low enough, Fripp would "lay his horsewhip on them well."[60]

Of the many cases of harsh treatment and sometimes actual barbarity, few compared with the 1849 incident recorded by Thomas Chaplin in his Journal. Chaplin's neighbor, James Sandiford, was brought before an inquest of planters regarding the death of his slave, Roger. In examining the slaves' remains, Chaplin wrote that "such a shocking sight never before met my eyes." The slave, a born cripple who "used his knees more than his feet," had been instructed, on a "cold and bitter day," to paddle a boat downriver for oysters and then to cut a bundle of mud marsh. Roger, instructed to return before "high water," did not show up until "ebb tide." But he brought back seven baskets of oysters and a small bundle of marsh. "That," commented Chaplin, "was more than the primest of my fellows would have done." But Sandiford gave Roger thirty lashes for not returning sooner, for not cutting more marsh, and for hollering loudly while being flogged for the first two offenses. Sandiford later eavesdropped on a conversation Roger had in the kitchen with another man. Two versions of the exchange were reported. According to the planter, Roger stated that if he had "sound limbs" he would shoot down a white man before he took a flogging. The man to whom Roger spoke denied this, informing the jurors that Roger said "he would turn his back on them if they shot him down," which Chaplin believed was the truth. Neither comment, in Chaplin's opinion, warranted the punishment Roger received:

> For these *crimes*, this man, this demon in human shape, this pretended Christian, member of the Baptist Church, had this poor cripple Negro placed in an open outhouse, the wind blowing through a hundred cracks, his clothes wet to the waist, without a single blanket & in freezing weather, with his back against the

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tical about employing blacks even as helpers. William Capers insisted that "helpers" only be "a feeble staff—not leaned upon. They can no more do the missionary's work than a staff can walk." On the other hand, Sea Island Baptists placed much Christian teaching on the shoulders of black leaders. Methodists were consistently confronted with the problems created by this difference in tactical approach. After 1845 most black elders operated with the approval of slaveholders. Some, according to Methodists, had rudimentary knowledge of Christianity. But most, said the missionaries, represented "the very essence of ignorance and superstition." Some slaves came to Methodists' preaching and "precious seasons" and "effusions of tears would ensue." But Methodists lamented that slaves immediately deserted them for "one of their own":

> Let it be known that one of these [slaves] is to preach on such a day and there is such a rush . . . that they may have the pleasure of hearing one of their own color . . . what else than mischief can be expected from the teaching of an ignorant enthusiast who knows nothing of God's word, and puts his own delusions in the place of divine truth? . . . and they say that whenever they come to hear me, it is from duty . . . because I am employed by their owners."

Wherever Baptists authorized Christian instruction, Methodists found black leaders and black societies. "The society exerts its influence against us which is remarkably strong," wrote the missionary at Pocotaligo in 1844. "This 'society' is altogether in the hands of the colored people who are actively engaged against us." Thus black leaders struggled to maintain their position among their people and continued preaching and practicing their own version of "Christianity." Methodists hoped the establishment of missions would fragment the influence of black teachers and thus foster the cause of "true" religion. A lengthy editorial was printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* in 1846 where the author discussed the "deplorable exhibition of pseudo religion" among slaves of the large plantations in coastal South Carolina:

> The superstitious notions prevalent here and there, are probably the reflects of—more ancient superstitions, handed down by tradition and propagated by so called *leaders*, who prior to the preaching of the gospel by . . . the missionaries . . . wielded a fearful amount of spiritual influence among their followers, and the negro communities of the plantations generally. And it is what with remarkable tenacity these superstitious actions still maintain their hold in spite of a better teaching. Instead of giving up their visionary religiónism, embracing the simple truth . . . our missionaries find them endeavoring to incorporate their

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superstitious rites with a purer system of instruction, producing thereby a hybrid, crude, and undefinable medley of truth and falsehood.[78]

Many missionaries saw slave children as the future of the enterprise. Others were even skeptical about that. According to one Methodist, "so far does prejudice extend, even the children on some of these places refuse to be instructed, because of the example of their parents and the older ones." Many Baptist planters left instruction of the young in the hands of plantation "help" who taught the children prayers and whatever else their religious instruction consisted of. Gradually, Methodists were forced to admit that despite their consistent though infrequent preaching and catechizing, they could not successfully compete with black leadership operating clandestinely or with the approval of Baptist churches and slaveholders.[79]

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The Episcopalian mission established in 1849 on the Sea Isalands took away the near monopoly that Methodist missionaries previously had among a number of Episcopalian planters. Episcopalian slaveholders observed the same uninterested attitude among the slaves as Methodists witnessed. John Edwin Fripp, a St. Helena Episcopalian, allowed his slaves to attend the preaching of a diocese missionary while Fripp himself was in residence on the plantation. But given a choice, few showed up to hear "Mr. Welch" when the minister was on the plantation. According to Fripp's Journal:

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> Sat. Dec. 19th—Rev. Welch is down tonight lecturing to the Negroes. Will go to Seabrooks in the Morning. The Negroes appear very backward in coming to hear him. They are getting tired of religion I expect.

No doubt "religion" was not what tired Fripp's slaves, but the dry "lecturing" which often characterized missionary sermons. Gullahs realized that planters were not truly concerned with their spiritual welfare and the they recognized the one-sidedness of their situation. An old coachman on the same Fripp plantation stated "massa been unjust to we. Take all we labor and get rich, then say we lazy, Can't care for we self, give us two suits a year, dat our wages."[80] No one need wonder about the degree of enthusiasm Gullahs had for the religious emissary of such masters.

Thus, a key to understanding the appeal of the Baptist faith for Gullahs lies in recognizing the slaves' rationale. Methodist emphasis on order and hierarchy left little room for internal flexibility in the denomina-

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tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation.

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently.

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175 177 701 the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]

Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the botton of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

•17 701 In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory, mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

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dition to Florida, one of the black preacher's exhortations was reportedly "worthy of a place in 'American Oratory.'" He urged the men to seek the post of danger and fight bravely. "He who is de fust man to get on de boat," he rallied, "and de fust to jump on shore, him, if he fall, will be de fust to get in heaben." Then, as if himself in the midst of battle, and aroused by the occasion, he added fervently:

> 'An' when do battle comes—when you see de Kunn'l put his shoulder to de wheel, and hear de shot and shell flying all around like de rain drops, den remember dat ebery one ob dose shot is a bolt of de Almighty God to send dem rebels to deir eberlasting damnation.[16]

Sacrifices for freedom were not only made by Gullah soldiers, for the war effort was a community enterprise. The men's absence from the plantations placed the burden of breadwinning solely on the women, who shouldered it admirably. Gullah men had at first objected to the women working in the fields because this labor had taken such a heavy toll on female health. But women insisted on working "fur pay," and did so "with a will," sometimes working two tasks in one day. Thus, while the men went off to fight or to work as laborers for the army, field work continued. Women, boys, and girls worked side by side, planting, hoeing, picking, sorting, ginning, and packing the cotton. They also raised vegetables and poultry for consumption and to sell. The women were ambitious and disciplined, laboring with "tireless energy" when working for themselves and their families. Sometimes they even managed to attend newly established schools in order to "catch a lesson." As a way of further supporting loved ones away with the regiment and the army, the women wrote letters. Many of the Northern women's "spare time" was spent writing words of love and encouragement dictated by the freedwomen.[17] It was a period of optimism, when social relations knitted over generations proved tenacious and steady. This was also a time when the faith of the bondspeople seemed to bear fruit.

The subject of freedom was often symbolically and thematically expressed in Gullah spirituals. While these "prayer songs" appear to be a portent of the future in a Christian context, they contain ambiguity that implies otherwise. Double meanings and surrogates abounded, and Gullah spirituals could often be interpreted in several ways. For example:

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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

175 533 771 When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the 175 song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder 701 we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that 533 it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of con- 175 descension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. 181 Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus 701 affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to 533 credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that 175 their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" 533 for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had devel- 186 oped over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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•17 567 793 794 they hoped, would encourage obedience, docility, humility, and a "turn-the-other-cheek" attitude. The elders' judgment was important to planters, who realized the influence these leaders exercised. Masters probably depended upon the reasoning power of elders, expecting them to use Christianity as a soothing influence in the slave quarters. Although law forbade black religious gatherings without three slaveholders being present, this edict was grossly violated in the Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, and black societies were rarely visited by whites supposedly superintending black worship.

17 567 793 Thus, black elders' duties of oversight, direction, watchcare, and advice were extensive. Since they ultimately had the last word on whether or not the "Christian" character of a "seeker" of religion warranted that individual's being accepted into "de Ark ob Safety," the supremacy of these leaders was considerable.[15] Yet black elders undoubtedly used their position of power with measure, fairness, and to benefit of the slave community, for they always maintained respect among the bondspeople. Their message was one of encouragement and their capacity to inspire moral confidence largely depended upon their verbal ability, gravity of deportment, and consistent record of honesty and correctness. As guardians of the community and articulators of group values, they may have counseled patience and been the main proponents of the Christian attitude of "resignation," which observers attributed to some Gullahs, as a form of protection. Above all, black elders were firm about depredations within the slave quarters, watching closely "to detect some delinquency" or "any shortcomings," yet ready to forgive an errant member.

> They visit, pray with and exhort the sick, rebuke the impenitent, counsel the weak, conduct social meetings for prayer, whenever such meetings are permitted by the proprietor of a plantation, and especially have vigilant watch over the young, striving to keep them in the path of rectitude.[16]

17 567 793 794 The other group of religious leaders, spiritual fathers and mothers, were not white-sanctioned leaders of the Praise House, but among the Gullahs they were recognized as legitimate and reportedly had "the most absolute authority over them." They were a continuous foil to Methodist missionaries and often disliked by planters because these religious leaders successfully incorporated non-Christian elements into white Protestantism. From this group came Praise House leaders and the "committee' that acted as the religious court. Thus on an individual plantation, the

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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175 113 [197] [177] 17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

[567] 20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–86; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

• 113 21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

175 113 23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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*ligion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), 39–41, 83–86; Little, *Mende*, 2, 217–18; W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 2–13, 119–20; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 22–24, 163–69; Folkways Research Series, *Traditional History of Folklore of the Globo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83, 123, and *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 21, 25, 27; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 156; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 6–7; Gamble, Wolof, 39; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols., (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 222, 226; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1958, repr. from 1807 ed.), 60–61; Karl Laman, *Kongo*, 5 vols. (Uppsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, 1962) III: 1–2, 53–63; Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), 244–45; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 72–76; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 4–5, 28–38, 159–62; Willie Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 52–56; Beryl L. Bellman, *Village of Curers and Assassins; on the Production of Fala Kpelle Cosmological Categories* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), 129–30; see also John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970). This author's approach seems more theological than anthropological or historical. African concepts of God are placed in Christian theological terms rather than discussed and interpreted in their own contextual environments. An older study is Edwin Smith, ed., *African Ideas of God* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1950). It provides the best information on concepts of God among various African peoples.

14. Jahn, *Muntu*, 109–14; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 167–69, 181; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 194–96; Little, *Mende*, 218–221; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18, 30–33; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 6–7; John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 34; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27–28, 42–47, 134, n. 50, and passim; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103–58; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 245–49.

15. Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 26; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 159–62; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 88–90; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 199; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 27, 29; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 153; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 59–60; Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God*, 153–64.

16. Laman, *Kongo*, III: 1–6, 216–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 43.

17. Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 76–82; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 26–27, 75–76; Harris & Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 216; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 35–39; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 11–12, Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 85–91.

18. Igor Kopytoff, "The Suku of Southwestern Congo," in James L. Gibbs Jr., ed.,

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•17 113 *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 450–52, 458; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Kongo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 84; Laman, *Kongo* II: 130–31; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 246–47.

19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

171 113 771 775 20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Mortuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

171 113 21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 80–84; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

[791] 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes; Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
112 Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of the difference between the two colonies.

[669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
567 Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical*
113 *Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 118.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

175 8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its
113 harshness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood; " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

17 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*
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*of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 176–77; Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons), 22–26, 41–57; James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783–1870* (New York: Delhousie University Press, 1976), 1–5, 10–12; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7, 12–13; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 19–26, 113–14; Kenneth Coleman, *The American Revolution in Georgia, 1763–1785* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1958), 121–29, 130–31, 144; *Papers of the Continental Congress*, Inspection Rolls of Negroes, Book I, April 23–September 13, 1783, Book II, September 22–November 19, 1783, passim. The name "Mellia Marrant" and her two children, listed as slaves of John Marrant, raises the question of whether these were the slaves of Whitefield convert John Marrant. Marrant was born in New York and there is no reason to believe that the family (apparently free) took the surname of a white South Carolinian. Mellia Marrant may be the sister or wife of John who was impressed into the British navy during the war and eventually went to England. His services to the British would enable his family to be given a certificate of freedom, and he related in his narrative that he had family in Nova Scotia. See William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785).

13. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), 325. For a view which argues that South Carolina blacks did not "take advantage of their owners' predicament during the Revolution," see Michael Mullin, "British Caribbean and North American Slaves in an Era of War and Revolution, 1775–1807," in Crow and Tise, *Southern Experience*, 235–36; this interpretation is also presented in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 108–9. For a discussion of the Afro-American family during the War for Independence, see Mary Beth Norton et al., "The Afro-American Family in the Age of Revolution," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 157–91. For a discussion of structural manifestations of autonomy in black life during the postwar period, see Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," 363–71.

14. Quarles, *Negro in The American Revolution*, 171–72; "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, a Black Preacher," *London Methodist Magazine*, 21 (1798–99) 105–110, 157–61, hereafter referred to as "Boston King Memoirs"; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks* 13, 30–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 5, 7.

15. "Boston King Memoirs"; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 31–34, 56–66.

16. "Boston King Memoirs"; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 10–12; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 156–57, 163–65, 171–77.

17. Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 16–21 and "Revolution in Black Life, 355; Oakes, *Ruling Race*, 28–29; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 61, 102–04, 124–26, 163–66, 171–77; Philip S. Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), 46; David Ramsey to Benjamin Rush, June 20, 1779, March 21, 1780, Rush Correspondence, Ramsey Letters, HSP; Wood, *Black Majority*, 124–30; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 6–10; Quoted from Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 31, 41–47. For works on black participation in the War for Independence, see Sidney Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1770–1800* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1973); Graham R. Hodges, "Black Revolt in New York City and the Neutral Zone, 1775–1783." Unpublished paper presented at the New-York Historical Society Conference on the Constitutional Era in New York, May 15, 1987.

18. Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 30–31, 35–41; Lofton, *Vary's Revolt*, 38–43, 51–55, 59–64; Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 29–

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•17 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10,
113 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

175 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöepf,
567 *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29, Avonor Samuel to William
113 Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahn, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP;
113 Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New
[567] York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel
[669] G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 64–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

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175 113 29. Ibid., 113–30.

30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

17 797 113 31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

175 113 32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

[797] 38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

175 39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

5 7 113 40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

[794] 42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

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51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

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54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88. 175 567 112

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21. 175 113

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchman Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21. 175 567 248 461 113

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73. 17

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal* 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27. 567 113 [248] [461]

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

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17 Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing
567 Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Ed-
113 dings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

[197] 48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

17 50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6;
113 ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

797 52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

793 53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

17 56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York:
113 Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*,
[797] February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Minions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

[797] 61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

17 64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare
797 Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who ar-
533 gues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on*
113 *St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

## 7. *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Woolard, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss , March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10, BC; see Appendix C.A Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 41, February 18, 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C,A see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839, 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A, [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Laburs*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Rambling of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, *140–58*; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1839, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerusulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[195] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field
[199] to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[193] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31,
[199] 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

17 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77;
113 James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### 8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to
175 be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn.,
113 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed.
199 Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Univer-
113 sities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought*
199 *from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau,
195 *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

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25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

## 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Ross B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 57, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977). 113

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5. 113 626 794

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70. 113 175

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22. [794] [512]

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592. [576]

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13. [431]

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acre*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

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15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

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19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

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23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

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24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Dewoin People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Gbeho Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* I (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

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forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

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Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

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In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

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### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

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The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.

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[For additional information on cultural trait distribution, see Category 17.]

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# *Foreword*

121 THE COASTAL REGION OF GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA is a fertile field for the study of old cultural heritages. Artists, poets, and novelists are not the only ones who have felt the allure of this region with its old plantations, its sleepy towns, its cypress swamps, its moss-hung trees, its ox carts, and its Negro peasantry. The works of C. C. Jones, Jr., John Bennett, Marcellus Whaley, Ambrose Gonzales, Reed Smith, Elsie C. Parsons, Ballanta-Taylor, T. J. Woofter, Jr., Guion G. Johnson, Guy B. Johnson, Robert Gordon, Lorenzo Turner, and others testify to the continuing interest of scholars in the history, folklore, folk music, and dialect of the Negro people of this region. These Negroes, more perhaps than any others in the United States, have lived in a physical and cultural isolation which is conducive to the survival of many old customs and thoughtways, both African and European. The present work represents an effort to go a bit deeper than any other work has done into certain aspects of the folk culture of these people in the coastal area. It is particularly welcome at this time, for it not only covers an area which has not received as much attention as have other areas, notably those around Charleston and Beaufort, but it is oriented toward the problem of African heritages in this country, a problem which is coming to be more and more important to the cultural anthropologist.

[171] Readers of *Drums and Shadows* will encounter much that is familiar, for many of the customs and beliefs found

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
•171 them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African
114 heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a
177 controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E. Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the
178 matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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# *Appendix*

171 1. *Burial at home*

a *Basden says of the Ibo:* "The desire of every Ibo man and woman is to die in their own town or, at least, to be buried within its precincts. For a long period it was very difficult to persuade a man to travel any distance from his native place, and if he were in need of medical assistance an Ibo would seldom agree to go from home in spite of assurances that he would be able to have better treatment elsewhere. In case of death occurring at a distance, if it can be done at all, the brethren will bring the body home for burial. It may be that this cannot be done for several days, according to distance and other circumstances."
*Among the Ibos of Nigeria, pp. 115–16.*

b *Bosman says of the Coast of Guinea:* "The Negroes are strangely fond of being buried in their own Country; so that if any Person dies out of it, they frequently bring his Corpse home to be buried, unless it be too far distant."
*Description of the Coast of Guinea, p. 232.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "When a man dies at a distance from his home his body is always taken back, when possible, to his home, wrapped up in mats covered by a cloth and placed on a bier or cradle, which is carried on the shoulders of his relatives. The reason assigned for this is that the dead must not be severed from the company of other ancestors—they should be buried close to their living descendants on whom they are dependent for nourishment. Moreover, it is important that the ritual traditional to the

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•171 kindred should be carried out accurately. This cannot be done by strangers."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 309.*

d *Nassau says of the Bihe country:* "It is considered essential that a man should die in his own country, if not in his own town. On the way to Bailundu, shortly after leaving Bihe territory, I met some men running at great speed, carrying a sick man tied to a pole, in order that he might die in his own country."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 228.*

2. *Burial of sections of body*

a *Burton says of Gelele:* "Amongst the Egbas and various tribes of the Congo family . . . , various small parts of the body are brought home to be reinterred."
*A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome,* II, *165.*

b *Ellis says of the Gold Coast:* "*Toh-fo,* 'one lost' is a ceremony held when a person has met with death, and the body has either been destroyed or cannot be found; for instance, when a man has been burned to death and the body reduced to ashes, or when one has been drowned and the body cannot be recovered. . . . In the case of a man destroyed by fire, some of the ashes of the burned body, or of the house in which it was consumed, are placed in the coffin with similar ceremonies.

"In this ceremony a fragment of the corpse is always interred if possible; and, if no portion of it can be found, some earth, water, or other substance from the locality in which the death occurred."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 223.*

3. *Burial of relatives and strangers*

a *Pearce says of West Africa:* "There is a strong feeling of kinship in Africa and only relatives may be buried in the same piece of ground together." (Interview with John Pearce of Hinesville, Ga., an ex-missionary in West Africa.)

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4. *Caul*

a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "A baby born with a caul has the power to see duppies without the duppies' harming him. Parkes was born with a caul and attributed his frequent visions of ghosts to this circumstance."
*Black Roadways, p. 57.*

b *Herskovits says:* "Born with a caul is significant in Dahomey, West Africa, Dutch Guiana, Jamaica, and probably everywhere among the New World Negroes."
From correspondence dated October 10, 1938.

c *Peterkin says:* "Animals have 'second sight' and can see spirits, but only people born with cauls over their faces have this keen vision."
*Roll, Jordan, Roll, p. 206.*

d *Beckwith says:* "The caul is also connected with sympathetic magic of a healing, rather than an injurious kind. It should be removed and carefully parched over a hot brick and a bit put into the baby's tea to prevent convulsions due to the irritation of a ghost."
*Black Roadways, p. 57.*

e *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "A child born with a caul is believed to be strong in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 95.*

f *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A child born with a caul—'with a veil over its face'—who follows the first child after twins, is called, if a boy Wusŭ, if a girl Wúmé. The child born after such a one is called Wûsâ or Wuhwê, according to sex. If the child with the caul does not follow the first child born after twins, then the names given are Kesŭ or Kesî; the child who follows one of these is called Kesâ, if a boy. No special name is given a girl born immediately after a child with a caul."
*Dahomey, 1, 264.*

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•171 5. *Charms, made of animals, insects*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Thus from the earth, from trees and shrubs, from rocks, and from the bodies of animals and humans the Dahomean obtains materials for his *gbõ*, while from the *Axizẽ* and other spirits of the forest, from Legbá, the Fá Group, Dą, and the Great Gods, he obtained knowledge of how to endow them with effective power."
*Dahomey*, II, *287*.

b *Leonard says of West Africa:* "These are procured from or made with the spines of certain animals, porcupines more especially, compounded with potash, iron filings, and other inorganic matters, which are reduced to a powder. In this form they are supposed to be communicated invisibly with such celerity and exactness against a person, that blood poisoning supervenes."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 500.*

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro: Fiofio*, as envisaged in this belief, is the name of an insect and also of a spirit which, taking the shape of this insect, enters human bodies, causing illness and sometimes death. It comes as a result of family quarrelling which does not end in reconciliation. Strictly speaking, it is the extending of gestures of friendship or intimacy at a later date, when the bitterness of the quarrel has either passed or is masked, which brings on the illness. Such gestures of intimacy or friendship include accepting food that is offered, or a caress, or borrowing some kind of wearing apparel, or asking and receiving any other favor, and the resulting illness comes to either one or both of the persons who had participated in the quarrel."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 53.*

6. *Charms, counter*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "The power of 'medicine' (*ogun*) exercised through a certain channel may be neutralised or overcome by a superior power of *ogun* through another channel. Van Gennep tells us that in Madagascar

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171 *fady* (the local name for 'taboo') may be broken by one who has a higher power known as *hasina*. So in Yoruba, a stronger 'medicine' is employed to overcome, or counteract, an evil one, or a curse incurred through a broken *ewo* ('taboo'). This is the explanation of the use of 'charms,' whether material (as amulets), vocal, or actionary. It is the invocation of a higher power, or a fuller measure of the same power."
*Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 121.*

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Súkpíkpâ, *brings danger to another.* a. This *gbŏ* is essentially a 'counter' against sorcery. Actually, it demonstrates the principle which will be developed at greater length in the succeeding pages, that the line between good magic and bad magic is difficult to determine, since evil can be done by a charm otherwise good, if it is directed toward an evil end, and good by an evil charm, if properly handled. This *gbŏ* is called *agbǵngba* 'outside'—and consists of a piece of wood first split in two, and then, after the ingredients are placed between the pieces, tied together with cord and fastened by passing the end through, and tying but not knotting it. One end is colored green. If a man who is strong in magic power is angry with the owner, and it is deemed likely that an attempt may be made to kill him with magic, the owner takes this charm, inserts it in the ground near his house, puts a stone on top of it and the evil magic is thereby not only prevented from becoming effective, but any evil attempted will rebound on him who has sent it."
*Dahomey*, II, *269.*

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of Dahomey:* "No matter how strong the magic, somewhere there is stronger magic which not only can overcome it, but may, in certain cases, turn back its effect on the person who invoked the original magic. This is true not only of evil charms, but of protective ones as well. Thus, we have in lengthy detail, information concerning a charm which a man buries in his field to protect it. Against this there is an evil 'counter'

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•171 which will not only allow its user to steal from the field, but brings evil on the rightful owner. Against this bad magic there is, in turn, an elaborate 'counter-counter,' which brings the thief to book."
*An Outline of Dahomean Religious Belief, p. 65.*

7. *Charms, foot-track*

a *Puckett says of the Gold Coast:* "On the Gold Coast it is believed that a man may be harmed by a 'medicine' made from the dust picked up from his foot-tracks. . . ."
*Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 220.*

8. *Charms, general*

a *Brown says of the Bantu tribes:* "As the Bechuana believe that no misfortune befalls one naturally, but is always the effect of malevolence on the part of the living or the dead, so they also strongly believe that good fortune can only be maintained by means of charms."
*Among the Bantu Nomads, p. 137.*

b *Ellis says of the Ewe of West Africa:* "Magic powders are very numerous. One kind, when blown against a door or window, causes it to fly open, no matter how securely it may be fastened; another, when thrown upon the footprints of an enemy, makes him mad; a third, used in the same way, neutralizes the evil effects of the second; and a fourth destroys the sight of all who look upon it.

"Magic unguents (iro) are not uncommon. They and the powders are obtained from the priests, and must be rubbed on the body of the person who is to be influenced by them. Some are believed to compel a man to lend money, but their more common property is to constrain the unwilling fair to listen favourably to the amorous proposal."
*The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 94.*

c *Herskovits says:* "In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 31.*

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•171 d *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Magic charms form another type of personal property. As has been noted, these charms, which include herbs and other medicines, are held by tradition to have been revealed chiefly to hunters in the bush. When a hunter had learned how to make a given charm, or had been taught how to use a certain leaf to cure some disease, this knowledge was then his property and had salable value. When he was sought out for a charm to achieve a specific purpose—to protect a man on a journey, or to make of him a successful trader, or to insure the death of an enemy—if the hunter detailed the contents of the charm, how to put the ingredients together, the situation in which it would become effective and any formulae necessary to set it in operation, this knowledge then became the property of the purchaser as well as the vender. . . . To the professional dealers in charms, then, these comprise a stock in trade that is their property and potential wealth; for others, while the charms they own are property, they do not represent a source of income."
*Dahomey*, I, *81–82*.

e *Kingsley says of West Africa:* "Charms are made for every occupation and desire in life—loving, hating, buying, selling, fishing, planting, travelling, hunting, etc."
*Travels in West Africa, p. 448.*

f *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "That is, people are spoken of as 'buying luck' or 'wearing luck,' and comments are heard about the importance of carrying one's 'luck' when walking alone at night, when going on a journey, when wooing a woman, or seeking work, or combating the effect of black magic."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 99.*

g *Nassau says of the Gabun territory:* "For every human passion or desire of every part of our nature, for our thousand necessities or wishes, a fetich can be made, its operations being directed to the attainment of one specified wish, and limited in power only by the possible existence of some more powerful antagonizing spirits."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 85.*

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h *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "Ibokk are, for the most part, made for defensive purposes, for protection against ill-wishers or evil messengers, but are sometimes procured from 'doctors' to harm an enemy."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 21.*

i "There is what may be termed a 'white art' as well as a 'black art,' and the great majority of fetiches and charms are intended to *protect* from evil, and not to *attack* innocent folk."
*The Geographical Journal*, XXXI, *607.*

9. *Charms, graveyard dirt*

a *Pearce says of West Africa:* "Juju bags containing graveyard dirt and other material which had had a spell put upon it by juju are effective for either good or evil purposes. A bag of this sort worn around the neck, as a Catholic wears a scapula, serves as a protection from the spells of enemies. However, if a man wishes to work evil on his enemy, he may purchase a juju bag containing evil powder, and through it cast a spell on his enemy."
(Interview)

10. *Charms, hair and nails*

a *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "Hence it is usual for pieces of hair and nails to be carefully buried or burned, in order that they may not fall into the hands of sorcerers; and whenever a king or chief expectorates, the saliva is carefully gathered up and hidden or buried."
*The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 99.*

b *Meek says of the Jukun:* "Sorcerers also capture and injure or kill souls in a variety of ways, notably by acting on the hair, nail-parings or excreta of a person, the soul substance being regarded as immanent in these. If a person wishes to injure another he has merely to obtain a piece of his enemy's nails and hand them to a sorcerer, who, if he knows his work, will speedily cause the death of the former owner of the nail-parings. For this reason a Jukun always

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• 171 hides or buries his hair and nail cuttings. Some Jukun burn these, but others would refrain from doing this on the ground that the burning would cause a scorching of his soul."

*A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 298.*

c *Milligan says of the Mpongwe:* "The parings of finger-nails, the hair of the victim and such things are powerful ingredients in these 'medicines.' An Mpongwe, after having his hair cut, gathers up every hair most carefully and burns it lest an enemy should secure it and use it to his injury. When sickness continues for a length of time they usually conclude that some offended relation has caused an evil spirit to abide in the town."

*The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 39.*

d *Nassau says of the Bantu:* "So fearful are natives of power being thus obtained over them, that they have their hair cut only by a friend; and even then they carefully burn it or cast it into a river."

*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.*

e *Nassau says of the Benga, the Mpongwe, and the Fang:* "If it be desired to obtain power over some one else, the oganga must be given by the applicant, to be mixed in the sacred compound, either crumbs from the food, or clippings of finger nails or hair, or (most powerful!) even a drop of blood of the person over whom influence is sought. These represent the life or body of that person."

*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.*

f *Nassau says of the Banita region:* "Sitting one day by a village boat-landing in the Banita region, about 1866, while my crew prepared for our journey, I was idly plucking at my beard, and carelessly flung away a few hairs. Presently I observed that some children gathered them up. Asking my Christian assistant what that meant, he told me: 'They will have a fetich made with those hairs; when next you visit this village, they will ask you for some favor, and you will grant it, by the power they will thus have over you."

*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 83.*

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17 in Ewe the word *vɔ̃-sesa* (amulet) is derived from *vɔ̃* and *sa*, to tie or bind."

171 *The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.*

c *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "Charms and amulets of various kinds are greatly used by the Yorubas. The Bale, or head-chief, of Ogbomosho, being of a particularly nervous and superstitious nature, had not only a number of tutelary gods guarding the threshold of his dwelling, but had laid in the ground, from one side of his compound to the other, chains and other charms to render each person who approached him powerless to do any evil. Charms for the protection of property are fastened to the houses, etc. They may consist of sticks, stumps of trees, etc."
*Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 123.*

d *Beckwith says:* "Other acts are to be avoided lest they pay the penalty of death to the immediate family. Never add to a house or cut down an old tree."
*Black Roadways, p. 87.*

12. *Charms, medicinal*

a *Delafosse says of the African in general:* "Belief . . . in the power of amulets and talismans is legendary among the Negroes. There is not one of them, whatever his religion, who does not wear on his body several 'gris-gris,' of which one is to preserve him from such and such a malady, a second from the evil eye."
*Negroes of Africa, pp. 236–37.*

b *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "Another word sometimes used to express amulet is *ogun*, which, however, more properly means medicinal preparation, poison, or magical drug."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 118.*

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "We had not been long in her hut before we noticed the iron arm-band she wore. It was, we knew, a '*tapu*'—a magical preventive which, in this instance,

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warned its wearer of danger, and kept her from harm in a combat."
*Rebel Destiny, p. 288.*

d "Obia, then, is the spirit; obia is the preventive and curing agent; obias are the charms that are worn by people to help them."
*Rebel Destiny, p. 321.*

13. *Chicken and cock superstitions*

a *Herskovits says:* "Frizzled chickens are prized both in Africa and in the New World for their ability to find and scratch up evil magic buried against the owner."
From correspondence dated October 10, 1938.

b *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "A cock crowing at midnight or long before dawn is immediately killed, as it is considered unlucky."
*Ashanti Proverbs,* p. 80.

14. *Cicatrization*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Another form which these positive injunctions take has to do with facial cuts, which vary from sib to sib. Thus the Adjalénû make no cuts at all. The Hwedánu who live in Whydah, make two cuts on each cheek. The Agblomenu, who are considered a group of autochthonous inhabitants of the plateau of Abomey, make three cuts on each side of the face, one on the temple called *àdjàkàsí* (tail of a rat), and two on the cheek, both in front of the ear. The Gedevi, another aboriginal group near Abomey, distinguish themselves by means of three cuts on each temple. At the present time all Dahomeans are supposed to have three cuts on the temple, though the Agblomenu have suppressed the two of these three and only cut the 'rat's tail.' "
*Dahomey,* I, *162.*

b "Twelve sets of cuts constitute a complete cicatrization."
*Dahomey,* I, *292.*

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c "The last design is placed between the breasts, and often takes the form of a series of links or of straight lines radiating from a central point."
*Dahomey*, I, *295*.

d *Livingstone says of South Africa:* "They mark themselves by a line of little raised cicatrices, each of which is a quarter of an inch long; they extend from the tip of the nose to the root of the hair on the forehead."
*Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, p. 576.*

15. *Conjure, illness and death*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "They consequently attribute sickness and death, other than death resulting from injury or violence, to persons who have for bad purposes enlisted the services of evil spirits, that is to say, to wizards and witches."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 117.*

b *Meek says of the Jukun:* "Sudden deaths, especially of young people, are usually regarded as the work of sorcerers (*ba-shiko* or *ba-shibu*). If the deceased had been noted for his disrespect to his seniors his death would be ascribed to offended ancestors, and he would go to his grave with 'bloodshot eyes'; but otherwise it is thought that one who had died suddenly had met his death by the foul means of witchcraft and would take vengeance in his own time."
*A Sudanese Kingdom, pp. 223–24.*

c *Milligan says of a Mpongwe tribe:* "Sickness and death, they believe, may be caused by fetish medicine, which need not be administered to the victim, but is usually laid beside the path where he is about to pass."
*The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 39.*

d *Nassau says of West Africa:* "'According to native ideas, all over Africa, such a thing as death from natural causes does not exist. Whatever ill befalls a man or a family, it is always the result of witchcraft, and in every

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case the witch-doctors are consulted to find out who has been guilty of it.' "
*Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 117.

e *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "When a man falls sick because his soul has gone forth and is being detained by an enemy, or when he believes that such an one is trying to entice it from out his body, he, in turn, goes to a Juju man known to have the power of seeing clearly."
*Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 121.

f *Talbot says of the Yoruba:* "The Yoruba, like all other tribes here, considered that a large number of deaths was due to witchcraft or ill-will on the part of some enemy, and when many people died of famine or sickness, a general meeting was held and resort had to divination to find out the guilty persons, who were at once killed or offered in sacrifice to one of the Orisha."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, III, 474–75.

16. *"Daddy"*

a *Hutchinson says of the Ethiopian:* "The appellative 'Daddy' is used by the Africans as expressive of their respect as well as confidence."
*Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians*, p. 22.

17. *Dances, buzzard lope, etc.*

a *Cuney-Hare says of the Bushman:* "They possess a variety of dances pertaining to social customs, each of which has its appropriate chant. One dance imitates the actions of different animals."
*Negro Musicians and Their Music*, pp. 10–12.

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "Those who danced for the buzzard had no machetes, but went about in a circle, moving with bodies bent forward from their waists and with arms thrown back in imitation of the bird from which their spirit took its name."
*Rebel Destiny*, p. 330.

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c "Bush and town invoke the buzzard, *Opete*, so named in Ashanti, and sacred everywhere in West Africa. . . ."
*Rebel Destiny*, Preface, X.

d "The men were dancing to the great Kromanti spirits; the tiger-jaguar—and the buzzard, two of the three forms which the dreaded Kromanti *obia* can take. 'Obia! Huh! Huh!' one ejaculated, imitating the tiger, as his dancing became wilder and wilder."
*Rebel Destiny*, p. 17.

18. *Dances, funerals*

a *Moore says of a Mandingo funeral:* "They begin with Crying, and at Night they go to Singing and Dancing, and continue so doing till the Time they break up and depart."
*Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa*, p. 130.

b *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "People from a far place who were related to the deceased and people from towns near by, also form their own companies. They dance the war-dances in the morning, and at 'the mouth' of evening, when the sun is slanting, they circle the grave. It is now that the corpse is taken to the grave."
*The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, p. 194.

19. *Dances, religious significance*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Dancing in Africa invariably has a religious significance."
*Religion and Art in Ashanti*, p. 184.

b *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "Among Nigerians, however, it would appear that the god was not evolved out of the dance, but was there first and the dance was developed as a method of worship, of attaining union with him, and of exerting an influence with *his help* on the fertility of men and of crops."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, III, 803.

20. *Day names*

a *Beckwith says of Jamaica:* "According to an old custom recorded from the African Gold Coast, every child receives

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at birth a name depending on the day of the week on which it is born.

*Friday* Cuffee (Coo-fee)"

*Black Roadways, p. 59.*

b *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "Every child, from the moment of birth, is given a name which is derived from the day of the week on which it is born."

*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of West Africa, p. 219.*

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "As soon as it is born, all the old women shout, 'Hail so-and-so,' at once naming the infant after that particular day of the week upon which it is born. This name, which is sometimes called 'God's name,' will ever after be the child's natal day name. To this, as will be noted presently, will later be added a patronymic, and possibly later on in life one or more 'strong names' (*mmerane*)."

*Religion and Art in Ashanti, pp. 56–57.*

## 21. *Days, lucky and unlucky*

a *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "There are national and tribal lucky and unlucky days, and individuals also have days which they consider lucky and unlucky for themselves. Kwoffi Karikari considered Thursday an unlucky day, and would never commence any undertaking on a Thursday. Kidjo Monday, which falls early in February, is considered by the Ashantis the luckiest day of the year. Their most unlucky day is the anniversary of the Saturday on which Osai Tutu was slain in an ambush near Acromanti in 1731."

*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 220.*

## 22. *Diviners, Divining, Seed Casting, Etc.*

a *Delafosse says:* "Numerous fortune-tellers predict the future and reveal hidden things, by means of processes,

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•171 many of which strangely resemble those which our own clairvoyants employ."
*Negroes of Africa*, p. 237.

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A third type, called *agɔ̃kwika*, employed two magically treated *agó* seeds tied to the ends of a cord long enough to go about the neck of the accused, and the seeds were buried lightly in the ground. Such was the spiritual power in these seeds, that if the accused was guilty of the crime, he could not remove them from the ground; if he succeeded in rising, he was declared innocent."
*Dahomey*, II, 18.

c "In this myth, not only is the explanation found of how the prevalent system of divination came to man, but the principal outlines of the practices which characterize the Fá cult are to be discerned—that is, the sixteen palm-kernels employed in throwing the lots, the sixteen combinations in which they may fall, and which foretell the future. . . ."
*Dahomey*, II, 206.

d "The details of this system by means of which the future is foretold may now be considered. In essence, Fá is based on the interpretation, by reference to appropriate myths, of the permutations and combinations obtained by the diviner when he manipulates the sixteen palm-kernels he employs for this purpose. Before him as he works lies a rectangular wooden tray, on which powdered white clay or meal has been sprinkled. In one hand he holds his sixteen palm-kernels, and with great rapidity brings the hand which holds them into the palm of the other one, leaving either one or two seeds for an instant before they are once more picked up and the process is repeated. As soon as he has glimpsed the one or two kernels in his left hand, the right, with the palm-kernels, closes down upon it and the two clasp the seeds. The index and second fingers of the right hand are, however, left free and with these he describes

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marks in the white powder on the board in front of him. Moving his fingers away from him, he makes a double line for each single kernel, a single line if two seeds are left. The process is repeated eight times for a complete reading."
*Dahomey*, II, *209–10*.

e *Rattray says of the Ashanti:* "The soothsayer, oracle man, or diviner, as will be seen presently, takes a leading part in the everyday life of these people. He is consulted on almost every conceivable occasion. Hardly anything can be done until he has been asked. He is really a *medium*, a 'go-between' in the land of the living and the world of spirit ancestors. The root of the word used to describe this person is generally the same as that found in the word for shrine. The people consult him at some shrine, the spirit in which guides him and directs his answers."
*The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, I, *44*.

23. *Drums*

a *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro:*

"Drums are the most important instruments in both Town and Bush, and the drummers, in these as in all Negro cultures, achieve a virtuosity of performance and an intricacy of rhythm that come of long practice. It was impossible to obtain satisfactory recordings of drumming which would reveal the complexity of these rhythm-patterns, chiefly because, lacking electrical recording apparatus, the inner rhythms which in combination give a steady beat are lost, and only the points where the notes of the several instruments coincide can be discerned.

"The drums have more than a musical significance in this culture. Tradition assigns to them the threefold power of summoning the gods and the spirits of the ancestors to appear, of articulating the messages of these supernatural beings when they arrive, and of sending them back to their habitats at the end of each ceremony. Both in Town and in

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•171 the Bush, the dancers who are the worshippers,—one of the most important expressions of worship is dancing—face the drums and dance toward them, in recognition of the voice of the god within the instruments."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 520–21.*

b *Milligan says of the West African:* "The fact is, however, that the only one of his musical instruments which the African regards with profound respect is his dearly beloved *tom-tom*—the drum to which he dances."
*The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 77.*

24. *Drums, funeral*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Outside the house the funerary zǫ̨li, a pottery drum, is played day and night. The drummers are the members of the *dókpwê* of the quarter where the dead man lived, or if he was a villager, of his village, and it is the head of this *dókpwê* who is the commanding *dókpwégâ* at the funeral."
*Dahomey, I, 355.*

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "That night whenever we stirred in our sleep we strained for the sound of the drums, but the wind blew from the east, and though Gankwe, where the dead man lay in state, was but a ten-minute run down the rapids, we could hear nothing. In the morning, however, we heard them plainly, heard the invocations drummed by the grave diggers on their way to the burial ground deep in the bush on the opposite bank."
*Rebel Destiny, p. 3.*

c *Livingstone says of South Africa:* "Drums were beating over the body of a man who had died the preceding day, and some women were making a clamorous wail at the door of his hut, and addressing the deceased as if alive. The drums continued beating the whole night, with as much regularity as a steam-engine thumps, on board ship."
*Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa, p. 467.*

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17 een inches high and twelve inches in diameter, and which does not have a foot, is used in the Sagbatá rites. The other more conventional drums range from two feet in size to a length of five feet and more."
*Dahomey*, II, *318*.

•171 e *Moore says of the Mandingo:* ". . . with him came two or three Women, and the same Number of Mundingo Drums, which are about a Yard long, and a Foot, or twenty Inches diameter at the Top, but less at the Bottom, made out of a solid Piece of Wood, and covered, only at the widest End, with the Skin of a Kid. They beat upon them with only one Stick, and their left Hand, to which the Women will dance very briskly."
*Travels Into the Inland Parts of Africa, p. 64.*

f *Ward says of the Bakongo country:* "The natives were drumming on a goat-skin stretched tightly across the mouth of a hollowed-out log, and dancing round a fire lighted in their midst, one man singing a refrain, while others took up the chorus; and the mingled sound of the voices and the distant beating of other drums in neighboring villages helped to keep me awake."
*Five Years with the Congo Cannibals, p. 68.*

g *Beckwith says:* "The beating of the gombay drum is a familiar accompaniment of death."
*Black Roadways, p. 83.*

26. *Drum Messages*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "A great deal is heard in Africa about the wonderful way in which news can be passed on over great distances in an incredibly short space of time. It has been reported that the news of the fall of Khartum was known among the natives of Sierra Leone the same day, and other equally wonderful instances are quoted to show that the native has some extraordinary rapid means of communicating important events. It must, however, be remembered that most of the instances that one hears quoted are incapable of verification, and would, moreover, probably be found

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to have been much exaggerated. Having said this much, however, it must be admitted that these natives have a means of intercommunication which often inspires wonder and curiosity on the part of Europeans. One of such means of communication is by drumming.

"This idea the European will readily grasp, and being familiar with various means of *signalling*, will suppose that some such a method might be adapted to drums; but among the Ashantis the drum is not used as a means of *signalling* in the sense that we would infer, that is by rapping out words by means of a prearranged code, but (to the native mind) is used to sound or speak the actual words."
*Ashanti Proverbs, pp. 133–34.*

b "I first became interested in this difficult subject many years ago. At that time it was generally known that the Ashanti, in common with certain other West Coast peoples, were able to convey messages over great distances and in an incredibly short space of time by means of drums, and it was thought that their system was based upon some such method as that with which Europeans are familiar in the Morse code."
*Ashanti, p. 242.*

27. *Earrings*

a *Beckwith says of the Jamaica Negro:* "Parkes says that men who 'deal in spirits' wear a red flannel shirt, or a cross-piece of red under their ordinary clothes, and generally gold earrings. Not all men who wear earrings are Obeah Men; fishermen, for example, generally wear one earring. The gold is said to 'brighten their eyes to see ghosts,' but also a gold earring is put on to improve the natural sight."
*Black Roadways, p. 108.*

28. *Earth thrown in grave*

a *Brown says of the Bantu Nomad, (the Bechuana):* "A pit is dug and into it the body is lowered in the sitting position. The grave is then filled in, each person present slowly

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pouring earth onto the body and around it with their hands until the grave is full."
*Among the Bantu Nomads, p. 67.*

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Loose earth is then thrown in on the body, together with the mat and cloth. Even very young sons must throw in a little earth, as evidence that they had taken a share in their father's burial rites. The last handfuls are thrown in with the back turned to the grave, as a sign that they had finished with the dead man."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 307–08.*

29. *Echo of speech*

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, '*Grâce* [et] mise'corde,' and the family murmured it in response."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 161.*

30. *Farewell to corpse (spoken to)*

a *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "Now the ceremony was drawing to a close, and the leave takings were to be said. . . . Distinctly the low voice of Sedefo came to us as he addressed the corpse:

> *'The hour has come when we must part from you. What the Earth has decreed we cannot help. We have done for you what we could. We have given you a funeral worthy of you. You must care for us, and you must deliver us from all evil that may come upon us.'"*

*Rebel Destiny, p. 18.*

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171 31. *Farewell to corpse (touched)*

a *Pearce says of the Gold Coast of West Africa:* "The mourners sit around the body with their hands upon it, and chant a farewell dirge."

32. *Fig, sacred*

a *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The chief here—in answer to my question—said that the fig tree was a famous sanctuary, and that any one sentenced to death who escaped there would be safe."
*Ashanti, pp. 128–29.*

33. *Folk Tales*

a *Rattray says of Hausa folk tales:* "Stories and traditions collected through the medium of an interpreter are amusing, and might prove of interest in the nursery, though much would have to be omitted or toned down, as savage folk-lore is often coarse and vulgar according to our notions."
*Hausa Folk-Lore Customs, Proverbs, Etc.,* I, *Author's Note,* XI.

34. *Forest-dwelling forces*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "Certain trees are particularly sacred. The silk-cotton tree (Yoruba *peregun*) is highly venerated throughout West Africa 'from the Senegal to the Niger,' probably because of its majestic appearance, for it is of little utility, the timber being soft, and its cotton possessing neither strength nor durability. This tree often grows to a stupendous height, approximating 300 feet, far out-topping all other trees of the forest."
*Faith, Fancies and Fetich, p. 16.*

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "The psychological liaison between the gods and magic, however, is revealed in the character of the semi-divine spirits who are believed to people the forest—Mínonâ, Hoho, the *abikŭ* and the *aziza*."
*Dahomey,* II, *260.*

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•171 c *Kingsley says of the Bantu tribes:* "In some part of the long single street of most villages there is built a low hut in which charms are hung, and by which grows a consecrated plant, a lily, a euphorbia, or a fig."
*Travels in West Africa, p. 452.*

d *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "Groves and woods, and those portions of the bush close to every town which are reserved as burial-grounds, are considered sacred and worship is paid to either the spirits or the deities who inhabit or preside over them."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 298.*

35. *Fowl, sacrifice of*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "After this invitation to be gone, the fowl, called *adire-iranna*, is sacrificed, which, besides securing a right-of-way for the soul, is supposed also to guide it. The feathers of the fowl are scattered around the house, and the bird itself carried out to a bush-road, where it is cooked and eaten."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 160.*

b *Leyden says of the Mandingo territory:* "The journey was marked by nothing remarkable, except the sacrifice of a white chicken, which was offered by Johnson, the interpreter, to the spirits of the woods, described as a powerful race of white beings, with long flowing hair."
*Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa, I, 339.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The next rite is known as Ekuibu-ocha, a phrase which seems to mean 'Making the face (of the dead man) white (*i.e.* radiant).' Women of the deceased's family bring a cock fastened to a string of cowries and one of the women who is considered especially lucky (*e.g.* whose children are all alive), or some person previously indicated by the deceased, holds or hangs the cock over the dead man's head. When the cock shakes its wings (a sign of acceptance by the deceased), it is taken out and hung at

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the door of the hut or on a branch of an *oterre* tree in the compound. After a while it is taken down and its neck is drawn, the blood being allowed to drip on to the ground at the threshold. The fowl is then cooked and eaten by the female relatives. The intention in leaving the fowl hung up is, apparently, to give the deceased time to see and receive the offering."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 303–04.*

d *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The eldest son supplies a sheep and a fowl which are killed in the yard of the compound (*dundon*) and grain-food is prepared which is called *sanfana* (in Dagomba, *sore segam*, literally 'food for the road'). The sextons and others attending the funeral partake of this food, and a portion of the grain-food and a leg of the fowl are also placed in a calabash which is set down in the room where the corpse had been laid prior to interment."
*The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, II, *460–61.*

36. *Funeral, proper observance*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "It is considered the greatest disgrace to a family not to be able to hold the proper ceremonies at the death of one of their number, a notion which is comprehensible when we remember how much the welfare of the soul of the deceased is supposed to depend upon their performance. Hence families not unfrequently reduce themselves almost to beggary in order to carry them out, or pawn or sell their children to raise the money necessary."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 161.*

b *Leonard says of the Ibo:* "All Ibo place great faith in the due and proper observance of the funeral ceremony, for they are of the opinion that it enables the soul to go to God and to find its final destination, and that without this sacred rite the soul is prevented by the other spirits from eating, or in any way associating with them, and in this manner, from entering into the Creator's presence. So in this way it becomes an outcast and a wanderer on the face of the earth,

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haunting houses and frequently burial grounds, or is forced perhaps to return to this world in the form or body of some animal."

*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 142.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The spirit of a dead Ibo is considered to hover round his home, or wander aimlessly in the underworld, until the final funeral rites have been performed."

*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 314.*

d *Milligan says of the Mpongwe of Gaboon:* "The spirit of the deceased knows all that is going on and is supposed to be very sensitive in regard to the amount of mourning and the details of the funeral."

*The Fetish Folk of West Africa, p. 148.*

37. *Funerals, wakes—importance, social activity*

a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "A death-watch is now provided to see to it that the body is not left unattended. This watch is kept with rigid care, especially when the body is in the hands of the members of the *dókpwê* who actually carry out the ritual of the funeral. This is because of the opportunity a corpse affords anyone who is desirous of obtaining the means for working magic by capturing the soul of the deceased, since a bit of the dead man's cloth, or, better still, some of his hair or nail-parings might easily be taken and used to this end. Furthermore, with such material, or with a cloth placed inside the mouth of the corpse to absorb some of the moisture remaining there, charms of great power and therefore great value could be made."

*Dahomey, I, 353.*

b *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "Although the death of a man is in reality a great loss to his household or even to the community, the occasion of his obsequies is regarded as an event of great entertainment to the community at large. It is looked upon as a circumstance in which the family honour is concerned in a distinctly two fold sense, affecting its reputation in this world as well as in the next.

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For the reception of the soul of the deceased in spiritland and his final prestige are altogether dependent on the grandeur and liberality of the human entertainment."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 157–58.*

c *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "A wake invariably takes place, the duration and grandeur of which depend upon the wealth of the family. Animals—including cows if these can be afforded—are slain in profusion, while palm wine and gin are provided in plenty, and in old days, rum. Cannons and guns are fired off to give notice to the ghosts that a 'big man' is coming, and plays are performed by the clubs and societies of which the deceased was a member. In fact, funerals provide the best opportunity for festivals, 'plays,' dances and performances in general."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, III, *473.*

## 88. *Harvest festivals*

a *Ellis says of the Tshi-Speaking native:* "Yam, or Harvest Festivals.—These appear to be festivals held for the purpose of returning thanks to the gods for having protected the crop. There are apparently two; one held in September, when the yam crop is ripe, and another, called *Ojirrah*, in December, when it is planted. A minor festival, called *Affi-neh-dzea-fi*, which is held in April, appears, however, to be of the same nature. The September festival lasts a fortnight, and is commenced by a loud beating of drums. It is called by the Ashantis *Appatram*, and no new yam may be eaten by the people till the close of the festival."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 229.*

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Public sacrifice to Ala may be offered periodically at the beginning of the agricultural season, before clearing new land, or after clearing old, before planting yams, or at the end of the yam harvest.
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 26.*

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•171 c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "There appear to be at least three great festivals which are held by the Talense in connexion with the crops and harvest."
*The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, II, *358–59.*

d *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "At the time of new yam planting, people came from far and near to beg protection and increase for their crops and herds. On such occasions the brow of the chief priest is bound with a fillet of white cloth, which may not be taken off till the time of sacrifice comes round again. He marks all the people with white chalk, as a sign that they have attended the festival and asked the blessing of the genius of the pool."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 38.*

17 39. *Hoe, magic*

a *Rattray repeats a Hausa folk tale:* "When he struck one blow on the ground with the hoe, then he climbed on the hoe and sat down, and the hoe started to hoe, and fairly flew until it had done as much as the hoers. It passed them, and reached the boundary of the furrow."
*Hausa Folk-Lore Customs, Proverbs, Etc.*, I, *74–76.*

b *Rattray tells an Ashanti folk tale:* "The Hoe turned over a huge tract (of land). Then they stopped work and went off, and the Porcupine took the hoe and hid it. And Kwaku, the Spider, saw (where he put it). He said, 'This hoe that I have seen, to-morrow very, very early I shall come and take it to do my work.' Truly, very, very, very early, the Spider went and got it; he took to his farm. Now, the Spider did not know how to make it stop, and he raised his song:

'Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa.
Gyensaworowa, Kotoko, saworowa,
Gyensaworowa.'

And the Hoe, when it commenced hoeing, continued hoeing. And it hoed until it came too far away. Now it reached the Sea-god's water. Thence it came to the Land of White-men-far, and the White men took it, and looked at it, and made

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17 does not depend, as that of much other sculpture does, on elaborate superficial decoration scratched upon a weak and vaguely realized mass. There is rarely a sense of overdecoration or pretense, a feeling of inner rottenness, as though, one could squash the whole fabric between the hands, or scrape off its ornaments at a stroke. Surface decorations there may be in profusion, but they are based upon a firm foundation and integrated with it, to form an unyielding and immovable structure."

•171 *Primitive Negro Sculpture, p. 37.*

e *Kingsley says of the West African:* "He cuts from a tree a moderately thick branch which he carves into a rude resemblance of the human figure; usually these figures are simply cylindrical pieces of wood, from ten to fourteen inches in length and from three to four in diameter. Two or three inches from one end, which may be called the top, the stick is notched so as to roughly resemble a neck, and the top is then rounded to bear some rough distant resemblance to a head."

*Travels in West Africa, p. 510.*

f *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "It is quite impossible to understand the spiritual conception and the god-idea of these natives unless we possess a knowledge of that peculiarly personal system of society out of which it has evolved and developed; and we recognise that the gods are but the shadows or spirits, so called, of mortals. They are rude but perfect pictures of the very worshippers in whose own human image they have been either kneaded out of clay or carved out of wood."

*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 433.*

g "Not so the barbarian, however. With him the Ju-Ju or emblem is no child's play, no mere outlet for a state of activity which he is not particularly desirous of, not even a safety-valve by which the accumulated steam of his pent-up emotions might escape, but a matter of life and death, connecting, as it does, one to the other, *i.e.* himself and household to the household in the spirit. To natural man this

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grotesque image of clay or wood is no mere toy, no senseless figure, that he moulds or carves for amusement during his hours of leisure, simply to kill time with.

"So this bundle of repressed but irrespressible emotions appeals to his household doll, as to an association—not in a merely abstract but in a personal sense, as a lifelong association, to which, connected and related as he is, from a twofold aspect, he is doubly bound. He appeals to it, as to a familiar object, embodying, as it does, his familiar and guardian spirit, not because he merely thinks or hopes this to be so, but because in all sincerity he feels and believes it to be the case. More than this, because he believes it to be the spirit of his father or grandfather, who, in accordance with the divine instructions, occupies the position of communicator and mediator between the human and spiritual households."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 384–85.*

h "Small figures and images, such as are mentioned above, purporting and believed by the natives to contain the spirits of the defunct, and occupying exactly the same status as the Aryan 'Pitris' or 'Fathers' and the Roman Lares and Penates, are also made and venerated by all the Delta tribes. Food and liquid offerings are regularly placed on graves or at the monuments erected, or the symbols that have just been referred to, for the use of the departed spirits."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 183.*

i *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "The priestly class and the *sumankwafo*, the doctors in *suman*, demanded for their professional purposes figures in human or animal forms; this resulted in the carving of *Sasabonsam*, *mmoatia* and, finally, human figures; in all of these the genius of the people found an outlet for latent artistic talent."
*Religion and Art in Ashanti, p. 269.*

## 42. *Memorial (second funeral)*

a *Farrow says of the Yoruba:* "In June of each year the Annual Egun festival is held, for seven days. It is the Yo-

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•171 ruba 'All Souls' festival, when mourning is repeated for all those who have died during the last few years. Egungun is specially powerful in Ibadan, even as Oro is in Abeokuta." *Faith, Fancies and Fetich, pp. 79–80.*

b *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes: "The Lamentation or Second Burial.*—This is conducted on much the same lines as the first, except that a greater entertainment is provided and the expenses incurred are heavier.

"In a spiritual sense, however, the rite is one of infinitely greater importance, because it is a special memorial service held over the deceased in order to release him from the thraldom of the region of the dead in which all souls are confined, where they exist on leaves or grass just like the brute beasts, and to usher him triumphantly, as befits his birth, into the abode of his fathers in the world of spirits.

"For the universal belief on this point is that no human soul can attain to the peaceful ancestral habitations without this rite of second burial. Hence the great aversion shown by a community towards those who fail to observe this holy sacrament."

*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 159–60.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The Ekwa-Ozu rites are commonly referred to in English as 'The Second Burial,' though there is no apparent reason for the use of this expression.

"The responsibility for performing the rites falls mainly on the principal heir, who should endeavour to carry them out within a year of the dead man's death. But the period may be extended, if the deceased's family has been unable to find the necessary means, and cases have occurred of the final funeral rites being postponed for as much as ten or twenty years."

*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 314.*

d *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "This first burial, generally called Mkpa Owo, is followed, from six months to two years later, by the Ewonga or Usiak Ekkpo, the second burial, with which the obsequies are completed and without

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which the deceased is thought to be unable to take his proper position in the realm of the dead."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 142.*

43. *Mortars*

a *Monteiro says of Angola:* "These mortars are made of soft wood, mostly of the cotton wood tree, which is easily cut with a knife; for scooping out the interior of the mortars the natives use a tool made by bending round about an inch of the point of an ordinary knife, which they call a "locombo."
*Angola and the River Congo, p. 167.*

44. *Owl, hooting of*

a *Ellis says of the Vais:* "The Vais consider the owl the king of all witches. They believe that some old king transformed himself into the owl and became the king of witchcraft. The owl is called húhu. Whenever the cry of this bird is heard they tremble with fear. It is said when an owl sits upon a home at least one of its inmates is sure to die."
*Negro Culture in West Africa, p. 66.*

b *Nassau says of West Africa:* "Then, concerning owls; see that your camp at night is not disturbed by the cry of the Kulu (spirit of the departed), that warns you that one of you is going to die."
*Fetichism in West Africa, pp. 195–96.*

45. *Palm cabbage, palm wine*

a *Bridge says of the West Coast of Africa:* "Palm wine is the sap of the tree; and its top furnishes a most delicious dish, called palm-cabbage. The trunk supplies fire-wood and timber for building fences. From the fibres of the wood is manufactured a strong cordage, and a kind of native cloth; and the leaves, besides being used for thatching houses, are converted into hats. If nature had given the inhabitants of Africa nothing else, this one gift of the palm-tree would have included food, drink, clothing, and habitation,

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and the gratuitous boon of beauty, into the bargain."
*Journal of an African Cruiser, p. 106.*

b *Burton says of Gelele:* "The palm, after being felled, is allowed to lie for a couple of days, the cabbage is removed for food, and in its place a pipe, generally a bit of papaw-stalk, conducts the sap into the calabash below. At times, to make the juice flow more freely, a lighted stick is thrust into the hole, which is afterwards scraped clear of charred wood. This "toddy" is the drink of the maritime regions, where it is most impudently watered, and we shall not taste it beyond the Agrime swamp."
*A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome,* I, *pp. 128–29.*

46. *Possession*

a *Basden says of the Ibo:* "The more one listens to native music, the more one is conscious of its vital power. It touches the chords of man's inmost being, and stirs his primal instincts. It demands the performer's whole attention and so sways the individual as almost to divide asunder, for the time being, mind and body. . . . Under its influence, and that of the accompanying dance, one has seen men and women pass into a completely dazed condition, oblivious and apparently unconscious of the world around them."
*Among the Ibos of Nigeria, p. 192.*

b *Ellis says of the Gold Coast:* "The drums strike up, and the priest commences his dance, leaping, bounding, and turning and twisting round and round, until he works himself into a real or simulated condition of frenzy, with foam dropping from the mouth, and eyes wildly rolling."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 125.*

c *Ellis says of the town of Forhudzi:* "A god was beginning to take possession of him. . . . In the meantime the trembling increased, and soon the priest was shuddering as if in an ague fit. Every portion of his body seemed to shake; the head, arms, legs, abdomen, and pectoral muscles, all quiver-

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ing violently. He leaned forward and appeared to be endeavoring to vomit, doubtless to give the idea that his body was struggling to expel the god which was now supposed to possess him. A little foam appeared on his lips, and from time to time saliva fell on the ground. Next, with open mouth and protruding tongue, and with eyes wildly rolling, he worked himself, still seated and quivering violently, into the middle of the arena."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 132.*

d *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity, while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman 'mounted' by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun. One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics—rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 146.*

e *Leonard says of the Ibo and other tribes:* "This possession by spirits, although not confined to any particular tribe or tribes in the Delta, is said to be much more common among the Ijo and Brassmen, and women are afflicted in a considerably greater proportion than men. These possessions—which are invariably made by the Owu or water spirit—may occur at any time, or in any place, and as soon as a woman jumps up and begins to talk a strange language—usually either Okrika or Kila—it is the first as it is a sure indication that she has become possessed. The fact that in many instances the obsessed person in her normal state is unable to speak the tongue which, when possessed, she speaks quite fluently, is naturally looked upon as direct evidence that it is the investing spirit who speaks and not the woman herself. So, too, a girl or woman who through excessive shyness is

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too coy to dance in public, develops, when under the influence of the Owu, an excess of boldness, which enables her to do things that under ordinary conditions she would not dream of doing. This boldness is to these natives merely the confirmation of a pre-existing conviction that it is not the person that is doing these things but the spirit who has invaded and obsessed her.

"It is further believed that persons so afflicted are possessed of physical strength which is altogether superhuman, so that when they become violent and uncontrollable they are scarcely to be overcome by half a dozen or more able-bodied men."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, pp. 227–28.*

f *Meek says of the Yaku:* "As the dance proceeds they are one by one assailed with convulsive shiverings, wave their arms, strike themselves and throw themselves on the ground like demented persons."
*A Sudanese Kingdom, p. 278.*

47. *Possessions on grave*

a *Burton says of Dahome:* "At the end of the funeral customs, especially in the Old Calabar River, a small house is built upon the beach, and in it are placed the valuables possessed by the departed—some whole, and others broken,—statues, clocks, vases, porcelains, and so forth."
*A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome,* II, *p. 262.*

b *Nassau says of the Benga, the Mpongwe and the Fang:* "Formerly also slaves carried boxes of the dead man's goods, cloth, hardware, crockery, and so forth, to be laid by the body, which in those days was not interred, but was left on the top of the ground covered with branches and leaves."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 218.*

c *Talbot says of the Ibibio:* "Next a table and some of the finest pieces of household furniture, together with jars, dishes, and bowls of old china, were carried thither and set in order. When all had been arranged, the coffin was carefully

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lowered down the shaft, borne through the passage and laid upon the resting-place so reverently prepared."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 154.*

48. *Root doctors*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "With the belief that spiritual agents are the cause of misfortune and sickness, it follows that medical treatment consists generally in charms. There are certain men considered most proficient in the curative art. These are the *liri-tina* (Kassena), *tiindana* (Nankanni), *tinyam* (Builsa), (owner of medicine). Their medicines are drawn from the bush, and are usually bitter-tasting grasses, herbs, and barks. For poultices the same herbs are used mixed with shea-butter and charcoal and ashes. Usually they are covered with cow-dung. It is said that the stronger the smell the more easily will the evil spirit causing the sickness be driven away."
*The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 46.*

b *Cruickshank says of the Gold Coast native:* "The natives of the Gold Coast have no despicable knowledge of the qualities of herbs. A collection of these was, at one time, sent home for analysis; and it was found generally that they possessed some qualities calculated to be of use in alleviating the diseases for which the natives applied them."
*Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast, II, 147.*

c *Leyden says of the interior sections of West Africa, such as the Congo, the banks of the Senegal and the Gambia, etc.:* "The magicians appear to have been resorted to universally in cases of malady, which proved a hard trial on the faith even of the steadiest converts. When their children or near relations were seized with illness, they immediately began to cast a longing eye towards their old method of cure; and if they had not recourse to it, they even incurred reproach among their neighbors, as suffering their relation to die, rather than incur the expence of a magician."

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## APPENDIX

•171 *Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Africa*, I, *120*.

d *Meek says of Nigeria:* "The believer in witchcraft feels he has a right to protect himself by every means in his power, and chief among these is the employment of a witch-doctor . . . [who] is therefore considered just as essential in most negro communities as a medical practitioner is amongst ourselves, and, though some witch-doctors may abuse their powers for selfish ends, as a class they are regarded as champions of morality."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 345.*

e *Nassau, quoting Menzies' History of Religion, p. 73, says of the Benja, the Mpongwe, the Fang, and other West African tribes:* " 'There is generally a special person in a tribe who knows these things, and is able to work them. He has more power over spirits than other men have, and is able to make them do what he likes. He can heal sickness, he can foretell the future, he can change a thing into something else, or a man into a lower animal, or a tree, or anything; he can also assume such transformations himself at will. He uses means to bring about such results; he knows about herbs, he has also recourse to rubbing, to making images of affected parts in the body, and to various other arts. . . . It is the spirit dwelling in him which brings about the wonderful results; without the spirit he could not do anything.' "
*Fetichism in West Africa, pp. 86–87.*

f *Ward says of the Bakongo tribes:* "It is a general belief with the Bakongo that all sickness is the result of witchcraft exercised by some member of the community, and the services of the charm-doctor are employed to discover the individual who is *ndoki*, *i.e.*, bedeviled, and guilty of devouring the spirit of the unfortunate invalid; and in the event of the sick person dying, the medicine-man is deputed by the relatives of the deceased to find out the witch who has 'eaten the heart.' "
*Five Years with the Congo Cannibals, p. 39.*

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17 often serves, in the town, as a generic term for all the snake spirits, though the *Dagowe*, snake, properly speaking, is one of the constrictor group found in the colony, and is believed by the natives to inhabit both land and water. This is, of course, good observation on their part, for this characteristic of all snakes of the boa type is well-known. Not all snakes are sacred, yet no one will kill a snake."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 63–64.*

e *Talbot says of the Ibibio tribes:* "Each great Ibibio Juju man is supposed to keep one such serpent familiar in his house, in the 'bush' where secret rites are celebrated, or in some place by the waterside. It is called Kukubarakpa, and, by virtue of this agent, much of the magician's power is said to come to him. The possession of a snake is also supposed to bring riches, though its magic is thought to be of no avail during the season of storms."
*Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 17.*

•171 51. *Serpents, dream of*

a *Leonard says of Southern Nigeria:* "A snake seen in a dream implies a host of enemies seeking to destroy the dreamer's life. Nightmare is caused by the visitation of an evil or it may be antipathetic spirit."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 147.*

52. *Sneezing*

a *Puckett says of the Ewe:* "Sneezing is regarded as a bad omen by the Ewe tribes of Africa because it indicates that the indwelling spirit is about to quit the body, affording an opportunity for a homeless spirit to enter in and cause illness. A similar belief leads the Calabar natives to exclaim, 'Far from you!' when a person sneezes, with an appropriate gesture as if throwing off some evil."
*Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, p. 453.*

53. *Spider stories*

*Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "Though few tales have been recorded, these play an impor-

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tant role in the life of the Suriname Negroes. They are, whatever their nature, called *Anqnsi-tori*, the stories of Anansi, the Twi trickster-hero, who, like in Curaçao and Jamaica, has survived his migration to the western hemisphere to be here, as on the Gold Coast, the most important single character in the folk-tales of the Negroes of these regions."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 138.*

54. *Spirits, animals*

a *Ellis says of the Yoruba:* "The souls of the dead are sometimes reborn in animals, and occasionally, though but rarely, in plants."
*The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 133.*

b *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "*Baka* appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears (?) and dogs."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 241.*

55. *Spirits, dwarfs*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "They are *kyikyiri* (Kassena), *kukru* (Builsa), and *chichirigu* (Nankanni). Sometimes they are visible to men, and in appearance resemble the *mmotia* of the Ashanti, ill-shapen dwarfs . . . they annoy travellers by night by 'throwing stones at them.' "
*The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, pp. 27–28.*

56. *Spirits, existence after death*

a *Campbell says of the Aku, Yoruba tribes:* "They believe in the spirit after death, and in its power of being present among the living for good or evil purposes."
*A Pilgrimage to My Motherland, p. 75.*

b *Cruickshank says of the Gold Coast native:* "They are unanimous in thinking that there is in man a spirit which survives the body. This spirit is supposed to remain near

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•171 the spot, where the body has been buried. They believe it to have a consciousness of what is going on upon earth, and to have the power of exercising some influence over their destiny."
*Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa*, II, *135*.

c *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "As in Africa, the spirit of the dead is powerful for good or evil, and the rites of death must be carried out as tradition demands, so that the dead man may feel he has received honor among the living and proper introduction to the world of the dead."
*Rebel Destiny, p. 4.*

57. *Spirits, faces turned backward*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* ". . . the spirits turned their faces to the back of the head."
*The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 34.*

58. *Spirit, food for*

a *Cole says of West Africa:* "The spirits of the dead, as well as genii, are also honored and adored. Food, tobacco, and rum are placed on the graves for the departed, and their aid is requested at the taking of a journey, or in times of need."
*A Revelation of the Secret Orders of Western Africa, p. 39.*

b *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "Food is brought in the dishes from which the dead ate when alive, and each meal is given to the *akɔvi* on guard, who takes three morsels and puts them down one after the other near the corpse. She also allows water to drop three times nearby, and then tells the wife of the deceased to gather up and remove everything that has been put down. The dead man's pipe must now be placed next to him; tobacco is put into it, and it is smoked for the enjoyment of the dead man by the *akɔvi* and the wife who watch the body."
*Dahomey*, I, *356*.

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c *Hutchinson says of the Efik:* "Amongst the Efik tribe, who are the residents here, there exists a practice of cooking food and leaving it on the table of a fabric called the 'devil house,' which is erected near the grave of a man or woman. The food is placed there in calabashes, and it is believed that the spirit of the deceased, with those of the butchered serfs who are her or his fellow-travelers, frequently came to partake of it in their journey to the world of spirits, whither they are supposed to be travelling."
*Ten Years' Wanderings Among the Ethiopians, pp. 206–07.*

d *Nassau says of West Africa:* "When affairs are going wrong in the villages, and the people do not know the cause, offerings of food and drink are taken to the grave to cause the spirit to cease disturbing them, and prayers are made to it that it may the rather bless them."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 220.*

e *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "An Ashanti never drinks without pouring a few drops of the wine on the ground for the denizens of the spirit world who may happen to be about (also some for 'fetishes'). Food is constantly placed aside for them."
*Ashanti Proverbs, p. 37.*

f "If you see your ancestor in a dream lying dead, as he did on the day of his death, then you know that there is going to be another death in your clan; otherwise, to be visited by an ancestor only means that he is hungry and you place food upon his stool."
*Religion and Art in Ashanti, pp. 193–94.*

59. *Spirits and ghosts, general*

a *Kingsley says of the West Coast of Africa:* "Accounts of apparitions abound in all the West Coast districts, and although the African holds them all in high horror and terror, he does not see anything supernatural in his 'Duppy.' It is a horrid thing to happen on, but there is nothing strange about it, and he is ten thousand times more fright-

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171 ened than puzzled over the affair. He does not want to 'investigate' to see whether there is anything in it. He wants to get clear away, and make ju-ju against it, 'one time.'

"These apparitions have a great variety of form, for, firstly, there are all the true spirits, nature spirits; secondly, the spirits of human beings—these human spirits are held to exist before as well as during and after bodily life; thirdly, the spirits of things."
*Travels in West Africa, p. 509.*

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "When going home late from *winti*-dances, we were led away from certain thoroughfares, and went a roundabout way to avoid a corner, or a tree, or a house, because these were known to be 'bad' places,—that is to say, they were haunted. At least two persons accompanied us home, so that, in returning to their own homes, they would not have to walk the streets alone. The hours that are dangerous are mid-day, from 5:30 to 6:30 in the evening, and from 12:30 to 1:30 at night."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 111.*

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Sasabonsám. Deriv. *bonsam*, a devil, or evil spirit (*not* the disembodied soul of any particular person, just as the fetish is not a human spirit). Its power is purely for evil and witchcraft. The *obayifo* is perhaps its servant, as the terms are sometimes synonymous."
*Ashanti Proverbs, p. 47.*

60. *Spirit, guardian of entrance* (*Legba*)

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* ". . . they proceeded slowly to the gateway, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 172–73.*

b "Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observances of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrances are usu-

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ally for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 286.*

61. *Spirit, guardian of buried treasure*

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "*Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. 'In this country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian. Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the slave, as a 'sold *baka*,' remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 242–43.*

62. *Spirits, plat-eye*

[175]

a *Johnson says of St. Helena:* "In the Georgetown section plat-eye is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area."
*Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, p. 58.*

b *Nassau says of West Africa:* "Another manifestation is that of the uvengwa. . . . It is the self-resurrected spirit and body of a dead human being. It is an object of dread, and is never worshipped in any manner whatever. Why it appears is not known. Perhaps it shows itself only in a restless, unquiet, or dissatisfied feeling. It is white in color, but the body is variously changed from the likeness of the original human body. Some say that it has only one eye, placed

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•171 in the centre of the forehead. Some say that its feet are webbed like an aquatic bird. It does not speak; it only wanders, looking as if with curiosity."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 71.*

63. *Spirits, river*

a *Cardinall says of the Gold Coast:* "Spirits of rivers and water-holes are greatly respected. They are most powerful spirits, too. They can slay men and they can bring much good fortune. To them are brought many sacrifices of fowls and goats, etc. It is said that these spirits live below the river-bed."
*The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, p. 34.*

b *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Paramaribo Negro:* "A fourth group of *winti* are those which are associated with the river. This group, as all others, overlap the Snake gods, since the constrictor lives in the water as well as on land. However, there are other gods, among them the *kaimq*, which are peculiar to the rivers alone. The river-gods are headed by the *Liba-Mama*, or *Watra-Mama*, respectively Mother of the River, or Mother of the Water, who, again, is not referred to by name. Among the Saramacca tribe of Bush-Negroes, the river-gods go under the generic name of Tone, and this name, like the name from the interior for the gods in general, is also sometimes employed in Paramaribo."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 64–65.*

c *Meek says of Nigeria:* "At Eha-Amufu (Nsukka Division) there is a river-cult, the priest of which is known as the Atama Ebe. Ebe is the spirit of the river and controls the fish, who are regarded as the spiritual counterparts of the inhabitants of Eha-Amufu. The big fish are the counterparts of the principal men of the village group, while the fry are the counterparts of persons of no consequence. When a villager dies a fish dies, and when a fish dies a villager dies. It is taboo, therefore, to catch fish in the river, and

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much annoyance has been caused by vizits of foreign fishermen who disregard the local scruples. Ebe, the spirit of the river, being the guardian of the fish, which are his children and messengers, is regarded as the giver of children to men, and is thus the object of public and private worship."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. 38.*

64. *Stealing from grave*

a *Nassau says of the interior tribes of the West Coast:* "A noticeable fact about these gifts to the spirits is that, however great a thief a man may be, he will not steal from a grave. The coveted mirror will lie there and waste in the rain, and the valuable garment will flap itself to rags in the wind, but human hands will not touch them. Sometimes the temptation to steal is removed, by the donor fracturing the article before it is laid on the grave."
*Fetichism in West Africa, p. 232.*

65. *Taboos*

a *Bosman says of Guinea:* "Each Person here is forbidden the eating of one sort of Flesh or other; one eats no Mutton, another no Goats-Flesh, Beef, Swines-Flesh, Wild-Fowl, Cocks with white feathers, &c. This Restraint is not laid upon them for a limited time, but for their whole Lives: And if the Romanists brag of the Antiquities of their Ecclesiastical Commands; so if you ask the Negroes why they do this, they will readily tell you, because their Ancestors did so from the beginning of the World and it hath been handed down from one Age to another by Tradition. The Son never eats what the Father is restrained from, as the Daughter herein follows the Mother's Example; and this Rule is as strictly observed amongst them, that 'tis impossible to persuade them to the contrary."
*Description of the Coast of Guinea, pp. 154–55.*

b *Burton says of the Dahomean:* "Some are allowed to eat beef, others only mutton; many are prohibited to touch the flesh of goats. Poultry is permitted to some, eggs to others."
*A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome,* II, *361–62.*

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•171 c *Ellis says of the Ewe:* "The usual reverence is paid by the members of a clan to the animal or plant from which the clan takes its name. It may not be used as food, or molested in any way; but must always be treated with veneration and respect. The general notion is that the members of the clan are directly descended from the animal, or plant, eponymous."
*The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 100.*

d *Ellis says of the Tshi:* "With some races the reverence originally felt for the deceased ancestor, and in later times transferred to the animal for which he was named, culminates in the animal being regarded as a tutelary deity, and consequently a being to be worshipped and propitiated by sacrifice; but in other cases—and this is almost always the case with the family divisions of the natives of the Gold Coast—an abstention from the use of the flesh of the animal whose name the family bears, is sometimes the only remaining sign of any feeling of reverence or respect."
*The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 206.*

e *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Suriname Negro:* "An illness may be caused by . . . an unconscious violation, arising out of the fact that a man's mother had never told him the name of his true father, and consequently he had been observing food taboos which were not his own and had been neglecting to observe those which were his, since, as we have seen, these personal food taboos are inherited from the father."
*Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 59–60.*

17 66. *Teeth, children born with*

a *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Children born feet first or with teeth or any deformity were also destroyed, on the ground that they were incarnations of evil spirits."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 290–91.*

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68. *Witches, animal form*

•171 a *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "The *axɔndato*, as such practitioners are called, are spoken of in whispers, and are said to be organized into a close guild. They exercise power over the souls of those who have not had proper burial and therefore wander about the earth discontented, and over these souls procured by 'killing' their owners in the manner described above. These *axɔndato* are to be recognized by their blood-shot eyes, and Dahomeans stealthily point out two or three such persons in the market-place who usually may be remarked to be doing somewhat better business than those who sit near them. These dangerous individuals change into bats at night, or assume other animal forms and go forth to hold council together or to perform their dark deeds."
*Dahomey*, II, 287.

b *Meek says of Nigeria:* "Witches (*amozu*) and wizards (*ogboma*) have also animal counterparts, and so assume the forms of owls, lizards, vultures, and numerous species of night-birds. Consequently, if a night-bird comes and rests on a house, the owner loses no time in trying to drive it away or shoot it; and if he fails he will seize his *ofo* and call on his ancestors or any local deity to rid him of his enemy. A witch always assails at night. By magic means she attacks the throat, so that the victim is paralysed and cannot move or speak, and in the morning may be found lying senseless and naked outside his hut. . . . Witches can penetrate into a house through the smallest cracks in the wall, and can assume the form of the smallest insect. Flies and other creatures which bite are witches or the agents of witches, and if a person is severely bitten he may consult a diviner, who will order the patient to offer sacrifice to propitate some witch, and induce the witch to remove the spell by transferring it to some one else. Witches can poison food or infect it with sorcery, and if any one eats a meal cooked by a witch he will become seriously ill or die. Moth-

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ers, therefore, advise their children to avoid eating food outside their own homes."
*Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, pp. 79–80.*

c *Talbot says of Southern Nigeria:* "Witches often change into leopards and other animals."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,* II, *219.*

d "Witchcraft seems to have been more dreaded in the Oru clan than among any other Ibo. . . . They can change into crocodiles, fish, leopards, bush-cows, snakes and goats."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,* II, *213.*

e *Farrow says:* "The witch-doctor is, of course, a privileged person. He is called in to trace the source of disease and death, for these are generally attributed to witchcraft, unless they are evidently caused by the vengeance of Shopono (smallpox), Shango, or some similar deity. Various forms of disease are described as 'snakes inside' (*ejo-inu*), 'an insect' (*kokoro*), etc., and it is supposed that these have been introduced by a foe through the agency of witchcraft."
*Faith, Fancies and Fetish, p. 125.*

69. *Witches, riding victims*

a *Ellis says of the Vais:* "There is a belief, as I have stated, among the Vais that witches come to your house and ride you at night,—that when the witch comes in the door he takes off his skin and lays it aside in the house. It is believed that he returns you to the bed where he found you, and that the witch may be killed by sprinkling salt and pepper in certain portions of the room, which will prevent the witch from putting on his skin. Just before they go to bed it is a common thing to see Vais people sprinkling salt and pepper about the room."
*Negro Culture in West Africa, p. 63.*

b *Leonard says:* "In Brass the natives firmly believe that witches exist, and that certain persons by natural operations—or rather by co-operation with natural forces—possess the power of inflicting disease, injury, or death upon

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•171 their neighbours. These individuals are divided into two classes—the harmful and the harmless.

"The former are said to go out of their houses at night, and to hold meetings with demons and their colleagues, to determine whose life is next to be destroyed. This is done by gradually sucking the blood of the victim through some supernatural and invisible means the effect of which on the victim is imperceptible to others."
*The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 486.*

c *Rattray says of Ashanti:* "Men and women possessed of this black magic are credited with volitant powers, being able to quit their bodies and travel great distances in the night. Besides sucking the blood of victims, they are supposed to be able to extract the sap and juices of crops."
*Ashanti Proverbs, p. 48.*

70. *Woodcarving and weaving*

a *Herskovits says:* "In West Africa, the development of techniques of all kinds is the greatest on the continent. The Benin bronzes, the brass-work of Dahomey, the weaving of the Ashanti, or the wood carving of the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, and Nigeria are famous, while pottery of a high grade, basketry, and iron work are found everywhere."
*Social History of the Negro, p. 221.*

b *Herskovits says of the Bush Negro:* "In the villages of the Bush Negroes the artist holds an enviable position, and the good carver is sought after in marriage and often wins the most desirable young woman for his wife. This is because Suriname woodcarving is a part of all phases of life."
*Social History of the Negro, p. 247.*

c *Herskovits says of Dahomey:* "But, as stated, the greatest proportion of objects are intended for some specific end. The spotted hyena, for example, formed a handle for the staff of a chief. The two wands with human figures on them are employed in the Fá cult. The three figures in the background of the same plate, representing a woman, an animal,

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•171 and a bird respectively, support cups which hold the seeds employed in the Fate cult. . . ."
*Dahomey*, II, *370*.

d "Wood-carving is the most democratic, and the most widely practiced, of all the arts. It constitutes the one mode of artistic expression open to all men in Dahomey, for, as in many cultures, wood-carving is not a technique permitted to women. In addition, however, to the democratic nature of the art it pervades the daily life of the people to a greater degree than any other art-form, and a catalogue of the uses to which the objects carved in wood are put by the Dahomeans would touch upon all elements of Dahomean culture. Carvings thus catalogued would range from the artistic statuettes found in the shrines of the gods and the smaller human figures used as *gbö*, the beautifully carved cups which hold the palm-kernels employed in the Fá cult, and the carefully worked handles of the Xevioso axes, all of which indicate the association of wood-carving with religion, to the mortars, stools, and other decorated objects used in the everyday round of life."
*Dahomey*, II, *363*.

e "Among these forms are plastic and graphic arts, music, dancing and a wide range of oral literature. In the former group wood-carving is the most widespread and the most commonly practised. As will be indicated in detail below, carvings in wood enter many phases of life. Statues of the gods, human forms which, as *gbö*, protect the owner and his household, and the implements of the Fate cult, are all a part of the religious life. The sceptres of King and chiefs, and the elaborately carved stools on which they sat were indispensable symbols of rank and succession. The wands of office and stools of sib-chiefs associate this art with social organisation, especially where the totem animal is figured, while even the *adjí* game-boards of the Dahomeans are embellished by the carvings of the artist."
*Dahomey*, II, *311*.

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171 f *Melville and Frances Herskovits say of the Bush Negro of Dutch Guiana:* "There were other carvings which we bought —a large rice-carrying tray, and some food stirrers, one of which was especially fine, made as it was of two small paddles with miniature blades, the handles joined by a wooden ring-chain, and all of this carved out of one piece of wood."
*Rebel Destiny, p. 277.*

g "Few things on the river seemed to the outsiders more characteristic of the life of the Saramacca people than these carvings which were met with everywhere, however small the village, however poor the home. When the seasonal rains came, men incised their desires on wood, which later told the legend of procreation, or safety on the river, or a curse invoked against a woman if she proved unfaithful; or something of humor, such as a man bidding for a girl's favor, and she refusing him, while up above intertwined were a man and woman, symbolizing the ultimate consummation with the proper suitor."
*Rebel Destiny, pp. 277–78.*

h *Talbot says of the Sudanese tribes:* "Carving in wood is common among all tribes, but is for the most part rather crude. In all cases articles were as far as possible made from the solid block; never nailed or glued together."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,* III, *928.*

i "The varieties of woven work include checker, twilled and wicker; others are plaited, and there are several sorts of coiled basketry. The oblong market baskets used by the women, particularly among the Ibo and many of the Semi-Bantu tribes, closely resemble those of the Ancient Egyptians."
*The Peoples of Southern Nigeria,* III, *938.*



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491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before
342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are
[177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that
[827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has
[356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and or-
[592] derly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is
•171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

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423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient ag-
241 riculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly in-
[243] digo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple commodities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice
171 crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans-
171 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often re-
178 flect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the re-
gion, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States.
463 The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show bas-
[531] kets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigan-
tic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African
[177] utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft,

285 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina
coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable
• 171 collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans
[178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with
868 the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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763 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the impor-
456 tance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

764 When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common [170] among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe [175] without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

764 A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in
775 rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to [178] the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same [171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

764 On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced [178] for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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538 (20) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

## The Setting

538 177 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (17D) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

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538 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in
517 kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa),
[264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a
[273] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo,
[171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than
[196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island story-
462 telling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba, [171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised [562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as
177 those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
857 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience
171 and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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596 to their families and neighbors and appear to enjoy companionship and group cooperation more than solitude and isolation. This social sharing
538 and seeming congeniality is as vivid in their literature as it is in their daily lives. An overt expression of group participation is witnessed in the interplay between speaker and audience in folktales, speeches, and sermons. In Sea Island public speaking, the audience is as important for a good performance as the performer himself. As in Africa, the best audience is a lively audience: one in which the listeners participate actively in the narration by responding to certain cues from the performer. In really exciting performances speaker and audience become so intermeshed and such oneness is achieved that it may appear that the response is an actual part of the tale itself. This is particularly true, of course, for tales well known to both audience and performer.

538 Unless tales are told in the privacy of a home with very few listeners, the speaker will rarely begin a performance without some
• 171 "warming up." Among the Igbo and Ibebio, for example, formal folktales are preceded by songs and selected tales called (in Igbo) *akuko eji awake nti,* which means the first tale told to awaken or to enlighten the ear so that it absorbs the real meaning of what follows. Among the Igbo, before any tale begins, the speaker greets his listeners by saying "Chakpii [Are you ready?]." And the listeners respond, "Haa [We are ready to welcome your story!]." (These words are repeated at the end of each story, where they may be read as, respectively, "My story has ended" and "Thank you, storyteller, for your tale.") While the islanders do not seem to have any tale prescribed for the sole purpose of opening telling sessions, they do have some patterns for preparing to tell informal folktales.

538 The timing and atmosphere are very important to telling, hearing, and collecting good tales. If the audience is not properly prepared, the occasion is not conducive to good tales. The atmosphere must be relaxed; the teller not only must be willing to tell a tale but must have an audience and sufficient time to tell the story. The more listeners, the better the tales seem to be. In large groups, even when a storytelling event has been planned, it often takes quite a while for a session to begin. The pattern seems to be that everyone in the group will at first pretend not to know any stories, or even how to tell one. If it is known that one of the people in the group is a good performer, then someone may point him out and ask him to tell a tale. He of course refuses.

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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522] enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly con- [123] genial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

[533] With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

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538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

[171] Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this person, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact, two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid storytellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island communities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

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209 other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

538 The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expec-
171 tations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions. perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

538 The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is
591 common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of
171 daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

538 For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

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159 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though
539 Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the
[171] words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings
[592] in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by
• [171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Is-
539 landers', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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## Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

000 I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

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guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pronouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ọ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [dɔ], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have parallels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

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[171] Mortars made from palm trees are traditionally used to pound rice and corn. Similar mortars are still used throughout Africa.

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Regardless of the region, these animals are heroic figures in the same tradition as Ber Rabbit in Gullah and inland black literature, or Ananse the spider in Caribbean literature.

In attempting to explain why a weak creature like a rabbit was selected as a folktale hero in black America, traditional theories have posited the powerless being as the personification of the slave, who had to be extraordinarily clever to avoid and survive the wrath of the slave master. While this concept is theoretically sound and indeed operative, it loses validity in light of the evidence that physically insignificant creatures were revered for their intelligence in Africa long before the African-American was ever subjected to the cruelties of slavery. Seldom does one find massive or ferocious animals like the lion, the leopard, the elephant, or the hippopotamus depicted in African literature as shrewd and insightful. They are continuously portrayed as stupid and as perpetually duped and humiliated by smaller animals who must from necessity live by their wits, not by their strength. This concept of shrewdness and cunning embodied within a tiny animal is apparent, for example, in "The Spider, the Elephant and the Hippopotamus," a tale told to Finnegan by the Limba and also told to Cronise and Ward by the Temne speakers.[32] In this tale the spider uses his wit against the power of two larger animals. We can find a parallel in Harris's Sea Island tale "Mr. Terrapin and Mr. Bear." Likewise, an Igbo tale of Nnabe, the tortoise, making a riding horse out of an alligator and insulting him midstream finds a parallel in Parsons's Ber Rabbit making a riding horse out of Ber Alligator on the Sea Islands. This same tale has a parallel in the Caribbean, with Ananse, the spider, riding the tiger's back.[33] In another Igbo tale "Nnabe and the Fruits" (given here with its Sea Island companion tale), Nnabe is able to defraud a whole host of animals; there are similarities in the way Ber Rabbit outwits Ber Wolf in "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter."

The spider, tortoise, and hare are shown to be inferior to and answerable only to a higher immortal being, Chineke in Igbo and the Lord in Sea Island tales. Here, for example, Nnabe and Ber Rabbit seek more knowledge from their creator in "Nnabe and Chineke" and "Ber Rabbit and the Lord." While both animals are revered for their wit and ingenuity, both are kicked out of heaven when they attempt to cheat God. Both continue to bear the scars of God's wrath: Nnabe has a broken shell as a result of his fall, and Ber Rabbit has a white tail as a reminder that God threw a cup of milk at him as he was ejected.

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538 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters
•171 nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from
538 the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering,
128 false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the
[193] formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix 1 for a transcription of one story into

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

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538 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however,
128 no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke
•171 [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

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538 •171 2. "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter" is Animal Type 15, The Theft of Butter by Playing Godfather, and Deception Motif K401.1, Dupe's Food Eaten and Then Blame Fastened on Him. Some previous commentators have made references to a fire-jumping scene in other versions of this Sea Island tale.[34] The African parallel for this tale, "Nnabe and the Fruits" does involve a jumping scene, where Nnabe is expected to jump to his death (Motif K891). However, being the sly, perceptive little animal that he is, Nnabe has made prior arrangements for his getaway once he completes his jump.

## 539 Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter

James Oree
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Ber Wolf de tell Ber Rabbit, "Let's make some butter, okay?"

So Ber Rabbit and Ber Wolf, they got together. They decided to make some butter. Now, they both was married. And between the rabbit and the wolf, the rabbit thought he had a little more sense than the wolf. Okay?

*Um hum! Yeah!*

So what happen, the rabbit and the wolf, they decided de make the butter.

By and by Ber Rabbit tell the wolf that his wife was expecting a baby. And that he had de go check on the baby! Every now and then he had de go and check on the baby!

So they work in the field. They went in the field and they start de work. They was hoeing, de working they crop. They planted it together—you know, do everything together. They planted they crop. And rabbit said to the wolf, "Ber Wolf? Look a here, Ber Wolf!" Say, "My wife de call me! Say, I—Shah [a typical Sea Island exclamation]! I have for go check on my wife now. Shah!—My wife de expecting a baby, and—"

[Ber Wolf] say, "Okay! Okay, Ber Rabbit, go head."

When he come back, [Ber Wolf] say, "Did your wife had the baby?"

[Ber Rabbit] say, "Yeah!"

[Ber Wolf] say, "What the baby is?"

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The lion started first and jumped across. Each of the other animals jumped across until at last it was Nnabe the tortoise's time to jump. He sang the song and jumped, but fell into the pit. In the pit he denied that he had eaten the fruit. He said that he fell into the pit because he was overdressed and too heavy to jump. Reluctantly, the other animals agreed that maybe his shell was too heavy and that he should be given another chance to clear himself. So they pulled him out from the pit and let him put off his shell. When he finished, he sang the song again and jumped, but still he fell into the pit. This second time all the other animals were convinced that he was the culprit. For his punishment, he was buried alive in the pit and covered with dirt. However, the tortoise was indeed wise, for he had already had the rabbit dig a path from the pit to his house. So the tortoise went home quietly, laughing to himself and praising himself for outwitting the other animals.

Then the *eke* market day arrived, when the rabbit was to collect his money from the tortoise. So the rabbit went to the tortoise's house and told him that he came to collect his fee. The tortoise did not know what to do, since he did not have the money. So he set another day for the rabbit, explaining that his mother-in-law had died and that he had spent all his money for her funeral. On the newly agreed date, the rabbit went again to collect his fee, and this time the tortoise had conceived of a plan to kill the rabbit. He boiled a big pot filled with water and waited for the rabbit to come. When the rabbit came, the tortoise tried to grab him by his tail, but the rabbit was too fast, and pulled himself loose except for the outer cover of his tail, which was pulled off in Nnabe's hands. To this day that is why the rabbit's tail is whiter than the rest of his body.

Chakpii!! *Haa!*

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3. "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is classified as Type 720, My Mother Slew Me; My Father Ate Me; and Motif E631.1, Speaking Bones of Murdered Person Reveal Murder. This tale was not as commonly told on the Sea Islands as it was among the Igbo of Nigeria. Many, many variations wherein crimes were revealed by the murdered person's bones were collected in Nigeria.

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# Appendix 1

# An Interview: Catching Fish

226 171 The ancient fishing methods explained in this interview are reminiscent of those found in Nigeria and other African countries near large bodies of water. I actually observed the drumming and spearing technique among the Igbo and Ibebio of northern Nigeria. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake also write of this continuing fishing practice on the Sea Islands.[1]

[115] The informant was a retired tradesman and a very important member in the church community. He said that he learned these practices from his father, and his father had learned them from the "old people" before him.

The interview has been edited slightly for clarity.

Mr. Daniel Dent
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
1983

226 124 INFORMANT: To catch mullet fish, we goes in the river. Everything still. The water still. Make a few throw with the cast net, and you haven't catch anything. So you get up on the side of boat and you beat on side with you oars, or paddle. And you just keep beating—[you] call em dolphin, we call em horsemen—then beat until the porpoise come around. After the porpoise come around, then the mullet fish will come to the shallow water. [Then] you cast for catch em. You don't catch much fish without the horseman. The porpoise have to be around. The only way to get the porpoise, man—[you] don't see them—you beat some, on the side of the boat, and they'll hear you miles for miles under the water.

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825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which [805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the [554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 •171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

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on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thought for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

## Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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CHAPTER 2

# The Socioreligious Heritage

•171 One of the most interesting problems of pre-colonial history is the relation of so-called secret societies to indigenous government. . . . Associations of this kind are prevalent . . . and are particularly numerous in the coastal area of rain-forest . . . including the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone. . . . They are not secret in any other respect. On the contrary, not only is the existence of these societies known . . . , but in many places the wide range of their activities makes them the dominant social force.*

In the case of a burial site, the coffin and the mound are the obvious containers; the soul of the deceased is the spark. In addition, . . . there are decorative objects that, in both Kongo and the Americas, cryptically honor the spirit in the earth, guide it to the other world, and prevent it from wandering or returning to haunt survivors. . . . The surface "decorations" frequently function as "medicines" of admonishment and love, and they mark a persistent cultural link between Kongo and the black New World.**

## *Upper Guinea Culture Circles*

Just as the impact of the slave trade in the West Atlantic region of the Guinea Coast has been treated with relative disinterest, so also has this area's cultural homogeneity either been glossed over or dismissed as the result of recent intergroup contact and European administration. For purposes of study Upper Guinea is not particularly rich in documentation, nor did the societies there possess high degrees of political central-

[113] *Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro," Part I, *Africa, Journal of the International African Institute* 35 no. 4 (October, 1965): 349.

[113] **Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 132.

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•171 ization. Moreover, community groups were usually not as large and territorial holdings not as extensive, as for instance those in the Niger Delta or Western Sudan. Hence the Upper Guinea, containing a multiplicity of ethnic entities, mixed kinship systems, and various languages has not received attention comparable to its significance. Yet early explorers, travelers, and traders were struck by what H. Baumann referred to as distinctive culture circles on the West African coast. Baumann referred to several regions, and his discussion applies to the Upper Guinea Coast, especially present-day Sierra Leone and Liberia. Here peoples historically had common cultural features, the most significant of which regulated the social, political, and to some extent economic life of the communities. These were secret societies with the Poro (or Beri) for men and the Sande (or Bundu) for women being almost universal, and, where they existed, always mandatory. The names sometimes varied but the influence and function of these societies was relatively uniform. The area of the "Poro Cluster" on the Central-West African Coast included the Lokko, Temne, Kono, Mende, Bullom, Krim, and the Limba ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. On the Malaguetta Coast (or Liberia), Poro and Sande groups included but were not limited to the Gola, Vai, De, Kpelle, Gizzi, Gbande, Belle, Loma, Mano, Gio, Ge, Sapa, Bassa, and Kru.[1]

In the sixteenth century, Portuguese traders referred to both male and female societies among Bulloms, observing similarities between various groups of people belonging to these associations. Affinity was so strong that traders viewed the people as one society, under the generic name of Sapi. Principal ethnic groups were Bulloms, Temnes, Limbas, and also some Bagas. They dressed alike, had the same system of justice, and understood each other. Unlike Western Sudanic groups, they had no political centralization, yet possessed social homogeneity through their common secret societies. The Portuguese considered the secret societies ways of training youth who reached puberty. There was a lengthy seclusion, secret training, bestowing of a new name, graduation, and celebration. Observers likened it to a convent procedure. Also, in the late seventeenth century, Dutch geographer Olfe Dapper reported on the multilingual quality of people on the Mesurado Coast under De control, in alliance with the Vai of Cape Mount. Among the languages listed were Temne, Mande, and Gola.[2]

British slave trader Nicholas Owen also witnessed manifestations of Poro society among the Bullom, even though group leadership was influenced by Islam. In 1746 he wrote:

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There is a secret mistery that these people have kept for many ages or, as for what we know, since their first foundation of great consequence to the pace [peace?] of the country; it goes by the general name of Pora or Pora men. These men are marked in their infancy by their priests with three or four rows of small dints upon their backs and shoulders; any that has not these marks they look upon as nothing. The nature of this Pora is this: there is one among the rest who personates the devil or Pora and before they begin to rize him, as they term it, he hides him self in some convenient place within call and upon his priests shouting several times the word 'Wo Pon,' he in the bush answers with a terabal screetch several times. Whenever the woman or white man or any that's not Pora men hears, they immediately fly to the houses and shut the windows and doors. . . . The good of this Pora is to keep from quarrelling. . . .[3]

John Matthews lived in Sierra Leone for several years in the 1700s and also observed the workings of Poro:

This wise, political institution is desseminated through the country for the purpose of putting an end to disputes and wars, as the jealousy, pride, and irritability of the natives are such as will not suffer them even conscious of being the aggressors to make concessions. . . . This law is never used but in dernier resort and when it is in force, the crimes of witchcraft and murder are punishable by it.[4]

Hence certain functions of Poro-Sande were early discerned by Europeans. These secret societies introduced all members into adulthood. Initiates were isolated from the community for a period of years in a special place called the "sacred grove." In these "bush schools" social knowledge and instruction were imparted. Individuals were educated to their life's work; familiarized with tribal history and lore; and schooled in social conduct and behavior befitting their particular sex and station. For girls, household information, responsibilities as wives and mothers, their economic roles, medicinal knowledge, singing, and dancing formed the basis of their social introduction to womanhood. Boys learned how to build houses, to follow their choice of trade, how to make their own farms, tactics of combat and of hunting. Secrecy of bush activities was paramount on pain of death. Even in the twentieth century the resiliency of these associations, though greatly altered, still remains, and efforts to obtain eyewitness accounts are generally futile. In the old days, initiation was compulsory. Marriage, sexual relations, or holding of property was not possible for a non-initiate. Regardless of biological age, a non-initiate was not considered an adult nor allowed to hold any position of importance.[5]

While Poro and Sande represented transformation from childhood to

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171 citizenship, membership in these societies was clearly more than a puberty *rite de passage* or a course of training for various roles in community life. According to Kenneth Little, a specialist on the Mende Poro, those functions were secondary to the main one, "to impress upon the new member the sacredness of his duty to the Poro," and hence to the community. To this end a youth was subjected to a series of terrifying experiences and symbolically eaten by the Poro spirit—the devil—and reborn by the same spiritual force. What trader Nicholas Owen witnessed was the "devil" entering a village to "catch" boys for Poro. The marks he saw on initiates were not inflicted at birth, but part of the initiation operation, representing the devil's teeth. The devil Poro or Sande first devoured then released the initiate. Its capacity to do this deeply reinforced Poro-Sande power at an impressionable age. Each individual swore to uphold secrecy of the initiation process and to abide by Poro-Sande authority. Allegiance was no longer given primarily to parents and kin but to the secret society, the foremost arbiter. Thus social and political functions of Poro and Sande were implemented to fulfill collective and societal goals. These regulatory processes, in the form of social control, were deterrents to deviant social behavior and arbitrary power. The Poro Council was supreme, and this inner circle called "palavar" to discuss and rule on all important events. They stopped village quarrels, tried and condemned social criminals, intensified holiday spirit on great occasions, and gave permission to declare war. While a chief was the nominal civil ruler, real power was in the hands of the Poro Council, consisting of senior members of both societies who could even depose a chief.[6]

The Poro sign was a spiral of ferns which reportedly still holds sway today in parts of Sierra Leone and Liberia. It represented a powerful prohibition, bringing sickness and death to those who ignored its ban. The spiral of ferns regulated economic affairs, setting rules about fishing, farming, trading practices, and price standards. Thus the secret society functioned as the primary psychological and physical coercive agent for the common good. However, the institution's power was derived from its affinity with the spirits and from other supernatural manifestations. Poro was law. Poro was order. And Poro came from God.[7]

No aspect of West African life was truly secular and Poro-Sande sociopolitical power symbolized relationships between the sacred and the temporal. The foundation of Poro-Sande prerogative was mystical in nature, and the institution was "made by God, not by man." Thus Poro-

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Sande spiritual significance was pervasive. Spirits dwelled in the sacred grove. Among them were ancestral spirits, bush and water spirits, spirits of associations, and Poro-Sande spirits, all with particular functions. Ancestral spirits, for example, explained life after death, were concerned with family and the larger group's well-being, and were protectors. Water and bush spirits, the nature category, imparted special knowledge and punishments. They were approached by medicine specialists, fortune tellers, or those specially versed in spirit communication. Association spirits represented such specialized organizations as the leopard or snake society, and were ancillaries of Poro and Sande, deriving power from the spirits they personified. Poro-Sande spirits, of which the "bush devil" was most important, were worldly representations of supernatural forces, personifying the will of "God" and mysteries of life. While other spirits in the pantheon were of the unseen world, Poro-Sande spirits represented the supernatural sphere, as well as earthly manifestations of supernatural power. All spirits remained hidden behind masks. The Poro and Sande leader's identity was an especially guarded secret. The leader's authority was intergroup, and his or her standing was recognized even in distant chiefdoms where a language barrier existed. Bush initiates were taken from several surrounding villages, adding to the strength of communal regulation. Also, a Poro or Sande member's status was recognized from group to group, creating solidarity and a fraternal spirit that superceded immediate kinship ties. A Poro-Sande founder was considered holy and immortal. Their death was kept secret by the society's inner circle of elders while another prepared to fill the place. The leader was buried in the sacred house in the grove. Thus strength and authority of Poro-Sande were not challenged because of a change in leadership.[8]

Hence, one aim was spirit control, mainly through ceremony, ritual, meditation, medicine, and exclusive contact. Essentially, "the Poro may be thought of as an attempt to reduce the pervading spirit world to an organization in which man might contact the spirit world and interpret it to the people, where men became spirits and took on godhead."[9] Additionally, meeting spirits in the bush, living and communicating with them symbolized control over the natural and supernatural environment. The spiritual seclusion also symbolized restraint over one's self by suspending elements of fear and individualism considered harmful to the community. The initiate's capacity to withstand the sacred bush experience and uphold its secrets extended functionally into the secular realm.

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•171 Society was organized around allegiance to and belief in the power of Poro and Sande. Reverence for the symbolically sacred led to obedience, accountability, and respect for what was generally its identical secular arm, the Poro Council.

The exact origin of Poro and Sande can probably never be determined. But Golas claim responsibility for the Poro's spread in their region. Vai tradition and that of other neighboring tribes confirm this point of view. Furthermore, Dutch geographer Dapper reported in 1686 that the "great priestess of Women society," residing in Gola country, came to administer to the Vai and De towns. The other theory of origin revolves around Sierra Leone groups. Temne people claim they borrowed the institutions from the Bullom, and the Portuguese observed the practices among the latter. Yet the Mende also claim to be the originators, and have historically had a very strong Poro-Sande. Possibly the institutions were introduced by the Bullom-Gizzi, early neighbors of the Gola, and when the Gizzi people of the south were overrun by and incorporated into the Mende group, they introduced Poro and Sande to the Mende. As neighbors of the Gola, Gizzi people shared the same linguistic background and other cultural traditions. Additionally, the Mende also overran the Gola and sold many into slavery. Hence, discussion comes full circle back to the Gola people. Even today, the most intensive and oldest presence of Poro and Sande is among Gola and Mende groups, as well as Moslem Vai.[10]

Further evidence for secret societies being of Gola origin stems from the interesting belief that the male Poro evolved after the female Sande. In precolonial times Gola society was matrilineal. "We were ruled by women and looked to our mothers," stated a Gola informant. In the beginning was Sande, a woman's society which governed, and was the custodian of ritual and of the spiritual powers necessary to defend ancestral interests. The initiation and training of women was a central task involving the entire community. And into these days of "peace and perfect order" came terrible wars, but women resisted the men's mobilization for defense. Thus the men invented a forest monster—the "Great Spirit of Poro" (a mask form) which frightened the women. This spirit provided men with the power to wrest control of the country, take away the sons, teach them the art of war and of politics, and to enforce loyalty exclusively among males, via the secret bush initiation. In these ways, the Gola defeated their enemies and became a great people Yet a com-

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promise of sorts was reached. Sande remained a force and the two societies shared sacred and secular governance. But Sande power was diluted and divided, symbolized by their initiation period being shorter than Poro's. By the time of European contact, Golas were a patrilineal people whose greatness had long since waned. In any event, both institutions were adopted by many ethnic groupings with decentralized structures of governance and administration.[11] And the historical importance of Golas in spreading Poro and Sande, coupled with their numerical contributions to slave coffles, provides food for thought regarding their previously ignored significance in coastal Carolina.

Basically then, bush initiation emphasized and reinforced traditional ways of life, a sense of camaraderie and societal bonds extending over a large area, transcending familial, clan, or ethnic barriers. The bush experience was a shared memory instilling loyalty, bonds of attachment, and unity that neither Christianity nor Islam could destroy even today. In Central West Africa allegiance toward the secret society was based on the institution's supernatural power, which was used to establish law, authority, accountability, security, and social cohesion in the community. Nearly all Africans brought to America came from groups where some type of initiation process was practiced, which further reinforces the argument for tenacity. Yet none contained the distinctive structurally inclusive elements of Poro and Sande with its compulsory ritual, social, political, economic, educational, and hierarchical framework. Poro and Sande influence, like most of traditional West African existence, suffered and was abused greatly because of the traffic in slaves. The power of Poro, rather than remaining a cementing force became, in many cases, an instrument of abuse.[12] Nevertheless, it was for many previous generations the foundation of social and spiritual organization among Upper Guinea ethnic groups. Once slave trading ceased, secret societies resumed much of their past significance. Poro and Sande existed before Europeans came and remained after the colonization of Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Africa these institutions withstood over three centuries of barbarous slave trading on the coasts. They survived the disdainful circumspection of black and white colonizers and repelled the narrow-minded indoctrination of black and white missionaries. Because so many ethnic groups from Poro-Sande traditions were transported to the Lowcountry and perhaps elsewhere, conceivably *some* of the more adaptive and useful elements of these institutions might remain, despite the trauma of capture, the long march, and the Middle Passage.

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ture, the long march, and the Middle Passage. Later discussion on Gullah folk religion will offer interpretations of how functional and ritualistic features of Poro-Sande Societies specifically, and other initiation rites generally, may have merged with Gullah versions of Christianity. This was especially apparent in that Gullah folk religion served as a cultural and community building force and a means of instilling individual self-worth among bondspeople.

### *Religion and Order in Traditional Society*

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Both Islamic and traditional African religions, similar to Christian spiritual belief, adhered to a kind of monotheism. For non-Moslem Africans the Supreme Being or Sky God had many names. Akan-Ashanti referred to God as *Onyame*. Bantu peoples called God *Nzambi*. Among the Mende God was *Ngewo* and to the Gola *Daya*. The Supreme Deity was generally considered omniscient, omnipotent, and creator of all life. God represented the highest values—kindness, justice, sincerity, and mercy. Thus in African perceptions, God was no fomenter of mischief or ill will. Unlike Jehovah, God was not to be feared, and no prayers needed to be offered. Evil came from other sources, not the Creator. Although God was not accorded worship through libation and was invisible, allegiance was rendered, and the Deity's ultimate power over humans was recognized. "Nzambi possesses us and eats us," or "he is gone, Nzambi has willed it," were central themes in some BaKongo proverbs and songs.[11]

Belief in afterlife was integral to traditional African religion. But Africans did not view the future world with fear, nor, as in Christianity, as a place of dispensations for rewards and punishments in a strict sense. In this land of the dead where life continued, there was no sickness, disease, poverty, or hunger. But underworld inhabitants retained the positions of their earthly hierarchy. Death was a journey into the spirit world, not a break with life or earthly beings. The idea of the perpetuity of life through time, space, and circumstance was common to African religious culture, and the complexity of this belief system is typified by BaKongo cosmology and concepts of the four moments of the sun. Using the sun through its course around the earth, the BaKongo pointed out the four stages which make up one's life cycle: (1) rising—meaning birth, beginning, or regrowth, (2) ascendency—meaning maturity and responsibility, (3) setting—implying death and transformation, (4) midnight,

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indicating existence in the other world and eventual rebirth. Life was a continuum and the sign of the four moments of the sun symbolized "spiritual continuity and renaissance" via its spiral journey. The crossing of the four solar moments, spacially like a Greek cross and similar to the Christian cross, was not introduced to the BaKongo by early Christianity. Long before the arrival of Europeans, this geometric statement, the Kongo Cruciform, adorned funerary objects and in other ways reflected BaKongo aesthetic perceptions of their relationship to the world. Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet have brilliantly demonstrated this through BaKongo visual traditions in Africa and the New World.[14]

Belief that one's spirit consciously existed after death was also common. "New" Africans, once they learned English, found reinforcement in Christian principles taught by white ministers, that everyone possessed a soul, apart from one's human form, with its own destiny. In certain ways African concepts were more complicated. Mende believed that each mortal had a *personality-soul*, or spirit existence, where the "vital force of the individual resided." This *personality-soul* left the flesh at death and took on full spiritual form. One who was a good person in earthly life continued as a good *personality-soul*. Those who led an evil life likewise became demonic as well as immune to antiwitch medicines. Golas and other neighboring groups referred to the soul as the "heart" which also stood for the mind. One's actions were directed by the "voice of his heart" which persuaded and guided individual behavior. Each living being possessed two hearts—one good and one bad—each trying to influence the other. Death destroyed the body but did not affect the soul, or "heart." The dead would awake, arise, and join their departed relations and friends at a common place of abode. A further example of immortality is provided by Akan tradition. Akan peoples believed that each person's guiding spirit, the *okra*, departed at death, indicating completion of earthly destiny. The *okra* returned to God to justify its existence on earth, but was also capable of appearing again in spirit form among the world of the living. The *okra* was considered the real self—in a sense, one's conscience—and was thus responsible for human behavior whether good or evil.[15]

Bantu peoples probably had the most elaborate and complex system of afterlife beliefs which were central to their religious traditions. Humans were double beings, consisting of an outer and inner entity. Each entity in turn had two parts. One part of the outer being, the shell, was

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nance.[18] The absence of mandatory secret societies as a means of maintaining corporate linkage and community loyalty points up the significance of kinship and lineage in a monarchial system such as that practiced by peoples of the Kongo region. Clan loyalty was paramount. If *Nzambi* ruled, reproved, and in the final analysis ordered the world according to divine design, ancestors superintended, rewarded, and welcomed the dead into their subterranean village. Ritually, BaKongo spiritual behavior was concatenated to ancestor devotion, not to *Nzambi*, though the spirit world consisted of forces unleashed by *Nzambi*. Among the most powerful of these were deceased elders of the clan, called *bakulu*—white spirits who roamed the earth (in woods, streams, and villages) and resided in the subterranean "world of no evil." Vital to ancestor reverence was the belief that discarnate human spirits maintain interest in their people after passing to the unseen society where they guard traditions and activities of the living. If family herds were squandered, ancestors took note and punished. If drought threatened the family herds, old chiefs in the spirit world might take pity and send rain. The power of ancestral spirits was commonly recognized.[19]

Belief in ancestoral spirits, in life after death, and in the significance of that future life gave funeral and burial rites a central place in African existence. Sick-bed attendance and a fitting send-off were essential observations of this rite of passage. Death halted routine activities when marriage or other rites did not. Failure to properly observe the death ritual could either implicate one in that death, or bring ill will to the erring clan member. The curse of the dying was much dreaded. In the American South, as noted by Herskovits, Bastide, Thompson, and others, black cemeteries represent a special historical relic. For here one finds the clearest, strongest visible examples of memories of African-inspired customs. African reverence for departed members of the family and group remained a factor in Gullah religious life even after they accepted Christianity. Gullah regard for deceased family members could not have equalled the homage paid to these spirits by Old World or "New" Africans. Still, spirits of the dead had to be reckoned with, and slaves believed they took the form of either good or evil supernatural forces. Vengeful spirits of the dead were those wronged during their lifetime, or "on easy" spirits perhaps indicating bewitchment, or they were the ancestors of outside families or groups. Hence in keeping with

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their traditional African heritage, Gullahs employed various means of pacification of the living dead, seemingly more derived from Bantu influence.[20]

Supernatural causation of suffering, disease, accidents, death under obscure circumstances, and other misfortunes was a core of African thought. Magic and medicine were employed for protection and healing. The use of sacred medicines called *minkisi* (singl. *nkisi*) was, along with ancestor reverence, fundamental to religion among Bantu peoples who lacked a complex system of lesser deities possessed for instance by the Yoruba peoples. Although *Nzambi* allowed death to come to humankind, the Deity also armed the people with *minkisi*. Minkisi power derived from two classes of medicine. They contained "spirit-embodying" (earth from a grave site for instance) and "spirit-admonishing" objects (seeds, claws, miniature knives, stones). Hence the basis of *nkisi* life source was a "captured soul," "spirit controlled by a man," and the charm's owner directed the spirit of the object to accomplish certain things.[21]

Medicine specialists, priests, and priestesses were, like ancestors, significant spiritual intermediaries. They were the great healers, or practitioners of "white magic" often symbolized by adornment with white chalk. Medicine specialists, called *nganga* by the BaKongo, discerned the cause of illness, holocaust, or unhappiness, discovered the culprit, and prescribed treatment and a means of preventing recurrence of the calamity. Since afflictions and misfortune were the workings of "black magic," called *kindoki* in KiKongo, diviners employed miraculous as well as herbal healing elements in their profession. As combatants of evil and antisocial behavior, they interceded spiritually with the supernatural and in some societies instructed patients regarding which ancestors or minor deities to approach for defensive and preventive measures. John Mbiti, an East African theologian and scholar, has offered a general synthesis of the African specialists' practice:

> The medicine man is in effect both doctor and pastor to the sick person. His medicines are made from plants, herbs, powders, bones, seeds, roots, juices, leaves, liquids, minerals, charcoal and the like; and in dealing with a patient, he may apply massages, needles or thorns, and he may bleed the patient; he may jump over the patient, he may use incantations and ventriloquism, and he may ask the patient to perform various things like sacrificing a chick or goat, observing some taboos or avoiding certain foods and persons—all these are in addition to giving the patient physical medicines.[22]

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Thus, diviners combined physical, religious, and psychological approaches in their treatments. Perhaps in instances where a physical cure was warranted herbal medicines sufficed. But when a patient was convinced that superhuman agencies were at the root of the problem, a diviner resorted to similar countermeasures of supernatural proportions, and it was a case of spirit acting upon spirit. Patients with faith enough in their specialists, priests, or priestesses might be relieved of a spell they felt in the grip of, "cured" of a psychosomatic complaint, or the healer might even employ an effective herbal remedy while prescribing an amulet, in which case the two powers working together were credited with effecting a cure.[23]

African diviners were specialists who usually considered themselves "called" to their positions, either as youths or later in life. The profession was also passed on within the family. The nature of the "calling" was generally through dreams in which deities or ancestors summoned a would-be diviner to the work. The training process was extensive and candidates were schooled in medicinal knowledge, magic, and witchcraft countermeasures. In the Upper and Lower Guinea regions, mandatory secret societies assumed the task of training religious specialists and the process took place over a number of years in which candidates were isolated from everyone except other initiates and teachers. Among ethnic groups of the Kongo, medicine specialists were sometimes trained in special secret societies. The class of diviners was elaborate (with over fifty orders), since BaKongo religion was solidly based on magico-healing *(minkisi)*. Yet a "proper specialist" or *nganga* need not necessarily belong to any society.[24]

Functions of spiritual leaders and diviners were of paramount significance in the New World setting. In the colonial era these leaders most likely provided a direct link with and representation of the past. Later they demonstrated the African-American adaptive capacity as they incorporated their influence into the Christian religion as well as sometimes operating completely outside of it. In the early days, when memories and reminiscences of Africa were fresh, African diviners assumed religious leadership. From this group may have emerged the "spiritual parents"—men and women whose position was unauthorized by whites, but central to the slaves' spiritual and religious orientation. Their existence predated the coming of organized Christian instruction to the Sea Islands. Yet they became the Gullahs' plenipotentiaries, responsible for

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
[754] conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical
[759] actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
791 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
175 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
791 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
791 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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ships as well. The ontological[27] category of traditional African societies, and which also formed the basis of the Gullah world view, was the fusion of spirituality with human activity and the impact of a sacred presence in all areas of life. Spirituality was a main element of culture, integrating and coordinating other aspects of communal behavior. Such a pattern, so deterministic to group attitudes in West African society, was difficult to obliterate especially among a people so completely defined out of the new social and cultural structure into which they were thrust.

West African world view was consonant with the idea that in a cohesive and integrated community each member had a place. In colonial Kongo whites tended to assume that individualism was absent from black behavior, and attributed to Africans a "Bantu mentality," completely different from "European mentality." As one author noted, this was a rationalization for despotism over Africans. Wyatt MacGaffey maintains that a "purely dogmatic" assumption of some scholars led to insistence that the individual is not differentiated from the collective or clan. One solution, writes MacGaffey, is to distinguish between "true individualism," a commendable trait among the BaKongo, and "egocentrism" which was deplorable. Additionally, MacGaffey sees a difference between progressive "civilized collectivism" and primitive forms of collectivity, the latter stagnating a society. These insights explain much about traditional African society. Certainly Africans had civil, structured communities in which individual activity was forged with collective necessity. Traditional African spiritualism was an individual as well as collective experience. It encompassed the total well-being of the community, but each person had a role in society, guided by spiritual forces. In this sense, religion for Africans and Gullahs, whether essentially traditional or Christian, was a total immersion phenomenon. The sacred was not set apart from temporal, individual, communal, material, or even political concerns, and religion assumed a meaning outside of a "holy" building, a "sacred" day of the week, or a set of dogmas and creeds to be accepted at face value. In traditional African philosophy, spiritual elan affected one's whole system of being, embracing feelings, social interactions, values, fears, and the disposition of the community at large. John Mbiti succinctly expresses this consciousness:

> . . . in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, to do so is to be severed from his

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171 roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society.[28]

Viewed in this light, the power of Poro-Sande, of the ancestors, and of *minkisi* were key unifying socioreligious forces. Each was effective because of divine supernatural intervention which demanded individual and group propriety. God gave Upper Guinea peoples Poro-Sande, gave *minkisi* to the BaKongo, and transformed the ancestors into spiritual guardians. Hence God was not only a Supreme Spirit but a lawgiver as well. The supernatural existence of Poro-Sande was thus ordained and the pantheon of Poro-Sande spirits, through association with God, decreed laws, set standards, modes of behavior, worship, and customs. The "captured spirit" in each *nkisi* was incarnated power sent directly from *Nzambi* (similar perhaps to the Christian Holy Ghost). Ancestors were the emissaries of the withdrawn Supreme Deity. This idea of the remoteness of God, noted by writers and observers, is disputed by some recent African scholars. Still both sides of the debate acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Deity in African spiritual concepts, and that God had agents through which divine will was dispensed. This provided a linkage of spiritual virtue with communal responsibility. The attributes of God (discussed earlier), corresponded with characteristics of harmony and social order, the antithesis of bush living which was a wild, antisocial state of consciousness. Similarly, Gullahs who accepted Christianity associated community socialization with religious piety. The laws of God were synonomous with correct conduct toward other members of the slave quarters. In maintaining this African socioreligious connection in the American ambiance, bondspeople operated on an internal logic that excluded planters, overseers, and even white Christian ministers. There was a parallel between the structural configuration of what became Gullah folk religion and composition of social order in the quarters. Thus in Gullah antebellum communities their interpretations of spirituality played a major role in attitudes toward collective accountability.[29]

171 African codes of ethics stemmed from spiritual orientation. Moral defects were considered spiritual flaws in traditional society and a blight on one's character. Individuals were expected to be guided by ethics characteristic of God, the ultimate source of moral order. Patriarchs, diviners, ancestors, and other spirits that one met in the sacred grove

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and through communion, were daily guardians of human behavior. Punishments and restitution for breaches in morals and ethics were not the province of a future world judge but dealt on earth.[30] Thus, although West African peoples were not generally adherents to the concept of a future tribunal, they did believe that evil activities and failure to obey social regulations warranted earthly censure and punishment according to the degree of depravity involved. And they developed institutions to carry out regulatory functions. This was obviously a more effective method of controlling deviant social behavior. In communities so heavily based on interdependency, assurances of immediate repercussions and ostracization were a more direct and real threat than fear of a remote world beyond.

Inherent in the traditional African world view that places sacredness foremost as a sociocultural component was an anthropocentric philosophy. Although employing a different purpose from what is being suggested here, John Mbiti, one of the adherents of this approach, divides the categories of African ontology thusly:

1. *God* as the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things
2. *Spirits* being made up of superhuman beings and the spirits of men who died a long time ago
3. *Man* including human beings who are alive and those about to be born
4. *Animals and plants* or the remainder of biological life
5. *Phenomena and objects without biological life.*[31]

Reverend Mbiti would perhaps disagree, but sociologically speaking African ontology appears to place more emphasis on humankind than on God and the spirits. While God is the apex of the African theory of being, humankind is the center since everything is viewed in relation to human existence.[32] This expresses affirmation of human and earthly life. Ontological categories are significant mainly within the context of human essence, experience, and environments, from the highest to the lowest form of being. Human spiritual activity is directed toward justification, preservation, protection, and enrichment of life. God explains creation of life and is a model of virtue that all should strive toward. Spirits are intermediaries representing assurance of perpetuity beyond the grave. The thrust of spiritual behavior confirms that mortal life is the nucleus of being, though not the end of the cycle. Recognition of ancestors, the power of Poro-Sande, sacred medicine, and the Supreme God, represent

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•171 endeavors to contribute to the natural and supernatural processes believed to govern life. The relationship between the pivotal position of humanity and religion in African ontology is seen in general concepts regarding life in an African village on the individual as well as the communal level.

While communal concerns are paramount, individual experience also represents group totality. Hence a sense of the sacred accompanied one from conception, through physical death and beyond. Life activity was fashioned by beliefs and rites with strong religious connotations. For example, African women participated in numerous rites and ceremonies to insure bringing a healthy child into the world. The fate of the unborn was placed in the care of spiritual beings and forces. A newborn's survival past three to seven days was a sign that it had been blessed by the spirits and a sacred naming ceremony was held where the infant was set apart for a certain occupation and a life of good habits and industry. At childhood's end, the spirits were celebrated and appreciation shown ceremoniously for watch and care during those formative years. Upon entrance into puberty a religious rite customarily prepared the youth for the initiation process. After initial training in the bush, the neophyte reentered society through a lavish sacred confirmation, recognizing that the individual was no longer a lost soul but a member of the village. Marriage rites also had consecrational connotations, a commemoration of continued procreation of the human species, longevity of the community, and individual self-fulfillment. Hence, introduction into various stages of life was accompanied by sacred observations, ceremonies, and festivals. Additionally, during the periods of crisis and stress of normal adult life, one naturally looked to an depended upon supernatural succor (via sacred medicine ancestral intervention) for guidance and assistance. Of course, death was epitomized by a religious send-off to the spirit world, with which the living had maintained such close contact. Death, then, was but the climax of one existence and the beginning of another. And afterlife concepts were perhaps the fullest embodiment of spiritualism as well as convictions of human perpetuity."

Thus African religion can be viewed as primarily a celebration of collective human life through individual experience. To live fully and robustly was a basis in African thinking and a reasoning behind their particular cosmology. That which threatened this will to live, or "vital force" was considered dangerous to the individual and to society. Inhabitants

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of the spirit world were guardians of life. They were appealed to when illness, environmental disaster, or the malice of wrongdoers jeopardized the life force. Often they were placated in the interim as a precautionary measure, always with the end being the perserverance of the individual, the clan and village, and the group. The underlying and perhaps most dynamic force operative in the development of a religion among the Gullahs was rooted in these processes. In some respects, African traditional religion was complimented by certain Christian beliefs. But it was mainly a pristine element of sacred thought that remained with the slaves and accounted for the vitality of African-American culture and creation of an African-American ethos. It was a spirituality which represented a zealous affirmation and celebration of life, that did not separate sacred from secular responsibility, and that placed community above individual interests without completely sacrificing personhood. The effects of this broader guiding African influence on Gullah religion explain their striving and motivation in maintaining, within the realm of bondage, a reason for being. Spiritual causation was one of the few means available in their attempts to fulfill needs, interpret experience, and articulate the expectations of an emerging people. This, along with practical and applied examples of Christianity, formed the basis of Gullah folk religion. Yet the process of socioreligious community formation was slow, traumatic, and filled with pitfalls. In the early years there were problems of cultural alienation on both sides. Even later, whites were not generally anxious to include the masses of African-Americans into the Protestant spiritual ethos. Nor were Gullahs exactly bursting with enthusiasm for a religion whose doctrines supposedly ordained their foreign bondage. This polarization lessened, for whites realized benefits in adopting an *unequal* spiritual coexistence, and Gullahs decided the new religion could be interpreted on a number of levels.

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More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[21] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

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code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. 000
The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with 175
Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah 171
spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who main- 567
tained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote: 792
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> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual children. (791)

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' 175
from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the 567
two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the 554
Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary 791
correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church 792
membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership 175
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175 band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175 Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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CHAPTER 10

# *Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phenomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these [533] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, forebod- [157] ing, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of de- 761 moralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical 775 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation expe- [171] rience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gullahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its 000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife beliefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

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no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the death-bed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende:

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead:

> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18]

Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related:

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

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774 spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence,
775 Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de
(782) speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects
(764) that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

775 Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these
775 "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles
764 on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following
782 explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to make him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

764 Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings
• 171 left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little water was placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, wash your hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate the remainder of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that the family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

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Similarity of beliefs and motives regarding grave adornment is best illustrated by the types of articles found on graves in the Sea Islands. Such objects as partially filled medicine bottles, mirrors, broken pitchers, saucers and cups, mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, vaseline, cold cream, tobacco, and black pepper were placed on graves. Seashells were also commonly placed on graves. Other personal items included shaving brushes, toothbrushes, mirrors, combs, and belt buckles. In addition, twelve Gullah ministers reported to Samuel Lawton that other articles of food such as grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, bread, and cake were often placed on graves and soon eaten by animals and birds. Further efforts to satisfy the spirits of the dead consisted of pouring water on the grave during a drought. This custom could have been for the purpose of quenching the thirst of the spirit so that the dead would not disturb the living by seeking water.[23]

Gullah decoration of graves indicates a firm belief in the return of ancestors from the world of the dead. Offerings on graves were statements of homage and in these graveyards, one finds the strongest expressions of African-inspired memories. Many objects are associated with or used to hold water. In BaKongo religion, deceased ancestors became white creatures called *bakulu*. They lived in the village of the dead, referred to as the land of all things white. This village was located under river beds and lakes. *Bakulu's* white spiritual transparency allowed them to return to the world of the living undetected. Sea shells, used on Gullah graves, for instance, are an important theme in BaKongo metaphysics. One BaKongo prayer which addresses the shells states, "As strong as your house, you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever." The essence of this prayer is recaptured by the late Bessie Jones of St. Simons Island, Georgia. She related:

> The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise.[24]

Just as sea shells and pottery express immortal existence, and the significance of a water underworld, so the glittering, iridescent mirrors and porcelain on Gullah graves reflect the light which represents the spirit. These objects, like water when struck by sunlight, are intimations of the flash of the separated spirit in symbolized flight. Mirrors, lamps, porcelain, and glass are spirit-embodying once they are placed on the graves.

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764 775 (171) Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 171 823 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Africa, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plateyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a 776 conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that 754 Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron."[28]

This may be similar to the power of *akisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29] 789 822 (776) (342) (775)

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time. 775 776

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex, 771 776 171

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representing honor, constancy, harmony, and perfection, while humanity occupied the center, ever striving to be godlike through a sense of love, community, kinship, and cooperation. In addition, the good and bad of the spirit world existed in both traditions although it was far more complex for Africans than for Gullahs. These beings included superhumans, animals, and objects without biological life.[30] Gullahs applied the African ontology, adapted Christianity and bondage to it, and created a religion that employed spirituality as a means of self-preservation and as a vital component of community life. It is, then, to the Gullahs' credit that though circumstances prevented them from rising up against slavery, they did not succumb to white cultural domination. Instead, they successfully rose above many of the negative ingredients of Christianity while assimilating certain other attributes which were synthesized with African culture. In bondage, Gullahs achieved elevation on the level of personal culture and the molding of community values. The edifying qualities of Gullah religious belief must be seen as having contributed much to that achievement, just as an element of truth must be recognized in the assertion that insofar as people develop their own culture they are not slaves.[31]

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28. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 236–53; Appendix A.

29. Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), Paul, 1951), 28–29, 37–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 5–6.

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6. Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 671; Little, "Political Function of the Poro," Part I, 357–58, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 200–205, and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 1, 4–6, 9–10; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 19–20, 6–7, 15, 31; Matthews, *Voyage to Sierra Leone*, 82–83; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Primitive Political Systems: A Preliminary Comparative Analysis," *American Anthropologist* 61 (1959): 202–3, 208.

7. Little, "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–206, and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 3–4 and "Political Function of the Poro," Part I, 350–54; Fulton, "Functions of Poro in Kpelle Society," 1221, 1226–27; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64, no. 3 (1962): 513–14 and "Gola Society and Culture," 70–76.

8. Little, *Mende*, 226–27, 240–47 and "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 3 and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–201; Fulton, "Functions of Poro in Kpelle Society," 1226–28; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 3–9, 11–12, 29–31.

9. Harley, "Notes on Poro," 7.

10. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 70; Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 2; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 67.

11. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 70, and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* 1 (1980): 15–16 and "Mask Makers and Myth in Western Liberia," in A. Forge, ed., *Primitive Art and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973): 126–130; see also Margaret Washington Creel, "The Significance to Female Diviners in Antebellum Slave Communities," unpublished paper presented at the Dark Madonna Symposium, November 8–9, 1986, University of California, Los Angeles.

12. Little, "Poro as Arbiter of Culture," 1, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 210–11; Harley, "Notes on Poro," 5; Dominique Zahan, *The Religious, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 53–65; Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–92; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 258.

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*ligion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), 39–41, 83–86; Little, *Mende*, 2, 217–18; W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 2–13, 119–20; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 22–24, 163–69; Folkways Research Series, *Traditional History of Folklore of the Gbeto Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83, 123, and *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 21, 25, 27; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 156; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 6–7; Gamble, Wolof, 39; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols., (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 222, 226; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1958, repr. from 1807 ed.), 60–61; Karl Laman, *Kongo*, 5 vols. (Uppsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, 1962) III: 1–2, 53–63; Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, trans. Helen Weaver (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), 244–45; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 72–76; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1959), 4–5, 28–38, 159–62; Willie Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 52–56; Beryl L. Bellman, *Village of Curers and Assassins; on the Production of Fala Kpelle Cosmological Categories* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975), 129–30; see also John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970). This author's approach seems more theological than anthropological or historical. African concepts of God are placed in Christian theological terms rather than discussed and interpreted in their own contextual environments. An older study is Edwin Smith, ed., *African Ideas of God* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1950). It provides the best information on concepts of God among various African peoples.

14. Jahn, *Muntu*, 109–14; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 167–69, 181; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 194–96; Little, *Mende*, 218–221; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18, 30–33; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 6–7; John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 34; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27–28, 42–47, 134, n. 50, and passim; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103–58; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 245–49.

15. Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 26; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 159–62; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 88–90; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 199; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province*, 18, 27, 29; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 153; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 59–60; Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God*, 153–64.

16. Laman, *Kongo*, III: 1–6, 216–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 43.

17. Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 76–82; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 26–27, 75–76; Harris & Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 14–18; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 216; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 63–64; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 35–39; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 11–12, Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 85–91.

18. Igor Kopytoff, "The Suku of Southwestern Congo," in James L. Gibbs Jr., ed.,

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17 113 *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 450–52, 458; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Kongo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 84; Laman, *Kongo* II: 130–31; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 246–47.

19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom* •171 *in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36– 113 39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. 771 from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments* 775 *of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Murtuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

171 21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 80–84; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, 113 *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

(791) 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes; Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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26. Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27A, 27B, WPA, SCL; Lowrey, *Old Plantation*, 83–87; Towne Diary, 98; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folk-lore Society 1923), 211–13; E. Horace Fitchett, "Superstitions in South Carolina," *The Crisis* 43 (1936): 360–71; Henry F. Davis, "Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 245–49; Leonora Herron and Alice M. Bacon, "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," *Southern Workman* 24 (1895): 118; Louis Pendleton, "Notes on Negro Folklore and Witchcraft in the South," *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 301–17; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 216–21; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 834–36; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; Charles A. Raymond, "Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 27 (June–November, 1963): Part I, 478–80, Part II, 676, Part III, 821; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 113 567 771

27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 771 113 [171]

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592. [171]

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14: Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

### *3. Missionaries and Masters*

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The* 175 771 113

000 himself understood.

539 (538) 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naIf and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
(197) dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
197 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[1]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and, the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[1] Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the original: of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

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(178)

[2] See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel 'more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small leetle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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## CONCLUSION

178 Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has
538 already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing
with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns,
(533) songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and
proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of
unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this
unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar
to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins
with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes
macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman
are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than
the things banned by the Great Tabu.'"

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[509] "Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening
(83) urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The
experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for mater-
ial of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less
obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in
Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater
sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of
• (171) certain tales or 'tosses', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the
Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go
t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toss' ' he had boasted of
knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European
tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One
day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too!
I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I
rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they
are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me
the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar
on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he
knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge,
'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part
of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I
leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christen-
sen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that,
faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she
found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for [243] beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa [412] (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require [171] the aid of rhythmic songs.

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of Afri- 535 can play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the 533 action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to [179] an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

533 One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

535 In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi- 533 religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies— 539 is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations border- 535 ing on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) 171 which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst].

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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535 Island, called by the incongruous railroad term "Ball the Jack."[18] A few years
•171 ago I saw it demonstrated by an old resident of Eleuthera, in the Bahamas, and its portrayal in the film *Sanders of the River*—for which "background shots" were made in villages along the Congo—indicates the region from which it originally came.

These dances, and such plantation activities as beating and fanning rice in the
123 traditional African manner, provide effective material for those in the family group who are moving-picture addicts. It is also possible that such survivals persist on our plantations as are not to be found elsewhere in America this side of Haiti or Dutch Guiana; but do not be discouraged if they do not come when you call. It took years for me to see the ring-shout and the Buzzard Lope, and to see and hear the ring-play dances and songs, and the songs in an African dialect. It is a curious fact that the Negro rarely volunteers information—on the sound principle, perhaps, that if you tell nothing you have nothing to regret; and this is my reason for giving so many identifying titles and lines. If you know what to ask for, the work is half done.

000 For the plantation owner who cares to take the trouble, a barbecue provides the quickest route to results. If the procedure is not already known, an old resident will tell how one should be conducted, and who is competent to do the work. Both whites and blacks remember with nostalgic regret the days when a barbecue celebrated the end of the plantation harvest. For the sake of the picture, if dancing takes place after the feast instead of before, a generous fat-wood fire should be built as close to a spreading live oak as is safe, and a few prizes of old-fashioned white aprons, gilt hoop earrings, gay handkerchiefs for the heads of the women, and red bandanas for the necks of the men should be supplied. A temporary platform of broad boards laid—on two-by-fours or on any firm foundation—under the oak tree will repay the extra trouble. If the plantation is not too near a city, there is likely to be such dancing and entertainment as would make a Broadway producer green with envy. An occasion like this brings out the best—also the worst—in the way of talent, and gives an opportunity to evaluate what is to be found at the back door.

Old songs like "O de Robe" and "Norah Hist the Windah" are suitable for a restful evening; but let it end with shouting, as was customary at the old-time prayer meetings, and the whole atmosphere will change. There will be an inner

[18] *I am told that the action employed in "Snake Hip" is similar to that used in "Ball the Jack."*

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533 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned
534 and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were
[202] well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

[21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section*
[175] *prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

[22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay*
[171] *of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

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000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 171 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 177 178 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio programs. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

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show that the "diary" was in reality not a record of Old Bilali's life. Disappointing as this discovery may be to those who are primarily interested in his history, it is still possible, according to Mr. Greenberg, to draw certain conclusions about him from the character of the manuscript.

He was apparently a fanatical Mohammedan, for the "diary" consists mainly of descriptions of "ablutions and the call to prayer." Mistakes in the Arabic script,[17] along with "repetitions, incorrect word divisions, and incorrect arrangement of the excerpts," indicate that he was trying to reproduce what he had learned orally. Since "books are first taught by oral memorization," Mr. Greenberg conjectures that "at the time of his departure from Africa the writer was still a young student."

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It was reassuring to find that Mr. Greenberg's deductions tallied with what Katie Brown, Bilali's great-granddaughter, had told me about him years before. According to her, he was captured when not fully grown, and went to Sapelo from Nassau with his wife and children. Where he spent the intervening years no one knows. Both Katie and her cousin, Shadrach Hall, tell me that the three oldest children were named Margaret, Hester, and Charlotte (Cotty). The others bore African names:[18] Fatima (Shad says she was named for her mother), Nyrrabuh or

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[171]

[17] Concerning the possibility "of discovering the origin and status of the writer" through the character of the script he used, Mr. Greenberg says: "The fact that the Arabic script was of the Maghrebine, or Western variety, and that the Risala is a legal work of the Malekite school, which is dominant in appproximtely the same regions as the Western style of writing, would seem to indicate that the writer came from some part of northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis) or from the Western Sudan. The confusion of 'd' and 'T' in several cases points strongly to the Sudan, since this pronunciation is unknown elsewhere. It is doubtful whether local varieties of the Maghrebine script in the Sudan can be distinguished at the present state of our knowledge; at any rate, no attempt has hitherto been made to do this, and therefore, this approach would seem to be closed to us pending further research."

In Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan, by W. B. Hodgson, the birthplace of Bul-ali is established in a letter from James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton plantation, Georgia. This letter is given in full, and states that his "driver Tom" and Mr. Spalding's Bul-ali were intimate friends. Both spoke the Foulah language, and were from the Kingdom of Bambara. Tom was born on the Niger River in Kianah, between Jenne and Timbuctoo, but Bul-ali was from Timboo.

[18] Lyell mentions the singular taste displayed by Negro parents in naming their children: January, April, Monday, and Hard Times. He did not know what Dr. Turner has discovered: the slaves followed a West African custom in naming their children according to the time of birth, conditions surrounding it, or the temperament of the child. Bad Boy, Peanut, Blossom, and July are names found on the Georgia coast. In West African Studies Miss Kingsley tells us that soon after a child is born it is given "the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born."

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Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English, French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages? This fact raises still another interesting question.

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Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

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Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

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her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a wash-stand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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764 [175] [176] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

[178] [175] In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 •171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

48 562 178 The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In [164] the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] *Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.*

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] *In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.*

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
794 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[711] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
[711] except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of beude seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. Ac-
•(171) cording to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

567 Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
754 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
197 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 Mrs. A. S. Hilman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
754 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
(551) magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

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How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Cranman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [22] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[22] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

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796 787 786 an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: [171] "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently [171] came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

796 786 Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical a helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

763 764 171 There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] *Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."*

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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[25] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[25] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the
567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa." [36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the Wanderer, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between
538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations
171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] J. A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."

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195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) A and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and (533) belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms.

538 •171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Domiello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 24, 1930.

A. [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analysis]

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538 wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display
•171 indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little
(522) man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the
race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to
538 state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his
[115] Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

### *Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well*

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

[171] In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!
But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:
What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] *An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat di fulafafa!" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say wulistapapa." The joke lies in the fact that "fulafafa" and "wulistapapa" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.*

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

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539 Miss Beckwith is evidently right in assuming that this form of amusement represents "the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts."

192 Discovering an unsuspected connection with Africa in words which sound as though they might be English, but really aren't,[43] provides almost as much satisfaction as finding new songs or dances. Conservative Negroes still retain many of these words—particularly in the old songs—and such are passed on to Dr. Turner in the hope that he may know their meaning. From his *West-African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah* I have learned much that has been an enigma to me in the past, but even Dr. Turner is puzzled by "giffy," which on Sapelo means damp. Years ago I heard the great blue heron in the marshes called "Poor Joe," and judged his lean body had given him his name. Not at all. *Podzo* is the name of a similar heron in Africa. We call a certain type of southern tortoise a "cooter." In the neighborhood of Timbuctoo its near relative is called a *kuta*. When I first visited the Georgia coast I heard the name "tackies" applied to the small wild horses found on the salt marshes of the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.[44] Now I find that *taki* is the West African name of a horse. The same with the "tabby" houses built for the slaves out of old oyster shells, sand, and cement (made from burning live oyster shells in pine cribs built for the purpose). In Africa the name for a house of similar construction is *tabax*. When a Southerner hears the word "tote" he knows that it means to carry; a very similar word, *tota*, from the Congo, means to pick up. Southern children know the "joggle board," or see-saw, but they do not know that the name comes from the West African word, *dzogal*, meaning to rise. In the old days you asked a colored woman where to find her husband. If she said at the "jook," it meant that he was in the rather ungodly place where drink was sold and good women were not supposed to go. According to the Vocabulary, *dzug* means "to misconduct oneself" and it is easy to see how "jook house," in the Gullah dialect, derived its name. In *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth tell us that Africa possessed an instrument known as the *banjar* made of a large gourd

[43] *By this time I should be wary of laughing up my sleeve when the Negro uses such words—but white people are like this. My last nugget was found through Mrs. Cate's keen sight. I had told her of the amusing application of the horse breeder's term "in foal" to the condition of one of my singers. With a fresh eye, she spotted in Dr. Turner's* Gullah Vocabulary *the word "en(in)fo le" meaning "pregnant."*

[44] *These hardy little horses are said to be descendants of those left by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century.*

[136]

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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as Sandi, Suki, Aba, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), benne[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens.
114 Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
192 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
171 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
567 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
(192) whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
(824) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and
(761) give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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175 gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me
56 how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa.
[159] Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's
569 appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of
754 her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old
159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land,
175 and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her
[683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in*
[171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

567 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton 322 press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 347 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 567 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in 326 the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- 322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21)[A] Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the 517

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 336 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that Art for Art's sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

[177]
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Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

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In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

533
•171

### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[177]

The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.

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(177)

from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

## 2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she [22] shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

[22] One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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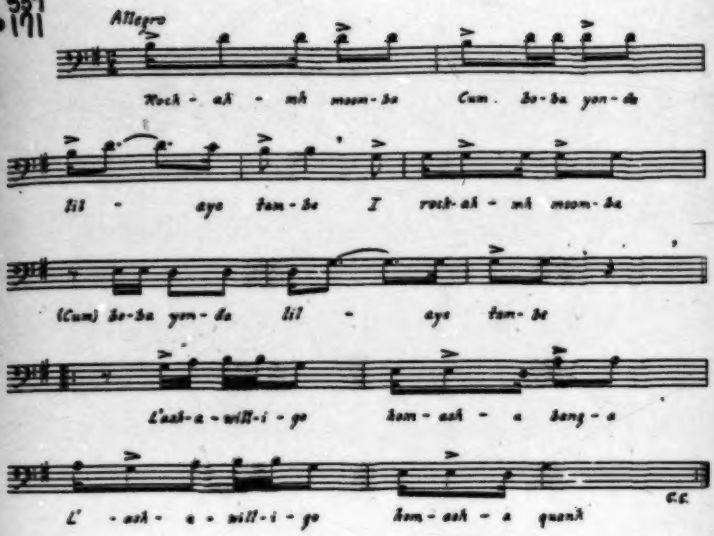

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This song and the one following evidently had a common origin. Perhaps "Ole Dublin" and "Gullah Ben" came from the same part of Africa, or were friends in Liberty County. Both songs are suggestive of the rhythm of the "ring-play":

Wa'k[83] Bil-le Au-ba
Be bul-o
Pretty fine lady
Be bul-o

I WOK OM A MO-NA

The following song was sung by Gullah Ben, who—like Dublin—came from Africa. He taught it to Ben Delegal, who in turn taught it to Amelia Dawley:

Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wok om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa willigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa willigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa willigo dwellinda quenk.

[83] Pronounce "Wa'k" to rhyme with "rock."

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Pounding Corn in West Africa

[Facing p. 48]

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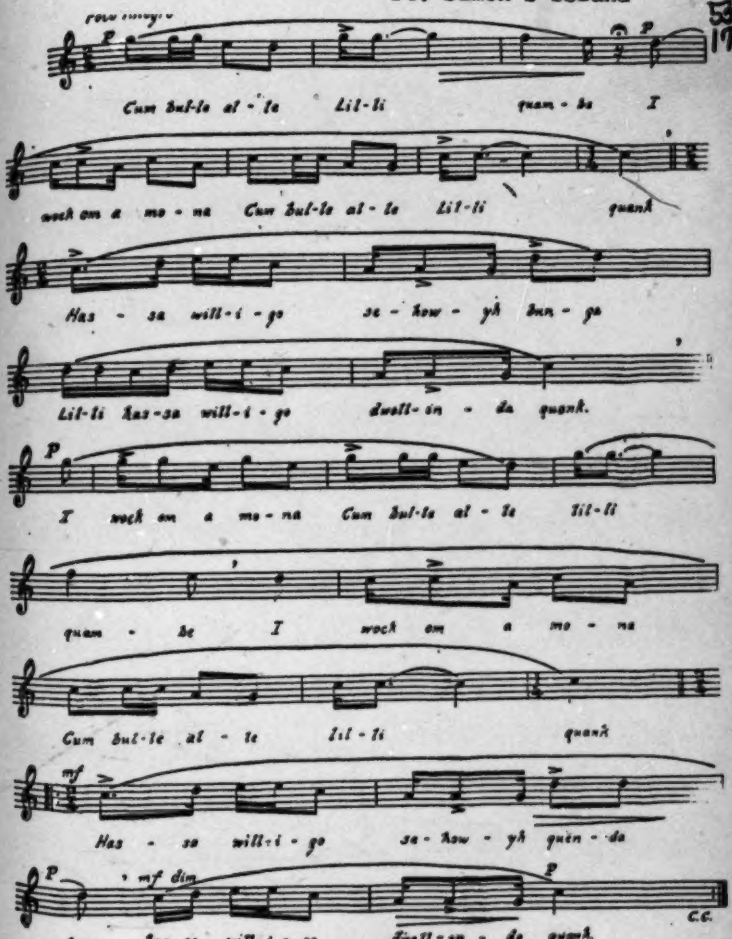


[p.49]

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## BYUM BY-E

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The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(763)

The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

(539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

[54] The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) ~1942

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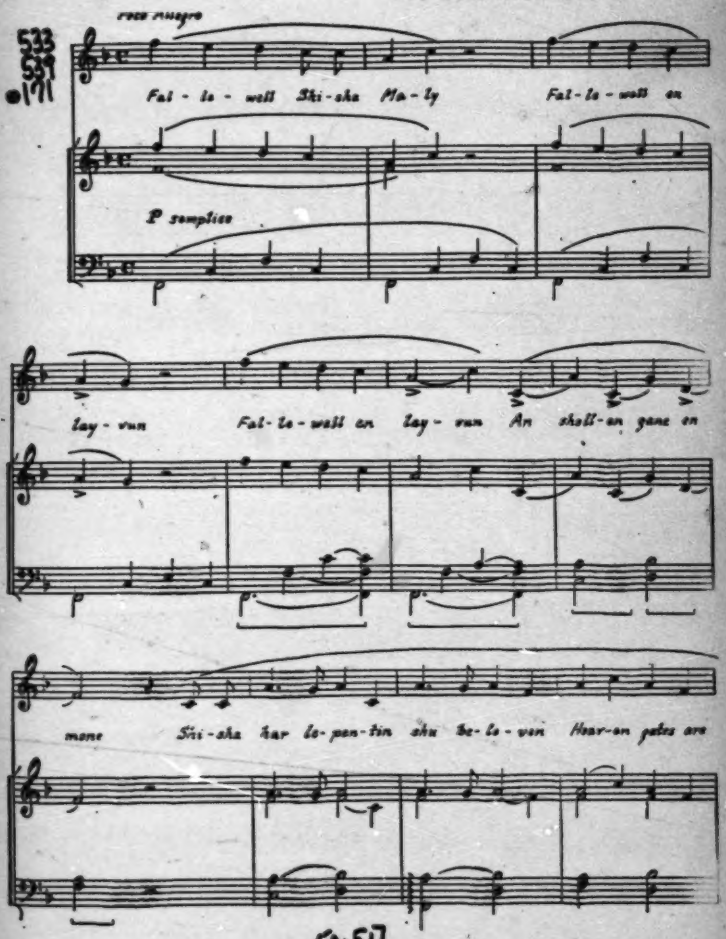

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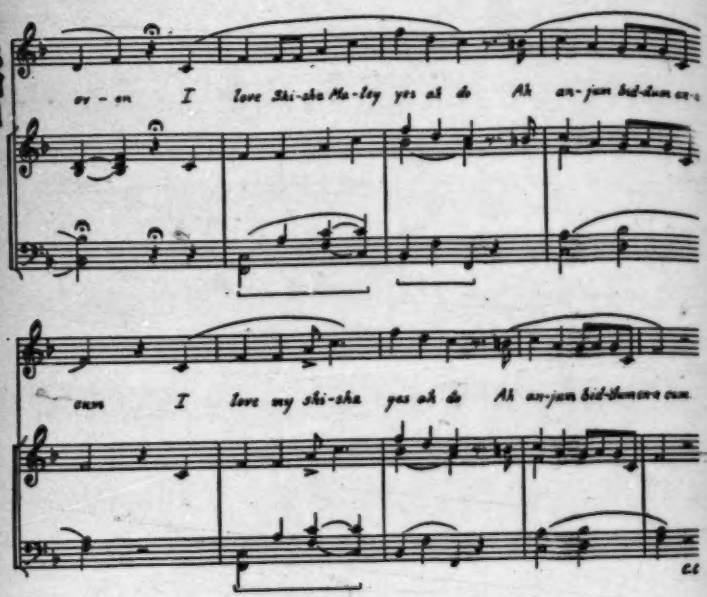


[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[15] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gene en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Miss sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Miss-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Miss-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[15] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

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## 5. BYUM BY-E

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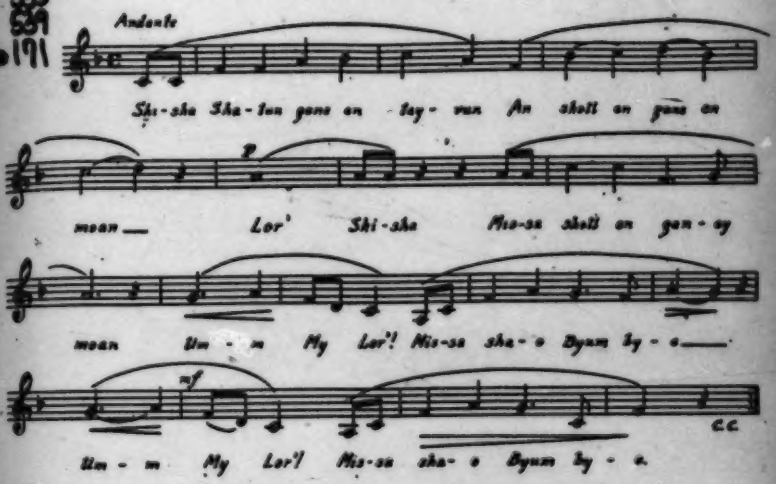


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"U-m-m,"[50] hummed with the lips closed, is a strangely moving tone (rightly named a moan), and in conjunction with the exclamatory words, "My Lor'! Missa-shao!" followed by the roll of the African word, "Byum by-e," gives emotional depth to this unusual song.

"Maum Kate" Wilson of Darien used to sing the following phrase: "Sumanar kusi luki tu," over and over, but no one ever learned what it meant. There are other songs in which half the words are African, but without the music it is useless to give them.

[50] An Anglo-African official tells us that the African side-drum (often called "the hypocrite" from the many different tones it is capable of producing through change of pressure of the arm under which it is held) makes a sound very similar to the hummed "U-m-m-m" so frequently employed in the slave songs. This humming is evidently another African survival. Its use is mentioned by the Dennis-Roosevelts as common to the Belgian Congo. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, says it is popular among the Zulus: "sometimes . . . a whole chorus will hum together with closed lips."

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 17 178 (179) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A, [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analyst]

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## THE BUZZARD LOPE—A SOLO DANCE

535 Since 1915 I have known that such a dance as the Buzzard Lope[6] could be found in the neighborhood of St. Simon's; but the Negroes of that section always told me it was done on some far-off island, such as St. Catherine's or Sapelo. Over ten years ago I asked the same question of a newcomer, as a matter of routine, which I had for years put to the other shouters: "Can you do the Buzzard Lope?" When she said: "Yes'm," I was a bit stunned . . . but she could, to perfection. To my surprise, however, I found that a number who had previously denied such a gift were close seconds. (Illustrations 23 and 26) A

53 This group used an old religious song with narrative lines of a suitable character. In ante-bellum days the slaves called the graveyard "the ole field":

### THROW ME ANYWHERE

Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Members,[7] you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die
In that ole field.

• (191) [6] Dances simulating the peculiar characteristics of animals are popular in Africa; and Mr. Herskovits tells me he has seen a similar dance in Dahomey.

[7] Deacons, preachers, brothers, sisters, and mother are all mentioned as wanting to die "In that old field."

A, (For Illustrations 23 & 26, see Categories 535 & 142, plates facing pp. 129 and 160 respectively--Analyst)

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave (538) songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of (128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of (171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what 761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(787) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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THE BELL DONE RING

533 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song [10] is
•171 given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it.
126 When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533
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Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

[10] Vol. I, record 86-A.

(567) [11] Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.

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795 794 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is [788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 178 [783] In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tidewater section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[14] The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide [114] lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult [171] in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers." (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

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"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [264] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[171] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

789 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[18] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 [764] Susyanna (Illustration 29)[A] learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[18] *As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 283.*

A. [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

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771 772 171 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

533 771 [154] In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

[171] 533 787

533 584

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

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764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[115] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

764 M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
•171 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers, there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my hus-
[123] band died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

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CHAPTER SIX

# Work Songs

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and—during the heat of the day—calling to each other across wide fields. The call was peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

533 198 (461) 533 198 171

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood—southern New Jersey—began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that, in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now." [1] However, there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large numbers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me My Money Down!"

533 171 533 461

[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243 [17] *William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters* •171 *got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.*

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## PEAS AN' THE RICE

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[243]

In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

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[18] James A. Grant in a Walk across Africa tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!" To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.

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A. B. A. B. A.

243 533 461 The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

533 534

Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo',
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Gally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

[20] Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.

[21] The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion.

[71]

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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[171] [22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
[501] on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[461] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[561] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
583 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense
[171] tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [171] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 567 461 [412] [533] On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

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## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made
697 it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon
[461] I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He
777 laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently
577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea
673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that
685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] *The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.*

[31] *In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Scagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."*

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533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun- from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

533 3. There is apparently very little invention or im-
provisation going on among the island singers. Prac-
• 171 tically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

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to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent investigation has shown that these island songs are found among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places. 533 171.

Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston. 533

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

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In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes.

000

The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

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*Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low,* for example. Every line is followed by the

[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times,* April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals;* J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro;* James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals.*

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refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

STANZA: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

CHORUS: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 58. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

> I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
> Ye followers of the lamb.[32]

> There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
> When we all shall meet above.[33]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father, mother, preacher, deacon,* etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well,* a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister, mother, neighbors, pastor, poor sinner,* etc.[34]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evi-

[32] *Ibid.*, II, 11. [33] *Ibid.*, I, 34. [34] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

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dently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify. 533 171

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following: 533

*Solo:* Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
*All:* Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
*Solo:* Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
*All:* Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[25] Finally, there is the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to some extent in the white songs.[26] The extent of its use can 533 171

[25] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[26] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

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533 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how*
•171 the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pat-
171 tern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least,
177 a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new
533 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the
178 possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

## Tunes

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[37] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[38] is as follows:

| | Negro Songs per cent | White Songs per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Major | 83.8 | 78.9 |
| Minor | 11.7 | 18.6 |
| Mixed or vague | 4.4 | 2.4 |

533 ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices re-
171 plied with certain words.

[37] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[38] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

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There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[89] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters. 533

*Deviations from the Conventional Scale.* Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises 533 171.

[89] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

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all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

| Deviations in White Songs | Rank of Same in Negro Songs |
|---|---|
| 1. Absence of seventh tone | 2 |
| 2. Absence of fourth and seventh | 1 |
| 3. Absence of fourth | 3 |
| 4. Absence of sixth | 4 |
| 5. Flat seventh | 5 |
| 6. Absence of sixth and seventh | 6 |
| 7. Flat third | 7 |

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[49] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

[49] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

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Taking up how more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

| | Number | | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro‡ | White | Negro |
| Pentatonic | 23 | 111 | 9.6 | 25.1 |
| No seventh | 39 | 78 | 16.2 | 17.6 |
| No fourth | 10 | 45 | 4.2 | 10.2 |
| Flat seventh | 8 | 20 | 3.3 | 4.5 |
| No sixth | 12 | * | 5.0 | * |
| No sixth and seventh | 5 | * | 2.1 | * |
| Other major | 143 | 188 | 59.6 | 42.6 |
| Total | 240 | 442 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. 22.

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fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

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Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

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for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 40 per cent of the total white population.[42]

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But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

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In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

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which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

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the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[80] 000

This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[81]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[82] 533 171. With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa. [177]

[80] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.
[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.
[82] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[53] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

[53] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84] 533 171.

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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"It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

*Intervals.* The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

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A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

| Keynote Intervals | Frequency of Interval: White Songs | Frequency of Interval: Negro Songs |
|---|---|---|
| 1. P1 (keynote) | 396 | 413 |
| 2. Major 3rd above keynote | 388 | 358 |
| 3. Perfect 5th above keynote | 346 | 268 |
| 4. Major 2nd above keynote | 324 | 254 |
| 5. Perfect 4th above keynote | 194 | 117 |
| 6. Perfect 4th below keynote | 86 | 101 |

[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Major 6th above keynote | 100 | 98 |
| 8. | Minor 3rd below keynote | 59 | 63 |
| 9. | Octave above keynote | 79 | 51 |
| 10. | Minor 2nd below keynote | 52 | 37 |
| 11. | Minor 3rd above keynote | 39 | 36 |
| 12. | Minor 7th above keynote | 9 | 24 |
| 13. | Major 7th above keynote | 31 | 6 |
| | Total number of intervals | 2,103 | 1,826 |

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

| | Percentage Distribution | |
|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro |
| Keynote | 19 | 23 |
| Major 3rd | 18 | 19 |
| Perfect 5th | 17 | 15 |
| | 54 | 57 |
| All others | 46 | 43 |
| | 100 | 100 |

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The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

*Endings on other than the keynote.* It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

*Melodic patterns.* Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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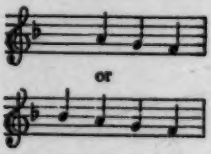
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[84]

White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[85]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus




This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

[84] See, for example, *'Rasin' Jacob; Old Ship of Zion; He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'; Oh, Freedom; I've Got a Mother in de Heaven; I'm a-Rolling; Old Time Religion; I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home; Go Round; Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler; You Can't Find a New Hiding Place; I Am Hunting for a City; When I Lay My Burden Down; O Lord, Have Mercy on Me; I'm Going Down to de River Jordan; Fix Me, Jesus; Angel Rolled de Stone Away;* and others.

[85] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

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533 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the
•171 pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne
[114] in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

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except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[68] 533

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

## Tempo and Rhythm

*Metre.* Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[69] 533 171.

> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

[68] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series.*

[69] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

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| | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|
| | Negro Songs | White Songs |
| Duple Time | 96 | 70 |
| Triple Time | 4 | 30 |

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

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*Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*

There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story*, Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp*, I, 40 and 47, respectively.

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

*Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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## FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories.

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As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them.

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An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with

> Once upon a time, a very good time,
> Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

> Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

[171]
[114]

[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

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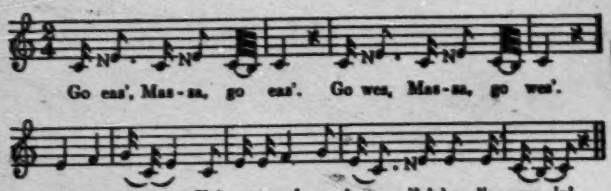


NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

## XV

### TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

[171]
[113]

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South Carolina
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IV[29]

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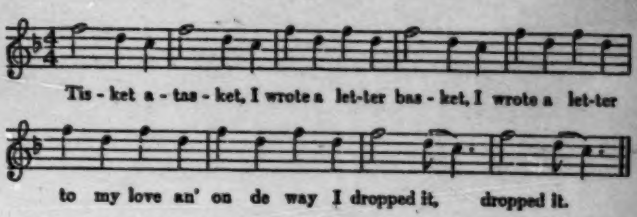
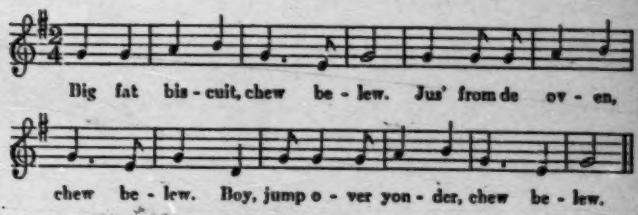



1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

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In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
[825] a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[772] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[764] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114]

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Georgia

# *Sapelo Island*

131 SAPELO ISLAND IS ONE OF THE CHAIN OF "GOLDEN Isles" lying along the Georgia Coast. The word Sapelo was
103 derived from "Zapala," the name used by the Indians when the island was a favorite hunting ground for the tribes that had given up much of the mainland to the Spaniards and
• 172 later to the English. Among the landmarks that recall colorful historical episodes are Indian mounds, tabby ruins of colonial days, and the remains of a house built by Jean Berard Mocquet, Marquis de Montalet, a French Royalist who immigrated to Georgia from Santo Domingo about 1797.

000 Plantation life flourished on Sapelo in the early nineteenth century. Here Thomas Spalding conducted one of the most extensive agricultural enterprises in the coastal section. The "big house" on the south end of the island was a spacious tabby mansion, so strongly constructed that the original walls are still standing and form the nucleus of the present dwelling. The island, with the exception of a number of Negro homesteads, is now the property of Richard Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but, although many improvements and changes have been made, much of the atmosphere of the early days has been preserved.

464 Industrial activity is concentrated in the central portion of Sapelo, where there is a sawmill that gives employment to many of the islanders. Nearby are the company houses, a
368 post office, and a store. Several Negro churches and a dance hall are located elsewhere on the island.

1: Federal Writers' Project NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For information on the reminiscences of older informants about the African people and/or their ancestors who were brought over to the New World as slaves before the American Civil War, see Category 829.]

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Georgia

# *Harris Neck*

361 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR
491 Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through
361 the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from
[351] the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

829 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remem-
193 bered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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Georgia

## HARRIS NECK

829 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spauld-
•173 ing," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey
[567] ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah
173 wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah
754 wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69a] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an
[789] hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage
285 and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence.
285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
197 days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 193 869 869 186 198 869 869 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would [538] teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 533 [534] The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples. 101

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One 114
early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote ex- 174
tensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the 101
Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from 175
the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have 174
obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the 197
Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" 174
trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with 174
Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances 114
the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala* (*gola*, *gula*) which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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114 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both
•174 possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

101 African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called
[567] Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gisi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide
[578] geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11]

174 One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins.
55 Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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rite.' " For the latter Gullah name, Turner states ". . . a ceremony during which the male receives the national mark . . . and a new name, at the same time being given certain instructions which he keeps strictly secret. . . ." The Gullah name *pora* Turner determines is Mende, referring to "the great secret society of the men." Also, Turner's African equivalent for the Gullah name *zo* is a Vai term, "the wearer of the mask in the Sande Society." Among Windward Coast groups, secret society leaders hid behind masks and the leaders were called *zo*.[12] Given the fact that the above Gullah words are personal names rather than vocabulary terms, one obviously views these relationships as speculative. Yet they do point to Upper Guinea influence. These considerations, together with observations made by P. E. Hair, indicate a strong ethnic influence in South Carolina of peoples from the Windward Coast.

This suggested presence of Upper Guinea and Windward Coast influences qualifies rather than negates the BaKongo impact. Certainly early colonial records indicate the overwhelming presence of Kongo-Angolan groups. As far as linguistics go, Turner argues strongly for that impact. Furthermore, some linguistic relationships noted for Windward Coast groups can be made for BaKongo. For example, the Gullah *ndoko* is Bobangi (KiKongo), referring to "a bewitching that is said to cause illness." In KiKongo *ndoki* is a sorcerer, or witch. Also, the Gullah name *n'zambi* is KiKongo for God. Yet how does one account for what Hair calls "the extraordinary" prevalence of Sierra Leone terms in Gullah ritual and working vocabulary? Undoubtedly both ethnic influences were significant. Moreover, the prevalence of Tshi names among Gullahs probably indicates important Ashanti and Fanti presence, the first slaves to reach Carolina as well.[13]

Brazilian scholar, Roger Bastide, points out that even in Portuguese communities where Bantu peoples dominated the slave population, "only a few traces of their religion survived. . . ." Perhaps Bastide makes too fine a distinction between religion and magic. Taking a theme from Melville Herskovits, he acknowledges the continued significance of customs related to death, funeral practices, and afterlife, but also maintains that Bantu was the most susceptible of all African religions to "external influences." More recently, Robert Farris Thompson takes a more expansive approach. In discussing the religion and art that "withstood the horrors of the middle passage," Thompson argues for a strong BaKongo influence. He believes the BaKongo cosmogram was "too complex" to re-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

175 567 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and [197] grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
199 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968;
113 repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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124 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

(101) 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

(567) 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy, "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

(113) 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

125 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

121 197 [576] [177] becomes characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The conflicting feature of those two notions is evident. Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks. That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable 121 197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent with the research which places West Africa as the origin of 174 the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela- 174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands 178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
174 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections, that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

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[13] Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

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# GULLAH

## Historical Background

101 Even to those familiar with the American Negro through the medium of either life or literature, the term Gullah is a little-known word for a less-known people. It is applied to a special group-type of Negroes, limited historically and geographically to the sea-islands and the narrow tidewater strip bordering the coast counties of South Carolina and Georgia and a small section of north-east Florida. The 197 language spoken by these Negroes constitutes a patois unique among the dialects of the United States, and differs from the more familiar upland Negro dialects as written by Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, as markedly as those dialects differ from the French Creole of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta.

•174 Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came 101 from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River.[1] A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year 1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly

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[1]This was the opinion of Mr. Ambrose E. Gonzales, a high authority on Gullah and author of the Black Border Series of Gullah stories. This was also the view of the Rev. John G. Williams. In the Preface to his *De Old Plantation*, Allendale, 1896, he wrote: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and a part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger'. In Appleton's 'New American Cyclopaedia' the Guinea negroes are described as 'black and having thick lips and flat noses', and the Angola, or 'Gulla' negroes as having 'few of the negro peculiarities of form and feature. They are brown in color'. These differences between negroes in the country have been often noticed and remarked upon frequently, the explanation of which differences is that the 'thick lips' and 'flat noses' point to Ashantee and Dahomey as the places from which their ancestors were brought and the 'brown color' and features more like the European in some negroes, very different from the Guineas, point to Angola or 'Gulla' as the country from which their ancestors came. So deeply fixed are the race and even tribal characteristics. There is history in the word 'Gullah', as it is improperly spelt."

[p. 7]

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174 [10] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [101] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

174 527 Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their reso- [197] lute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1] Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present [127] paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the sources of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Cangui or Comi Negroes called Gwalla.

[2] Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

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175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[1]

[243] [248]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

"If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers." *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 174

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

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would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

*African Words*

Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made poe-

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sible (1) the borrowing of European words by the Africans and (2) the adoption of African words by the sailors and traders, the former process naturally being the more active of the two.

The history of a specific word will illustrate the difficulties involved. On St. Helena Island the word *malafee*,[117] meaning whiskey, is known to a few persons. It is supposedly of African origin. In fact, one dictionary[118] lists *malafu*, banana wine, and states that the word is African. Now, in medieval times there was a famous wine, malvesie, so named from Napoli di Malvasia, a town on the south coast of the Morea in Greece. It was sold in many ports, and its name was known in dozens of languages. In Dutch it was called *malvezy*, and this form came into English as *malvesie*. Chaucer mentioned "A Iubbe of Malveyse" in the *Canterbury Tales*.

The close relation between *f* and *v* made it easy for *malvesie* to become *malfesie*, and this form is very close to the St. Helena *malafee*. The name of the wine, however, was later changed in English from *malvesie* to *malmsey*, so that the old form was perpetuated only in oral language. It is certain that the old name was known to some of the English who colonized America. The word had also probably penetrated various African languages. The form *malafu*, attributed to Africa, has already been cited. In the Swahili (Zanzibar region) *m'lava* for drunk or intoxicated was reported in Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, 1846, p. 578.

[117] Noted by Mrs. Parsons in her *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands*, p. xxi. For a possible West Indian parallel, see her *Folk Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas*, p. 20: *Malantre*.

[118] Funk and Wagnalls. No specific African language is mentioned, however, and nothing said as to the extent of the use of the word in America.

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Here, then, is a word known in England in Chaucer's day cropping out in various places centuries later. Its appearance among the Negroes of the Sea Islands has given rise to the supposition that it is of African origin, which was certainly not the case. The question then arises, might it not at least be of African provenience? Perhaps so, since the African forms are different from the English form: *m'la'va, mal'afee, malafu'* (sometimes *mala'fu*) as compared to *mal'vesie*. Still *mal'afee* could be an English dialectal pronunciation of *malvesie* and might have entered this country with the English. At any rate, this word affords an excellent illustration of the need for caution in the study of strange words found in American Negro speech.[119]

No better evidence of the almost complete assimilation of English language habits by the Negro can be found than the scarcity of English words of African origin. Various words have been thought to be of African extraction, but many of them have turned out to be archaic English[120] or to be derived from Spanish or Portuguese.[121] There have been, of course, numerous individual survivals, that is, instances in which one person would continue to use a word or two of his native African language, but these have not obtained any diffusion and have about disappeared.

[119] The dictionaries and grammars of various African languages have nearly all been compiled since 1800, and there had been plenty of time for the assimilation of European words by African tongues. I sometimes wonder if *buckra*, white man, said to be derived from the Efik of Old Calabar, where it meant a spirit or powerful being, might not have come from English *beager*, or a related word from English or some other European language.

[120] E.g., *brawtus*, meaning something extra, something in addition, thought by some to be African, is from English *brotts* or *brotta*. *Tote*, to carry, is also English. See list of archaisms above.

[121] E.g., *pickaniny* is from Portuguese, *pequenino*.

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For an African word to gain a regional diffusion in this country, it either had to designate some object which was familiar to a large proportion of the slaves but was new to the English settlers, or it had to be an expressive substitute for the name of some object already known to the white people. Words for certain plants like *okra*, *gumbo*, *yam*, *goober*, are examples of the first type. *Buckra*, for white man, and *cooter*, for terrapin, are examples of the second type. 192 174.

Several words now generally conceded to be of African origin were introduced to the white people in this country during slavery. The vegetable name, *okra*, is familiar to most people, its synonym, *gumbo*, a little less widely known; *yam* (potato) is in general use; *goober* (peanut) is common throughout the South, but its synonym, *pinda* or *pindar*, is less popular; *cooter* is known to the whites in most of the Southern states. All of these words are in use in the Gullah area today. In addition there are several which are practically confined to this area although occasionally found elsewhere in the lower South. *Buckra* is used in the low country, but the works of Gonzales and others have increased its literary diffusion of late. *Ki* as an exclamation is heard among the Negroes in most parts of the Gullah area. *Oona*[122] (*thou* or *you*) thought to be African, is common in the Gullah region.[123] 192

[122] Sometimes *yunnah*, *hunnah*, *wunnah*.

[123] Possible sources exist in several West African languages. In the Kuka or Yaw language, *thou* is *yini*. In the Somray *thou* is *yungar*. See Benton, *Notes on Some Languages of the Western Sudan*, p. 122. *Thou* is *yi*, *yi*, *yu*, *wi*, *wo*, *wu*, etc., in several languages of Guinea and the Sudan. In Koi and in Gbaragba the second person plural is *wun*, in Kparabon it is *wuna*, in Bo it is *wu*, in Troughon it is *wuna*. See Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*, section on "Langues de Soudan et de la Guinée." In Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, a vocabulary of Sowheli (or Swahili), the language of Zanzibar, is printed.

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lish to the Negro or from the Negro to the English is not known at present, but there is evidence that its ultimate derivation will prove to be African.[129] 192

These words include all which are used throughout or in large sections of the Gullah area which have been shown to be of African derivation. The word *Gullah* itself might be added. In the Savannah section the word *Geechy* is similarly used to designate the Negroes of that region, and it seems likely that it came from the name of a river near Savannah, the Ogeechee.[130] Negroes in the vicinity of this river were called 'Geechy River Negroes, which was finally shortened to Geechy.[131]

It is probable that in this country the white man has been the medium of conservation and diffusion of these African words more than the Negro has. Some of the words were adopted by planters in the West Indies and were brought to South Carolina by those who migrated 174 192

[129] Smith states that Professor W. A. Craigie derives it "from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food." This is not specific enough. I have examined vocabularies of about thirty West African languages, and only one has any word for eat which resembles *nyam*, viz., the Samoay, *yamum*.

[130] Pronounced *Ogeechy*. Of Indian origin.

[131] Professor Smith lists *geechy* as *African*, but he refers to a different usage, namely, as an adjective in the sense of "goosey." I have never encountered *geechy* used in this sense. Smith lists several other words as possibly African (*Gullah*, pp. 32-3). These are *cymbi*, *bakalingo*, *swanga*, *gufer*, *geechy*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*, *du-du*, and Stepney. I have seen no specific African derivations for any of these. None of these is used on St. Helena, as far as our research staff can ascertain, except *swanga*, meaning swaggering, boastful, etc. I think this is too close to *our swank*, *swankum*, *swagger*, etc., to need any other explanation. Words like *think* and *thank* are often pronounced in Gullah with more of a g sound than a *k* sound. This tendency would change the English dialectic *swanky* to *swangy* or *swanga*. Swanky has the same meaning as Gullah *swanga*, namely "swaggering" (adj.) and "a strapping fellow" (noun). See Wright, *Provincial Dictionary*, also *English Dialect Dictionary*. *Da* and *da-da* are possibly dialect pronunciations of *there*, *that there*. Smith's list was compiled from various sources, and it was not always possible for him to get definite information as to meanings, pronunciations, etc.

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174 192 from the West Indies. The variety of African language groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

19 177 178 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[122]

[122] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs originated further north than St. Helena, probably in the piedmont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors will look into the matter they will find in other communities on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number of these St. Helena spirituals.[88] Thus the percentage of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration of songs from the area which had felt strongly the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These considerations are all directly opposed to the theory that the scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African traits.

533 533 174• [114] [178]

*Modulations.* Change from one key or one mode to another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

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[88] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184]

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[For additional information on the history of slavery in Georgia, South Carolina and the coastal Sea Islands, see Category 17.]

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# *Introduction*

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THE AFRICAN NEGRO, INTRODUCED AS A SLAVE INTO Virginia in 1619, had been a part of the plantation life of the older colonies of America for more than a century before the Colony of Georgia was founded in 1733. Almost two decades passed before the Trustees of Georgia legalized Negro slavery. Thus it was the middle of the eighteenth century before Georgia became an open market for slaves.

By this time certain land restrictions had been removed and the consequent development of large plantations, for which the Negro was an economic necessity, greatly stimulated the slave market. During these early years the plantations that developed in the tidewater regions of coastal Georgia planted principally rice, a wet culture necessitating a high percentage of Negro laborers. Later, as additional acres of adjoining higher ground were planted in sugar cane and cotton, the demand for slaves persisted.

For more than a hundred years (1750–1858) this demand steadily increased, and it was the common habit to dump from 300 to 400 "prime Africans" on the Savannah market. Under these conditions Georgia, and more particularly the coastal region, was being supplied with Africans when much of older America was already sufficiently supplied or oversupplied with native born slaves bred for the domestic trade. Thus in many regions the long period of white contact was beginning to obscure tribal customs when Africans were being brought in great numbers to Georgia soil.

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## INTRODUCTION

•175 Although in 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited slave importation directly from Africa and in 1808 the Federal Constitution made the African slave trade unlawful, the favorable topography of the Georgia coast encouraged smuggling. The tidewater coastline and large navigable rivers penetrating for miles into the interior facilitated the landing of cargo. Consequently illegal slave traffic flourished in this region until 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* landed its cargo on Georgia soil.

Newspaper advertisements indicate that a large proportion of these early cargoes came from the Gambia River and Niger River sections; later the coast from the Congo River to the southern end of Portuguese West Africa was the base of operation. Accounts of various explorers' travels through Africa at that time, however, indicate that native traders frequently collected their slave cargoes from interior sections and shipped them from the west coast of Africa. Although to the white man, Negroes of an average cargo might have seemed similar in type, it is possible that in many instances they were brought from widely separated regions.

101 The coastal Negroes of Georgia are sometimes called Gullahs, although in general parlance the term is applied only to the Negroes of coastal South Carolina. Because of the similarity in type and speech, however, it is sometimes loosely extended to include the Georgia coastal Negroes as well. The place name, Geechee, derived from Ogeechee River, near Savannah, is also used locally to designate the Negroes of this district.

175 The coastal plantations that absorbed the slave traffic were remote from one another. The jungle swamps of the low country and the wide expanses of water separating the coastal islands made communication difficult among the plantation laborers of this section. With the continued arrival of Africans to these isolated plantation communities, native ceremonies and customs were renewed or exchanged. (178)

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175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs in-
178 tensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
[177] delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of
the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
177 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as
136 the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
185 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

• 175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
569 Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story. They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

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175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

182 For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun,
433 surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

182 It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

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## Demography

175 The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Euro-
[103] peans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves
175 and their free descendants.[10] Not many whites or Europeans inhabited
162 the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent
567 residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importa-
567 tion from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African
[178] population. The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14]

175 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-
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tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island communities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial composition, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically distressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth, as is shown in Table 2.

The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to major commercialization and to developmental pressures from the exclusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Islands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4). James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white. Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total population of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A. [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

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423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
•175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient ag-
241 riculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly in-
[243] digo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple commodities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice
171 crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans-
171 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

823

3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

197 113

4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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121 mend ways of dealing with reality. The Gullahs defined life in sacred terms, an inherited African legacy.[4] Their introduction to Christianity reinforced this sense of the sacred but also raised questions regarding contradictions inherent in the teachings. Slaves who organized the 1822 revolt attempt in Charleston, called the Vesey Conspiracy, based their right to rebellion on several principles, among which were certain Christian beliefs extracted from the Bible. Yet slave masters and clergymen used the same Bible (albeit different texts) to explain *their* "right" to keep blacks in bondage. Both groups' beliefs determined their interpretations of scriptures, reflecting diametrically opposed interests and attitudes. Furthermore, as the more isolated Gullahs became "Christians," their spiritual orientation continued to foster independent ways of thinking. This was demonstrated by the Gullah's spiritual autonomy, in the structuring of their community-culture, their sense of morality, and sense of themselves as a people.

In this volume, I have tried to strike a balance between "pure" religion (for its own sake, other worldly or transcendental) and applied religion (its functional or empirical use) because both were practiced among slaves who ultimately adopted Christianity. Yet evidence sometimes points to a cloudy qualitative difference between the two. Some Gullah slaves accepted Christianity at face value as presented by missionaries and masters. Most did not, but instead blended transcendental aspects of Christianity with the everyday, paramount reality of their human experiences and aspirations.

Awareness of the empirical impact of religious instruction, and in some cases the lack thereof, is important for understanding how and why folk religion flourished among the Gullahs. The religious instruction movement also provides a way of contemplating the reasons for Christian instruction on the part of whites. Almost from the beginning a few whites, despite much opposition, attempted to Christianize slaves. Some slaves responded warmly. Yet a concerted process of slave conversion among the majority of coastal Carolina slaves did not begin in earnest by whites until around 1830. Even then, the way was sometimes filled with pitfalls created by a reluctant master class and disinterested clergy. Furthermore, the culturally and geographically isolated black population, whose main spiritual tradition still rested on Africanity, showed only lukewarm interest for some time. Certainly there was exposure to Christianity before 1830—from acculturated, privileged blacks and occasional spiritu-

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121 ally moved ministers and planters. Also the Great Awakening of the
175 colonial era touched South Carolina even if it did not linger there for very long. And early Methodists actively tried bringing Christianity to the Gullahs, but were under bans of proscription as an antislavery denomination. Hence, prior to the movement begun by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1829, most slaves working in the fields received their "Christian" instruction from fellow slaves. When slaves accepted Christianity under Methodist and later Baptist tutelage, they embraced it selectively, fusing Christianity with African traditions to create Gullah folk religion. This religion was a means of explaining experiential reality for the Gullahs on sacred and secular levels. If community was the base or substance of Gullah life, spirituality (a more appropriate term, I think, than religion) was the superstructure upon which the foundation was posited.

The final area of investigation in my broadly considered three-tier thematic construct, is resistance—perhaps the most debated issue in the North American bondage experience. There is a tendency to interpret resistance in its strictest sense—as bloodletting or flight to freedom. These are obvious means of rebellion, and from the beginning, African-Carolinians were a restless, insurgent group. This study is a further comment on that spirit of resistance. Yet I primarily delve into what are in my opinion equally meaningful ways of analyzing resistance to enslavement. The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy denotes the end (as far as historical knowledge goes) of concerted efforts at black liberation among the Gullahs. The revelation of the Conspiracy and subsequent debates over the value of religious instruction (since the event was planned under the guise of religion) ushered in, paradoxically, a movement to convert the slave population in South Carolina. From outward appearances the Vesey Conspiracy marked the end of organized black resistance in South Carolina. This is the juncture at which I believe the question of resistance takes on expanded meaning. I attempt to demonstrate that resistance against white power and hegemony was conspicuous in the Gullahs' sense of cultural autonomy, authoritative, creative community-building, and their spiritual disengagement from the slaveocracy's version of Christian teachings. The means and methods of their accomplishment are viewed through the Gullah community and folk religion.

121 I have benefited greatly from the works of previous writers. W. E. B.
127 DuBois was among the first to discuss elements of continuity between

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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples. 101

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

114 174 101 175 174 197 174

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala* (*gola*, *gula*) which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

•175 567 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and [197] grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary: 175 567 197

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena: 175 533 [797]

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the 114

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114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet 771 no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

• 175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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churchmen to convert slaves, but that a concerted program conducted by "Southern men with Southern principles," was the best insurance against slave insurrection. Both views gained adherents as 1831 brought Nat Turner's Rebellion, which went well past the planning stages and had an even clearer relationship to Christianity and biblical imagery. The Turner Rebellion made it seemingly more evident that measures had to be taken to avert disruption of the South's peculiar institution.[20]

Once frenzy over the Vesey Conspiracy had abated somewhat, the South Carolina Methodist Conference, supported by a few influential planters, became the first denomination to openly advocate religious instruction for slaves, and to actively engage in a program of plantation missions. Gradually, often begrudgingly, other churches followed. By 1845 support for religious instruction was a majority opinion in the state. By the end of the antebellum era many slaveholders credited Christian teaching with quelling a rebellious spirit in the slave quarters. Many planters who once doubted or were openly hostile to the benefits of Christian instruction viewed it as essential to plantation management. Clergymen and missionaries who took interest in the slaves' spiritual welfare extolled the success of the "great work." Churches prided themselves on overcoming planter opposition and criticism from Northern brethren. In their eyes the accomplishment was threefold: (1) a "veil of ignorance" was lifted from the spiritual cognizance of the bondspeople, (2) the Southern religious sector fulfilled its duty to God by saving black souls, and (3) the status quo was preserved by making slaves satisfied with their place in the social order:

> In reviewing the history of this society [the Methodist Missionary Society] and its operation since its organization . . . it is a matter of no ordinary gratification to remember that we hold the honor of having been pioneers in the missions to the African race. It is likewise a source of peculiar and grateful satisfaction, that the progress of these labours instead of awakening fears as to their political effects, have, on the contrary, dispelled such apprehensions, and shown that the teachings of the gospel are in the highest degree compatible with our institutions, and afford additional security to the public peace. While our missionaries have been unfolding to the negro race the riches of the grace revealed in Jesus Christ and opening up to their faith and hope the glories of an eternal life, they have been likewise teaching from the same inspired record that the way to the attainment of that life is by obedience and fidelity, by contentment and holy living. Spurning the doctrines of a false philanthropy, they have been content with the truth of divine revelation, and acknowledge no "higher law."[21]

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175 If the results of Christian instruction were measured by numbers of rebellions following Vesey and Turner, it could be said that insofar as status quo proponents were concerned, such instruction of bondspeople was eminently successful. Slaves appeared to accept Protestantism taught in a spirit purposely antithetical to their will to freedom. Emphasis was on authority, dependence on future rewards and punishments for suffering or wrongdoing on earth, and a profound inequality between master and slave. This seemed especially the case in the Sea Islands. There no widespread slave conspiracy or rebellion was known of, and Christianity appeared well entrenched by the time of freedom.

121 This study examines the Christian conversion process among the Gul-
lahs in an effort to understand these slaves' interpretation of Christianity
175 and the motives behind attempts to Christianize them. It is hypothesized that Gullah slaves of coastal Carolina used Christianity as an ideology with strong connotations supporting their sense of freedom. Early efforts to resist bondage, represented fusing Christianity with Africanity to provide a militant nationalism articulated by the black rebels of Charleston. Failure of that Conspiracy shook the Gullah community and may have facilitated a new adaptive structure in which slaves selectively employed Christianity in ways important to their own social existence. Slaves continued to oppose bondage, not with physical force, but by creating a strong, religious collective which shielded them from a sense of alienation. But their experiences were also based on an African world view and cultural structure though conceptually expressed in Christian terms. In the new religion, the slaves found some features reminiscent of their African socioreligious past. It also offered an explanation for their historical situation, which inspired currents of hope. On the Sea Islands, Gul-
121 lahs partly used the moral teachings of Christ as a basis for community
175 structure and organization. Yet they saw no contradiction in refusing to
797 blindly internalize everything they were taught. Thus Gullahs did not trespass against their own moral sense or jeopardize their integrity as a people struggling against oppression. Their retention of an African world
121 view enabled them to maintain an appreciation of life on a collective level, striving to preserve the group consciousness that was a main ingredient of African heritage. Hence Christian and African traditions helped shape the resistance culture and plantation commonwealth that evolved in the slave quarters. In this sense religious instruction of the slaves can-

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CHAPTER I

# Gullah Roots

•175 The majority of the tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast were active participants in the Atlantic slave-trade. . . . But the Mandingas, Susus and Fulas stood well to the fore—partly because of their own key role in the slaving operations on the Upper Guinea Coast, and partly because they succeeded in reducing many of the littoral peoples and the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon to a state of vassalage, under the banner of Islam.*

But I must own to the shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kidnapped and betrayed by my own complexion, who were the first cause of my exile and slavery; but if there were no buyers there would be no sellers.**

## *Ethnic Origins and Carolina Preferences*

European traders divided the African shoreline into Upper and Lower Guinea, although opinions differed on where the division occurred. In this study Upper Guinea refers to the area from the Senegal River north, called the Senegambia, to the Cross River south, termed the Slave Coast. Lower Guinea is south of the Slave Coast, to the Kongo-Angola region. Most Africans imported into South Carolina were taken from trading stations in four areas of the Guinea Coast. From Lower Guinea Africans mainly from the Kongo and Angola region comprised black cargoes destined for Charleston. From Upper Guinea they came from the land between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, present-day Gambia; from the

[113] *Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 436.

[113] **Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969; repr. from 1787 ed.), 12.

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•175 Windward Coast, now Sierra Leone and Liberia; and from the Gold Coast, presently the Republic of Ghana. Few African ethnic groups were spared a tribute to slave coffles. Yet the littoral of the above areas and inhabitants living about 200 miles inland provided the majority of black cargoes destined for the Carolina coast.[1]

Gold Coast Africans were apparently the first black Carolinians. They were preferred by West Indian adventurers who initially settled Carolina and brought about 1,000 slaves with them. Often referred to as Coromantees (or Kromanti), after the coastal factory from which they were first shipped, most of these Africans, generally Akan and Ashanti peoples, were sold into bondage by powerful, coast-dwelling Fanti. Famous on West Indian plantations for their work habits, efficiency, and strength, Akan-Ashanti groups were also said to possess the haughty spirit that planters associated with rebelliousness. "The Coromantees are not only the best and most faithful of our slaves, but are really born heroes," wrote the governor of the Leeward Islands in 1701. He added that:

> there never was a rascal or coward of that nation, intrepid to the last degree. . . . My father, who had studied the genius and temper of all kinds of negroes for forty-five years . . . would say "no man deserved a Coromantee that would not treat him like a friend rather than a slave."[2]

Men who made voyages to the Guinea Coast concurred with and often fostered attitudes expressed toward Gold Coast Africans. John Atkins, a ship's surgeon, considered himself an "authority" on Africans. "Slaves differ in their goodness," he insisted, maintaining that "those from the Gold Coast are accounted best, being cleanest limbed, and more docile by our Settlements than others." But Atkins cautioned that Akan-Ashanti were also "more prompt to Revenge, and murder the Instruments of their Slavery, and also apter in means to compress it."[3]

Charleston merchants paid particular attention to the source of black cargoes. Although Gold Coast Africans sold at a premium, early Carolinian planters were forced to compete for them with West Indian sugar producers who usually got first choice. Second in favor were Africans from Angola. "We wish therefore you would send either to the Gold Coast or Angola," wrote one Charleston factor. "And there will not be this next Year Insuing Negroes Enough especially Gold Coast and Angola, for the Demand."[4] Peter Wood's study of blacks in colonial South Carolina argues effectively for a preponderance, by 1740, of "salt water"

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•175 Angolans over other ethnic groups. According to Wood, the 1730s was a time of massive slave importation and low natural increase. Over 50 percent of the slaves had been in the colony less than ten years, and approximately 70 percent of the black population was originally from Angola where the trade was mainly conducted by the Portuguese.[5]

The diversity of Portuguese slave-trading policy and their concentration on penetrating Africa's interior partly accounts for a paucity of records on their trade.[6] At any rate studies do indicate that while slave traders were not usually compelled to go into the interior in the eighteenth century, they occasionally went as far as Mozambique, largely by sea. Dieudonne Rinchon, a well-known French scholar and sometimes apologist for the slave trade, provided evidence of the expanse of Portuguese activity:

> Les esclaves exportés sont principalement des Ambundus, (Ovimbundu) des gens de Mbamba et de Mbata, et pour le reste des Nègres due Haute-Congo achetés par les Bamfumgunu et les Bateke du Pool [the Stanley Pool]. Quelques-uns de ces esclaves viennet de fort loin dans l'in-terieur. Le capitaine négrier Degrandpré achète à Cabinda une Négresse qui lui paraît assez familière avec les Blancs, ou du moins qui ne témoigne à leur vue ni surprise, ni frayeur; frappé de cette sécurité peu ordinaire, le négrier lui en demande la cause. Elle répond qu'elle a vu précédement des Blancs dans une autre terre, où le soleil se lève dans l'eau, et non comme au Congo où il se cache dans la mer; et elle ajoute en montrant le levant *monizi monambu*, j'ai vu le bord de la mer; elle a été en chemin, *gonda cacata*, beaucoup de lune. Ce récit semble confirmer les dires de Dapper que parfois des esclaves du Mozambique sont vendus au Congo.[7]

Information provided by Rinchon's informant is supported by recent scholarship. Long-distance trade routes in Central Africa were a direct result of the emergence of Portuguese activity according to Jan Vansina. Trade around the Stanley Pool touched a number of regional water networks. Slave recruitment extended as far as what is now Shaba Province in Zaire. Furthermore, scholars investigating African retentions in Gullah dialect identify Ovimbundu, BaKongo, Mbundu, Mayombe, and others as Bantu-speaking peoples who greatly contributed patterns of speech to the Sea Island patois. With the exception of Mozambique(ans), most of these people lived no more than 200 miles from the Coast.[8]

Ethnic characteristics as perceived by white Carolinians labeled Angolan slaves as "docile" and "comely" but not particularly strong. Hence they supposedly made better house slaves than the presumably more sturdy Gold Coast Africans. Bantu-speaking Africans were also consid-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 33]

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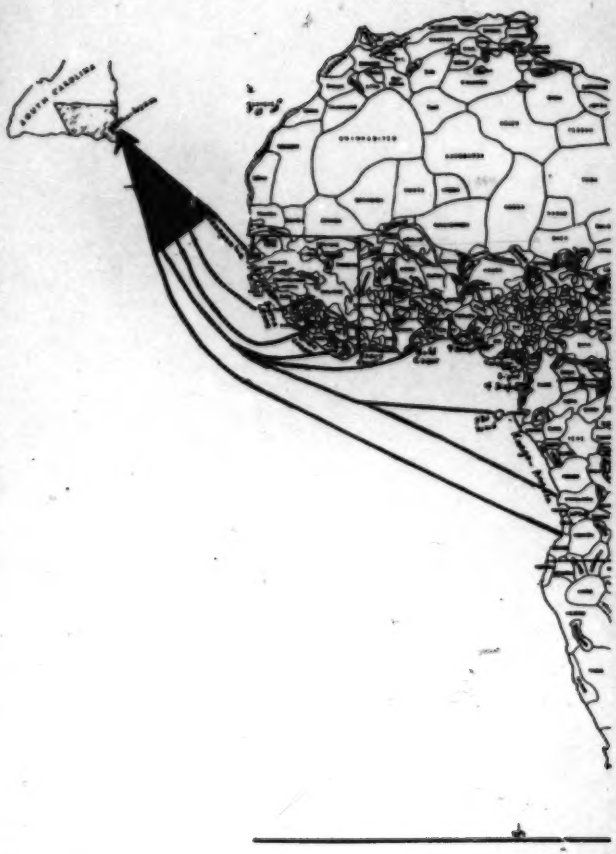


*Cultural map of Africa.*

[p.32]

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•175 ered especially apt at mechanical arts and trades. Categories related to temperament and labor capability were subjective, having more to do with need than reality. At a time when Carolina's economy was diverse and Africans were engaged in numerous occupations, perceptions may have suited availability. Yet the theory that Africans contributed skill and know-how to Carolina's early economy has much validity. In any case, events leading up to the Stono Rebellion of 1739 caused white Carolinians to alter their attitudes toward their servile population. The Bantu family of Africa was ethnically diverse, and from Angola to Mozambique contained a variety of physical types. Yet they possessed many common customs and values. In Carolina, cultural and linguistic homogeneity, coupled with mounting white repression, inspired a reputedly "docile" people to rebel against the "Instruments of their Slavery." Thus to Kongo-Angolans, Carolinians attributed still another adage—the tendency toward flight and rebellion.[9]

At the time of the Stono Rebellion, there were around 39,000 blacks and 20,000 whites in South Carolina. Fear and anxiety followed the uprising, culminating in a prohibitive duty on slave imports. During this nearly ten-year moratorium the trade was reduced to a mere trickle, bringing to a close what can be considered the first of three phases in the history of the African slave trade to the colony and the state.[10]

Cessation of the transatlantic slave trade found the majority of South Carolina's black laborers, between 80–90 percent, concentrated in parishes closest to Charleston. The sparsely settled Sea Island parish of St. Helena, located on the southern frontier, had only forty-two slaves in 1720. Even by the 1730s when settled parishes were bulging with Africans and rice shifted from a competing export to the primary agricultural concern, growth and settlement of the coastal frontier remained minimal. Given the preponderance of Kongo-Angolans in the slave population, most slaves in the Sea Island region were undoubtedly from this group. St. Helena Parish was close to Spanish territory and possible freedom. It was a congregating area for slaves, and a number of bondsmen from there were known to have been involved in the Stono Rebellion.[11] Naturally, as the Sea Islands developed, planters relied on their supply of country-born and more acculturated Africans to oversee labor operation on frontier plantations. Hence early African cultural influences of Akan-Ashanti and Bantu were present. During the next generation, following the slave trade moratorium, two developments added to African cultural

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175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experiments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government. Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

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•175 Strong preferences and equally fervent disdain for certain Africans continued to dominate Carolinian rationale, but Kongo-Angolans were no longer considered desirable. Instead, Africans from Senegambia were put on a par with those of the Gold Coast. Newspaper advertisements and private correspondence provide insight into this preference. The most influential Charleston factor was Henry Laurens. Carolina-born and British-educated, Laurens established himself as a successful merchant and planter in his early twenties. Laurens was a "particular friend" of Richard Oswald, a wealthy British merchant. Oswald owned the British slave factory on Bance Island in the Sierra Leone River. During the middle period of the trade (1750–1787), Laurens handled Oswald's Sierra Leone cargoes in Charleston for a 10 percent commission. Laurens was careful and methodical in preserving communications. His records reveal a sense of prevailing attitudes toward African origins. In one correspondence, Laurens urged a West Indian associate to send portions of his cargoes to Carolina where Africans who were "healthy and in good flesh would find a ready market." Laurens cautioned, however, that the quality of the slaves should be high, at least two-thirds of them men eighteen to twenty-five years of age and that "there must not be a Callabar (Igbo) amongst them. Gold Coast and Gambia are best, next to them the Windward Coast are preferred to Angolas. . . . Pray observe that our people like tall slaves best for our business and strong withal."[14]

Cargoes from the Slave Coast (Dahomey and the Ivory Coast) were rarely noted by Laurens or mentioned in newspaper advertisements. When ships from these areas did arrive, an explanation in the announcement was called for: "Just arrived in the ship Marlborough . . . 300 Negroes, directly from Whydah, a country greatly preferred to any other thru-out the West Indies and inferior to none on the Coast of Africa."[15]

Callabar Africans were shunned by Carolinians and consistently rejected by Laurens. "Callabar slaves won't go down when others can be had," Laurens warned a British merchant in 1755. That same year he also wrote to another correspondent discussing the deplorable conditions of the trade for Carolina merchants competing for Africans with West Indian planters. He asked for "stout healthy fellows . . . the country is not material if they are not from Callabar which slaves are quite out of repute from numbers in every cargo that have been sold with us destroying themselves."[16]

Among the many judgments Carolinians made about African ethnic groups—from supposed suicidal and melancholy tendencies of Callabars

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•175 to the height and strength of Senegambians, one characteristic predominated: the desirability of purchasing slaves familiar with rice cultivation. Upper Guinea and especially Senegambia was visited by Europeans before North American settlement. Some Europeans settled on African coasts and along rivers leading inland. Daniel Littlefield has made a strong case for colonial Carolina preference being based on Africans' knowledge of rice cultivation.[17]

Early explorers were impressed with Upper Guinea Africans' knowledge of grain cultivation, particularly their rice staple. In the Gambia region, Africans engaged in large-scale planting operations of corn, pepper, grains, and nuts, as well as "superior" cotton and indigo. Present-day Liberia was first called the Malaguetta Coast by the Portuguese because the Africans there cultivated malaguetta pepper. This pepper supposedly prevented dysentery and was used to season food given to Africans during the journey to America known as the Middle Passage. Later the name Malaguetta Coast was dropped and the term Grain Coast was adopted. Before the end of the eighteenth century the Grain Coast was synonomous with rice producing and referred to as the Rice Coast. Following establishment of the slave trade, some Africans shipped to America had been employed previously at slave factories or in the homes of English businessmen residing on the coasts. These "castle slaves" were often skilled in trades and housekeeping, some even having knowledge of English. A Charleston newspaper provides an example:

> 230 choice Negroes . . . just arrived from Gambia . . . in perfect health, and have been inoculated for the smallpox on the coast. Among them are 20 young men and women with their children in families late servants of a person leaving Gambia R. Most of them can talk English and have been used to attend in a house and go in a craft, who will be kept separate in the yard.[18]

Of course most Africans possessed no rudimentary English and had no experience with white society. Their value was a long familiarity with planting and cultivation of rice and indigo, the quality of which was said to have surpassed that grown in Carolina. This meant that an extensive "breaking in" period and close agricultural supervision of "new" Africans was minimal. Thus while Upper Guinea Africans may have been preferred because they were tall and considered more manageable, evidence also suggests a more sound explanation: knowledge of agriculture made these Africans particularly sought after in coastal Carolina.

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•175 Hence, the middle period of the slave trade to Carolina which corresponds to the last half of the eighteenth century, is significant for obtaining additional impressions of African provenance in the coastal and Sea Island region, since this time span corresponded with vigorous economic growth in those areas. Aside from records left by merchants and factors, advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which, beginning in 1732, is an almost unbroken newspaper file, provide information on the trade. Announcements such as the following from 1756 usually mentioned and frequently emphasized the origin of cargoes:

> To be Sold: on Wednesday . . . a cargo of fine Slaves just arrived in the ship St. Andrew . . . directly from the River Gambia [Wolof, Serer, Mandingo, etc.]; they are perfectly healthy, and have been so the whole passage.
> Negroes chiefly from the same country as those which are brought from the River Gambia . . . from the factory in Sierra Leone [Mende, Temne, Vai, etc.] on the Windward Coast of Guiney, where said cargo was picked out of a large parcel.[19]

In the early nineteenth century the South Carolina up-country engaged in large-scale production of short staple cotton, creating a renewed demand for slaves. This brought on the third and final phase of African trading, from 1804 to 1808. The Kongo-Angola area mainly supplied up-country plantations as well as plantations in other states that refused to import. Percentage-wise then, Bantu-speaking peoples apparently comprised the majority of Africans imported to South Carolina. Yet it has generally gone unnoticed that Upper Guinea contributed heavily to the slave populations of the Sea Islands and surrounding coast. Africans of Senegambia figured most prominently in the slave trade to South Carolina prior to and immediately after the War for Independence. Closely following in imports were those of the Windward Coast. Together these two regions' captured inhabitants comprised a large majority of Africans brought to South Carolina even if we make allowances for the fact that Angolan ships were sometimes larger and sometimes brought more Africans to America.[20]

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Thus, the middle period of the slave trade represented expanded economic enterprise in the Sea Islands where indigo dominated, and in the hinterlands where rice was almost exclusively cultivated. Africans brought into these areas where chiefly ethnic groups of Upper Guinea and were victims of the "holy war" conducted by Moslem Mandinga, Susu, and Fula peoples.

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17 trade. Djolas' simple manners and customs, loose tribal organization, and decentralized government made them easy prey for the European-backed, domineering, highly politically structured Moslem Mandingas. Thousands of Djolas filled the holds of British slave ships. Fulani inhabitants of the Gambia were, like Mandingas, followers of the Koran and by the sixteenth century were vassals of the latter. They planted crops, tended Mandinga cattle, leased their territory, and occasionally joined Mandinga merchants in wars against ethnic groups to procure slaves. Mandinga-Fulani interdependency probably goes farther than common religious ties to explain why large numbers of Fulani were not sold into slavery as compared with Djolas and Wolofs. Another large ethnic group of the Senegambia was the Seraculeh. They were actually a northern branch of Mandingas who engaged in slaving in the Upper River Division of the Gambia Valley.[22]

• 175 Besides obeying the Koran's edict to make war on "non-believers," black Muslim traders followed a custom of general acquisitiveness stimulated by European labor demands. Moslem Africans were enslaved for petty as well as major crimes and offenses. Walter Rodney has maintained that prior to the Atlantic trade most crimes were punishable by fines and few groups practiced capital punishment. The slave trade heightened rivalries and intensified a pattern of class exploitation.[23] This insight is supported by Francis Moore, a contemporary observer who remained on the Gambia River from 1730 to 1735. Moore noted that some Mandinga merchants journeyed inland and might not return with slaves for twenty days. But in referring to the littoral trade he observed:

> Besides the slaves which merchants bring down, there are many bought along the river. These are either taken in war, as the former are, or else men condemned for crimes, or else stolen, which is very frequent. . . . Since this slave trade has been us'd all punishments are changed into slavery; there being an Advantage on such condemnations, they strain for crimes very hard . . . every trifling crime is punished in the same manner.[24]

Rulers and elites perpetrated the trade against the general population, often whether Islam was professed or not. Occasionally mistakes were made and a noble would be enslaved, as in the case of Job ben Solomon. He was a wealthy Fula of the Gambia region who crossed the river with a coffle of slaves that he intended to sell for his father. Ben Solomon was caught by Mandinga merchants and sold to a Captain Pike of the ship *Arabella*, the same person with whom ben Solomon had bartered for his

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slaves, although the two could not agree on a price. Job ben Solomon attracted attention in America because of his noble birth and knowledge of Arabic. He was sent to England and later returned to his native Gambia. Europeans made every effort to rectify such situations before the Middle Passage, if a local nobleman inadvertently fell into their hands. Fear of retaliation on the part of the black elite and a desire to protect trading interests dictated this policy.[25] Thus while Djolas, Wolofs, and smaller non-Moslem groups figured most heavily in the Senegambia slave trade during the eighteenth century, all of the major tribes of the region were represented in the slave marts.

In the Sierra Leone littoral, the Temne and Bullom were the largest and most powerful ethnic groups by the sixteenth century. Other peoples included the Baga and the Lokko. Moslems did not wield political or military dominance in this area of the coast in the sixteenth century. However, Portuguese arrival encouraged Moslem Susu and Fula to move closer to the sea. Most of this penetration was peaceful but at times conflicts flared and captives were sold to slaving captains. By the mid eighteenth century, the Susu had carved out a seaway at the expense of the Baga and rivaled Mandinga activity in the Upper Guinea trade.[26]

In the seventeenth century a new wave of Fulani and Mandinga Muslims began settling in the mountainous regions of Sierra Leone, intermingling with non-Moslem Susu and Fula. Initial peaceful contact gave way to violence and the invaders launched the Jihad of the Futa Djalon in 1726, pushing converted and non-converted Susu and their ethnic kinspeople, the Djalonkes, south and west. Hence on the coast, Susu presence was enhanced and speeded up by the coming of refugees from the Jihad, and Islam made inroads among the littoral ruling groups. The Futa Djalon refugees encroached upon the indigenous peoples and sold these "war" captives in the slave trade. The Mandinga contingent, interested primarily in slaves but dispersing their knowledge of Islam as well, backed Fula Moslems who were thrusting singly and in groups from the interior. The victims of Moslem Fula, Mandinga, and Susu traders were primarily the Limba, Lokko, and Gizzi; secondarily, the Kono and Kuranko. But Moslem forces also came to dominate the coastal Baga, Temne, and Bullom. Ultimately an Islamic base was established among the upper class and the Jihad of the sword was rarely necessary against them. Hence harrassment of the common people was practiced on both sides. Bullom and Temne often worked with Susu and Fula traders in supply-

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175 ing their own people, and placing Moslems in positions of authority and influence. Ruling groups became ideologically if not ethnically homogenous.[27]

The result of the Jihad was a "prodigious" trade in slaves in the last half of the seventeenth century. Despite interruptions of the trade to North America caused first by European wars and later by the War for Independence, British and Yankee captains supplied Carolina planters with a large number of "war captives" from factories on the Sierra Leone littoral. While their numbers did not compare with those taken from the Gold Coast by the British, the latter were primarily destined for the West Indies. The Jihad largely created the "startling activity" of slaving on the Upper Guinea coast.[28] It also coincided with coastal Carolina's agricultural expansion and renewed labor demands peopling the Sea Island region with Africans from a common cultural circle.

Another large ethnic group falling within the present geographical boundaries of Sierra Leone and also heavily engaged in the slave trade was the Mende people. Mende were of Mandinga stock but not followers of Islam during the era of the Atlantic trade. They were a warlike people, pushing into occupied territories, killing local rulers, and enslaving villagers. In the eighteenth century Mende occupied a large section of the Sherbro hinterland. Although they remained inland throughout most of the slave-trading period, Mende traders frequented the coast. The Mende preyed upon some of the same groups victimized by Moslem traders. But they also spread havoc and influence into the hinterlands of the Malaguetta Coast, a present-day Liberia. There they sought slaves for European traders and for their own society which was dominated by this type of labor.[29]

Pre-European history of ethnic populations of the Malaguetta or Windward Coast has been largely overshadowed by the long, unsettling presence of black American colonizers since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet during the time of South Carolina's coastal expansion slave trading in this region was brisk. Linguistically speaking, people of the region, now called Liberia, can be divided into three groups. Among the lower coast were the Kru group or Kwa-speaking people consisting of the Kru, Bassa, De, and Grebo. Kru were seldom enslaved because they were reportedly so adverse to bondage that they committed suicide if escape was impossible. Actually Kru men were excellent sailors and both African and European traders depended on them to transport

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175 cargoes to waiting vessels on the lower coast. The second grouping was farther north and comprised the Mandingas or Mande-speaking people who were the Mandinga, Gbande, Mende, Vai, Kono, Buzi, Loma, Kpelle, Gio, and Mano. Within this group the Vai, Mende, and Mandingas dominated trade and most often infringed upon the liberty of their neighbors. The third group is perhaps most significant because so many of them made the Middle Passage. This group, the Gola, included Gizzis and Golas, and was of the Niger-Congo linguistic family encompassing Temne, Bullom, Fulani, and Wolof—widely separated peoples geographically. In the Malaguetta Coast region Gola and Gizzi were linguistically isolated on the northeast and northwest by Mande-speaking people.[30]

A process similar to what transpired in present-day Sierra Leone occurred in the Malaguetta Coast region of Upper Guinea. Warfare and movements of the Mende, Mandingas, and Fulani stimulated by the slave trade, created pressure situations for interior forest groups. Just as the Temne and Bullom were displaced by more aggressive groups, so was intensive Mandinga activity on the Malaguetta Coast evident by the seventeenth century. A commercial confederacy existed in which Western Sudanic goods were exchanged for slaves. The slaves were then sent to the coast through Vai and De middlemen. This created another series of wars in which Golas and Gizzis, inhabiting the interior northeast, were heavily involved. Golas and Gizzis struck back against Mandingas and Mende, but generally were no match for the two latter groups. Golas and Gizzis were in a state of almost continual warfare from the seventeenth century on. As slaving activity increased in the next century, Golas began stretching out to areas near Cape Mount and placing themselves under Vai and De protection. Other members of the Gola ethnic group moved out of the northeast where they had been heavily preyed upon. In both instances what began as small villages grew to become dominant towns. Hence while Gola numbers were being diminished in the northeast because of the slave trade, in regions near the coast they were thriving numerically. This led to conflict with Vai and De, the nominal rulers, and hence to more wars. The real source of conflict was control of trade. In the eighteenth century access to gunpowder, small arms, and cannon provided a new and more deadly kind of warfare, as well as extreme concentrations of power and wealth. A process of internal alliances and war within Gola chiefdoms and elsewhere created pre-

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dacious conditions from the old Gola-Gizzi homeland in the interior to the heterogeneous coastal Mandinga confederacy.[31] 1750

Golas never succeeded in wresting a settlement on the littoral from the Vai and hence had no direct commerce with European ships. Yet by the time of the first black American colonists' arrival in Liberia, Golas were a dominant group culturally and economically in the immediate interior. Prior to that however, they were, along with the Gizzi, the eighteenth century's major victims of the Atlantic slave trade in the region known as Liberia. They also succumbed to the defensive act of attacking and enslaving their own ethnic people. Gizzis were apparently transported in such large numbers that a river in Bullom territory was thusly named, although the Gizzi lived nowhere in that vicinity which was part of the Sierra Leone littoral. In 1778 it was reported that victims secured at Idolos, the factory near the Gizzi or Kizzi River, were in poor physical condition from having traveled great distances in slave coffles.[32]

The late Walter Rodney maintained that the scope of the Atlantic slave trade as conducted on the Upper Guinea Coast during the second half of the eighteenth century has not been fully appreciated and that the general level of trading from 1750 onward was high. Developments in South Carolina support his contention. During this period Africans arrived who transferred a medium of culture, communalism, and spirituality that assimilated with the existing African traditions, both of which necessarily adapted to Euro-American ambiance. Ultimately Africa's loss was America's gain. Still the history of the Atlantic slave trade remains a bitter memory, and the tragedy of it is poignantly revealed in the words of Professor Rodney:

> The impression that African society was being overwhelmed by its involvement with the European economy was most strongly conveyed at points when Africans conceded that their slaving activities were the consequences of the fact that nothing but slaves would purchase European goods. Yet European consumer goods contributed nothing to the development of African production. Only the rulers benefited narrowly, by receiving the best cloth, drinking the most alcohol, and preserving the widest collection of durable items for prestige purposes. It is this factor of realized self-interest which goes some way towards explaining the otherwise incomprehensible actions of Africans toward Africans.[33]

In summary, I argue that in the Carolina Lowcountry there was an early cultural dominance of BaKongo peoples of Kongo-Angolan origin, followed by Upper Guinea Africans of the Senegambia and Windward

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•175 Coasts. Upper Guinea peoples coming to Carolina found a creolized black culture already adjusting and acculturating. But more significantly, the large numbers of African-born slaves, entrenched into a system of rice production, also reinforced the Old World heritage. The complex formation of African-American Gullah culture involved, in some ways, the concept of "hearth areas," that is, those who arrive earlier may have as strong an impact as latecomers of more numerical strength. This may explain the continued use of Tshi (Gold Coast) names from the colonial era through the Civil War. Still, it was the BaKongo influence that served as incubator for many Gullah cultural patterns, and superceded Akan-Ashanti impact. Yet BaKongo cultural antecedents did not smother the Upper Guinea contribution to African-American culture. Indeed, it appears that each major group left its presence, and the longevity of these influences depended on adaptability. Thus, the "Doctrine of First Effective Settlement"[34] is significantly altered in the case of the Gullahs.

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
[754] conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical
[759] actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
791 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spir-
• 175 itual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new
791 religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
178 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another
791 basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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CHAPTER 3

# Missionaries and Masters

000 The ignorance therefore of these poor slaves in the principles of Christianity in a Christian country and under a Christian government is not so much their fault as their unhappiness in falling into the hands of such ill masters who not only neglect to instruct them but scoff at those that attempt it, and give them likewise strange ideas of Christianity from the scandalous lives they lead.*

We apprehend the Master, acting according to the law of your Province, in gelding his slave hath not committed any crime, to give any offence to any member to break communion with him in the Church.**

## *Anglicans*

•175 In 1701, about thirty years after the founding of Carolina, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was established in order to bring the Anglican church to the British colonies. The SPG was also chartered to Christianize so-called heathen blacks and Indians. In South Carolina the two missions were at variance throughout the Society's presence there.[1]

South Carolinians first came into contact with Indians through trade and war. The practice was to enslave Indian prisoners of war, and early eighteenth-century letters of Society missionaries mention Indian slaves often enough to indicate their sizable presence among the bondspeople. The Society hoped to address the spiritual needs of both slave and free

*South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8.

[113] **Baptist Church in Devon, England to Baptist Church at Charles Town 1710, from William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 501.

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•175 Indians, and of black slaves. Ministers met resistance from every quarter, especially in regard to blacks. Indians were considered more "civilized" by both Society missionaries and planters. Also, African slavery increased while Indian slavery waned, with the latter group becoming less of a threat to planters and less of an insurmountable challenge to Society missionaries. Some white adventurers on the frontier were deeply involved in trading with Indians and welcomed the presence of a missionary for their own personal reasons. From St. Helena, Thomas Nairne, Anglican missionary and Indian trader, wrote to the Society in 1705 that their "good faith and charitable intention" toward the Indians was being "perverted" under the notion that converting Negroes was "a work good and necessary." "You know as well as I," wrote Nairne, "that all Carolina laughs at that untruth."[2]

Early efforts to Christianize blacks were attempted only in more settled areas of Charleston and surrounding frontier plantations. Nevertheless, hostility to the enterprise continued as the colony developed and the slave population increased. Society missionaries listed numerous "rubs and impediments," mostly under the rubric of desire for profit on the part of planters, the master's own impiety, or fear of insurrection. Planters of all denominations struggled financially in the early eighteenth century and considered slave conversion inimical and inconsistent with their pecuniary interests. They were unwilling to give slaves time for instruction on workdays, and even Sunday teaching was not generally permitted. Sunday was the day slaves worked for themselves. "There are many Planters who to free themselves from the trouble of feeding and clothing their slaves allow them one day in the week to clear ground and plant for themselves as much as will clothe and subsist them and their families," complained a Society clergyman in 1712 to the British Commissary. But, added the clergy, Sunday was already their ministers' busiest day for it was set aside to administer to whites. "I shall not mention any conversion of heathen servants," wrote William Taylor from "St Martin in the field," owing to the "backwardness of masters." From Christ Church, a frontier area just south of Charleston, Gilbert Jones insisted in 1716 that his work was hindered by the "pursuit of wealth." He wrote that "the least apprehension of entrenching upon their darling interest overbalances the most urgent argument we can use to persuade them to their duty. . . ."[3]

What was needed, according to the frustrated South Carolina clergy,

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was the force of local government which could pass binding legislation on the colonists, and itinerant catechists sent by the Society who could devote full time to missionary work. The choice of whether or not slaves were exposed to Christianity had to be taken out of the hands of masters:

> They know that if they would encourage their [slaves] conversion they must allow them some reasonable time for their instruction; and this would consequently be a hindrance to their work and an abatement of the Master's. And this is not openly owned and avowed to be the cause of that . . . unwillingness they express on this occasion, yet I may venture to say 'tis so at the bottom. Nor can some of them forbear to speak out their minds, though they endeavor to justify and excuse themselves by pretending that the slaves (the Negroes especially) are a wicked stubborn race of men and can never be converted, tho to gull and deceive their Masters they may put on the air and appearance of religion.[4]

Society representatives were in an unenviable position. Depending upon white colonists for salary and substance, ministers rarely took planters seriously to task for hostility to slave instruction. Letters received by the Home Office sometimes reveal a life of sacrifice and futile struggle on behalf of the enslaved. But correspondence also presents the uneven character of clergy and planters alike. Not all Society clergymen used their office prudently or even spiritually. Sometimes, those who did found the vestry rallied against them. The planters were known as a loud, boisterous, impious group. One distraught clergyman wrote from Goose-creek that conversion of slaves would be greatly facilitated if masters themselves could "be persuaded to lead truly Christian lives." He continued:

> It is a melancholy reflection to consider how very much the wicked lives and scandalous behaviour of many professing Christianity have hitherto retarded in these parts of the world, for not a few of these . . . have sometimes been guilty . . . of such gross enormities as even the more modest heathens . . . have been ashamed of. . . .[5]

Ministers related that among the planters, "Religion was the thing they troubled themselves with the least." From St. George's Parish Francis Varnod wrote that "Sunday was only distinguished from other days because it was a day of rest and pleasure." Some ministers admonished too consistently and as a result suffered ridicule, harassment, and removal. At St. Phillips Church in Charleston the Reverend Marston was turned out "without salary due him," though many considered him a "good, moral, hospitable" man who noted "vice and virtue with no respect of

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1775 person." For some time there was no one in the province to preach or administer sacraments until one more to the liking of certain communicants was substituted. The new rector was reportedly of "evil fame" and on one occasion, "in his cups baptised a bear."[6]

Some Carolina clergymen had harsh words for the planters who made their lives and work difficult. The most dedicated minister, Francis Le Jau of Goose Creek, wrote that "revenge, self-interest, engrossing of trade, peaces of profit" in anything whatsoever were the only concern of planters. Le Jau was convinced that the "topping men" of the colony "were satisfied with a church which they could largely control and which made no pietistical demand on their way of life." And in a voice of unity the clergy wrote to the Society in London that the worse "generation of infidels" they had to deal with were not "those poor heathen slaves," but their masters. Speaking with "equal grief and truth" the clergy considered the planters' actions and attitudes to "have made themselves worse than dogs."[7]

1775 1997 The problem of Christian instruction was even more dire in the Sea Island Parish of St. Helena. Until 1733 when Georgia was settled, this was South Carolina's southernmost frontier, embracing the township of Beaufort and surrounding islands. While more settled parishes were populated with whites and Africans, St. Helena was primarily still part of the Indian lands. The major occupation of the handful of settlers was Indian trade. Yemassee Indians inhabiting the region tried to maintain friendly relations with white settlers. But avaricious land grabbing and broken trade agreements caused conflicts that endangered the parish's existence. In 1715 the Yemassee waged all-out war, and the entire province faced extinction. Many settlers took refuge in Charleston. St. Helena was completely uprooted while an army of 600 whites and 400 slaves was obliged to engage the Indians throughout the southern regions of Carolina. Not until 1716 did white families return to St. Helena and rebuild their dwellings. But frequent alarms occasioned by Spaniards as well as Indians forced homeseekers to flee at a moment's notice to more densely occupied and better protected parishes.[8]

Although missionaries were sent among Indians around St. Helena as early as 1704, twenty more years passed before a church building for whites was erected. Prior to 1725 the nearest parish church was forty miles away from St. Helena by water travel. Six pews accommodated the Anglican communicants which consisted of around thirty-nine fami-

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lies in 1728. The first rector was Lewis Jones who served in that capacity until 1745. Jones painted a bleak picture of life on the frontier. "The inhabitants are mostly poor planters of corn, pease, rice and a good many of them living at a great distance from each other," he wrote in 1728. There were at that time sixty-two families in the parish, thirty-nine of whom were Anglican, twenty-one Presbyterian, one Independent, and one Anabaptist. At that time only 170 slaves lived in the entire parish, and hence they were a minority, an atypical situation for early Carolina.[9]

The parish had no school although a few families had private teachers. As for the Negro slaves, Jones admitted in 1728 that "no care" was taken in Christianizing them. The reason, he cited, was due to their frequent removal to other areas, since Spaniards and Indians plagued the frontier, carrying away slaves. As a result, the number of St. Helena slaves decreased rather than increased from 224 in 1727 to 170 in 1728, while the entire colony's black population was over 20,000 in 1727.[10] Several possibilities may explain the disappearance of slaves. Spaniards provided a safety valve and chance for freedom. Indians may have done the same or may have simply attempted to decimate the white people's black labor force. Proximity to freedom and the paucity of whites must have intensified slaves' expectation of obtaining liberty. If later developments are any indication, slaves took advantage of these opportunities and the removal of slaves from the area represented white efforts to prevent this. The pattern continued until the Spanish and Indians were pushed back by the settlement of Georgia.

But the Sea Island region received early missionary attention for the slaves from another Anglican source. Thomas Bray (1658–1729/30) was the chief organizer of the three Anglican missionary efforts—the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), established in 1699, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), formed in 1701, and the Associates for Dr. Bray, established in 1723/24 and reorganized in 1729–30. Bray's first concern was Christianizing blacks and Indians. But he also shared, with Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, an interest in improving the lot of prisoners in England. With encouragement and financial support from high places, Bray and a group of sympathizers attempted to put a missionary plan into operation, hence the founding of Bray's Associates. Because Thomas Bray and a number of Associates became involved in plans to found Georgia, it was determined that the southern missionary movement should begin near Savan-

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175 nah (since the Trustees did not initially intend to have slaves in Georgia). One Associate and Georgia Trustee wrote to John Wesley prior to the latter's departure for Georgia as a missionary to whites:

> One end for which we were associated was the conversion of Negro slaves. As yet nothing has been attempted in this way; but a door is opened, not far from home [i.e. Georgia]. The Purryburgers have purchased slaves; they act under our influence; and Mr. Oglethorpe will think it advisable to begin there.[11]

Thomas Bray did not live to see Oglethorpe settle Georgia or to witness the missionary attempt among South Carolina slaves. But he and his Associates were instrumental in bringing about one endeavor to Christianize slaves in South Carolina.[12]

A colony of Swiss Protestant refugees, led by Jean Pierre Purry, settled on the southern frontier on the north bank of the Savannah River in 1731. This was about 20 miles from where Savannah, Georgia, would be located in 1733. Two Moravian missionaries, commissioned by the Associates to instruct slaves in Purrysburg, arrived there in 1739. The missionary venture failed. Few blacks were in the area, and one missionary became ill and died within six months. The other sailed for Philadelphia the following year. But an even more significant note on the ill-fated nature of the plan was the fact that these missionaries apparently could not even speak English. Yet this early activity and interest in slave conversion in the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Island region set the stage for future developments. The Georgia Trustees' alteration of their brief policy of slavery exclusion in the colony, the proximity of the two colonies, and the Trustees' early concern for religious instruction made the Sea Island region fruitful territory for the evangelism of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening. These early associations also perhaps laid the foundation for later acceptance of black independent churches at a time when such institutions were forbidden elsewhere. Georgia's evangelistic fervor and liberalism spilled over into the South Carolina slave population in the Sea Island region.[13]

175 Lewis Jones remained at St. Helena until his death in 1745 and his
797 main concern as rector was with white communicants. In 1736 he com-
569 plained to the Society that despite his endeavors he had only been allowed to baptize one black and one mulatto slave. Bringing Christianity to slaves in St. Helena was discouraging work. Writing to the Secretary in England he stated that "the pious zeal of the venerable Society, and

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of its worthy Diocesan for promoting Christian knowledge among the Negroes meets with but a cold reception." This attitude was further strengthened by the 1739 Stono Rebellion. From St. Helena Lewis Jones lamented the fact that twenty-three "much indulged" slaves from his parish had joined the rebellion.[14]

But St. Helena witnessed some spiritual awakening. Whitefield preached there in 1739 and convinced a few whites to instruct slaves in Christianity. Whitefield however was not popular with the Anglican hierarchy. Unbeknownst to Lewis Jones, Whitefield had been censored by Commissary Alexander Garden in Charleston, and the latter was outraged upon learning that the outspoken evangelist was preaching in the Anglican Church at St. Helena. Further problems were created for Jones by one of Whitefield's St. Helena disciples, a planter named Hugh Bryan. Bryan, considered a mystic and an eccentric, preached to his slaves and reportedly openly predicted they would rebel and obtain their freedom.[15]

Like sister parishes, St. Helena suffered from problems of white communicants with only marginal interest in spiritual matters. Jones complained that duly elected vestrymen refused to serve even after accepting appointments. Church attendance was also poor. Jones suggested Sunday worship be held only once in five weeks. But even these infrequent services were poorly attended with the total numbers of communicants usually not exceeding twenty. Still, the long tenure of Lewis Jones brought an added stability and consistency for the Church of England on the frontier and it remained the dominant denomination throughout the colonial era. After Jones' death, ministers came and went in rapid succession. As the parish grew in economic enterprise through cultivation of indigo, a demand for slaves gave St. Helena a new significance. Yet, except for short-term effects of the Great Awakening, Anglicans in the Sea Island region remained aloof toward spiritual enthusiasm for themselves and their burgeoning African-born black population.[16]

Pecuniary interest and spiritual indifference were not the only factors that generated hostility and a "cold reception" from planters. The element of sheer physical self-preservation cannot be discounted as a reason for planter resistance. They were spread out on the frontier, surrounded by a predominantly hostile population—namely West Africans and Indians—and were in the process of exploiting both through bondage and unfair trade practices. Whites had every reason to fear of slave insurrec-

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•175 tion and Indian attacks. They wanted and needed docile, obedient servants, not "Christians" with a sense of spiritual freedom and "leisure" for worship. They were convinced Christianity would make laborers unfit for slavery and induce feelings of equality with whites. Geographical dispersement of white settlers was an added anxiety. Plantations were "remote and distant from one another," so that if the majority of slaves were frequently assembled their numbers would be known to them. This would provide "an opportunity of knowing their own strength and superiority in point of number," and possibly tempt them "to recover their liberty, tho' it were the slaughter and destruction of the whole colony."[17]

Some missionaries were convinced that planters used fear of insurrection as an excuse to prevent slaves from being instructed. The Reverend Varnod wrote that masters pretend "that the slaves would use the Lord's Day to make insurrection." If this was the real reason for non-cooperation, he queried, why was it that ministers were also prohibited by civil authorities from going into the slave cabins and instructing them? Yet other missionaries insisted that the fear was real. The frontier parishes provided opportunities for flight and resistance because of minimal fortifications, a small white population, and the presence of free Indians on the one side and anti-British Spaniards on the other. Whites were cognizant of their vulnerability and impatient with an Anglican clergy who saw Christianizing black slaves as an issue of consequence. Rather, it was the planters' policy to have red and black slaves "put check upon each other lest by their vastly superior numbers," whites would be "crushed by one or the other."[18]

The method of Christian instruction employed by South Carolina Anglicans added to the planters' uneasiness. Anglicans believed literacy was essential for communicants and their work consisted of compelling slaves to memorize the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, a short catechism, and in explaining to slaves the life and death of Christ in brief discourse. But the major emphasis was on literacy, which most clergymen considered a prerequisite for baptism. Bibles and common prayer books were sent from England. Yet the amount of time needed to teach reading properly was not provided. Many whites were openly hostile to the idea of slave literacy. While Society representatives might persuade a "pious" planter to allow a "favorite" country-born slave the benefits of literacy, such an opportunity was unusual. Dissemination of knowledge among slaves served no useful purpose from the planters' point of view.[19]

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In 1734, as a direct attack on SPG activity among the slaves, the planter-controlled South Carolina Assembly passed a law prohibiting slaves from leaving plantations on "Sundays, fast days, and holy days" without a ticket. Since few bondspeople were given passes to attend worship, and clergymen were not normally allowed in slave cabins, the law was a serious setback for the already languishing missionary movement. Peter Wood has discussed "mounting anxiety and patterns of control" on the part of whites in the 1730s, as the black, foreign-born slave population around Charleston expanded dramatically through importations. This apprehension was increased as planters also associated religious instruction with rebelliousness. An insurrection plot uncovered in Antigua in 1736 fed Carolina planters' fears and their belief in the ill effects of the Society's endeavors. The conspiracy was widespread and accounts stated that many of the leaders were literate, having been taught by Anglican clergy.[20] 175

But it was the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and two subsequent abortive uprisings that brought home the issue for white Carolinians. The Stono uprising began in St. Paul's Parish, twenty miles from Charleston. It gained momentum as the rebels headed farther south for Spanish St. Augustine, gathering recruits as they went. White Carolinians were especially enraged by the fact that notices posted by Spaniards offering freedom to runaways could be read by slaves who had received instruction from Society missionaries. The New Negro Act passed in 1740 curtailed the Society's freedom to teach slaves to read and write English. It was the biggest setback for the Society's program thus far.[21]

Still the Society persisted in more settled regions, though not with unified enthusiasm. While most legislation following the Stono Rebellion was repressive, it was also intended to reduce the incentive for revolt. In 1740 Alexander Garden, South Carolina Commissary for the Bishop of London, made a proposal. He suggested placing young, Carolina-born slave boys, ten or twelve years of age, under full Society tutelage for two years. Once trained, these youths would return to the plantations as religious school masters, adequately prepared to instruct slave children and adults in the neighborhood. Garden insisted that the most effective method was to have a teacher come from the slaves' own numbers. "As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children, or from young to old." Garden confidently asserted that in twenty years, "knowledge of 17

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aged benevolence toward slaves and encouraged Quakers to instruct their slaves in Christianity. Yet most Quakers followed a policy of excluding blacks from meetings even though they may have provided religious instruction.[24] 17

Presbyterians and Baptists immigrated to South Carolina in the 1680s, settling in Charleston and nearby areas. Encouraged by the promotional campaign which the colony's proprietors initiated, two wealthy groups of English and Scottish Presbyterians settled in Carolina. The first Presbyterian church, the Circular Church, was organized in Charleston by 1690. Like early Baptists who settled in Carolina, Presbyterians were Calvinists who practiced the doctrine of election and restricted church membership. Hence, they did not actively engage in programs of slave conversion.[25] Yet despite their Calvinism, early Baptists had divergent view about doctrine which separated them from other independent denominations and which later led to adoption of evangelism that included their slave population. 175

The name "Baptists" or "Anabaptists," given to the adherents of this particular denomination, has deceptive connotations. It was not a self-chosen name but one attached to the denomination by enemies during the Reformation. Baptists asserted that infant "sprinkling" was not warranted in the scriptures, and was thus contrary to the principle of voluntary action in religion, hence inviting corruption. These Christians made baptism on a profession of faith a condition of church fellowship. This, along with their denial of the validity of infant baptism and adherence to total immersion, did more than anything else to place Baptists at variance with other denominations. Yet rejection of infant baptism did not occupy as prominent a position in Baptist belief as opponents gave it. Baptists' most uncompromising religious position was their belief in the absolute authority and sufficiency of scripture and a regenerate church membership (principles which all evangelical sects ultimately embraced). This meant applying scripture to details of doctrine, practice, and daily life. Those Baptists who owed their origin to English Puritanism, and who rejected the medieval evangelism in the Augustinian tradition, strongly believed in Calvinism, especially predestination. (They were called Particular Baptists.) Puritan-oriented Baptists, led by William Screven, moved from Maine in 1683 and settled in Charleston at the same time that another group of similar persuasion arrived from England. By 1699 the two groups had emerged and formed one church. Quarrels and infighting over lead-

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•175 ership and doctrine caused a schism in the 1720s that led to the Old England group moving out of the building. Ultimately the Old England branch settled at Stono. It was the Screven-influenced groups that spread the tenets of the Baptist faith throughout the coastal regions. They broadened and tempered their Calvinism and, under the preaching of Whitefield, adopted for a short time a modified evangelism.[26]

Thus Baptist presence in Carolina predated that of official Anglican representation. Of all the dissenting sects, SPG ministers found Baptists the most troublesome. Society ministers found Church of England adherents attending Baptist meetings, choosing "rather to hear them . . . than none." This provided an added dilemma for Anglican ministers trying to establish the Church of England. They had to compete with believers whose practices were radically opposed to Anglicanism. Anabaptists presented their views in a heavy-handed manner according to Society ministers. Le Jau wrote that on one occasion an Anabaptist teacher espoused the doctrine of predestination in "so terrifying a manner that the next day after his preaching . . . a good man of my acquaintance hanged himself." It was a direct result of Anabaptist fatalistic preaching which threw the man into melancholy. And although the death "mortified" the sect, they continued their style of preaching, causing Le Jau to define Anabaptist character as consisting of "much obstinacy and little sense."[27]

Most early Baptists came to Carolina in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity. Some were well-to-do, but most were poor or "middling" people engaged in planting, trading, and the skilled crafts. In addition to fervor for their faith, Baptists were as eager as others to acquire obvious forms of individious distinction—land and slaves. In proportion to their numbers, which remained comparatively small as the colony grew, Baptists expanded their economic interests and spiritual influence throughout the Lowcountry. Every parish had its share of Dissenters and Baptists were the most aggressive. Usually Baptists spread out as families rather than as a sect. If conditions were favorable, established Baptists encouraged others to settle. In 1728 the most remote parish, St. Helena, had only one Anabaptist family out of a total of sixty-two. Christ Church Parish, closer in but still a frontier settlement, had twenty Baptist families out of fifty-three in all.[28] But the opening up of land taken away from Indians, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France, and later the demand for indigo, led to increased Baptist presence and influence in the coastal and Sea Island regions.

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As slaveholders, Carolina Baptists contributed to developing attitudes about slavery and blacks. They were, for the most part, Calvinist (or Particular) Baptists. Early Baptists did not attempt to bring Christianity to slaves and would not allow other sect's missionaries among their bondspeople. Nevertheless, at least one aspect of slavery caused anxiety among early Baptist slaveholders as it did among the Anglican ministers who spoke out in protest. By law, South Carolina masters were *required* to castrate a slave who ran away four times, or the master faced forfeiture of ownership to the white informer. Perhaps because of the strong protest raised by Society minister Francis Le Jau, perhaps because of the dissension it caused within their own sect, Baptist planters questioned the validity of this particular law. Charleston Baptists wrote the Baptist Church in Devon, England, for an opinion. Was this form of punishment a sin and a travesty against religious conscience? The Devon congregation replied in the negative by way of a lengthy expository. Intentions of the law were corrective not malicious wrote the Devon minister. Also, the law was passed for the "common good" and preservation of order. ". . . are not those Negroes a sort of rude, unpolished people whose nature requireth a stricter hand over 'em?" queried the English minister. Furthermore, not to punish a slave severely would be "a means of encouraging him in rebellion for the future." The Devon Church also put the matter to the Baptist Association for a verdict. The several churches agreed with the Devon congregation:

> We apprehend, the Master Acting according to the Law of your Province, in gelding his slave, hath not committed any crime, to give any member to break communion with him in the church; because we see by Scripture, that 'tis lawful to buy them. (Gen. 17: 13, 23, 27). And if lawful to buy them 'tis lawful to keep them in order, and under government; and for self-preservation, punish them to prevent farther mischief that may ensue by their running away and [?] rebelling against their masters, Exodus 21: 20, 21.[29]

Like fellow Anglican settlers, Baptist planters viewed slaves as a labor force, not generally as potential Christian converts. What troubled Baptists about the castration law, as pointed out, was concern for their own souls. Also, Calvinist-oriented Baptists followed the tradition of civil law being in agreement with God's law. Hence they sought justification, not to say rationalization, for the sake of their sense of piety and not out of concern for black humanity. Additionally, the law applied to black slaves, not apparently to Indians or white, indentured servants. Clearly, a dou-

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•175 ble standard operated even in terms of blacks and Indians, both of whom were enslaved, but not considered by some on the same level in the chain of being. Once again scripture was used to rationalize specialized cruelty and racism. The law of Moses distinguished between "Jewish and heathenish servant(s)," with the former receiving "greater mercy" according to the Devon congregation. Was not the case "somewhat the same" since the "nature" of Negroes required more severity? It was a new low for Carolina slavery, already filled with atrocities. For the gelding law had no Southern colonial precedent. Barbados, from where the colony borrowed its code, had no such law, although New Jersey passed a gelding law in 1706.[30]

Early Baptists' questioning of the gelding law had little or nothing to do with concern for slaves, but was primarily to purge and "save" their own souls. As William McLoughlin and Winthrop Jordan point out, letters such as those sent to the English Baptists by Carolina Baptists, which compile an entire collection, indicate some opposition to cruelties imposed upon slaves, but are even more telling for other reasons. The correspondence demonstrates how religious values were malleated to conform with civil institutions in South Carolina, and illustrate a belief that civil authority and God's law must be obeyed equally. Furthermore, these letters centering on problems of conscience and conduct reveal the use of biblical sanction of slavery and the slave code to maintain the social order.[31] These uses of religion by a later generation of South Carolina Baptists is explored in Chapter Seven.

A favorite slave might be allowed into the denomination fold. But for the most part, early Baptist interests as slaveholders and their doctrinal beliefs precluded accepting masses of slaves into the sect of a "chosen few." Hence Baptists were not troubled about the fate of black souls. Nevertheless, as the black population increased in Charleston, some were allowed the "privilege" of attending Baptist worship. Slaves whose Baptist masters embraced the evangelism of Whitefield were probably exposed to Christian instruction. Yet Whitefield's impact on Baptists was not totally positive from a spiritual perspective. General Baptists, espousing essentially Arminian views, were opposed to Whitefield. But many Particular Baptists of Calvinist-Puritan orientation accepted Whitefield. The latter group spread to the Lowcountry and were responsible for the missionary activity of their sect during the Great Awakening.[32]

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CHAPTER 4

# Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening

Just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text and looking round . . . as I thought directly upon me, and pointing his finger, he uttered . . . "Prepare to meet thy God O'Israel." . . . I was struck to the ground and lay both speechless and senseless. . . . When the people were dismissed, Mr. Whitefield came in to the vestry, and being told of my condition he came immediately, and he said, "Jesus Christ has got thee at last."*

As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children to parents, or from young to old.—They are as 'twere a Nation within a Nation. In all country settlements, they live in contiguous houses, often 2, 3, or 4 families in one house, slightly partitioned into so many apartments, so they labor together, and converse almost wholly among themselves, . . .**

## *The Coming of George Whitefield*

The late 1730s were trying times for South Carolina as one calamity after another befell the province. In 1737, widespread fear and alarm occurred over a pending Spanish attack which never came. In 1738 and 1739 smallpox and yellow fever ravaged the colony. In 1739 the Lowcountry was shaken by a slave uprising that left more than sixty people dead. It was no wonder that many residents of pleasure-loving Charleston were psychologically prepared for the coming of George Whitefield

*William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785), 13.

**Alexander Garden to London Office, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury.

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175 in 1740. Indeed, the inhabitants seemed to anticipate that on the heels of disaster would come one preaching penitence and redemption.[1]

Before his first journey to America in 1738, George Whitefield was a rising, controversial Anglican cleric, known for his enthusiasm and capacity to draw masses of people from many walks of life, but especially the lower ranks of society. In the colonies, he established headquarters in Savannah, Georgia, where at twenty-three he served as Anglican missionary and founded Bethesda, an orphanage for white children. At twenty-five in 1740, Whitefield's reputation in the colonies was well known and he moved thousands, particularly in the middle colonies, through the spiritual force of his sermons. Whitefield was of humble birth, and a friend as well as former Oxford mate of the more erudite Wesleys, John and Charles, although in 1741 the brothers broke with Whitefield for doctrinal and personal reasons. (This breach lasted for a number of years.) Still, both the Wesleys and Whitefield were part of the "despised" Methodist group which John Wesley later stabilized, organized, and shaped into a massive denomination. Yet Whitefield and the Great Awakening laid the groundwork for Wesleyan Methodism in America some thirty years before the first itinerant was sent. Young Whitefield's appeal, his introduction of open-air and extempore evangelical preaching, captured the spiritual pulse of England and America.[2]

Whitefield's first visit to Charleston was in late August, 1738:

> Arrived last night here, and preached twice to-day, I hope with some good effect. The Bishop of London's Commissary, the Rev. Mr. Garden, a good soldier of Christ, received me in a most Christian manner. . . . How does God raise me up friends whereever I go.[3]

This initial positive impression of Charleston and Commissary Garden was short-lived. Upon his return to England, Whitefield was under increasing attack and criticism. He and Wesley were shut out of many Anglican pulpits because of their doctrinal views and method of preaching. Whitefield also introduced into religious revival open-air worship, because, in the words of Charles Wesley, "The Churches will not contain the multitudes that throng to hear him."[4]

Yet popularity with the people caused problems with the clergy in England and in the colonies. Although a minister of the Church of England, Whitefield openly attacked Anglican preachers and warmly fellowshipped with dissenting congregations. Colonialists, already involved in

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a religious awakening, welcomed Whitefield. In 1739, on his second visit, his evangelical tour attracted thousands. Whitefield's controversy with the Anglican clergy centered on his belief in regeneration and the necessity of rebirth for salvation. Additionally, the young evangelist preached that the doctrine of "works" should be replaced with "justification by faith," and he took this controversy into his public ministry. Thus Whitefield aligned himself with many Dissenters and soon gained general opposition from almost all of the Anglican clergy.[5]

Following his tour of the middle colonies, Whitefield journeyed South overland, preaching along the way and freely espousing his theological views among all who listened. Upon reaching Charleston he was denied use of the Anglican Church, St. Phillips, because "the curate had not a commission to lend the pulpit," without the consent of the Commissary, who was out of town. This did not silence Whitefield. He preached at a meetinghouse to a large but lukewarm audience. Whitefield noted the affectation of dress and gaiety which he thought ill-becoming an audience receiving the Word, and he made this the subject of his sermon. Next day, many more came to hear the evangelist and he felt rewarded for the previous day's efforts:

> . . . Many were melted to tears. One of the town, most remarkably gay, was observed to weep. Instead of the people going out (as they did yesterday) in a light, unthinking manner, a visible concern was in most of their faces.[6]

Whitefield was moved by this sentiment and agreed to stay another day, preaching in the largest meetinghouse in town. He left Charleston, "full of joy at the prospect of a good work having begun in that place."[7]

This optimistic attitude, however, was not completely reflected in Whitefield's journal, as he penned his impressions of the American colonies. Pennsylvania he believed was the "garden of America." He found the people sociable, sober, and hardworking. More significantly for Whitefield, "they have the Lord for their God." He had not yet seen New England. The Southern colonies had little esteem for religion according to the evangelist. Maryland was worse than Virginia, not because of Catholicism but because of the Church of England. Yet neither colony was exemplary because of slavery, indentured servitude, an Anglican clergy spoiled by "too much tobacco," and because people lived great distances from each other and used this excuse to forego public worship. North Carolina scarcely had even "the form of religion" with

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•175 no church house yet completed. His most biting criticism was for South Carolina where there were abundant ministers of many persuasions and where Commissary Garden was "strict in the outward discipline of the Church." Yet despite the prevalence of ministers, meetinghouses and outward spiritual form, Whitefield surmised of South Carolina, "I hear of no stirring among the dry bones."[8]

An open controversy between Whitefield and Commissary Garden erupted in full force when the former returned to Charleston for his mail from England, in the spring of 1740. Whitefield called upon Garden and was surprised with a "cool reception." His attacks on the Anglican clergy, his unorthodox preaching, and his decision to commune with dissenting churches had angered the Commissary. Garden accused the evangelist of "enthusiasm" and "pride" for speaking against the clergy. Wherein, asked the Commissary, was the clergy to blame? Whitefield replied, "they do not preach justification by faith alone." After discussing the matter, the evangelist, known for his self-righteousness in spiritual concerns, determined that Garden "was as ignorant as the rest." Garden raged at the young cleric, accusing him of breaking his "Cannons and Ordination vow." Whitefield reminded Garden that he was an ordained minister with letters from the Bishop of London. The conversation grew more heated before it concluded. Garden warned Whitefield that if he preached at any public church again in Carolina, he would suspend him. Whitefield wrote in his journal:

> I replied, I should regard that as much as I would a Pope's bull. "But, Sir," I said, "why should you be offended at my speaking against the generality of the clergy; for I always spoke well of you?" "I might as well be offended . . . at you saying 'the generality of the people are notorious sinners' . . . because I am one of the people." I further added, "you did not behave thus, when I was with you last." "No," he said, "but you did not speak against the clergy then." Then I said to him, "If you will make an application to yourself . . . let me ask . . . . Have you delivered your soul by exclaiming against the assemblies and balls here?"
>
> "What," said he, "must you come to catecize me? No. I have not . . . there is no harm in them." "Then," I replied, "I shall think it my duty to exclaim against you." "Then, Sir," he said in a very great rage, "Get you out of my house."[9]

The enmity continued, with Whitefield preaching to Charleston and experiencing unprecedented popularity as he bewailed the hand of God in the problems that befell the province. Garden sometimes attacked

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Whitefield from the pulpit of St. Philips when the young minister came for worship, and he refused to give Whitefield the Sacraments. Nevertheless, Dissenters and probably more than a few Anglicans came under the spell of Whitefield's doctrines of regeneration and rebirth. The enmity was taken up in the newspapers and through letter writing campaigns.[10] Thus the two most significant men to address the issue of the religious instruction of slaves were bitter antagonists. And within the conflict the subject of slavery as well as doctrinal differences had a place.

Alexander Garden began the Charleston Negro School in 1743 with the approbation of the Society and a few slaveholders. He was familiar with the Carolina scene, having arrived there in 1719. Through his efforts the school lasted for over twenty years, although its success was very limited. Two young boys were purchased, taught to read and write, and then instructed in elementary Christianity. Reaction toward the school was positive in some quarters. As soon as Garden's two protégés, Harry and Andrew, were trained, students were admitted. Spelling books, Testaments, and common prayer books were contributed by the Society, the Bray Associates, and a few concerned residents. Thirty students were enrolled at first, and by 1747 the school had forty "scholars" who were "graduated" with a basic, elementary knowledge of Christianity and literacy. The school appeared to be thriving and in 1748, Garden wrote that ". . . the Society's negro school at Charles Town continued to go on with all desirable success and last year discharged about 17 scholars discharged as proposed."[11]

Thus while Garden was engaged in a bitter debate with George Whitefield, partly over slavery as we shall see, the Commissary was also using his efforts to bring Christianity and literacy to some slaves. The Charleston Negro School was extremely limited in outreach capacity, but important community leaders (such as the Pinckneys, Pringles, and Wraggs) believed in it. When the school was blown down by a tempest in 1752, it was built within a month and the supplies replaced. The year 1755 was a peak one for the school, with seventy children enrolled. But Garden resigned his position that year and his successor, Richard Clarke, was not as influential a rector. Slaves certainly seemed willing and eager to attend, probably for an opportunity at literacy rather than religious instruction. Hence while there was no lack of pupils, white support was a problem. Though they had to "pinch it off their own backs and out of their own bellies, Blacks sought education for their children."[12]

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The occasion of Whitefield's overland journey from Philadelphia to Savannah brought him face to face with the institution of slavery. Slavery was ingrained in the fabric of American life and Whitefield viewed it firsthand, lodging on large and small plantations, observing the slaves in their arduous labor. He was struck by their treatment of their foreignness. Whitefield generally insisted that his hosts allow him access to their slaves, among whom he talked and prayed. As a result of this journey and subsequent observations, he composed his famous letter to the slave owners. Never one to mince words, Whitefield was clear and forthright in his attack. At the time he prepared his letter to the slaveholders, he also wrote an equally controversial piece attacking the late Archbishop Tillotson. Tillotson's memory was revered in England and America by Anglicans as well as Dissenters who adhered to a doctrine of works. Yet Whitefield took issue with the cleric's position, declaring that in terms of scriptural and Anglican doctrine of justification by faith, the late archbishop "was certainly as ignorant thereof as Mahamet himself." Thus both letters, published simultaneously, created a howl of protest.[16]

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Just as Whitefield eschewed any sense of obedience to ecclesiastical superiors, so he took on the slaveholding class. When the confrontation with Commissary Garden occurred, both letters were already written. And when he arrived in Philadelphia, less than a month after the angry session in Charleston (April 1740), he gave the letters to Benjamin Franklin to publish, and then submitted copies to newspapers throughout the colonies. "A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Concerning their Negroes," was a bold attempt to expose the conditions of slavery to America and to chastise slaveholders for withholding Christianity from slaves. Avoiding condemnation of the institution of slavery, Whitefield abhorred the "miseries of the poor Negroes":

> . . . I think that God has a quarrel with you for your abuse of and cruelty to the poor Negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the Nations from whom they are bought, to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take it upon me to determine; sure I am, it is sinful, when bought, to use them as bad, nay worse, than brutes; and whatever particular exceptions there may be . . . I fear, the generality of you . . . are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard if not harder than the horses whereon you ride.[17]

Horses, went on Whitefield, were at least fed after their labor, while slaves were forced to grind their own corn after a day of hard labor. He

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•175 added that while dogs were "caressed and fondled" at tables, slaves were "scarce permitted to pick up crumbs which fall. . . ." Whitefield discussed accounts of punishments, of slaves having forks thrust into their flesh at the slightest provocation, and of inhuman usage by "cruel taskmasters," which at length brought death. He condemned the fact that slaves enjoyed none of the fruits of their labor while owners claimed cleared, cultivated plantations, spacious homes, and sumptuous fares.[18]

Yet worst of all, added the evangelist, "I have great reason to believe, that most of you, on purpose keep your Negroes ignorant of Christianity." Slaves were allowed to "profane the Lord's Day by their dancing, piping and such . . ." wrote Whitefield, and he added that he was familiar with the slaveholders' rationale. Many felt that Christianity would render slaves less submissive. He chided slave owners for not knowing their Bible. "Do you not read that servants, and as many as are under the yoke of bondage are required to be subject, in all lawful things to their master." One need only observe the blacks of the North to realize that Christianity would not undermine slavery.[19]

Whitefield issued a shrill warning to the slaveholders, reminding them that God would not reject the prayers of the "poor Negroes." Considering their treatment, Whitefield wondered why there had not been more instances of self-murder among them, or why uprisings were not more frequent. But the day might come:

> 'Go now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries shall come upon you!' Behold the provision of the poor Negroes, which have reaped down your fields, which is by you denied them. 'crieth the cries of them which have come into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.'[20]

Slave masters' ill-use of bondspeople had long been documented by Anglican ministers in private correspondence, though never broached publically as Whitefield did. Francis Le Jau was horrified at the "unjust, profane and inhumane practices" of the planters. In 1709 he witnessed the death of a slave woman who was "barbously burned alive near my door without positive proof of the crime she was accused of." The woman professed her innocence to Le Jau "to the last." In 1712 Le Jau opposed the law that punished slaves with castration for running away. He also noted other barbarous methods of punishment. Planters put slaves in a coffin "to punish small faults" where they were almost crushed to death. For twenty-four hours slaves were chained thusly with lead "pressing

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upon their stomach." Le Jau commented that the "sickness and mortality" which was so high among whites at that time, was the "wrath of God" seeking retribution for the inhuman treatment of slaves. "When I look upon the ordinary cause that makes those poor souls run away, and almost despair," wrote Le Jau, "I find it immoderate labor and want of victuals and rest."[21] 175.

One minister at Christ Church Parish, John Fulton, was continuously "harassed" by white parishoners who resented his efforts to protect the slaves. On one occasion some of Fulton's church members invaded his home with pistols, sat up all night drinking, and slept off the effects in the minister's "best beds." On another evening whites entered Fulton's home, "fired one pistol in my bed, another . . . at my Negro boy because he would not supply them with drink. . . ." Fulton had purchased a slave boy from a parishioner on a night when the man "supt" at his house, "merely to deliver him from the severe usage of his master . . . ." The minister deplored the treatment the slaves received. Some he said were whipped to death, others were branded "in sundry places with hot irons." Planters, according to Fulton, made a practice of "cutting off their ears and scarifying their faces." Fulton was accused of secretly instructing slaves at night and his church members met repeatedly to "contrive and plot" his removal, which they ultimately succeeded in accomplishing.[22]

Such were the conditions that moved George Whitefield to speak out, that led to acts of insurrection so feared by planters, and that generated instances of escape so common in the colonial era. Some parishioners were "forced to come to church with loaded guns." According to Fulton, "a great many slaves" engaged in insurrection in that parish. In the early days of the Society's presence Le Jau noted that masters could not be persuaded "that Negroes and Indians were otherwise than beasts, and use them like such." One of his female communicants inquired of him if it was really possible that any of her slaves could ever get to heaven and she have to see them there. Another young man stated that "he was resolved never to come to the holy table while slaves are received there." These attitudes were reinforced later as other Society ministers continued to privately comment on problems they faced.[23]

Whitefield's public rebuke caused bitterness between himself and many slaveholders. Response against him was vehement, although it apparently did not hurt his cause among Dissenters in Charleston, and may

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•175 have convinced some Anglicans to do more toward Christianizing slaves. The summer of 1740 was a high point for the young evangelist, despite Garden's accusations that he was inciting insurrection. No matter how much the established church grumbled against him, Charleston residents thronged to hear Whitefield in August of 1740. This is all the more interesting, because he directly referred to Charleston in his "Letter" and preached that their misfortunes were visitations of retribution from God:

> . . . God has already begun to visit for this as well as other wicked things. For near this two years last past, he has been in a remarkable manner, contending with the people of South Carolina. Their houses have been depopulated with the small-pox and fever, and their own slaves have rose up in arms against them.
>
> These judgments are undoubtedly sent abroad. . . . And unless you repent, you must in all like manner expect to perish.[24]

Clearly the evangelist had hit the mark with some Carolinians, judging from his popularity after publication of his "Letter." Most of these several thousands were Dissenters but they were also slaveholders. Whitefield's message may have struck a respondent chord. Some in the Charleston community, for a time at least, attempted to rectify the spiritual distance between master and slave through support for the Negro School. Thus it must be assumed that George Whitefield had a temporary reforming effect on some slaveholders. On the other hand, there is an additional explanation.

George Whitefield was far from a prototype abolitionist. True, he attacked the abuse of slaves, he willingly preached to blacks, and he admonished slave owners for not providing religious instruction. But one year after writing his grave accusation regarding excesses of the institution of slavery, Whitefield used his influence to persuade the Georgia Trustees to permit slavery in the new colony. He insisted that Bethesda Orphanage could not function without slave labor, that Georgia would never flourish without it, and that only blacks could work in the hot, mosquito-infested regions. Furthermore, according to Whitefield, enslaving Africans was missionary work, since they would be instructed in Christianity. Moreover, ever mindful of a need to justify actions through holy writ, Whitefield maintained that slavery was consistent with the Bible, citing Abraham as a slaveholder. He had made it clear in his "Letter . . . Concerning . . . Negroes" that scriptural arguments were on the side of the masters as far as ownership of slaves was concerned, though not in the denial of Christian instruction. Surely those who lis-

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tened and read carefully could find little to quarrel with as far as Whitefield's stand on slavery. His plea for better treatment was only "Christian duty." And, despite the flowery eloquence of 1740, Whitefield himself soon became a slaveholder, and an absentee one. By 1747, he was using profits from his South Carolina plantation, ironically called "Providence," to keep Bethesda afloat. In the accounts of Bethesda, an inventory in Whitefield's own hand thanks God for "the increase in Negroes," and further states, "I entirely approve of reducing the Orphan House as low as possible, and I am determined to take no more than the plantation will maintain until I can buy more negroes." At his death in 1770, Whitefield was a slaveholder and a buyer of slaves. He willed them, as he did his livestock, his land, and books, to Salina, the Countess of Huntingdon,[25] assumedly for the glory of God and the good of the orphanage.

It was a typical kind of clerical hypocrisy, this "straddle the fence" logic of George Whitefield's. He reasoned that importation of Africans was stamping out "heathenism":

> though it is true, that they are brought in a wrong way from their country, and it is a trade not to be approved of, yet as it will be carried on whether we will or not; I should think myself highly favoured if I could purchase a good number of them, in order to make their lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.[26]

No mention of the separation of kin, brutality of the trade, the unearned labor he spoke of so eloquently in his "Letter," or scriptural references that abhor slavery. It was a curious perpetuation of one kind of misery to alleviate another. It was also as logically "un-Christian" as any act committed by anyone Whitefield attacked. Planters admittedly used slaves for profit, but the sacrosanct dualism of Whitefield represents an even greater travesty because he attached to slavery the name of brotherhood and spiritual equality. One could simply explain Whitefield's activities as the workings of the eighteenth-century mind, were it not for the glaring difference between his position and that of John Wesley's. While Whitefield was justifying the institution, John Wesley spoke against its great evil. In 1743, in writing the General Rules, he prohibited "the buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women and children, with an intention to enslave them." One Methodist went to his grave denouncing slavery. The other, equally renowned, died a slave-

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•175 holder and justified the institution as a fomenter of spiritual beneficence. Viewed in light of his schizophrenic position on slavery, one can better understand the disciples of Whitefield in the Lowcountry, the Bryans and, secondarily, the Hutsons. Wealthy slaveholders and longtime residents of Beaufort with a branch later moving to Savannah, the Bryan family, under Whitefield's influence, attempted to bring Christianity to slaves in the Lowcountry when few others dared or cared to. They, along with Georgia merchant and slave trader James Habersham, also purchased Providence Plantation for Whitefield.[27]

Hugh Bryan was one of the earliest and most consistent followers of George Whitefield. His father, Joseph, migrated from England in 1680 and settled in the Sea Island region in the vicinity of Pocotaligo and Prince William Parish, where his children were born. Joseph Bryan was reportedly a successful and hospitable planter, particularly known for his long, close association with the Yemassee Indians. This fact saved the life of his son Hugh (1699–1753), who was captured by the Indians during the Yemassee War of 1715. Indeed, the entire family escaped massacre and plunder because of the elder Bryan's relationship with the Indians. Young Hugh was carried to Florida and, despite clamorings for his death, was kept safe by the king. Hugh found a Bible belonging to a massacred white family and it became his constant solace. Although he apparently suffered many hardships, Hugh was released at St. Augustine after about a year. But the experience—loneliness, fear, and suffering—undoubtedly deeply affected Bryan who was reunited with his family. Following his conversion by George Whitefield, Hugh Bryan sometimes exhibited rash, mystical, eccentric behavior which attracted the authorities and on one occasion led to his arrest and near-arrest of his spiritual mentor. Yet his conversion turned his mind toward the slaves' spiritual condition as well as his own.[28]

George Whitefield converted Hugh Bryan in 1740. Whitefield's Journal informs that in 1740 Bryan and his wife, at Whitefield's suggestion, "resolved to begin a negro school." A young actor whom Whitefield converted in New York and who went South, was to be the schoolmaster. This was apparently William Hutson. Whether Hutson was an instructor of slaves is unclear, and probably unlikely. But he did work as tutor for Bryan's children and later at Bethesda. By 1743, he was pastor of a new church, Stoney Creek, which the Bryans had joined, and he had also married a well-born slave-owning widow. The "school" Whitefield

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spoke of may have simply been the assembling of slaves which Bryan became known for and which got him in trouble with the authorities.[29]

Hugh Bryan, an Anglican, experienced a number of difficulties between 1740 and 1743. His close friendship with Whitefield led him to express ecclesiastical pronouncements against the Church of England and especially to undertake his work among the slaves in the Sea Island region. In a letter to the *Gazette* in 1741, Bryan predicted the doom of the province because of "the wickedness of the people and the sloth and indifference of the clergy." He went on to berate the Church for persecution of "the faithful minister [Whitefield] for not conforming exactly to their appendages of religion. . . ." Bryan was jailed for his calumnies and it was discovered that Whitefield had supervised and edited the letter. The "faithful minister" was about to sail for England but had to postpone departure, post bond, and meet court. Both Bryan and Whitefield apparently answered the charges satisfactorily and the proceedings were abandoned.[30]

Hugh Bryan, however, soon drew adverse attention of the worst kind. His work among the slaves created a stir because of charges that he prophesized the destruction of Charleston and gathered large groups of them under a pretext of religious instruction. Bryan did not admit to the charge of inciting rebellion but did confess his error in listening to a wicked voice, and asked for a pardon:

> I find that I have presumed in my zeal for God's glory beyond his will, and that he has suffered me to fall into a delusion of Satan—. . . . This delusion I did not discover till three days past when, after many days' converse with an invisible spirit . . . I found my teacher to be a liar and the father of lies, which brought me to a sense of my error and has much abased my soul with bitter reflections on the dishonor I have done to God as well as the disquiet which I may have occasioned my country. . . .

Yet the "invisible spirit" was not done with Bryan. This supernatural force directed him, like Moses, to take a rod and smite the waters in order to divide them. Bryan tried this and assuming the waters would separate any time, he proceeded into the sea until he was up to his chin in water. He was rescued by his brother who had followed him and convinced him to go home.[31]

Such antics from Whitefield's most faithful Carolina disciple did little to encourage the cleric's cause among Anglicans. It did even less for religious instruction. Whatever efforts Bryan was attempting were ap-

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•175 parently abandoned. In spite of his apology and his assurances that he was doing nothing to incite insurrection, the Assembly thought otherwise. The grand jury of the province condemned the gathering of "great bodies of Negroes . . . assembled together on pretence of religious worship." This they said was against the law and dangerous to the peace of the inhabitants. Hugh Bryan and his several associates were forbidden to assemble slaves for preaching purposes, or from "preaching to them at private houses without authority for so doing." Thus if there ever was a "school," it was quickly abandoned. Hugh Bryan apparently behaved himself following his indictment by the Assembly. For we hear nothing in the records of his attempting to disobey the ruling, although from his diary it is clear that he did not completely give up on his own slaves. Still, for the most part, Bryan seems to have settled back into the role of a comfortable, although guilt-ridden, patriarch.[32]

The Bryans soon left the Anglican fold, helping William Hutson organize the Stoney Creek Independent Church in Beaufort. The church register indicates that between 1743 and 1756 twenty-seven slaves and eight children were baptized. This is an unimpressive record and demonstrates how little progress was taking place. Yet more slaves were probably being instructed than the register suggests, and nearly all those baptized were slaves of the Bryans or Hutsons. Nevertheless, results were meager compared to the burgeoning black population in the Lowcountry. And Lewis Jones, rector of St. Helena, in Beaufort, reported to Commissary Garden that whatever objections the Church had to Whitefield, it was only through his influence that "two or three families in this Parish . . . have been lately prevailed upon to have their negroes intructed in the . . . Christian faith."[33]

Jonathan Bryan's story (1708–1788) is one of a more solid and seemingly more stable commitment to Christianizing slaves than Hugh's, at least his efforts bore more results. British-educated Jonathan was brought under Whitefield's influence around the same time as his brother. He evinced similar religious zeal but a more controlled enthusiasm. The proximity of the Bryan plantations to Georgia facilitated frequent visits to the new colony. Jonathan was active as an adviser in Georgia, was selected by founder Oglethorpe to survey roads there, and frequently went into that territory for runaway slaves. Hence Jonathan was familiar with the affairs of the new colony and joined Whitefield in advocating slavery. In fact, Jonathan loaned slaves to Georgia to help with their

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labor shortage. Obviously, religious enthusiasm did not interfere with a proslavery attitude. As a substantial Carolina planter, Jonathan hoped to continue increasing his holdings. But the price of land was high and for Jonathan "avenues of mobility in the Carolina social order were clogged." Thus when Georgia legalized slavery in 1751, Jonathan Bryan settled there that same year.[34]

Georgia's founding was closely tied to creating a place for the unfortunate. This, along with the religiosity expressed by the Trustees, Bray Associates, and others involved (like the Wesleys and Whitefield) in the colony, may explain the first slave code. Once slavery was established, a clause supporting religious instruction of slaves was part of the code. Masters were required to address their slaves' spiritual welfare. Slave labor on Sundays was forbidden, and owners were obliged to see that slaves be gathered "at some time on the Lord's Day for Instruction in the Christian Religion." Thus the slave code emphasized the master's Christian duty toward bondspeople. It was a policy most owners ignored on the one hand, and within five years the code was rewritten along the South Carolina model (not surprisingly, since many Carolinians and West Indians settled there), and the religious instruction provision was deleted. On the other hand, this early legal support for Christian instruction, supported by Bryan and others, probably contributed to a more liberal attitude regarding this issue in Georgia. This is most evident in events which led to the establishment of the African Baptist Church at Savannah, which was formed under the leadership and pastorship of Jonathan Bryan's slave Andrew. In South Carolina, a black man named David George probably set up the first black Baptist organization in the South, at Silver Bluff near the Savannah River, between 1773 and 1775. Yet following the disruption caused by the War for Independence and George's removal to Nova Scotia, the Silver Bluff Church found a more hospitable environment in Georgia, becoming the First African Baptist Church at Augusta (just twelve miles away).[35]

Thus by the time of the War for Independence, there were several black preachers in the Lowcountry. Their movements were proscribed, they were frequently persecuted, and their contact with slave masses was negligable. Often they preached to whites or to mixed audiences. Still, they represent the beginnings of an emerging African-Christianity. Most of them either came under the influence of George Whitefield's preaching or were converted to Christianity by those preaching a message sim-

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it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends pr[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[18] 17 197

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[19] 175

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication: 175 197 539

| *BUDDY QUOW* | A Key to Buddy Quow |
|---|---|
| Was matter Buddy Quow? | What is the matter Brother Quow? |
| I ble Obesha bang you, | I believe the overseer has beaten you, |
| You tan no sabby how, | You look I don't know how, |
| Dah Backrow Man go wrong you, | That White Man has wronged you, |
| Buddy Quow, | Brother Quow, |
| Dah Backrow & | That White Man & |

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2

No hawte bun morrowgo,
Nusso grandy hungry do you,
I hab some Barbaracco,
I bring dem all for you morrowgo

I bring dem all &

Don't let your heart be troubled Country Man,
Nor great hunger distress you,
I have some Barbaracco's*
I will bring them all for you Country Man.

I will bring &

*Horse Beans

3

No hungry nor so dry
For true now no me yerry
Make vawter for me yie
I cry so, tell me vary vipe me yie

I cry so tell &

I am not hungry nor dry,
Indeed now only hear me,
It makes my eyes water,
I have cried so, until I am tired wiping my eyes.

I have cried so &

. . .

5

Dah time Quasheba tell,
De Pickney he bin coming
I gow go for to sell

De hog me mommo gibe me, berry well

Dah hog &

When Quasheba said,
She was with child,
I went immediately and sold very well,
The hog my mother gave me.

The hog &

6

Von coat I buy um new,
Von ropper I bin bring come
Von new hankisha too
I nebo bin go tink um nusso true.

I nebo bin &

I bought a new coat,
A wrapper I bought also,
And a new handkerchief too,
I thought of nothing but that it was true.

I thought &

7

When Unco Quaco say,
De Pickney he was come now,
I no go morrow stay
My harete bin knock pum pum on true grangie

My harete &

When Uncle Quaco said,
The child was just born,
I did not stay till the morrow,
My heart beat pum, pum for great joy.

My heart &

8

Gor Mighty da nah Buf
See how Quasheba do me
Dah Backrow Man he luf
He bring molatto for me Gor nah Buf

He bring &

God Almighty above!
See how Quasheba has used me!
She loved the White Man,
And has brought a Mulatto for me, God above!

And has brought &

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9

He yie, he nose, he mout,
(I bin good mine for hit um)
Tun ebery mossel bout
Lak Obesha bin pit um out he mout.

Lak Obesha &

Its eyes, its nose, its mouth,
(I had a great inclination to strike it.)
Take every part of it together,
'Tis as if the overseer had spit it out of his mouth.

'Tis as if &

The poem, "Buddy Quow," is a fascinating example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect and demonstrates the contribution of various ethnic groups in the formation of pidgin. The names Quow, Quasheba, and Quaco are derived from the Tshi language (Ashanti and Fanti), Africans of the Gold Coast region. Gold Coast Africans, as noted previously, were the first black Carolinians. They were not imported in as large numbers as other groups, but were preferred by South Carolinians, and represent a continuous contribution throughout much of the slave-trade era. Hence their early presence and reinforcement made a strong base. The word "pickney" is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish "pequeno nino" (small child), and barbaracco means horse bean in both languages. This may be a Kongo-Angolan influence since Portuguese ports were in Kongo-Angola and many Africans from that region were imported to South Carolina. The masculine pronoun used to refer to both genders may indicate Upper Guinea influence, where such usage was common among Africans learning English on their native coasts from Methodist missionaries or traders, as previously discussed. Since Gullah is a spoken rather than written dialect, the interpreter of the poem may have lost some of the meaning. Yet most of the interpretations correspond to what is known of Gullah dialect and offer a sense of what Gullah was like when it was a true dialect. Writers who believe that there is no sharp break between Gullah and general black vernacular may not fully consider the historical Gullahs and their creative means of communication in an isolated setting. While there are obvious similarities between twentieth-century black vernacular and Gullah as recorded in the twentieth century, the geographical isolation in which Gullah was originally created points to a dialect peculiar to the Sea Island region, where Africans made their own language adjustments with minimal acculturative influences.[40] In any case, the adoption of a means of communication common to all the slaves in the area was a significant community-building mechanism, and previous African language orientations played an important role.

In addition to a language barrier, ministers realized that the black pop- 175

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Ottolenghe's statement probably represents more wishful thinking than reality. Most Africans no more welcomed the colonial missionary than they did their masters, albeit for different reasons. There were few immediate redeeming qualities in the new religion that warranted acceptance. Ministers actually offered further bondage of a different type. While there was apprehension among planters about baptism conferring freedom, clergymen were quick to disclaim such intent. In 1710 Robert Maule wrote from Goose Creek that he "frequently made it my business . . . to represent the groundlessness of such an opinion." As far as the Society was concerned "baptism makes no great alteration as to outward circumstances of . . . slaves in this world." For people still close to traditions that espoused the significance of the "here and now," the ministers' reasoning must have sounded strange and shallow. Francis Le Jau made slaves swear to a declaration before being baptized: 1750

"You declare in the presence of God and before this congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of design to free yourself from the duty and obedience you owe to your master while you live, but meekly for the good of our soul. . . ."[43]

Thus most slaves saw Christianity as representing obedience, duty to slavemasters, and a further tightening of the screws of the bondage system. If this were not enough to discourage interest in Christianity, ministers also insisted that slaves give up Sunday afternoon merrymaking in exchange for religious instruction. "It has been customary among them to have their feasts, dances and merry meetings upon the Lord's Day," wrote Le Jau from Goose Creek.[44]

Such feasts and forms of merriment probably had as much spiritual content as the ministers' Sunday sermons. Festivals, feasts, and ceremonies were generally associated with some sacred or spiritual observances among Africans. What missionaries deemed mere merrymaking was probably naming celebrations, forms of fellowship with ancestors and spirits, or even semblances of initiation commemoration. George Whitefield may have recognized something outside of his own spiritual cognizance when he secretly observed South Carolina slaves on his overland journey. It was a totally foreign and frightening situation for the young evangelist, never known for his physical courage. His experiences may have inspired his letter to slaveholders in which he spoke of the slaves' "paganism" and appealed for religious instruction.

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•175 The occasion was January 1740, on a night of the moon eclipse. Whitefield and his small group missed their path along the seacoast road. The weary travelers saw a light in the forest. Two from the party went to investigate and "found a hut full of Negroes," who appeared surprised at the sight of the whites. The visitors inquired after the planter whose home they sought but the blacks were no help, insisting they were "newcomers." The travelers became fearful and inferred that the blacks "were some of those who lately made an insurrection . . . and had runaway from their masters." Whitefield and his friends "thought it best to mend our pace." But apprehensions had no sooner subsided when the galloping group encountered another eery scene:

> We saw another great fire near the roadside, and imagining there was another nest of such Negroes, we made a circuit into the woods, and one of my friends at a distance observed them dancing round the fire. The moon shining brightly, we soon found our way into the great road again; and after we had gone about a dozen miles (expecting to find Negroes in every place), we came to a great plantation, the master of which gave us lodging, and our beasts provender. Upon our relating the circumstances of our travels, he . . . informed us whose they were, and upon what occasion they were in those places. . . . This afforded us much comfort, after we had ridden nearly threescore miles, and, as we thought, in great peril of our lives. Blessed be Thy Name, O Lord, for this, and all other Thy mercies, through Jesus Christ![45]

The event affected Whitefield deeply, seeing the primitive scene of blacks dancing around a huge fire. It undoubtedly conjured up all sorts of images in the mind of the evangelist—images of black rebellion, "black paganism" and even white oppression. That same month he wrote his letter to slaveholders, and his observances on that moon-eclipsed night represented only a small portion of what he witnessed about slavery.

But it was difficult to convince slaves to relinquish their festive observances, practiced only on Sundays or when away from the immediate auspices of white power. Sunday was the only day slaves could engage in activities unrelated to laboring for whites. Attempts to strip them of this small means of cultural independence must have appeared to be the height of folly. Six days a week slaves labored in the white man's fields, on his wharves, in his home, in his forests, and in his businesses. And on the seventh day, for some if not all slaves, a day of "rest," they were implored to worship the white man's god, the same God whom Africans were told decreed their foreign bondage. Furthermore, even planters used

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Sunday as a day of pleasure. Certainly, it was difficult to convince slaves that they should be more exemplary than their masters. These early Carolinians were described as a boisterous lot, frequently engaging in "cursing, swearing, drinking and gaming and barbarous misuse of their Negroes." For ministers and missionaries then, there was the double obstacle of combatting "the strong prejudices" of Africans "grown in years," and "the backwardness of masters."[46] 175

Not all masters were "backward." Some, such as Hugh Bryan, were atypical in that instead of depriving slaves of Christianity, it was sometimes forced upon them. Bryan was accused of inciting the St. Helena slaves to revolt in 1741, when he was probably just attempting to provide religious instruction. His utterances may have generated some discontent among the slaves since he counseled in words similar to those used by Whitefield in his letter to slaveholders. But Whitefield was speaking to masters not to slaves. As ill-advised and eccentric as Hugh Bryan's statements may have been, he was a planter, and as his letter of apology reaffirmed, was in sympathy with the planter cause. He soon settled down to a less public life. But his diary and letters indicate that the spiritual welfare of his slaves was a continual concern. Still, he seems to have been no more successful in creating a change of heart among his bondspeople than he was in mastering his own sense of sin and guilt. Some slaves were baptized and admitted into the Stoney Creek Church, as demonstrated by the church register. Their numbers were small, probably household servants. And, slaves were listed only for baptism, while the baptism, marriage, and burial of whites was recorded.[47] [669] [567]

Of course, church lists do not tell the whole story. And while few slaves cared to convince the Stoney Creek white membership that they had a "true experience," some probably had to listen to sermons and instruction in their "duty." Certainly Bryan's slaves were rarely deleted from his fervent prayers. He found them inattentive and continued to pray for them. "My servants were called to prayers, but none came," he wrote on one occasion. On another he wrote of it being "a time of trial and uneasiness from the disobedience of servants. . . ." Thus the slaves heard but did not listen and Bryan's frustrations for his soul and theirs seemed to weigh heavy on his heart.[48]

It was a strange relationship between master and slaves. Bryan seemed sincere although his own spiritual enthusiasm was often mixed with periods of gay indulgence and the conviviality so common among individ-

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uals of his stature. This inconsistency may have been noticed by his slaves. But more significantly, his dualism was evident in the fact that he believed in bondage and protected the institution. He was prominent in the Sea Island community and had an economic stake in slavery. While he preached to his slaves he apprehended runaways. Thus Bryan, while he prevailed upon the Lord, "for my poor servants, that they might be delivered from the power of the devil," he also hired people to help him search for slaves who deserted his plantations for freedom in St. Augustine, and was reimbursed by the authorities for his expenses. Regardless of his individual sincerity, Bryan's bondspeople might have believed a contradiction existed between what was preached and what was practiced.[49]

Certainly George Whitefield's attempt to reach blacks had some effect. His influence not only disseminated Christianity to slaves via white emissaries such as the Bryans and Hutsons, but was carried by some black believers as well. Whitefield's impassioned sermons moved many blacks in the Northern cities and he cites cases of the "poor Negroes" in the Southern districts being moved to tears. What these tears represent is entirely open to question as far as most slaves' understanding is concerned. But in some instances of conversion, the evangelist definitely made a mark. Such was the experience of John Marrant, who left a vivid account of his meeting with Whitefield.[50]

John Marrant was apparently born free, in New York in 1755. He moved to Georgia with his mother, brother, and sisters (his father having died when Marrant was four) and in the South his mother sought an apprenticeship for him. Marrant loved music and persuaded his mother to apprentice him to a music school in Charleston. By the age of thirteen, he had quickly mastered the violin and French horn. Such talents in the gay city made Marrant "much respected by the gentlemen and ladies whose children attended the school, and also my master." As a musician young Marrant was exposed to all the "vanity and vice of the city." He frequented balls and parties, meeting with "general applause" wherever he went. He grew accustomed to staying up all night, was "a stranger to want," and was "devoted to pleasure and drinking in iniquity like water."[51]

This life of debauchery continued as Marrant's year-and-a-half apprenticeship drew to a close. But before his service was complete, Marrant experienced his "awakening." On his way to play for an occasion,

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he and a companion passed a meetinghouse. His companion explained that "a crazy man was hallooing there." His curiosity aroused, Marrant went in to hear what the man was "hallooing about." His companion, apparently white, suggested that Marrant "Blow the French horn among them," and vowed to defend him if the crowd tried to beat him for disturbing the meeting. Marrant pushed through the crowded room, took his French horn from his shoulder, and prepared to blow:

> just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text, and looking round, and as I thought, directly upon me, and pointing his finger, he uttered these words, "Prepare to meet thy God, O' Israel." The Lord accompanied the word with such power that I was struck to the ground, and lay both speechless and senseless near half-an hour.[52]

Marrant awoke to find himself attended by two men throwing water on his face and a woman applying salt to his nose. As he recovered and recalled the nature of his condition he was once again thrust into a sense of affliction. "I thought I saw the devil on every side of me," he wrote, and he began to "halloo" in the midst of the congregation. His disturbances caused him to be carried away for he "could neither walk nor stand."[53]

Upon completion of his sermon, Whitefield went to the boy, and "being told of my condition, . . . the first word he said to me was. 'JESUS CHRIST HAS GOT THEE AT LAST.' " Whitefield talked with him, put him under the care of the Baptist minister, the Reverend Hall, and took his leave. Still unable to walk Marrant was carried home where his "distressed" sister got medical help. But to no avail. According to Marrant, his "wounded spirit," not his body, was in need of help. Marrant could neither eat, drink (except sips of water), walk, or stand for three days. The Baptist minister called on him and prayed with Marrant until finally he was made "happy" in conversion and lost his physical impediments.[54]

It was a deeply moving experience for the boy of fourteen, and throughout his many trials and "backslidings," Marrant's conversion always returned him to the fold of Christianity. His change of heart prompted a piety which caused him to leave the service of the music master and to begin reading the scriptures. This made him a laughing stock in his sister's home and in the neighborhood. He was considered "crazy and mad." Under such persecution, he resolved to return to his mother in Georgia.[55]

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message which won over black converts like Marrant. Whitefield was not a theologian in a strict sense—although he did produce a theology of sorts. Indeed he spoke against the clergy's erudite learnedness. Rather than a teacher, he was a preacher, and saw his role in a prophetic sense. He shunned speculative theology and organized religion. His authority was the Bible, at least certain doctrines from it. But he rarely preached from the Bible. His message was simple: all humankind is guilty of sin and must ask forgiveness, immortality comes through regeneration and rebirth through Jesus Christ. Inherent in his sermons, which probably appealed to blacks, was his stress on the mercy and love of Jesus Christ and his emphatic renditions of the benefits of divine grace. His insistence that God "was no respector of persons" found attentive ears. Whitefield's traveling companion, William Seward, noted the numerous occasions in the North when blacks became "greatly affected" by the evangelist's sermons, "especially when our brother invited the poor Negroes to touch Christ by faith, whereby they would gain freedom from the slavery of sin and satan." Whitefield's insistence that "God intends salvation for Negroes" probably struck a responsive chord for some accultured blacks, both slave and free.[58] His message was one of offering blacks incorporation into the Christian spiritual family, of providing them with a spiritual identity. For a group defined out of American social institutions and laboring under restrictions of racism, it was a comforting, appealing overture.

The directness of Whitefield's vision of rebirth and his invitation for blacks to expunge the "devil" from within was one manner of appeal. He often began his sermons with a rendition of his own conversion. Additionally, his sense of caring, his abortive efforts to begin a "Negro school" in the North, and his attack on the treatment of slaves also indicated that the evangelist was at least an ally. While cultural and spiritual differences prevented others from addressing blacks, Whitefield's people's religion emphasized commonality. His capacity to simplify "divine truth" and present biblical narratives and the Gospel message in clear, vivid fashions gained him a black audience. The following excerpt summarizes his message and method when addressing black people. In this case it is the slaves of the Jonathan Bryan household:

> Welcome to Christ's fold . . . This is a mystery . . . for unsearchable grace . . . would Jesus Christ take you . . . even you dispised Negroes and join you in one fold with is people? Oh what manner of grace is this? Would he lift you . . . from the dust, you beggars from the Dunghill, from the depths of vile

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slavery . . . to set you among princes, the princes of his people and to make you inherit the Throne of Glory?"

His words are full of condescension to be sure. Yet it is also an exalted message indicating equality in spirituality. Many blacks, especially slaves, probably understood little of what Whitefield said but *felt* what they thought he meant deeply. Some, as evidenced by the Marrant family, heard him and ignored him. The majority never saw or heard Whitefield at all. But those who did and believed took the message, in their own way, back to the slaves, altered it, and even practiced it under another denomination. Additionally, the disciples of the evangelist kept his message alive among a few favored slaves. Hence arose the early religious slave gatherings at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, around 1773, and the beginnings of a black church at Savannah under British occupation during the War of Independence. Additionally, John Wesley sent his first two itinerants to the American Colonies in 1764 with a doctrine not only of spiritual egalitarianism (minus the Calvinist predestination of Whitefield), but of antislavery convictions as well. Yet in the slaveholding Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, planters who allowed religious instruction distorted Christianity. Slaves who accepted the religion as taught by slaveholders ostensibly accepted a servile position in the spiritual world as they were forced to in the temporal realm. The "very short summary of religion" which the "best" slaveholders espoused emphasized obedience. Slaves were instructed that:

> There is one God in heaven who never dies, and who sees and knows everything. That he punishes all roguery, mischief, lying, either before death or after it. That he punishes them for it before they die, by putting it into their masters' hearts to correct them, and after dying by giving them to the devil to burn in his own place. That he will put it into their masters' hearts to be kind to those who do their work without knavery or murmuring. To take care of them in old age and sickness, and not to plague them with too much work, or to chastise them if they are not able to do it. That in the after world, after they die, he will give all good Negroes, rest from all labour, and plenty of all good things.[40]

Thus the period of the Great Awakening can be viewed as seedtime for planting Christianity in the Lowcountry. Whitefield's journeys there continued until his death, and left an impact on the spiritual consciousness of some acculturated slaves. Also, Commissary Garden's Charleston Negro School may have had some influence, although it seems negligible. Finally, the Bray Associates made yet another early attempt at

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Christian instruction, leaving a record of trying experiences and impediments. The germination process was slow and uneven. Black acceptance and understanding, the hostility of the master class, and the paucity of missionaries devoted to the enterprise were the major reasons for hindrance. Also, the Great Awakening came on the heels of economic possibilities that could only be realized through exploitation of a massive labor force. Immediately after the 1739 Stono uprising, few Africans came into Charleston because of a prohibitive import duty. Between 1740 and 1750 less than 1,900 slaves arrived. However, after this ten-year moratorium the trade was on an upswing, halted only (temporarily) by the War for Independence. Furthermore black population in the Lowcountry south of Charleston increased most rapidly, a trend which continued through the period of the slave trade.[61] 175.

Georgia's slave population was at first bought in small groups. By 1760, ten years after the trade was legalized, Georgia merchants began importing directly from Africa while continuing to purchase from Charleston. It is ironic that the major supporters of religious instruction in the seacoast region of Georgia were not only large planters but slave merchants.[62] Yet the fact remains that many owners offered no version of Christianity. Many slaves concerned themselves with creating a communal environment within bondage, seeking ways to assert their autonomy. Others sought autonomy by fleeing bondage altogether. For a number of slaves, the agitation among white colonials for independence, the resulting war, and subsequent period of adjustment provided opportunities for liberation.

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CHAPTER 5

# An Almost Chosen People

"How is it," asked Samuel Johnson, "that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"* 000

Mingo said *that all those belonging to the African Church are engaged in the insurrection, from the country to the town—that there is a little man among them who can't be shot, killed, or caught, who was to be their general, and who would provide them with arms—that some arms were provided but he did not tell me where they were.*** 175

## *Rebels and Outlaws: White Independence, Black Liberation*

On November 9, 1861, a Massachusetts man, S. M. Weld, was going through "old pamphlets and newspapers" in the garrett of Baptist planter William Pope's deserted house at Hilton Head Island. It was two days after the battle of Port Royal. The papers Weld found had apparently been "thrown out and forgotten by the owner," who like every other white Sea Islander, had fled to the mainland at the thundering sound of Yankee gunboats. Among the pamphlets found was one entitled "Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes Charged with an Attempt to Raise An Insurrection in the State of South Carolina." Weld observed that the pamphlet was rare, since every effort was made to destroy all

*Quoted from Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 35. [113]

**Testimony of slave informant Willian, in Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An official report of the trials of sundry Negroes*), 85–86. [113]

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● 195 copies soon after they were published because the contents were thought "dangerous for the slaves to see."[1]

Yet William Pope saw fit to keep the document and no doubt spent many hours pondering the intended rebellion. The title of the pamphlet reveals the prevailing attitude about the magnitude of the insurrection. Many believed it extended as far north as Georgetown and the Santee, and as far south as the Euhaws and Sea Islands. Some testimony indicated that the insurrection was even known of in Columbia. Certainly Pope, like the majority of slaveholders, had total confidence in the trial procedure, the validity of the document, and in the verdict that a large-scale, well-planned insurrection was barely averted. At the time Pope also shared the planters' conviction that teaching Christianity to the masses of slaves was tantamount to breeding insurrectionists. The slave insurrection which centered in Charleston in 1822 was spawned in the all-black class meetings of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. On a national level the incident, known as the "Denmark Vesey Conspiracy," gripped the religious sector, antislavery advocates, and proslavery elements, each group believing that events supported their respective philosophy of right. In South Carolina however, and especially in the Lowcountry, the attempted insurrection was viewed in more immediate terms. The safety of the white population, outnumbered eight to one by the black laboring class, was considered to be in great jeopardy. An examination and analysis of the intended insurrection provides significant evidence about the way in which some slaves put Christianity to use, about the African religious influence in the Christian church, and the effort of whites to permanently trample the seeds of nationalism, unity, and resistance in black South Carolina.[2]

No one who carefully examines existing sources can maintain that a spirit of rebellion and strong will to freedom was not prevalent among South Carolina slaves. As far back as the record goes evidence reflects this resistance on a number of levels. In 1720 a group of slaves in Charleston rose up and attacked whites in their homes and in the streets, killing a white man, a white woman, and, inadvertently, a small black child. Of those apprehended, six were convicted but three of them escaped. In 1730 South Carolina slaves again attempted an insurrection and were reportedly well armed. Each slave was to murder his master during the night and, after assembling for a victory dance, rush into Charleston and kill every white they met. The year 1739 was especially

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momentous. The uprising at Stono, discussed by Peter Wood and Vincent Harding, epitomized the spirit of rebellion among African-born slaves. For eighteenth-century bondspeople the price of freedom and rebellion was frequently death, and invariably repression and terrorism. In 1740 the Negro Act, a direct result of the Stono uprising, restricted activity and mobility in various ways. Additionally, indiscriminate, sporadic, knee-jerk acts of violence against the general black population were designed to instill fear and cowering among those bold enough even to contemplate a means of freedom. Moreover, an internal check on the slaves was devised by instituting a bounty system among their own race. Those who divulged any insurrection plot were amply rewarded with a full purse and freedom papers. These measures periodically kept the lid on collective resistance until the time around the American War for Independence. Still, individual and small group acts of freedom continued throughout. A major manifestation of this was flight, and Carolina newspapers are replete with examples. More often than not, individual fleeing slaves were African-born. Philip Morgan writes that while South Carolina's eighteenth-century slave population was less than half that of Virginia's, the most populous American colony, the former's runaway population was four times as large, if newspaper advertisements alone are measured. Morgan maintains that not all runaways are rebels. Still, flight is an act of resistance, and even newspaper notices, according to Morgan, represent "only the most visible tip of an otherwise indeterminate iceberg."[3]

Runaway activity increased after the reopening of the trade in 1750 as Africans poured into the colony. Advertisements reveal a slave society as tumultuous as it was economically prosperous. Slaves fled individually and together. While recently imported Africans may have had little if any idea of where they were headed geographically, other more seasoned slaves did. Many from both groups managed to remain undetected for months. In April 1759, an African woman called "Statira" had "lost herself." She could not speak "one word of English," nor "even tell her own name." Yet she was still at large in September. She was of the "Gola Coast Country" and had tribal markings upon her temples. A Gambia slave who fled his master in July 1751 was still at large in October. Sometimes masters did not even get slaves broken in before they absconded. One slave brought to the work house at Charleston, spoke "bad English," and could not say who his master was. Yet he was able to

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•175 convey to the other incarcerated slaves that he was among nine "new negro men and 1 woman," whom a white had purchased, "most of which ran away."[4]

No clear line of demarcation existed between American and African-born slaves when it came to acts of escape on a group level. While more native Africans fled than African-Americans, in collective situations they frequently ran together, as the following advertisement from a September issue of the *Gazette* illustrates:

> Run Away from the subscriber on St. Helena Island on the 11th of July last a negro fellow named Mingo, about 40 years old, and his wife Quante, a sensible wench about 20 with her child a boy about 3 years old, all this country born: Also Cudjo a sensible Coromantee Negro fellow about 45 years old, stutters and his wife Dinah, an Ebo wench that speaks very good English with her two-children a boy about 8 years and a girl about 18 months. Whoever takes up and delivers them to me or to the work house in Charles Town, shall have £10 Reward. Besides reasonable charges.

This group of slaves had also remained undetected for several months. By the time the advertisement was placed they could have been well out of the colony, given St. Helena's proximity to Spanish and Seminole Indian territory, or have joined one of the runaway camps that dotted the South Carolina frontier. Indeed, maroon settlements were one safety valve that provided an alternative to insurrection. The existence of these settlements represents an example of organized rebellious activity in the generation between the Stono uprising and the War for Independence.[5] The first two runaways mentioned, though American-born, had African given names. Forebears with strong ties to Africa had left a legacy of resistance along with the Old World naming. The fact that this was a mixed group of African and country-born slaves expresses the camaraderie that could be forged by oppression and kinship.

Another apparently country-born group of acculturated slaves made their escape from Purrysburg in the Sea Island region. Two men and a woman with two small children escaped in "a boat with four oars" from their master's plantation. He offered £5 sterling as reward for their return and informed the public that they not only spoke good English but also French and German. These slaves probably made their way to the Savannah River and into Spanish and Indian territory. That was certainly the avowed intention in another case in which a Beaufort slave was "gibbetted" for the murder of one Charles Purry. In his death agony the slave confessed

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to the murder and disclosed that he and eight others had planned to murder two more whites as well but were prevented by the immediate discovery of Purry's body. The slaves intended to steal a boat and make their way to St. Augustine. The proximity of the Sea Islands to St. Augustine caused planters much anguish. Various methods were used to deter slaves from fleeing to this Spanish settlement. Hugh Bryan spent much time and energy in efforts to locate runaways heading south. Entries in the *Commons Journal* reveal that in some instances white servants joined black slaves in flight and in taking even more aggressive measures. The Bryans, other planters, and hired individuals pursued, apparently unsuccessfully, a white servant and several slaves who, prior to making their escape, killed one white.[6] Thus the common oppression experienced by blacks and whites (probably Indians also) sometimes led to unified acts of resistance.

Slaves who ran away in groups of various sorts, as Michael Johnson has noted, typified the collective resistance spirit and kinship attachment present among rural and urban Africans and African-Americans. But at times the spirit of disenchantment assumed more dramatic and telling proportions. The Sea Island bondspeople, black and white, who engaged in the above plots were not satisfied with absconding which they might have accomplished undetected. Instead, they chose to strike out in a far more violent manner. Nor was the slaves' sense of wrong always eased by mere absence from the masters' plantations. At times a more exacting retribution was resorted to. Some slaves became highwaymen, robbing and plundering the white countryside until they were apprehended or killed. In 1759 an escaped slave thusly engaged was finally captured. During the night he managed to free himself, and with an axe the slave killed the white who had apprehended him, the man's wife, and one of his children. The slave remained free for a month, and on his continued rampage through the countryside killed another white man and his two children. The fugitive was finally caught in Charleston, convicted, and "hung in chains" at the city dividing path for all the population to view.[7] Thus eighteenth-century slave society was far from tranquil. What has often been represented as "planter paranoia" was actually recognition that the black population was unsubmissive, resistant, and, in many cases, very much on the move. Most of the rebelliousness was not collectively organized or planned, yet that is not surprising. Africans and African-Americans were not yet a homogeneous group, often did not speak the

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•175 same language, and sometimes could not even trust each other. Additionally, in a foreign country it was difficult at best to organize movements that would lead to specific goals other than immediate freedom. Still, liberty itself was a determined end.

Yet the absence of notable collective resistance activity seemed to precipitate laxness in law enforcement in small quarters. Repression, severity, high mortality, and overwork was the fate of slaves inhabiting the rice and indigo regions in the last half of the century. But the continued importation of foreign-born Africans engaged in the drudgery of plantation work helped to create mobility for acculturated, urban slaves on whom masters depended for their personal and leisurely inclinations. In the urban ambiance, the slave code of 1740 sometimes faded in memory along with the rebellion that precipitated it. This was especially the case as turmoil leading to rebellion against England increased. White South Carolinians, concerned with the jeopardy of their own political independence and becoming more at ease with an urban acculturated black population, allowed some practices to exist unmolested that were illegal by statute. Slaves in and near Charleston were known to gather in large numbers without white supervision for festivity, frolic, and perhaps more sober business. In 1772 a "stranger" to South Carolina engaged in a series of editorials printed in the *Gazette* regarding the "deluge of enormous vices" that prevailed among the slaves. According to the stranger, laws passed by the colony were "treated with contempt." One of the most important features of the 1740 Act was the provision that no slave be outside plantation or town limits without a ticket on pain of twenty lashes. Yet the writer maintained that fugitive slaves freely walked the roads, engaged in "theft and robbery," and were harbored in the city. Additionally, the stranger observed that on any given weekend, before sunset on Saturday until two hours before sunrise on Sundays, the numbers of slaves passing on the main road was "never less than four hundred but often exceeds seven." Yet, insisted the alarmed citizen, "one rarely met with more than 40 or 50 tickets or letters in the hands of the country Negroes and never more than four or five such licenses amongst those that belong to the Town." Any white man who questioned one of these slaves was either ignored or answered with an impudent, "I belong to my master!" which ended the conversation. Furthermore, it was noted that the slaves carried heavy hickory sticks or clubs which, thus serving as hangers for provision and "plunder," could easily double as weapons.

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Through the graces of an "old grey-headed Negro" the stranger claimed to have witnessed much. On one occasion he watched a "country dance, rput or cabal," from a concealed position:

> Every one carried something . . . liquors of all sorts; rum, tongues, hams, beefs, geese, turkies, fowls, both dressed and raw, with many luxuries of the table, as sweatmeats, pickles, etc., (which some did not scruple to acknowledge they obtained by means of false keys procured form a Negro in town who could make any key, whenever the impression of the true one was brought to him in wax). . . . The entertainment was opened by the men. . . .[8]

The informant pressed on, describing a graphic picture of social activity among urban and country slaves in an unscrutinized setting. The blacks exerted surlines, insolence, and a readiness to protect themselves against an offending white party with no immediate legal jurisdiction over them. The stranger reminded the public that such gatherings as these were prohibited by the 1740 slave code, because they allowed slaves to take note of their own strength and to measure opportunities for rebellion. In addition to obvious conviviality, the assembly was not without its serious elements. From his hiding place, the informant observed "private committees" whose deliberations were conducted in low, cautious voices so that even other slaves could not overhear. Perhaps these men were discussing means to remedy their own plight or ways of aiding others in hiding. That was the implicit impression the stranger conveyed as he commented on the scene:

> The members of this *secret council* had much the appearance of doctors, in deep and solemn consultation upon life or death; which indeed might have been the scope of their meditations at that time. No less than 12 fugitive slaves joined this respectable company before midnight, 3 of whom were mounted on good horses, these after delivering good quantity of mutton, lamb and veal, which they brought with them, directly associated with one or other of the private consultators; and went off about an hour before day.

Where was the patrol duty intended to prevent such "irregularities and the manifest ill-consequences there of"? demanded the stranger. Why, he wondered, as this negligence so grossly overlooked instead of being promptly punished?[9]

Exaggeration perhaps. Yet secret goings on, solidarity, and kinship between slaves and fugitive slaves were not uncommon. The small white population was engaged in economic pursuits and in maintaining political liberty in the face of perceived British "oppression." Hence it was

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•175 hardly possible to keep constant vigilance on the large servile labor force. Most slaves were isolated on plantations and could not gather for large nocturnal frolics and surreptitious planning sessions, or conspire with runaways. Nevertheless, this generation of slaves refused to accept the jurisdiction outlined in the strict legal codes of the colony. The frequency of runaways, evidence of crimes against whites, and other black assertions of free will characterized their response to the institution of slavery. James Oakes has suggested that the only period with claims to parternalistic elements in the history of North American bondage was the colonial era. To some extent in the latter stages of colonial South Carolina, this may have been the case, and here only in a limited sense. One cannot imagine how a padrone or signeurial attitude could prevail among market-oriented rice and indigo planters. And there is little evidence to support a paternalistic argument for that experience among the slaves. But the ideology could have taken root in urban centers like Charleston and perhaps Beaufort, or within planter households where master-slave interaction was not guided by their relationship to a staple crop which depended on a driven labor force for profit.[10]

In the 1770s agitation about human rights, liberty, and equality pervaded the country and was not lost on the slaves. Such discussion increased their sense of momentousness and enhanced an already present desire for freedom. The spirit of the age fostered insurrection activity in the Southern colonies. Many feared that rupture with Great Britain would bring rebellion among slaves. In Charleston a supposed conspiracy was uncovered in the summer of 1775, and in Virginia a planter cautioned that prudence dictated that "such attempts should be concealed as well as suppressed."[11] This logic was not only designed to prevent general fear among whites but also to preclude slaves from taking advantage of white vulnerability and making connections between the two struggles.

When the War for Independence moved south, many slaves made every effort to take advantage of freedom proclamations issued by the British. Under Virginia Governor Dunmore's Proclamation of 1775 and General Clinton's promises of freedom for defecting slaves in 1779, thousands fled plantations in hope of liberty. It did not require urging from Britons to inspire slaves toward liberty. The black population in some regions was already on the move and not necessarily fleeing to English forces. But for many, the British seemed to offer the quickest, and sometimes only route to possible freedom. How well slaves understood the offer of

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freedom is demonstrated in a letter written by Stephen Bull to Henry Laurens in March, 1776. "It is better," he wrote, "for the public and the owners, if . . . deserted Negroes . . . be shot, if they cannot be taken." This measure would, Bull hoped, "deter other Negroes from deserting." Such was not the case. In the Southern region, prospects of liberty took on new meaning for some Lowcountry slaves. British occupation of coastal Georgia began in December 1778 after an aged slave guided the British in a surprise attack, and continued until July 1782. Charleston was literally battered into submission in May 1780. The British kept lists of blacks given certificates of freedom signed by General Samuel Birch, British commander of New York, and allowed to leave America in 1783. These inspection rolls are useful evidences of social history. They contain names of blacks, ages, a brief description, former owners, and length of time away from owners. While the majority of the South Carolina slaves on these lists are from Charleston, most of whom left during the seige, there are also listings of slaves from the region south of that city:

Brass Watson (30), scar on forehead, slave of John Day, Charleston.
Nancy (his wife) (30), 2 small children, slaves of Mr. Quince, Wilmington, N. C., left 7 years ago.
MaryAnn (23), very small, formerly owned by Thomas Cooper, Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Mellia Marrant (30), squat wench, property of John Marrant, near Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Amelia (6), child of above.
Ben (4), child of above.
Michael Thomas (18), of Richard Garret, Beaufort, S. C., left 7 years ago.
James Brown (21), belonging to William Williamson, Black Swamp, left 4 years ago.
Sally Beauman (25), fine wench, of Thomas Beauman of Beaufort, left 4 years ago.
Lampson Miles (12), fine boy of John Miles, Indian Lands, left 5 years ago.
Sam Hutchins (26), property of Wm. Harden, Indian Lands.
Sara Jones (33), stout wench of Richard Stevens, Port Royal, S. C.[12]

So reads the "Book of Negroes," as the British army approved passage from America for those slaves with their certificates of freedom signed by General Birch. The lists indicate that a number of the "elderly" and "worn out" former bondspeople had nevertheless somehow gotten to New York in anticipation of freedom. Black women figure prominently in the lists, some of whom had been behind British lines, or away from own-

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ish. The resourceful young man managed his escape to British-occupied New York, and was one of those who "received a certificate from the commanding officer," General Birch, setting sail for Nova Scotia in 1783.[15]

Boston King and the loyal blacks left New York with great expectations, most of which went unrealized. But that first winter, "the work of religion began to revive" among the black colonists, thankful for their deliverance from bondage. Throughout his war exploits, King had prayed fervently for deliverance. In his many close encounters, King's most earnest supplications were expressed when he was back in bondage in New Brunswick. He thought of nothing but freedom: "I called to remembrance the many great deliverances the Lord had wrought for me and besought him to save me this once and I would serve him all the days of my life." It was a promise not immediately fulfilled, for King was occupied by more practical concerns. Yet the Nova Scotia experiences, the hardships the black colonists endured, and the racism at the hands of white loyalists drew the little black band together and King soon became their spiritual leader. For both Boston King and John Marrant, early exposure to missionary activity, early visionary spiritual experiences, positions of acculturation, together with their unusually eventful lives and deliverances all contributed to lasting commitments to Christianity and subsequent call to the ministry.[16]

To alleviate anxiety over absconding property and fear of uprising, some whites advocated that slaves be armed in the South with a promise of freedom as was occurring in the North. In South Carolina, bondspeople were used in many ways during the war, but they were never armed. David Ramsey, a Philadelphian who moved South after marrying the daughter of Henry Laurens, at first considered slaves "too dastardly" to fight. Defections to the British army notwithstanding, Ramsey believed that "abject submission had destroyed every spark of courage in their breasts." Others disagreed, and thought slaves quite capable as soldiers, as indeed they had proven on previous occasions in South Carolina. General Moultrie, a South Carolina planter, continuously urged from the battlefields that slaves be employed as soldiers by his state, especially since they were already fighting in the British army. John Laurens also argued for use of black troops, but his minority proposal was quickly defeated. But even Ramsey changed his mind as British forces prepared to blockade Charleston. Arming slaves probably would not have saved the city from the long-costly seige, because blacks thought it safer to

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•175 trust "the devil you did not know." But such actions would have destroyed slavery. South Carolinians had no such intention. And even though blacks felt their best opportunities lay with the British, tragedy took a heavy toll. Unlike the resourceful Boston King, other slaves were trapped in the South when American victory became imminent. Although an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Georgia and South Carolina blacks were evacuated from Charleston in 1782 under British protection, thousands more were transported back into slavery in the West Indies and East Florida by British "liberators" during the course of the war. And apparently many of those left behind made every effort to leave, as David Ramsey's contemporary account reveals:

> They had been so impressed by the British with the expectations of severest treatment . . . that in order to get off with the retreating army, they would sometimes fasten themselves to the sides of boats. To prevent this dangerous practice the fingers of some were chopped off, and soldiers were posted with cutlasses and bayonets to oblige them to keep at proper distance. Many of them, labouring under diseases, forsaken by their new masters, and destitute of the necessaries of life, perished in the woods. Some who got off with the army were collected on Otter island, where the camp-fever continued to rage . . . some hundreds of them expired. Their dead bodies . . . were devoured by beasts and birds, and to this day (1785) the island is strewed with their bones.[17]

The American War for Independence did not bring freedom to South Carolina slaves, even though the British presence had shaken the institution more than whites cared to admit. Blacks were largely unarmed, still consisting of many foreign-born Africans and actually caught between two enemies. The condition of the majority of slaves was not greatly altered. Yet their expectations had risen. Espousals of republican and human rights philosophies, the sense of independence some slaves experienced through wartime displacement, as well as white Carolina's renewed strengthening and commitment to bondage, created postwar spurts of active collective resistance. Postwar living conditions also contributed much to unrest, as slaves bore the brunt of the depressing aftereffects. In the city slaves resumed performance of the essential tasks of market merchandising, butchering, fishing, carting, skilled labor, public works, and myriad domestic tasks. Many slaves were hired out to perform various jobs and provide revenue for masters. On coastal plantations rice productivity was soon on the upswing again, and in the upcountry short staple cotton was not long in benefiting from the invention

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of the cotton gin. On the Sea Islands indigo planters marked time and clung to their slaves, although their new relationship with Great Britain cut off their monopoly of indigo profits. Shortly, a new commodity, sea island cotton, proved to be a vastly profitable substitute for indigo. There was never a question as to whether or not slavery would survive in South Carolina and Georgia.[18] 175 (567)

Postwar South Carolina settled back into a system of slavery which was unbending in its oppression. Signs of brutality and harshness were clearly visible. One 1785 traveler was awestruck by the natural beauty of the state, but also mused on how quickly "heaven's best gifts" were forgotten, "as well as the bountiful giver." Upon visiting a structure jocosely referred to as the "sugar house," the observer was repulsed by what he saw. Here Charleston slaves were punished. The place contained "dreadful machinery" on which slaves were confined and suspended. "I marked the scourge which was tinged with human blood and other apparatus of more than savage barbarity." More revolting than the "machinery" said the observer, was the "viewing bench" designed for "such spectators as chose to regale themselves with a view of the agony of suffering humanity." How was it possible, wondered the traveler, that "a people who have just risen up from the struggles of virtue and liberty should be so insensible of their inestimable blessings . . . as to consign to sining and dispair creatures like themselves and to triumph in their destress." Another example comes from Georgia. Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush noted that on the Sea Island plantations of Pierce Butler, the overseer, Mr. Mitchell, whipped slaves "til they laughed."—"Pain," said Rush, "changed to pleasure."[19] 175 567 (152)

Whatever mechanisms of escapism prompted this "hysterical" reaction to whipping, it is doubtful that pain was turning to pleasure as the usually sensitive Dr. Rush believed. But the statement represents more than an ignorant comment about an oppressive system, since the incident took place on a Butler plantation. This latter fact demonstrates the limitations inherent in viewing bondage from what may seem to be a redeeming ideology—paternalism. While Butler himself can probably be considered as close to any planter in representing "paternalism," this only reveals the inadequacy of the term in describing master-slave relationships. He was known for buying slaves in family units and for trying to keep them together on his plantations. He was also remembered by his old house slaves for having been a caring master. But Butler was often absent, and

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175 567 with an eye toward profit to support his elegant Philadelphia life-style, he hired hard-driving overseers and gave them free reign in his absence. His heirs continued to manage the estates in this way, and just before the Civil War, many "faithful" Butler slaves were sold to maintain that life-style.[20]

175 The postwar runaway situation among the slaves in the country and cities created alarm. In rural areas maroon groups were strengthened by the war with Britain. Slaves who aided the British in the siege of Savannah fled after their allies lost the war and maroons lost their hope of freedom. After the war, campaigns against maroons were conducted by the South Carolina and Georgia militias. The situation was discussed in both states' legislative bodies. Major Pierce Butler frequently expressed anxiety over maroon groups, and in 1789 noted that his island plantations were threatened from two sources—Indians and groups of runaway slaves, both of which were aided by the Spanish. It was, he wrote, "such an alarming and serious a nature as to threaten . . . ruin and depopulation unless timely protected by Congress." He proposed making war on the Creeks, taking Florida from the Spanish, and sending federal troops to combat slave maroon problems. He and other elected officials from his region "sounded" the new national Congress on the issue. But the new government was too engaged in more "pressing" business. These groups of fugitives, sometimes aided by the Spanish, remained part of the Lowcountry landscape even in the vicinity of Charleston. Some could be linked to the wartime period. In one 1786 account a militia expedition attacked a band of about one hundred fugitives who had sheltered on "Belleisle Island, about 17 or 18 miles up Savannah River." The band had boldly committed robberies on neighboring plantations. The first attempt to dislodge the group failed although several fugitives were killed, and four whites wounded. That same evening the whites were reinforced and continued their assault, "but the Negroes came down in such numbers" that it was decided to return to the boats. The fugitives attempted to cut off this route, "but were prevented by Lieutenant Elfe of the artillery," whose company discharged grape shot, killing or wounding several as evidenced by the amount of blood seen afterwards in the place where the shot was aimed. Several days later, after the fugitives had abandoned the scene, "General Jackson" went to the Island and destroyed the provisions, canoes, and boats. He also burned their homes

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and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 (533) (539)

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the leaders of the intended insurrection. The slaves held secret meetings on one of the islands near Charleston and the "proceedings were opened and closed by the singing of this "Hymn of Freedom":

*Hail! all hail! ye Afric clan*
*Hail! ye oppressed, ye Afric band,*
*Who toil and sweat in Slavery bound;*
*(Repeated)*

And when your health & strength are gone
Are left to hunger & to mourn.
Let *Independence* be your aim,
Ever mindful what 'tis worth.
Pledge your bodies for the prize
Pile them even to the skies!
*Chorus*
Firm, united let us be,
Resolved on death or liberty
As a band of Patriots joined
Peace & Plenty we shall find.

*Look to Heaven with manly trust*
*And swear by Him that's always just*
*That no white foe with impious band*
*(Repeated)*

Shall slave your wives & daughters more
Or rob them of their virtue dear.
Be armed with valor firm & true,
Their hopes are fixed on Heaven & you
That truth & justice will prevail
And every scheme of bondage fail.
*Chorus*

*Arise! Arise! shake off your chains*
*Your cause is just, so Heaven ordains*
*To you shall Freedom be proclaimed.*
*(Repeated)*

Raise your arms & bare your breasts,
Almighty God will do the rest.
Blow the clarion! a warlike blast!
Call every Negro from his task!
Wrest the scourge from Buckra's hand,
And drive each tryant from the land.
*Chorus*

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The British fleet that was "anxiously looked for" never came. And while "the rising of the slaves was abandoned," many took advantage of white preoccupation with the war and absconded from plantation and city.[23] 175•

The last two known incidents of collective rebelliousness prior to 1822 occurred in 1816. In Camden, South Carolina, slaves planned a move for freedom that was ironically set for July 4. At the time, Rachel Blanding was a Camden resident, although originally from New England. She wrote a Philadelphia cousin that the "whole village and neighborhood" was in "confusion" over the fear of insurrection, and that "nothing but the interposition of that Being to whom we are indebted for all our mercies has saved us from destruction." The plan had been "in agitation" since the previous Christmas. The slaves intended to set fire to a wealthy part of town and while whites were thusly engaged, the would-be rebels "meant to have possession of the arsenal . . . and proceed to murder the men," while the women would reportedly be reserved for other "purposes." The jail was filled with slaves, "stretched out on their backs on the base of the floor and scarcely move their heads, but have a strong guard placed over them." For Rachel Blanding, it was "a dreadful situation to be in," believing she could not "go to bed in safety." She shuddered especially at the slaves' "thirst for revenge." They would not hear of sparing even an "old gentleman who is a preacher," never owned slaves, and "devoted his time to preaching to them on the plantations."[24]

As the trials commenced, it was feared that sentencing and executions of those in custody would "exasperate the others to do a great mischief." Camden remained on the alert during most of July. Able-bodied men took turns at nightly guard duty until the sentencing was carried out. Of the nine ring leaders discovered, six were found guilty and hanged and two others imprisoned in "solitary confinement." The ninth conspirator, Stephen, was undoubtedly the divine "interposition" of whom Rachel Blanding spoke, better known as informer. The slaves never knew who the informer was. Orders pertaining to Stephen were that he was guilty and to have the "sentence of death passed at the same time as his fellows, but he is to be pardoned." Even whites were not privy to the identity of the insider, who requested that his master send him out of the country because the conspirators "had engaged all for a great distance, . . . and he knew the Negroes would not let him live here."[25]

According to the *Camden Gazette*, those "most active in the insurrection attempt occupied a respectable stand in one of the churches, several were

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•175 professors and one a class leader." Apparently the church was Methodist—a portent of plans to come on a larger scale. All leaders entered pleas of "not guilty" to the charges, although Rachel Blanding wrote, "two or three" finally confessed "and died like heroes," stating they were dying "in a good cause." The rebels obviously saw no contradiction between religious beliefs and raising an insurrection for their freedom. On the contrary, as was the case with the Charleston rebels in 1822, the Camden conspirators' reading of the scriptures probably justified rebellion. According to Blanding, one of the leaders, "a professor of religion said he had only one sin to answer for, and that was he sat down to the communion table with white people when he knew he was going to cut their throats as soon as convenient."[26]

Although the town of Camden regained its composure following revelation of the insurrection plot and subsequent punishments, the Blandings did not. Even before the conspiracy, Rachel Blanding considered living in the South "a sacrifice." Despite gala social occasions, weddings, balls, and "great parties," she wrote in 1808, "I can assure you I am not well pleased with South Carolina," and hoped her physician-husband would prosper enough to enable them to exchange the "land of slavery" for the "land of liberty." She was weary of "a land of luxury acquired by the hearts' blood of the poor ignorant Africans." Following the Camden conspiracy, the Blandings determined to move to the North the next spring even though it was against their "interests." "We have taken such a disgust of slavery," Rachel Blanding wrote, "that we cannot feel satisfied here."[27]

Later in the year, white troops battled a community of runaways in the seacoast region near the Ashepoo River. The maroons were a menacing presence as their numbers had increased and their depredations became more bold. They were finally captured and their stronghold destroyed. Thus did superior arms and numbers gradually doom maroonage in South Carolina. But even as late as 1821 an outlaw community clashed with whites near Georgetown. One slaveholder was killed in the attack and several fugitives captured.[28]

This unsettling activity was intensified by the frequency of flight in the coastal and island regions. But most strivings for freedom were largely sporadic and did not reflect long-range planning as did the efforts of Gabriel and his lieutenants or the Camden group. Yet conditions seemed as ripe in South Carolina as in Virginia for an organized movement for

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freedom. It came in Charleston. As John Lofton points out, Santo Domingo provided a practical example of a successful black revolt, the age offered a philosophy, while natural inclinations and oppression supplied a rationale.[29] By 1822 ideology and leadership were present. The record shows that legions of slaves in the Lowcountry, hoping to spur a statewide insurrection under the contagion of freedom, prepared to take by force what was rightfully theirs. The rebellion strategy was formulated and formented under the guise of an African-Christian association in Charleston known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This strategy and the rebellion's leadership reflected the composition of slave society in coastal South Carolina and the spiritual orientation of the insurrectionists. Indeed, the attempted rebellion embodied militant aspects of two religious traditions. It was closely linked with the Methodist Church but was to be carried out under a mystique of African supernatural forces. Moreover, the relationship with African religious tradition may have been the strongest bond among the insurrectionists in their designs. In the Lowcountry, the real language of egalitarianism came from Christian ideology. This did not always translate into support for emancipation, although some whites, for a time, broached the issue. More significantly, the liberal trend led to black exposure to Christianity on a level not previously experienced. Although some slaves may have accepted Christianity just as it flowed out of the white man's mouth, many did not. This latter group used the Christian religion to help provide the genius of their liberation struggle.

### *Slave Religion in the Postwar Lowcountry*

In the Lowcountry, early black exposure to Christianity was largely the work of those previously influenced by George Whitefield, and of postwar Methodists. Although a member of the Anglican clergy, Whitefield, as previously discussed, was not popular with the established church in South Carolina. His staunchest followers were within dissenting congregations. The English evangelist was particularly effective among Puritan-Baptists because of his Calvinist stand on scriptural authority, regenerate membership, and justification by faith. The first Lowcountry extension of the Old England Baptists was the establishment of a church at Euhaw in 1746, for the benefit of communicants who moved their habitations south to these Indian lands and to Edisto Island. Other churches were

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country. Other affluent Baptist-Episcopalian members of the slavocracy in the Sea Island region included the Bosticks, the Elliotts, the Popes, and the Fripps. Thus the stigma attached to Baptists subsided. By 1812 the once dissenting faith was a respectable form of worship in the Sea Islands. Lowcountry Baptists had always identified with planter interests and with slaveholding. The Reverend Holcomb lived long enough to see "the flower of Beaufort filling their seats at the Lord's table" for communion at the Baptist Church.[31]

When George Whitefield appealed to planters for religious instruction of slaves, Baptist compliance may have been more forthcoming, in some cases, than among other denominations. His remonstrances did not seem to diminish Puritan-Baptist attraction to his preaching. Whitefield, after all, was a slaveholder himself. Thus in isolated pockets of coastal Carolina and Georgia, preaching to blacks did occur and had obvious results around the time of the War for Independence and afterwards.

As previously discussed, the first organized black religious gathering under Christian auspices in the South was at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, between 1773 and 1775. That occurred on the estate of planter and Indian agent George Galphin, through the efforts of a Connecticut Baptist named Wait Palmer. David George, one of Galphin's slaves, was a convert of Palmer's, and was appointed elder over the little band of eight after being instructed in that office. David George was greatly influenced and encouraged by a black Baptist preacher named George Liele (also called George Sharp). Liele, under the guidance of Georgia white Baptists, had become a practicing exhorter. His master, Henry Sharp, a deacon of the Burke County church where Liele was "called," freed his slave, although Liele continued on with the white family. In his capacity as a preacher George Liele ministered to various plantations as well as to whites and blacks in his own church near Savannah. Liele's master, a loyalist, fought with the British and was killed. Liele remained with the British during the Savannah occupation.[32]

When the War for Independence began, slave owners prohibited ministers from visiting the plantations, fearing that information about the war, especially Dunmore's and Clinton's freedom offers, would cause black defection. With ministers no longer visiting, David George, who had experienced a call to preach under the ministrations of Liele, took over the little church, then numbering about forty. When the British overran the seacoast region, American patriots, Galphin among them,

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•175 fled for their lives. David George, along with fifty other slaves, sought freedom and refuge under the British flag in Savannah. There they were reunited with George Liele, and the little community of Baptists thrived in wartime Savannah. Although the core of the membership was probably from Silver Bluff, it was George Liele's influence as a servant to a British officer that gave the black church its recognition in the military government.[33]

Included in the wartime black church membership were two men who did not take advantage of their opportunity to remain free through British service, but elected to remain slaves, becoming founders of black churches in Georgia. One was Andrew, favorite slave of Jonathan Bryan. Bryan, like other American patriots had fled Savannah. Andrew was baptized by George Liele just before the latter evacuated for Jamaica with the British in 1782. Andrew began preaching in the neighborhood and was brutally whipped and imprisoned on more than one occasion. Those who endeavored to hear him were also punished. Finally, prominent citizens interceded, among them Andrew's master. It was determined that the slaves were "sincere." Jonathan Bryan provided them with a barn for worship, the white Baptist divine, Abraham Marshall, ordained Andrew, and by 1788 the African Baptist Church of Savannah was flourishing. They claimed 570 converts, "many of whom have not permission" from their owners "to be baptized." Andrew, already in his fifties, was given his freedom and the church continued to grow.[34]

Jesse Peter (called Jesse Galphin) was another one of those who obtained freedom by going to the British, but who returned to his master's estate and to slavery after the war. Peter was ordained along with Andrew and became pastor of the reconstituted Silver Bluff Church. In 1793 the church had sixty members, but after that date it apparently no longer existed. This occurred at the time the Springfield (First African) Baptist Church at Augusta was formed with Jesse Peter as pastor. Thus no black church existed in South Carolina after 1793 until the African Methodist Church of Charleston was organized. Why the Silver Bluff Church disappeared cannot be explained merely by the removal of Jesse Peter, although Augusta was but twelve miles from Silver Bluff. Most likely South Carolina planters were hostile to the presence of a black church. George Galphin, an Irish-born man, known for his kindness to both blacks and Indians, was exceptional. But Galphin died before the war ended. Jesse Peter undoubtedly felt his work was more secure in

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Georgia. He remained a slave, but was given "uncommon liberty." He preached at several places in addition to his church, and "a number of white people admired him." In any case Savannah and Augusta are atypical examples of black early participation in the Christian religion. These churches were closely controlled and carefully watched. They essentially were under receivership of prominent white Baptists such as Abraham Marshall. While the "regulating touches" of white authority reportedly gave the black churches "standing and influence,"[35] this scrutiny probably gave them little autonomy.

David George did not feel the attachment to familiar places and people that Andrew Bryan and Jesse Peter felt, perhaps because he was not born and raised on the seacoast. David George was a Virginia slave whose life had been hard before coming to the Galphins. His African-born parents had nine children. All were brutally treated. George had witnessed the whipping of his sisters, brothers, and mother. At times George was flogged "till the blood . . . ran down over my waistband." This caused George to flee, finding odd jobs, living with Indians, and finally ending up in South Carolina where Galphin purchased him from the Virginia master who was ever on his trail. Although George remembered Galphin as a kind man, he had no intention of returning to bondage. In Savannah, George and his half-Indian wife fared well. She worked as a laundress, at one time taking in General Clinton's wash. George operated a butcher's stall, and rented a house with a garden and field. His trade took him into the country (where his brother-in-law supplied him with meat). George was given a pass certifying that he was "a good Subject to King George," as well as a "Free Negro Man." When the Savannah evacuation began, George took his family to Charleston where he attached himself to Major General James Paterson. When Paterson was ordered to sail for Halifax, Nova Scotia, George and his family went with him.[36]

Despite this flurry of religious activity in a few areas of the Lowcountry for a short period of time, and although several black churches were established in coastal Georgia by the turn of the century, religious instruction was not widespread. If Georgia was exemplary as an area where religious activity was taking place, it also demonstrates how little was actually done. Jonathan Bryan wrote to a London Methodist in 1785 of his concern for the "unhappy condition of our Negroes, who are kept in worse than Egyptian bondage." Worst of all, wrote Bryan, was their

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175 spiritual state. While slave labor produced "the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and all the superfluities we possess," they received "nothing equivalent." On the contrary, wrote Bryan, "we keep from them the key of knowledge, so that their bodies and souls perish together in our service."[37]

If Christian instruction among slaves languished in supposedly liberal coastal Georgia, in coastal South Carolina it was deplorable among many Baptists whose attachment to the former preachings of George Whitefield stopped short of missionary work among the slave masses. Baptists were interested in extending the faith, as evidenced by how quickly they spread to the coastal and upcountry frontier. But this evangelical zeal did not extend to the general slave population. Early Sea Island Baptists [569] were involved in protecting slavery, consolidating property, and maintaining a money crop. Like Episcopalians, they viewed efforts of spiritual uplift among masses of slaves as dangerous and antagonistic to economic interests.

175 The War for Independence did much to unsettle growth in the Sea 799 Island region. Once the war ended the people engaged in reconstructing their society and reconstituting their economic priorities. Little time was spent on contemplation of their souls. In 1792, Matthew Tate, a friend of Benjamin Rush and an Episcopalian minister, became rector at St. Helena Church in Beaufort. The spiritual life was low according to Tate, who was himself primarily interested in economic advantage. Since there was no other Episcopal clergyman for 40 miles, Tate boasted of the money to be made from conducting marriages and funerals. Also the availability of single, preferably wealthy widows was a notable concern of the rector's.[38] Given such pecuniary preoccupations on the part of ministers it is understandable that the state of Christianity suffered.

175 Religion did not assume a prominent role in the lives of either Baptists 569 or Episcopalians in the coastal and Sea Islands region. Indigo, cotton, rice, slaves, and a well-planned social calendar received highest consideration. In 1766 a Philadelphian, John Bartram, visited the coastal and Sea Island regions of South Carolina and Georgia. Even at this early stage of development a certain affluence was observed. Bartram wrote in his diary that the "best inhabitants" had great farms distanced from the seacoast towns. On the farms "they keep numerous Negro slaves, who are closely employed in cultivating the ground, or sowing plank, or looking after their stock for maintenance of their masters." The farms were

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39] 175 567

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. [162] The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that:

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41] 175 (567)

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries 175 567 794 (177)

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175 569 794 and a tower, a first indication of a notable black membership at this Island church. In 1819, the Euhaw Church reported a membership of "18 Whites and 4 Colored," and the church at Black Swamp had thirty white and one hundred black members.[42]

175 569 797 Some slaves, during the "Second Great Awakening," beginning around 1800, were exposed to Christianity in Baptist churches. Often blacks were "converted" when no whites came forth. In 1800, Richard Furman of Charleston wrote to a Philadelphia Baptist minister of the success the new minister at Euhaw Church was experiencing. In nine months, "Mr Cook" had "baptized about twenty persons." Most of them "are Negroes."[43] This is a very small number, but nonetheless demonstrates that actual black membership does not tell the whole story. Obviously blacks were baptized in many instances without being given church membership. While this demonstrates black exposure to Christianity, it also illustrates the paucity of "Christian" instruction.

175 Even the religious revitalization that began in the North after the War of 1812 and spread to some parts of the South, was not greatly effective in the Carolina Lowcountry. In 1821, a long-term visitor from Connecticut living in Robertville wrote:

> The Religious state of things here it is hoped is improving. A few are enquiring "What they Shall do to be saved" . . . we who have been accustomed to having ministers settled in every village must feel the dearth of ministers in this part of our country where the toilers are ripe for the harvest and seem only to want Faithful Laborers in the vineyard. . . . The inhabitants of this place are all connected by inter-marriages, and I am afraid are very wordly minded and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than the rise and progress of religion.[44]

Although Baptists had no national association, local organizations exemplify how negligible black membership was in white churches. By 1806 there were 130 Baptist churches in South Carolina, most of which were in the upcountry. Communicants totaled 10,560, 3,500 of whom were reportedly black. Sixteen years later, according to the 1822 South Carolina Baptist Convention, the number of black Baptists had not greatly increased. The Baptist Church at Charleston had a black membership large enough to allow for separate meetings with "proper" regulations by 1819. It is questionable how many of the total black church membership was made up of slaves. In the case of the Charleston Baptist Church's black membership, the majority of the congregations were free. Yet an

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interesting example of possible autonomy is that Charleston black Baptists, slave and free, were allowed to meet together apart from the white church and to discipline their own members. This practice was probably discontinued after the Vesey Conspiracy of 1822.[45] 175.

The first two emissaries of Wesleyan Methodism arrived in the colonies in 1769. One of them, Joseph Philmoore, went to Charleston in 1773. Philmoore, who had "traveled many thousands of miles in England and Wales," and had seen "much of North America," considered his journey over the sandy, boggy roads "the most distressing of all ever met with before." Philmoore's opinion of religion in the Lowcountry was no less negative. The unpopularity of Methodist preaching forced him to limit himself to daytime sermons. Thirty-three years had passed since George Whitefield made his final appearance in Charleston. Long before his last visits, Whitefield's popularity had waned. Methodism was unpopular within the established church. The Methodism of Wesley was even more abhorrent, because it rejected the doctrine of election and was against slavery. Philmoore found an inhospitable people in Charleston who, under nighttime cover, resorted to overt acts of aggression against Methodist preaching. On one occasion, he preached in a theater and was forced to flee "through a trapdoor—used for the ghost in *Hamlet*." Philmoore's short stay had little permanent effect for Methodism.[46]

It was 1785 before the Methodists made another trip to Charleston. Francis Asbury, the man responsible for organization of the Methodist Episcopal church in America the previous year, arrived in Charleston to organize a church. At that time the Methodists were a small, weak group nationally. American Methodists had been pacifists during the late war and their British leader was a Tory. These facts, along with their doctrines and moral stand on slavery, made them distrusted, especially in the South, where the majority of American Wesleyans resided. Asbury and his coadjutors, Henry Willis and Jesse Lee, found that while they had some "friends" in the upcountry, the people of Charleston would "receive nothing." The only group with any appearance of religion he wrote were the Calvinists. Asbury was alarmed and "dejected in spirit" because of the small congregations. Nevertheless, through the efforts of his two associates who remained in the city, by the end of the year a church was established consisting of "thirty-five whites and twenty-three colored." Having no church of their own, Methodists first met in a deserted Baptist meetinghouse. One Sunday they found the pews flung out

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•175 in the streets and the entrances and windows of the church barred. The group met in each others' homes and even attempted to purchase an unused "French Church." Their unpopularity was such that negotiations were terminated. But by 1787, the determined group had erected their own edifice, the Cumberland Street Church.[47]

Belief in extempore preaching and evangelism inspired Methodists to gather in the public market, the streets, and in private homes for worship, even after their church was built. These assemblies were frequently broken up by the Charleston intendant and city guard. Threats, harangues, and arrests were common occurrences. Services held in homes were bombarded with missiles thrown by youths from families of "standing." Methodists who preached and exhorted in public were arrested for "disturbing the peace." Bishop Francis Asbury noted in his journal in 1788 that Methodist preaching occasioned riots in Charleston, even within the confines of the church building. One such commotion which began outside the church door so alarmed the congregation that "ladies leaped out at the windows of the church and a dreadful confusion ensued." That same night, while Asbury himself was preaching, "a stone was thrown against the north side of the church; then another on the south; a third came through the pulpit window, and struck near me inside the pulpit." Undaunted, Asbury continued with his preaching and insisted that he had "more liberty to speak in Charleston this visit" than ever before.[48]

The early Methodist church was not antislavery in terms of membership, although its proclamations, reputation, and some individual action imply otherwise. Few Southern-born lay preachers favored emancipation even though British-born Methodist leaders like Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat did. From the Charleston region Asbury wrote in 1795:

> Here are the rich, the rice and the slaves; the last is awful to me. Wealthy people settle on the rice lands of Cooper River hold from fifty to two hundred slaves on a plantation in chains and bondage: yet God is able of these stones, yea of these slave-holders to raise up children unto Abraham.[49]

Yet the American Methodist ministry was divided. Thomas Coke, sent by Wesley to help organize the denomination, was strongly antislavery. He and Asbury organized the new church under a discipline that required Methodists to free their slaves or be denied the Lord's Supper and expelled. Although antislavery rules were adopted at the first Amer-

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ican Methodist General Conference at Christmas 1784, negative reaction was so strong that the rules were suspended at a June conference in Baltimore in 1785 on behalf of the entire church. Nevertheless, some emancipationist sentiment continued. In 1795 ministers meeting in Charleston signed an agreement which recognized slavery as "evil" and condemned "patrons of slavery as well as holders of slaves." Chastizing each other for "strengthening the hands of oppression," the signatories agreed that those of them who owned slaves should emancipate them immediately if permitted to do so by law. Where legal strictures prevented manumission, it was decreed that slaves "ought to be compensated for their labor and willed free." They further resolved that those acting otherwise thereby forfeited both their seat in the Conference and their Letter of Ordination. This was the basis of the 1796 "Articles of Agreement Amongst the Preachers" signed by many conference members in both regions. However, no account of the agreement was published in the Minutes, and as the action was binding only on those who signed, it carried little weight. When the second meeting of the whole church occurred in 1796, General Conference's language regarding slaveholding was conciliatory. It affirmed that it was "more than ever" convinced of the "great evil" of slavery, but actually retreated from the previous stand. Rather than deny membership to slaveholders as previously mandated, the new "anti-slavery" stand accepted them into the church after a preacher had spoken to them "freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery."[50]

Thus the Methodist church, though attempting to engage in Christian instruction of the slaves in some areas, took a compromise position on slavery. Many Southern Methodists bought and sold slaves. They were not proscribed for it by the episcopacy, and most were not troubled by conscience. Yet quarrels did develop over slaveholding, even in Charleston. In 1794 William Hammett, in charge of the Charleston Methodist Church, was himself a slaveholder. Yet he was still harassed and accused of negligently giving passes to blacks so they could "traverse the town at any hour of the night," and "turned out of the pulpit" as a consequence. The minister was able to overcome the incident and continued serving local Methodists. Yet he found that opposition came from another quarter as well. Hammett faced criticism and abuse from his own denomination for being a slaveholder. In 1795 the issue created tension and anger although the church majority stood with Hammett. Still some members,

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leading accuser in the 1795 quarrel in the Charleston Church over slavery. The "appeal" was written in Charleston in 1796 while Phillips was still in the city. It was published in New York where the author had removed himself from harm's way. Phillips had been arrested and physically abused by Charleston authorities and citizens for public preaching, for teaching Christianity to slaves and free blacks, and for his antislavery views. The pamphlet denounced the "injustices" perpetrated by slaveholders and prophesied their doom. The author of the tract labeled Charleston masters "thieves" and "men stealers" who ranked with the "vilest characters" in scripture, the Sodomites. He attacked Charleston slaveholders for varied reasons, but especially on the slave trade and the lack of religious instruction. Phillips insisted in his preface that he had such "an entire aversion to war, that if the slaves could obtain their liberty by it, I would, *if possible*, dissuade them from it." Yet his unequivocal position came close to predicting violence: 17

> And you say, you did not bring them to this country, and . . . blame and condemn those who did; but inasmuch as you perpetuate their crime in keeping them in ignorance and in perpetual slavery, . . . fitting out vessels in this port for the slave trade . . . soliciting that the trade may be opened again, prove, that you are men of like evil dispositions with those who first put this villainous and unnatural practice into execution . . . why do you insist on their being kept ignorant that they may be obedient? . . . Is this Republicanism? Is there not some fraud here? . . . If you have divine authority for what you are doing, whom or what do you fear? . . . Why do you introduce club law instead of equity? . . . Is it not more than probably that the very slaves you are now training up in sin and ignorance, and securing as a portion for your children, will be the very instruments of their, if not your destruction? . . . Are not the owners become the servants of servants. . . . Thus the head is become the tail, according to the saying of Moses in Deuteronomy.

The Phillips pamphlet was sent to Charleston, adding more fuel to an already volatile situation. Hostile white citizens were aware of the 1784 General Conference statement, the 1796 "Articles of Agreement," and the manumission activity in the Northeast and Upper South. Thus the association of early Lowcountry Methodism with antislavery attitudes was not without foundation, though such sentiment was not pervasive. Still, proclamations like Phillips' kept whites on the alert for Methodist depredations against "public safety."[54] 175

In 1802 a mob assembled in Charleston after news reached "leading citizens' that antislavery literature had arrived for the South Carolina

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•175 Conference from the Northeast and that a Methodist minister named Harper would distribute it. Asbury himself had approved distribution of the pamphlets. The situation "caused trembling" in the city. Nervous over the recent Gabriel plot in Virginia and remembering the Santo Domingo insurrection, Charleston residents had no intention of allowing Methodists to spread the antislavery tracts. The station preacher, Harper, received the papers and at first stored them. When the city intendant called upon Harper, he burned the papers in the official's presence. This satisfied the intendant but not the populace. An angry crowd determined that Harper should personally "atone for the injury he had inflicted on the peace and dignity of the state." Harper was cornered by the mob but with assistance managed to escape. The frustrated crowd turned their vehemence on the only other Methodist preacher in the city, George Daugherty, who was officiating for the evening at the meeting-house. Daugherty was seized as he left the church and dragged through the streets. As an added indignity, the crowd decided to "pump him." They dragged him to a pump, placed his head under the spout, and continued pumping him for some time, a chilling experience in the dead of winter for a man already feeble in health. A "pious female" passing by halted the assault on Daugherty by boldly stuffing her shawl into the spout of the pump. Another citizen "stepped up with a drawn sword" and vowed to protect the minister at all hazards. Daugherty, though rescued, was nearly drowned and thoroughly chilled. He reportedly contracted a recurring pulmonary infection from the incident that proved fatal a few years afterward. At the 1804 meeting of the General Conference the slavery rules were mitigated by Asbury and two disciplines were published—one for Virginia and states to the North and one for those South of the Old Dominion. Privately the frustrated Asbury wrote, "I am called upon to suffer for *Christ's sake*, not for slavery."[55]

Despite the absence of a consensus among Methodists regarding slavery and religious instruction of bondspeople, in the Lowcountry the denomination attracted few white followers. Along the wealthier remote portions of the coast and even in the cities, from Cape Fear to the Savannah River, Methodist preachers were under a ban of suspicion as disorganizers who endangered "public peace." By 1800 there was only one Methodist church south of Charleston, on Edisto Island. Black participation, where Methodist churches existed, was generally discouraged even though slaves and free blacks responded to the personalism of the

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Methodist denomination. Meetings were conducted exclusively on their behalf in Charleston, and blacks also attended white gatherings in churches, or went to the homes of white Methodists for worship, love feasts, and public prayers. But antislavery documents such as the one produced by John Phillips placed African-Americans in a precarious position. To attend Methodist meetings was to bring on wrath and physical abuse. The city guard arrested and whipped black Methodist followers for openly fraternizing with whites. Slaveholders opposed granting church membership in general to slaves, but to follow the Methodists was open defiance.[56]

But free blacks and slaves were attracted to the fervent Methodist preaching and their Armenian doctrines of universal salvation and individual free will. Like the preachings of Whitefield, Methodism must have been a welcome change for unlettered blacks from the stern, cold predestinarianism of other sects. And there was the ostensible egalitarianism. Black methodist exhorters addressed audiences of their own race and whites as well during this time, even in the South (although rarely during the antebellum period). Francis Asbury's traveling companion (who apparently also acted as his servant) was reportedly an impressive orator. Richard Allen and others less well known also went among integrated congregations. Asbury expressed pride in the Charleston "black" and "yellow" membership. "The Baptists have built an elegant church," he wrote, "they take the rich while the commonality and the slaves fall to us."[57]

Lowcountry black Methodists often paid a heavy price for their zeal, especially if they felt called to exhort. Such was the case with Sancho, an African-born Charleston slave formerly from an upper-class Moslem family, who was captured at age twelve en route to England for schooling. Sancho was converted to Methodism as a young man by Francis Asbury, which was when his "troubles began." Sancho's plight illustrates the slaveholders' attitude toward religious instruction for slaves as well as the dislike other denominations had of Methodism. His experiences are also comments on the limitations of Methodism as an egalitarian denomination. Furthermore, from Sancho we learn how strongly some slaves imbibed Christianity. Sancho's first master, a Catholic, was incensed over the slave's devotion to the Methodists. According to Sancho, he was beaten bloodily on many occasions because of his religious beliefs, and was repeatedly forced to pull his master in place of a horse.

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•175 The owner held "a double barrel gun in his hand to shoot me down if I should murmer or repine." When this master died, Sancho was sold to an Episcopalian master whose hatred of Methodism equalled that of the first. Sancho's religious enthusiasm was enhanced by previous experiences. The undaunted slave held prayers on his owner's plantations despite warnings and threats. Methodist emphasis on "suffering for Christ's sake" was carried to an extreme in the case of unfortunate Sancho:

> He took me and tied me to an apple tree and one hundred and fifty lashes put upon me and told me to call upon Christ to take it off and also said he was Christ himself. He put me in the barn in stocks and a chain fixed upon my neck . . . I laid in that situation all night—covered with blood. . . . And O Paul I know the reason why you and your comrades sang praise to God in Midnight. . . . When I came out next morning . . . some of the people fainted at the sight of me. . . .

Sancho's seeming contempt for his personal survival perplexed his master who finally sold him to a man who reportedly would "break me of my religion." Ironically the slave breaker was himself a Methodist, and after he "tried" Sancho's faith, or perhaps his willingness to obey (or endure), he awarded him many privileges and allowed him to pray and hold meetings.[58]

Most slaves would not have endured such punishments for the sake of Methodism, or any other religion for that matter. However, some did. Certainly Andrew Bryan's example in Savannah was similar to Sancho's before whites finally believed that religion not rebellion occupied his thoughts. If some slaves took Christianity literally, many more viewed it symbolically. Of course slaveholders wanted bondspeople to imbibe subservient, not militant elements of Christianity. And proslavery advocates had difficulty believing that slaves accepted Christianity without questioning their temporal human condition. Apparently slaves, like Sancho and Bryan did. Although no one can say what these slaves were thinking when offering themselves as human sacrifices, it was not resistance or rebellion. Still, zealots such as Andrew Bryan and Sancho were exceptions. Many slaves, embraced Christianity without explicitly accepting their earthly station. Indeed, later events demonstrate that for blacks, among the attractions to Methodism in the early nineteenth-century was the church's temporary egalitarian posture.

Charleston African-Americans who accepted early Methodism only heightened suspicion and persecution on the part of whites. In 1800 the

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state restricted their right to practice Christian religion, as it soon restricted the right of masters to manumit them. Laws were passed in that year and also in 1803 forbidding black Methodists from holding meetings between sunset and sunrise, and decreeing that daytime meetings required the presence of a majority of whites, with the doors open. While the laws were only randomly enforced, they served to keep blacks away from meetings because of the city guard and patrols. Leagues of white citizens and "peace officers" broke down doors and dispersed "offenders." The Methodist leadership already preparing to retreat from its antislavery position for the sake of the denomination's survival in the South was disheartened and frustrated for they feared that access to the Charleston black population would be denied altogether. Asbury wrote that while "the rich among the people never thought us worthy to preach to them," they did sometimes give the slaves liberty to hear the Methodists and join their church. But now he noted, "it appears the poor Africans will no longer have this indulgence." Few slaves were allowed the liberty of attending daytime services, since they often worked until sunset. Thus to deprive them of the opportunity to attend worship in the evening was to prevent their church attendance altogether. The absence of black worshippers was keenly felt in Charleston. Night preaching at the Cumberland Church was not the same. "O, what a change for the worse," wrote itinerant James Jenkins in 1801. Customarily the galleries were "filled with the colored people," whose "most cheerful and delightful singing" rang throughout the church. Now Jenkins lamented, "there were not exceeding two or three to be seen, and they apparently afraid to show themselves."[59]

The message of white proslavery Carolinians did not fall on deaf ears. The Methodist church, like other denominations in the South, was already accommodating slavery. In 1800 Jenkins, on higher authority, ceased giving the sacraments to blacks. In order to prosper in the white community, the church needed to divest itself of antislavery attitudes and advocates. Also, rationalized the Methodists, to obtain access to the slaves, as the leadership desired, any teaching which even implicitly encouraged emancipation had to be silenced. In 1808 efforts to regulate conference members' proslavery activities were rescinded. The General Conference gave annual conferences jurisdiction over this issue. Asbury had already concluded that the church should work for the slaves' souls and amelioration of their condition rather than for their liberation.[60] In Charleston,

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•175 as antislavery ardor waned, Methodists were gradually accepted. Blacks slowly returned to worship in large numbers. In 1793, the Charleston Church had 280 black and 65 whites as members. One year later the numbers had risen slightly for the entire state but not significantly in Charleston. This changed as Methodists moved away from a stand against slavery. Black membership rose to 3,128 in 1812 and in 1815 membership of the Charleston Methodist Church stood at 3,793 blacks and 282 whites. Methodists were the only denomination in Charleston that had such massive numbers of African-Americans on its membership rolls. Thus, in South Carolina close contact with Methodism was evident in Charleston among slaves and free blacks, and in regions farther north and west. For the rest of the Lowcountry slave population, not living in the midst of white society, large scale Christian instruction remained a movement of the future.[61] What slaves knew of Christianity in the country region they learned mainly from each other.

### *The Price of Freedom*

Early liberalism within the Methodist church gave rise to a black leadership that helped foment seeds of organized insurrection among slaves in Charleston which may have spread through the coastal lowlands and surrounding Sea Islands. Soon after the church organized nationally, the General Conference took a significant step in gaining black converts by encouraging the development of a black ministry. Obviously this was more of a reality in the North than in the South. A ruling was passed, over strong opposition from Southern preachers, to ordain local black deacons where they had their own houses of worship. Desire for autonomy among blacks in the North led to establishment of independent churches before the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1794 Richard Allen of Philadelphia organized a separate black Methodist congregation. In 1799 Bishop Asbury ordained him deacon, and later elder of the Methodist Episcopal church. Allen's church was Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, fondly known as "Mother Bethel." But in Philadelphia the last vestige of ties with white Methodism were not truly broken until 1816. At that time, after a ten-year struggle with the General Conference, the blacks won, through a court order, the right to deny pulpit access to ministers of the white-controlled conference. It was a celebrated moment of independence and emergence of a black denomi-

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nation. From this beginning sprang sister branches of African Methodist churches. That year five African churches had enough strength to bind together into one formal organization which embraced not only northern cities but congregations in Delaware and Maryland as well. With an eye toward joining this connection, African-American Methodists of Charleston created their own African Methodist Association.[62]

At a time when bondage in South Carolina was established more firmly than ever, the Methodist church was one area where urban slaves could experience a modicum of autonomy and freedom of spiritual expression. Black Methodists had enjoyed an independent quarterly conference in the early 1800s. They had control of their own collections from which they distributed to needy members of their community, and they maintained internal jurisdiction over the church trial of black members. Although many facets of black life contributed to seeds of discontent, the loss of this control over their religious life prompted visible action. White Methodists first moved against the black quarterly conference, abolishing it in 1815. Soon thereafter Charleston black Methodists contacted the Philadelphia AME Church, sending two representatives, Morris Brown and Henry Drayton, to be ordained for pastorates. Dispute over custody of a black burial ground gave the black secessionists their immediate pretext for withdrawal from the white organization. Led by Morris Brown, most of the black deacons, called class leaders, and over four-fifths of the 6,000 black worshipers removed their membership from the three white Methodist churches. This was clearly an illegal act and a move of group assertion, precipitating protests from white church leadership and repression from the authorities. In 1817 blacks organized the Charleston African Association, establishing several churches out of their massive numbers, one on Anson Street, one on Cow Alley, and one in Hampstead, the latter being most closely linked to the rebellion attempt. In December 1817, when blacks began holding worship, 469 were arrested for disorderly conduct. In 1818 the city guard arrested 140 blacks from the Hampstead Church including Morris Brown. The black Methodists were charged with instructing slaves without the presence of whites. "Bishop" Brown and four ministers were sentenced to serve either a month in jail or banishment from the state. Brown chose jail. Eight other black ministers were sentenced to floggings, fines, and banishments.[63]

The 1818 incident did more than any other to arouse the black community of Charleston. Abuse of their religious leaders brought home the

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•175 fact that even spiritual liberty for bound and free African-Americans would be denied. Morris Brown was an exemplary figure in the black community. A prosperous shoemaker, Brown, unlike most well-to-do men of color, shunned false elitism and made every effort to bridge class-caste distinctions between slave and free or light and dark people of African origin. Brown's loyalty was with the lot of the slaves rather than free blacks. As head of the independent black Methodist Association, his congregations consisted primarily of slaves. A man of little education, Brown purchased members of his race specifically to manumit them before laws prohibited this. He hoped for legal sanction for the African Association even though harrassment, arrests, and physical abuse of black members continued. A group of freedmen petitioned the state legislature for permission to conduct separate religious worship. The petition was denied, yet the black Methodists continued their meetings.[64]

Finally, the closing of the black church in 1821 was apparently the final blow for most of the leading conspirators. A total account of the 1822 insurrection attempt is not within the purview of this study. Other scholars and observers have addressed events leading up to the attempted insurrection, its disclosure, and its effects on blacks and whites in South Carolina. At least one writer has maintained that there was actually no conspiracy at all.[65] However, the evidence supports the most widely held opinion that a plan of insurrection was in effect in Charleston. Uses of Christian ideology and African spirituality were essential in recruiting and in maintaining a large black following to carry out the insurrection. Within the leadership these two religious traditions nourished the rebels and were especially represented in Denmark Vesey and Gullah Jack. Vesey was a free "black" man and perhaps the first to contemplate the conspiracy. This has given rise to the notion that the insurrection was the work of free men more than slaves. Free men may have assented to the conspiracy as some evidence suggests. Yet the insurrectionists were, with the exception of Vesey, slaves from a variety of backgrounds—skilled artisans, rural people, African-born, and country-born.

Denmark Vesey, if not American-born, certainly represented black acculturation in other respects. Urbane, politicized, well-read, revolutionary, perhaps even a Christian, Vesey turned the black defection from the white Methodist Church into a dramatization of the plight of both slave and free African-Americans. Testimony indicates that the conspiracy was four years in the planning, corresponding to the period when

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slaves met in unsupervised assemblies for Methodist class meetings after their withdrawal from white churches. One black leader even stated that the African Church "met for this very purpose," but that in 1820, when a group from the Anson Street Church was "taken up," plans were temporarily shelved. Vesey and his closest associates, two of whom (Ned Bennet and Peter Poyas) were deacons, used weekly class meetings to discuss revolutionary passages in the Old Testament, as a forum for deploring the African-American condition and as a means to convey the political implications of the national debate over slavery. "He read to us from the Bible, how the Children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt from Bondage," confessed Rolla Bennett, one of Vesey's trusted who broke under pressure. Others proclaimed similar statements. The slaves' situation was compared with that of the Israelites. Favorite passages were from the book of Zachariah, especially the fourteenth chapter. Vesey and Poyas interpreted the chapter as predicting the doom of those who had enslaved or fought against God's chosen, and in this instance they substituted their own race for the Israelites. "My man," insisted Peter to one of the recruits, "God has a hand in it. We have been meeting for four years and are not betrayed."[66]

The harsh justice and strict moralistic tone of the Old Testament was also adopted by the slaves. None was to be spared. Vesey "read from the Bible where God commanded, that all should be cut off, both men, women and children," confessed one of the recruits. And the leaders insisted that "it was no sin for us to do so, for the Lord had commanded us to do it." Still some followers objected to the killing of women and children. The leaders would not hear, answering "what was the use of killing the louse and leaving the nit." Total destruction was not only prudent, but in keeping with the Word of God. Other recruits, similar to those in the 1816 Camden conspiracy, wondered about the ministers, believing that they at least should be spared. But white preachers were considered especially guilty. Vesey commanded:

> Ministers were to be killed except a few who were to be saved and showed the different passages in the Bible from which Denmark preached (& the rest) and they were to be asked, Why they did not preach up this thing (meaning the passages on liberty & C) to them before. . . .[67]

One such passage was from Exodus. The first chapter deals with enslavement of Jews by the Egyptians, as undeserved a bondage as that of black servitude. Another favorite was Exodus 21:16:

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cules and the Waggoner whose waggon was stalled, and he began to pray, and Hercules said, you fool put your shoulder to the wheel, whip up the horses and your waggon will be pulled out; that if we did not put our hand to the work and deliver ourselves, we should never come out of slavery.[70] 17

Thus Vesey appealed to slaves through a kind of Greek rationalism as well as through his knowledge of the Bible. Biblical recounting of the struggle against bondage provided a major ideological weapon with which to reach the urban slaves who accepted Methodism. Yet even the most edifying features of the adopted religion would not be entirely acceptable or understood outside of the urban milieu. And even in the city the old ways died slowly. Many in the Methodist Church were African-born, nearly all of them slaves and not living in the "privileged" circumstances of the leadership. Hence, Vesey needed to draw partly on an African spiritual heritage. Vesey may have known of Boukman, the vodun high priest in the Santo Domingo revolt. Boukman used African religion as a conspiracy medium even before Toussaint joined the insurrection. Under a banner of the African god of revenge, he and his thousands of followers began the rebellion that brought terror to whites, freedom to slaves, and independence to the black island.[71] Similarly, in South Carolina the real spiritual force that bound the majority of known insurrectionists from Charleston to the country region, from the mainland to the islands, was the African priest Gullah Jack. 1750

Jack, the slave of Paul Pritchard, and, like Vesey, a member of the Hampstead Church, reportedly advocated the rebellion when the black church members were first harassed and abused in 1818. Thus his association with the conspiracy was of the longest duration along with the original six first executed. If Denmark Vesey was the chief theoretician and Peter Poyas the arch plotter and organizer, then Gullah Jack was the religious embodiment of the movement. Jack's influence over the slaves did not derive from his role in the African Methodist Church but from his service as priest and doctor. He was African-born, a little man with "small feet and hands" whose trademark up to the time of his capture was a set of huge black whiskers. To avert capture after discovery of the first attempted revolt, Jack removed this symbol of his power. Jack headed the Gullah Society and his activities and recruiting efforts occurred in and outside of Charleston. As a force within the movement, he was well known among all the slaves. The arch-conspirators told recruits that they would be immune from death or injury at the hands of whites through Gullah Jack's potion and power. One follower related:

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•175 He gave me some dry food, consisting of parched corn and ground nuts, and said eat that and nothing else on the morning it breaks out, and when you join us as we pass put into your mouth this crab-claw and you can't then be wounded, and said he, I give the same to the rest of my troops—if you drop the large crab-claw out of your mouth, then put in the small one.[72]

Jack's charm, the crab-claw, and his dietary instructions are reminiscent of the BaKongo *nkisi*. The *nkisi* charm was a preserver, protector of life, and a healing agent. *Nkisi* derived its power from "spirit-embodying" materials which took on life, and from the user's confidence in its powers. Among the BaKongo, the "foot of a hen" and other claws suggest the captivating power of the spirit of the charm.[73]

Recruitment of slaves under the banner of Jack's mystical powers and invincibility may have been more effective than biblical rhetoric. Those who testified against him cowered in his presence. Jack apparently combined the positive powers of *nkisi* with the malevolent forces of *kindoki* to control the recruits. According to the Court, it was "not without considerable difficulty" that witnesses were convinced they need not fear Jack's "conjurations." While Jack was alive only one member of his Gullah Society spoke against him, at great fear for his life:

Gullah Jack is an enemy of white people. I attended a meeting at his house and he was the head man there. . . . Jack was my leader he is head of the Gullah Company. I heard that among them they had charms. Jack said if any man betrayed him, they would injure him, and I was afraid to inform. . . . If I am accepted as a witness and my life spared, I must beg the court to send me away from this place, as I consider my life in great danger from having given testimony. . . . I was afraid of Gullah Jack as a conjurer.

Only after the execution of Gullah Jack on July 12, 1822, did the extent of his participation in the rebellion and its massive organizational scope surface. His death released a wave of recriminations against him and his associates that led to many arrests and deaths.[74]

In the New World setting the role of African diviners such as Gullah Jack and Boukman assumed broader proportions. They were not only interpreters of the supernatural but had sociopolitical functions as well. The most active center of the Vesey conspiracy, aside from the African Church meetings, was Bulkey's farm where Jack's Gullah Society held its monthly meetings and planning sessions and also received intelligence from the country and city about the state of the rebellion. "Peter Poyas and others . . . came to the farm . . . and sang and prayed all night,"

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confessed one informant. At another meeting Gullah Society members "roasted a fowl and ate it half-raw—as evidence of union." The sacrificial fowl is significant in African spiritualism. To kill a chicken, usually a white one, symbolically kept away bad spirits and ill will. In Santo Domingo on the eve of the slave rebellion, Boukman and his men uttered vodun incantations and sucked the blood of a "stuck pig." Both symbols of solidarity are reminiscent of Upper Guinea secret society initiation rites and BaKongo *minkisi* ritual, serving an expanded function. C.L.R. James reminds us that these prayers and supplications summoned forth courage against a powerful enemy:

> The God who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm . . . he watches us. He sees all the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty which speaks in the hearts of us all.[75]

Gullah Jack was also in charge of arms and referred to as "the general." He insisted that only African-born slaves could be trusted with information about weaponry, and even that group had to be limited. Jack consulted with other slaves who reportedly had divinely dispensated spiritual power. There was the "Old Daddy," with whom Jack met on Bulkey's farm, an aged African, "marked on both sides of his face." Though too old actually to participate in the rebellion, "Old Daddy" was privy to much information, and a source of inspiration for Jack, who visited him often. There was the old blind cartman, Philip, who could discern the expression on a recruit's face despite his blindness. Philip, a seer born "with a caul," was thusly empowered with ability to foretell the future and see spirits. Philip was also a preacher in the African Church. One recruit, introduced to the plot in the old man's presence, expressed hesitancy merely by his timorous facial expression and uneasiness, not by verbal utterances. Yet the recruit testified that the blind man perceived his fear and paraphrased scripture, asking, " 'Why should thy heart be troubled?' " The greatly alarmed man joined the movement, believing that his thoughts could be deciphered. Philip, as a fortune-teller encouraged the conspirators and at first foreshadowed victory. Later, however, he urged the rebels to " 'give up the business' " because " 'the white people could fire five times while they fired once.' "[76]

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•175 Jack's spiritual and political protégé was Tom, a blacksmith who reportedly made pikes and other weapons for Gullah Jack, and helped hide kegs of powder. The two were inseparable according to testimony. " 'When you don't see me and see Tom, you see me,' " Jack told his followers. Tom's blacksmith shop was a meeting place where a white youth who worked for Tom saw Jack frequently. Jack appeared even at mealtime according to the youth. And Tom's owner repeatedly warned him about associating with Gullah Jack but to no avail. They mostly "spoke in Gullah which I do not understand," reported the youth. He remembered watching Tom make a foot-long knife and this testimony alone sent the blacksmith to the gallows. Few people knew the whereabouts of the arms but all knew of their existence and many had seen weapons. Some were found on Bulkey's farm where the Gullahs met. Despite the small number, the discovery created a sense of terror. Yet because no one discovered a large cache of weapons does not necessarily indicate that it did not exist, but perhaps was well hidden. The Gullah Society was the most unified and trusted group of conspirators as well as the most resolute. They revealed nothing even as they approached death. The white youth testified that "Tom said that after the people were taken up, that he would not do as some had done, tell upon one another for money." Tom was true to his word. He remained at large for five days after his mentor was arrested, was confined for fifteen days before being executed, and probably endured torture. He never broke his silence.[77]

Tom may have been ordained by Gullah Jack to carry on the struggle if opportunity permitted, as Jack attempted to do when the first six leaders were arrested. For Jack decided to proceed with the rebellion after initial revelations prompted the first arrests. Originally a rescue of Vesey and the others was discussed. Realizing the unlikelyhood of success, the men opted for a move on the city to be led by Jack's Gullahs and those country slaves now commanded by Charles Drayton. In the short interim between the executions of the first six leaders on July 2, and the revelation that the danger was not past, Jack told his men to ready themselves. Hopefully if the Gullahs and other country slaves began the revolt, this would rally the urban slaves fearful of being named by those already "taken up." It was a bold attempt to salvage the rebellion and maintain unity. Undoubtedly Vesey and the others met death so audaciously because they knew the extent of the conspiracy and believed the rebellion would go on. It might have succeeded had not Jack been com-

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mitted on July 5. The testimony of the state's chief witness was verified by others: 1750

On Monday, 1st July, Charles Drayton told me that there would be an insurrection on the morning of 6th July, as soon as the guards were turned in—he said he commanded the country born company . . . Jack told me on the 1st July the same thing. . . .[78]

Gullah Jack's band was implicated more than any other group and most of the testimony against Jack and these men came to light only after the leader's reportedly undignified exit from life. The Official Report stated that for one professing such power and invincibility, Jack met his end uncourageously unlike the other leaders. At the pronouncement of the death sentence he reportedly begged for more time. When taken to the scaffold, "he gave up his spirit without firmness or composure."[79] This, perhaps more than any other factor, shook the faith of the insurgents and began a wave of confessions, implications, and accusations among some of the most deeply involved. It surely made faith in African spiritual prowess waiver and perhaps tied slaves closer to the slaveholders' religion, seemingly more powerful than theirs. Traditional beliefs had failed the insurgents as Gullah Jack's courage seem to fail him in the last hour. While he never revealed any information about the plot, his failed power symbolized the African-Christian cultural limbo of the slaves. Both traditions contained tactics suitable for liberation. Many Africans were members of the African Methodist church but feared and revered Gullah Jack as a diviner. "Until Jack was taken up and condemned to death," confessed one slave, "I felt as if I was bound up, and had not the power to speak one word about it. Jack charmed Julius and myself."[80] The power of Gullah Jack, however, did not withstand the test of indestructibility against white repression and force. Hence belief in the power of the old ways was visibly shaken though not immediately supplanted by Christianity. In passing sentence on Gullah Jack, the court mocked his power and his "gods":

Your boasted charms have not preserved yourself and of course could not protect others. Your altars and your Gods have sunk together in the dust. The airy spectres, conjured by you, have been chased away by the superior light of Truth, and you stand exposed, the miserable and deluded victim of offended justice. Your days are literally numbered . . . and all the Powers of Darkness cannot rescue you from your approaching Fate![81]

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•175 Yet Jack's boldness as an organizer and spiritual force had a deep logic within it. He warned the insurgents that African charms would not protect them against the treachery of their own color. This internal betrayal, distrust, and division among followers doomed the movement. The diviner's pronouncement was prophetic, for the seat of the slaves' undoing was found within themselves. Still, the 1822 conspiracy was an impressive collective militant effort, politically skillful and astute in its attempt to encompass all of the dispossessed blacks, even those who were quasi-free. Testimony conflicted, but a few free blacks besides Vesey were reportedly involved. Others may have gone undetected. Even the illustrious Morris Brown was implicated, although some witnesses denied this. Most testimony was second hand. But some insisted that Gullah Jack "had gone to Father Brown to ask him whether he would sanction the insurrection, and Morris Brown replied, 'if you can get men go on, but don't mention my name. I am going shortly to the North and I shall hear there, what you are about.' " Brown returned to Charleston to defend himself though eventually banished from the state. Another free black minister formerly harassed and brutalized because of his association with the African church reportedly approved of the plan, stating, a "little spanking with the sword was over due to the whites."[82] Most free blacks who were interrogated were released. The movement, clearly meant to be a slave revolt, nevertheless, attempted to achieve unity by bridging occupational, regional, and cultural barriers. The Vesey Conspiracy, though never pulled off, represented one of the strongest demonstrations of solidarity and racial unity in the history of North American slave revolts.

The argument of whether acculturated urban or isolated rural slaves were more given to rebelliousness has been addressed by a number of American historians.[83] In the case of the 1822 movement, the Conspiracy bridged these distinctions. Liberty for urban slaves was an illusion. Unable to reap the proceeds and benefits of their own labor, no longer able to look forward to purchasing their freedom or to free family members, these frustrated laborers and artisans provided an important leadership element. Although "privileged" to learn a trade, carry on the master's business, or allowed to become literate, they were still slaves. The modicum of flexibility and autonomy they were given only fed the contradiction. The rebel leaders were conscious men, aware of their worth yet no less bound than workers in the field. True they were spared the dull,

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degrading labors of field work, but as they used their opportunity to sharpen and cultivate their intellect their discontent became only more gnawing. Of course whites were incredulous at this logic and puzzled when "indulged" slaves sought open rebellion. For example, John the coachman of Elias Horry, was apprehended and implicated in the Conspiracy. The disbelieving master reportedly turned to his slave:

> 'Tell me, are you guilty? For I cannot believe unless I hear you say so.'
> 'Yes' replied the Negro.
> 'What were your intentions?'
> 'To kill you, rip open your belly and throw your guts in your face.'[84]

However, acutely oppressed African-born slaves, with strong ties to Africanity, formed the backbone of the rebellion effort. All of the leaders recognized their crucial role and knew that success depended on their assent and participation. Few doubted that it would be forthcoming. Planning and leadership came from the acculturated. But the rank and file were made up of plantation slaves. In this group the leaders placed the utmost confidence. "Let us assemble a sufficient number to commence the work with spirit and we'll not want men, they'll fall in behind us fast enough."[85] Also, the rural slaves, along with Jack's Gullahs, attempted to see the rebellion through before the capture of Jack.

The endeavor was a fusion of those at the bottom and those who could never aspire to the top, a lesson learned from Santo Domingo and Gabriel Prosser. The majority of African-Americans were at least united in their alienation from white culture and society. In the town the slaves met at class meetings and in each other's homes for planning sessions. As time for the rising neared, Vesey refused to work at carpentry and Jack refused to pay his mistress his wages. Both engaged themselves fully in the rebellion. Jack was instrumental in reaching rural and African-born slaves. But Vesey also traveled extensively in the countryside. As a free man and a respected carpenter, he traversed outside of the city limits without arousing suspicion. Lieutenants also worked the country parishes where kinship ties existed between those on the plantations and those in the city. Gullah Jack's haunt, Bulkey's farm, was on the outskirts of town, and the black overseer, Billy, was drawn into the insurrection. Jesse Blackwood, one of the first six leaders executed after the June disclosures, was expressly engaged in preparing and alerting plantation slaves. On one estate in St. John's Parish, forty miles south of

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•175 Charleston, all of the people were reportedly engaged, including the "trusted" driver. Most of the people apparently knew little of the details, but they did believe that their emancipation was at hand. The owner of the St. John's Parish plantation related that, from his knowledge of the means slaves used in "communicating intelligence from one plantation to another," he was convinced that "it was known throughout the neighborhood."[86]

The cause of failure cannot be placed on either the most exploited slaves who stood poised to move toward liberty or the urban laboring slaves who organized the rebellion but quickly defected. Most likely the bad judgment of Rolla Bennett who tried to recruit house servants and waiting men is largely responsible. This buffer group created by bondage was generally, though not always, composed of those who imbibed white culture and loyalty to white masters. Once again the wisdom of the black leadership was illustrated by the dictum of Peter Poyas, who warned leaders to be wary of those who worked in the house, particularly of those who wore the master's old clothes and ate the leavings from his table. Disclosures leading to the hanging of twenty-two men after the death of Gullah Jack came from urban slaves, which reveals the degree of disunion and distrust present among them. Significant also was perhaps a fear that they had rallied behind the wrong god and had trusted a fallible bastion of power. Living among whites as they did, urban slaves were between two cultures while isolated plantation slaves were able to keep more elements of the old one alive. Still, the Conspiracy was a supreme effort to break the chains of bondage in a spirit of nationalism, unity, and religious self-determination that would appeal to nearly all those of African heritage.

Testimony of informants gave credence to the magnitude, intensive planning, and geographical proximity of the conspiracy. The mainland country people to the south were under the command of Gullah Jack, the Island people around Charleston were led by Rolla Bennett, and those from the North by Ned Bennett. "I have spoken to Denmark and Peter about the people in the country," stated John Enslow, "and know they went into the country often and told me they had communications with all the islands—also in Columbia, Santee and different places in that direction." Estimates of numbers involved ranged from 600 to 9,000. Allowance must be made for exaggeration and for the leadership's persuasion tactics. Yet word of the intended insurrection or at least pending

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emancipation could have spread in a variety of ways, aside from direct information from an insurgent. Large retinues of slaves traveled from urban to country residences especially in summer months. Black boatmen traveled the creeks, rivers, and Atlantic waters frequently, carrying produce, white people, cotton, and, most significant for slaves, the latest information about kith and kin. Many "trusted" slaves had liberty to travel and do business in their master's stead, as did Rolla, Governor Bennett's "trusted" slave.[87]

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Thus a network of communication was established that funneled gossip, news, and even secrets throughout the surrounding plantations. Such a network could spread news of rebellion once the first blow was struck in Charleston. That summer of 1822 the Lowcountry slave quarters were buzzing with news from Charleston. But it was not news of rebellion and freedom. The day of freedom never came. Instead, word indicated that a reign of terror was in full force and the black leadership was swinging from ropes in the Charleston jail yard. As far south as Beaufort and the surrounding Islands, planters readied themselves for an uprising. Beaufort's town council went into secret session and doubled the armed night patrol. Later that year Beaufort authorities were alarmed by rumors that a slave insurrection was planned in their town. But these fears were apparently unfounded.

During the trials of the insurrectionists, the official report singled out the religious practices of blacks as a leading cause of the intended rebellion. According to the chief investigator:

> Religious fanaticism has not been without its effects on this project . . . the cession of a large body of blacks from the white Methodist Church formed a hot bed, in which the germ might be well expected to spring into life and vigor.[88]

Charleston clergymen of all denominations publicly alleged that blacks' recent religious practices were a major factor in spreading unrest. Respected Methodist minister Benjamin Elliott wrote a pamphlet deploring what he considered the exploitation of religion:

> This description of our population had been allowed to assemble for *religious* instruction.—The designing leaders in the scheme of villainy, availed themselves to these occasions to instill sentiments of ferocity, by *falsifying the Bible*. All the severe penal laws of the Israelites were quoted to mislead them, and the denunciations in the prophecies, which were intended to deter men from evil, were declared to be divine commands which they were to *execute*.[89]

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the leadership it included anyone with a weapon, anyone "named" with a horse or means of obtaining one, those "named" who met at Bulkey's farm, or who had been in the company of those with weapons and powder. Many families were affected. None was allowed to mourn or to recover the bodies. The July 26 executions were the most horrendous. Twenty-two men were brought to the gallows with the entire city watching. At the execution ground confusion ensued and a slave boy-child was trampled to death by horses. Another boy, white, watched the hanging from the safety of a third floor window of his King Street home. Later he described the spectacle as "a sight calculated to strike terror in the heart of every slave." It was a cold-blooded warning to would-be insurrectionists. But the death agony in the black community continued. On July 30, six more were executed. Additional men were thusly sentenced, but the stench of death began to sicken even white vengeance and these last thirty-six slaves were banished. The final victim to die for attempting to raise the insurrection was on August 2 when one William Garner was caught in Columbia where he had fled following the arrests.[93] It was a reminder of the power of the state and tenacity of slavery. Black leadership had fallen. The black Methodist church was destroyed. And in the eyes of many, African spiritualism had failed the test of service and invincibility against white might and white religion. 17

Despite apparent failings, many slaves were still tied to old ways, although drawn to the dominant religion as well. In both systems of belief they envisioned a means of attaining their heart's desire—liberty. But the immediate reality indicated that most whites were no more prepared to view Lowcountry slaves as spiritual siblings than as political equals. Yet at this time slaves may have decided that freedom would not come by the sword. The chances were too slim, the risks too many, and the price too dear. Much of the Old Testament militancy faded among the slaves familiar with its tenets. For the majority, who perhaps didn't fully grasp the association, it was not difficult to incorporate into their spiritualism a New Testament ideology which prophesied equality for all and the dignity of the sufferer. New Testament tenets became for them one banner under which to pursue their continued vision of freedom. 175.

The Vesey Conspiracy prompted a lengthy debate and for a number of years afterward the subject of religious education was controversial in South Carolina. Most slave masters in the Lowcountry grew more adamant than ever in resisting Christian instruction of slaves. But among

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•175 "thinking men" the belief emerged that a religious relationship between master and slave would have greater police power than statute. Two issued loomed in the minds of concerned South Carolinians. First, whites pondered the "falsification" of scriptures by the insurrectionists. Second, many slaves adhered to a spiritual tradition outside of white purview and capable of calling forth the instincts of freedom to a point of open rebellion. Governor Thomas Bennett, whose most trusted slaves were leaders in the attempted insurrection, lamented to Baptist pastor Richard Furman of Charleston that the projected insurrection had produced a backlash against the religious teaching of slaves. He urged that "humanity and religion" be advocated and laudably employed. According to Bennett, the Old and New Testament presented evidence of "Slaves and their Masters enjoying Membership together in the same Christian Church." As for the "religious" character of the "nefarious scheme," Bennett believed the scriptures were perverted by the insurrectionists. He observed that none of the "religious Negroes" in regular white churches were drawn into the plot because the conspirators were afraid to trust them. Bennett insisted that "religious Negroes" should not be punished for what others had done. Such Negroes were a safeguard to Southern society:

> We have Reasons to believe they have a good Influence on the State of Society by the Promotion of good Morale as well as Piety among that class of People. This circumstance corroborates a Sentiment which has been long entertained by some who have been careful in making observations, as well as in informing on this subject . . . one of the best securities we have to the domestic Peace and Safety of the State is found in the Sentiments and corresponding Dispositions of the religious Negroes.[24]

Others felt moved to address the issue. In 1822, Richard Furman, representing the Baptist Convention of South Carolina, communicated to the new governor the expressed "official" views of the Baptists. South Carolina Baptist ministers reaffirmed the lawfulness of holding slaves. Some of them owned hundreds. Using scripture as evidence, Furman maintained, as had Bennett, that slaves belonging to regular white churches did not participate in the Vesey Conspiracy. He further admitted that Christian teaching among the slaves had been almost totally ignored. In that respect Furman recognized that masters had not done their "duty." Speaking for the Convention, he stated:

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The interest and security of the State would be promoted, by allowing, under proper regulations, considerable religious privileges, to such of this class, as to know how to estimate them aright, and have given suitable evidence of their own good principles, uprightness and fidelity; by attaching them to principles of gratitude and love, to the interests of their masters and the State; and thus rendering their fidelity firm and constant.[95]

While Furman himself believed in a more active policy of religious instruction, the Baptists' statement was almost pure rhetoric. Baptists remained little concerned with religious instruction before or for some years after Vesey's Conspiracy. Wealthy coastal and Sea Island planters (nearly all Baptists and Episcopalians) viewed the attempted insurrection as an eerie vindication of their long-standing resistance to Christianizing slaves. In the midst of a large African slave population, they were the most vulnerable in case of an uprising. Still, every denomination was drawn into posturing on the conspiracy where religion and rebellion had been given the same meaning. The times stimulated much thought that would eventually lead to some implementation. Yet immediate reaction was not favorable to a liberal attitude. For whites the social trauma was too real. For blacks it was a time of anger and disappointment mixed with an overriding fear. Slaves were hanged for crimes that had previously brought lashes. Slaves set fires. In Georgetown in 1829 a conspiracy was discovered. Several slaves were hanged and the Lowcountry once again put on the alert. In Savannah and Augusta, disastrous fires prompted the Georgia governor to prepare a defense against slave revolt. In other states similar unrest occurred during this period. But Lowcountry slaves were particularly restless. The Southern situation was exacerbated by an incendiary document written by a black man from the North in 1829 and probably smuggled into South Carolina by black seamen. David Walker relied heavily on Christianity in his appeal to fellow blacks to take up arms against white masters. In the wake of these activities, the infrequent custom of teaching slaves to read was banned by statute. Runaway slaves robbed the mails and attacked travelers more than ever. Religious instruction, where it previously existed became unpopular. Slave meetings were disbanded and missionaries cut off from plantations. Masters previously indifferent became openly hostile to religious instruction. The few who once favored slave literacy disavowed it. The debate continued. But religious activity among the masses of slaves was, for a time, a closed issue in the South Carolina Lowcountry.[96]

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•175 A spiritual revival occurred in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Societies were organized for spreading the gospel at home and abroad. In the South, before the Vesey Conspiracy, an impulse was given to religion mainly by Methodists, which awakened some to the "spiritual needs" of the black population. White churches began building galleries to allow for accommodation of free blacks and favorite or acculturated slaves. Eventually this limited exposure to Christianity would filter down to the masses of field slaves. But Vesey's Conspiracy and other factors delayed that. Even so, early nineteenth-century "revivalism" was mainly directed toward whites in newly settled regions, Indians, and missionary efforts abroad. By 1830 only a small minority of slaves regularly attended a church or heard a sermon. In the words of one slaveholding clergyman turned historian, "taking them as a class, their religious instruction was extensively and most seriously ignored."[97]

Still, some evinced concern and the issue began the "war of pens." A few planters and small number of statesmen felt the sting of abolitionist accusations and a gnawing contradiction as they piously embraced the evangelism of the 1830s and 1840s. The issue continued to breed anxiety. Most large planters deeply feared and distrusted the effects of Christianity on the servile population. It was a sore spot with the South Carolina clergy as well. Those who took their religion seriously were troubled by the dichotomy of the South. And even in South Carolina, though smarting from accusations, no denomination took their religion more seriously than the Methodists.

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CHAPTER 6

# "Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantation Missions and Methodist Impact

> But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency. . . .*

> In slabery, nigger go to white folks chu'ch. Slabe don't know nutting 'bout baptizing. W'en nigger dead, you can't knock off wuk for berry um. You berry um by de light ob torch. . . . Dey wasn't no nigger preacher on de plantation but dey been people to hold praise. (prayers).**

## *The Movement*

The South Carolina Methodist hierarchy was apparently stimulated into action as a result of the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy and other events. Methodists came to view religious instruction of slaves as their particular calling. The mission was designed to Christianize the slaves on the one hand, and on the other, to demonstrate that Christianity would not foment rebellion or threaten the public peace. Rather than a two-edged

*James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 314–15.
**Sam Polite, former slave, in George P. Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 Parts, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), III: (3)274.

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•175 sword, or a weapon of resistance, Methodists believed Christianity could, if "properly" taught, be the best insurance against insurrection. As far as Lowcountry slaves were concerned, the religion and some of those who brought it, had certain redeeming qualities. Selectivity was practiced on both sides. The Methodist hierarchy carefully chose biblical literature they believed suitable for slaves. And the Gullahs decided which features of the Christian doctrines could be serviceable to them.

Southern contemplation of the fears and horrors of slave insurrection and the pros and cons of slave conversion continued during the decade that had brought Denmark Vesey's Conspiracy. The Northern religious community grew more and more vociferous in denouncing the lack of Christianization efforts among bondspeople. At a time when American missionaries were "spreading the gospel" to American Indians, Africans, Asians, and Polynesians, some noticed that no such energies were spent on the African-Americans. In 1826 a leading Presbyterian journal, the *Christian Advocate*, published a query regarding the state of religious instruction among the slaves. Aiming at the Southern clergy, the writer asked:

> Are there not 2,000,000 slaves in the republic of the United States?
> Are not almost the whole of them denied the Word of God?
> Are they not in full view of the American church, and yet in a great measure overlooked by that Church?
> Is there any reason why they should be disregarded, especially while Greeks are remembered, and distant heathens commiserated?

The inquirer concluded that "It would doubtless be a work of mercy and relief to many who may have a conscience not justly enlightened, to furnish such fair and true answers to these questions, as would take away groundless apprehension that 'all is not right' in our own church and country."[1]

A Southern minister sent a prompt reply substantiating the validity of the criticism:

> Should it be asked, "are not the greater part of them [the slaves] ignorant of the Word of God?" I should reply in the affirmative. Should it be again asked, "Are not many of them 'denied' the Word of God?" I should reply, yes. . . . Some slaves are, by their wicked owners, absolutely forbidden to use the Word of God. . . . Many slaves, owned by masters professedly Christians, are so neglected by them, as regards their spiritual interests, that they live and die in utter ignorance of the Word of God.[2]

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Others expressed similar concerns. That same year the *Wesleyan Journal* published an article signed "Philander" which discussed the excuses offered for this "neglect" of "duty" in regard to the slaves. Some said slaves were "too ignorant" to understand doctrine and "too perverse" to regularly attend to matters of religion. Others, stated "Philander," insisted that masters would not allow Christian instruction of their slaves. Yet according to the writer, the "most significant culprit" was the Church, in this case Methodist. As "Philander" viewed the situation, the Church refused to broach the issue because it was unpopular. Thus the Methodist church was not fulfilling its duty as overseer of the spiritual welfare of the humanity within its own presence. "Philander" was followed by a letter of support from "Philemon," probably a slaveholder given the biblical reference of the name. "Philemon" suggested that the Methodist church "get on with the business." Christian instruction, he believed, would be a boon to *masters* and could be carried out effectively by the itinerant ministry.[3]

South Carolina Methodists have been credited with leading the slave states in motivating interest in Christian instruction among planters and other denominations. Certainly Methodists began discussion of the subject through the *Wesleyan Journal*, edited by William Capers, who became superintendant of the plantation missions. But the first major statement came in 1829 when Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, noted statesman and slaveholder, addressed the Agricultural Society of South Carolina. Pinckney had recently solicited the services of a Methodist missionary for his own plantations, and believed in the benefits to be derived from Christian conversion of bondspeople. His address skillfully approached the issue by disarming his listeners with an introductory defense of slavery. Settling fellow slaveholders at ease, Pinckney extolled them for concern with their slaves' physical well-being, juxtaposing the "happy" bondspeople with the "beleagured" laboring poor in Europe and the North. He further attempted to assure the audience of his proslavery commitment, defending the system from biblical example and citing passages well known to most upholders of the institution. Finally, satisfied with his own persuasive maneuvers, the statesman held forth on the business at hand, still cautiously speaking from the planters' position:

> Nothing is better calculated to render man satisfied with his destiny in this world, than a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments; and that good conduct, founded on Christian principles, will ensure

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•175 superior rewards in that which is future and eternal. A firm persuasion that it is both our interest and duty to afford religious instruction to the blacks, induces me to dwell on this subject.[4]

Many meritorious qualities existed in a Christian servile people as opposed to the "heathen" one that lived among them, Pinckney assured Society members. Christianity would elevate black behavior from its "deplorable state," and such amelioration was an asset to the planter. Pinckney held that black children learned from parents and elders mischievous tendencies that were counterproductive to plantation interests. From "his natural instructors," Pinckney related, the "little negro is often taught . . . that he may commit any vice he can conceal from his superiors; and thus falsehood and deception are among the earliest they imbibe." But if "true religion" were propagated, a sense of duty would undermine the slaves' reluctance to labor and,

diminishing the cases of feigned sickness so harassing the planter, would augment their numerical force and consequent production. . . . A greater proportion of domestic happiness would prevail, and render them contented with their situation, and more anxious to promote their owner's welfare. The absence, or diminution of theft, falsehood, and many other vices, would render the home of the Agriculturalist far more agreeable than it can be where guilt, which escapes human detection, knows not and fears not another tribunal.[5]

To those objecting to Christian instruction on grounds that it was "the cloak assumed to cover the nefarious designs of insurrection," Pinckney countered that such instruction would be "the best antidote to this very disease." He maintained that no arguments were entitled to so little weight as those condemning slave exposure to Protestantism because it was abused by some. So long as planters exercised their right of scrutiny and control over who taught slaves and kept a watchful eye on the content of the doctrines disseminated, Christian teaching would not lend itself to insurrection. The appeal was to group interest. To "ensure the security and comfort of the planter" slaves should be made "conscious of their advantages, and grateful to their Maker for his bounties." To accomplish this an efficient system of Christianizing was needed, especially in the country region, and every Protestant denomination stood ready and willing to send missionaries where plantation owners would permit it. These "white and Southern" missionaries Pinckney insisted, would only instruct slaves "orally" in the duties and principles of Christianity. "Such a state of moral culture," persuaded Pinckney, "would give us the advan-

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tage in argument over those of our Northern Brethren . . . whose objection to our system is partly founded on the deficiency of religious instruction." If said instruction and subsequent conversion were "more genuinely diffused," Pinckney assured, "our national character would be relieved from its only real opprobrium."[6] 175

C. C. Pinckney's address before the South Carolina Agricultural Society typified the concern of a few planters to make the masses of bondspeople culturally visible for the first time. While reminding slaveholders of their duty to provide spiritual and religious instruction to their slaves, his overriding argument in favor of Christianizing efforts centered on protection of the institution and a countermeasure support system against the influence of leadership in the slave quarters. Christianity, with its concepts of sin and rebirth, could conceivably contribute to the bondspeople's developing a sense of vulnerability and prostration. So long as slaves remained a somewhat foreign and even mysterious mass of laborers, outside the realm of human interest on the part of whites, such slaves were a threat. As Christians however, sharing the same beliefs and spiritual orientation as their masters, blacks would eventually come to feel part of the total society. To imbibe white religion as taught by the new wave of missionaries would, in the mind of Pinckney and others, allow slaves to accept their subservient role in society, making them not only physical dependents but spiritual and psychological dependents as well.

Pinckney's call for bringing Christianity to the slaves was a significant departure, coming as it did from a wealthy, highly recognized planter and politician. This was the first time a large group of South Carolina planters were addressed on the subject by an individual whose respectability was national and whose interests coincided directly with their own. Pinckney's method of approaching the issue was employed by others later. He saw the result of Christian conversion primarily in idyllic terms—happy, docile, "spiritually uplifted" darkies, and a peaceful plantation, free from theft, runaways, and bereft of artful means to avoid labor. The appeal also liberated the slaveholders from a sense of guilt—if they happened to have one—regarding their right to hold slaves. Pinckney reasoned that the doctrines of the Old as well as New Testaments upheld slavery and that scriptures, "if properly taught," would never undermine the slave system. Naturally, the best way to ensure "proper" instruction was to have "Southern men with Southern principles" as teachers. Fi- 17

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around the time of Vesey's Conspiracy, most were slaves. But the up-country, frequented by circuit riders and stimulated by numerous revivals, contained the majority of the state's 18,460 black Methodists at the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Thus the coastal plantations, especially in the Sea Islands, were the main target areas during the thirty years of Methodist religious efforts among the bondspeople of South Carolina, and parts of Georgia.[10]

When the South Carolina Methodist Conference met in February 1830, its Missionary Society produced a stirring report entitled "The Southern Slave Population." Authored by James O. Andrew, a slaveholding bishop from Augusta, Georgia, the document noted the lack of missionary service to slaves and lauded the attention and encouragement given by C. C. Pinckney. More significantly, the report indicated a rising concern within the Southern Methodist church. In 1831 Andrew's report was published in the national Methodist journal, indicating that a movement was under way in the regional jurisdiction of the South Carolina Conference. Bishop Andrew acknowledged that in the face of "so many obstacles," a long period of negligence had characterized Methodist attitude. Yet he insisted that the Methodist church was not unmindful of the so-called irreligion of the slaves:

> We saw the efforts made to send the Gospel to distant Pagans, and we heard of the success of those efforts with much gratification. But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity and to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency, and longed to see put into operation such an instrumentality as should extensively and successfully, carry the Gospel to the large and increasing slave population.[11]

The difficulties and magnitude of the undertaking had until recently hindered the Church's commitment Andrew reported. But a new day was dawning. Of late, the Church was "cheered and strengthened" and much gratified by the expressed advocacy of the renowned C. C. Pinckney. The South Carolina Conference considered the words of so "notable and respected" a Carolinian to be a "valuable and powerful auxiliary" in the work undertaken. Speaking on behalf of the Methodists' missionary branch, the slaveholding bishop reiterated even more strongly themes pounded out by Pinckney: the "moral baseness" of un-Christian slaves had to be combated. Among bondspeople, stated Andrew, "the tender

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•175 and hallowed ties of husband and wife are unknown," and the slaves' "love of strong drink" and "immoral spirit" was a detriment to the economic interests of the planter and tranquility of the plantation. In comparing these "vices" to the "virtues" of the "Christian Negro," Andrew noted:

> The *Christian Negro looks to heaven*. He feels that this world is but a temporary home, and although his condition here may be a hard one, yet God can sanctify every hardship to an abundant increase of his spiritual comfort. He serves his master from *principle* not from *fear*. It is a service rendered to God; and he regards his master's interests as his own. They are therefore safe in his hands.[12]

The relationship between Christian instruction and socioeconomic control was not peculiar to "enlightened" elements of the South. British employers and Methodist clergy resorted to a similar analysis during the Industrial Revolution, which coincided with the period of American Methodist activity among the slaves. Some of the parallels are noteworthy. The values of a doctrine of submission with a spiritual base had its uses for both American slaveholders and British employers. British antislavery Methodists and reformers did not allow this "progressive" cause to interfere with the "demands" of a free market economy. Religion taught to slaves in the South, like that British laborers were encouraged to accept, reinforced the "blessedness of poverty," or the dignity of being a good slave. Both policies were viewed as essential for discipline to the machine in the case of England and to the fields in the case of the United States. Yet this "godliness" brought no temporal gain to the laborers. Thus E. P. Thompson, in writing about British workers, noted that the "first great lesson" taught to laborers was that their primary happiness was not in the present world, but in a future one. Labor then, was a "*pure act of virtue*," according to British pro-Methodist ideologues of the nineteenth century. It was "inspired by the love of a transcendent Being, operating . . . on our will and affections." The *Power of the Cross* transformed the will, created a hatred of *sin* and love of *good*, as interpreted by employer and slavemaster through their missionary agents. The *Power of the Cross* was sacrificial. Sacrifice would remove the guilt of *sin*. The words of Dr. Andrew Ure from his *Philosophy of Manufactures* illustrate the functional use of religion as a means of work discipline. While specifically referring to British laborers, the analogy is comparable to the slaves. Ure maintained that the "transforming power" of the Cross was:

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the motive which removes love of sin; it mortifies sin by showing its turpitude to be indelible except by such an awful expiration: it atones for disobedience; it excites to obedience; it purchases strength for obedience; it makes obedience practicable; it makes it acceptable; it makes it in a manner unavoidable, for it constrains to it; it is, finally, not only the motive to obedience, but the pattern of it.[13]

Still the Methodists boasted of spiritual egalitarianism rather than the elitism so traditional among Calvinist-oriented and Anglican sects in the United States and England. Methodism beckoned all. The elect could be legion if willing totally to prostrate themselves before the Cross. The South Carolina Methodist church declared itself ready to include the African-Americans on the Lowcountry plantations into their connection. Andrew concluded his address by calling for missionaries of a special caliber, particularly designated for such a work, and capable of feeling themselves charged with the slaves' spiritual interests. They must be men whom the bondspeople were willing to regard as "*their preachers*" but also men to whom slaveholders would look upon confidently, as the *appropriate* spiritual guides of their slaves. The appeal was moving and dramatic:

Here is a work which will require piety, prudence, patience in no ordinary measure. He who would enter upon it efficiently, must be willing to feel himself in a good degree an exile from the pleasures of society. He must be willing to be looked down upon by the rich and great about him as a *negro preacher*. He must be content to take up his abode amidst fogs and death, and *trust God* emphatically. . . .

Methinks we hear a goodly number starting from the different departments of the Church, and saying *we* are willing to sit down by the negro's cabin fire, and talk to him of Jesus and the resurrection and death; and take God as our portion and heaven as our final home. . . . Then we say to the Church, up quickly and send these men to their work.[14]

Impressive claims to apostolic fervor had their place in motivating the Methodist Church to Christianize the slaves in South Carolina. Yet the Methodists did not initiate the movement even though as early as 1824 they expressed a desire to create "a separate department" to address the slaves' "spiritual welfare." Lack of enthusiasm closed the issue until 1828. At that time two Lowcountry planters, Colonel Lewis Morris and Charles Baring of the Combahee region, asked Methodist circuit rider, George W. Moore, to give special religious instruction to their slaves. Morris and Baring were so pleased with the outcome that they determined to

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•175 petition the South Carolina Conference, scheduled to meet early the following year, to send regular missionaries to their plantations. At the same time, but perhaps not independent of the former developments, C. C. Pinckney called on William Capers, Presiding Elder of the Charleston District, and asked him to recommend a "suitable exhorter" to oversee his plantations on the Santee River. Pinckney related that one of his Georgia friends employed a Methodist overseer, and was very happy with the "new piety" among the slaves and with the increase in plantation productivity. The Georgia planter credited these developments to his overseer's influence over the slaves. Capers informed Pinckney that he could not assist him in employing a Methodist minister as an overseer, but added that a full-time religious instructor could be provided by the South Carolina Conference upon application. Pinckney agreed to apply, and the South Carolina Conference of 1829 was historic. The Morris, Baring, and Pinckney requests were acted upon immediately, and the Conference sent out the first missionaries devoted exclusively to Lowcountry slaves. With the movement launched, a statement was appropriate. Pinckney's address favoring slave conversion came in August 1829. The Methodists began religious instruction in 1828. But no statement on the issue was forthcoming from the South Carolina Conference until February 1830. Thus Pinckney's approbation preceded the South Carolina Methodists' appeal, perhaps as a means of cushioning opposition and suspicion. In any case, the role of the Methodist church in initiating religious instruction among the slaves in South Carolina was not as bold a venture as some previous writers on the subject have stated.[15]

The Christian conversion movement, then, originated with an appeal from planters. After that initial step the Methodist church in South Carolina pledged active support and leadership. Possibly national pressure from the General Conference would have eventually forced the Southern clergy into action. Once the state hierarchy organized their missions to the slaves, the process was conducted with diligence and vigor. But as of 1829, no pressure from the national episcopacy induced such a movement, and the urgency which South Carolina Methodists expressed could easily have been prompted by the financial support from "concerned" planters. Furthermore, the source of South Carolina Methodist zeal for slave conversion was not found in the Church hierarchy. Most enthusiasm as well as commitment derived from the lay preachers, men of humble birth, for the most part non-slaveholders, sent among bondspeople

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in the isolated, unhealthy Lowcountry and Sea Island regions. Some of them were buried there. One wonders how long the question of slave conversion would have lain dormant except for the efforts intended to stabilize the plantation system. This primary goal, seasoned perhaps with some element of conscience, caused a few influential slaveholders to promote the experiment. A definite parallel existed between spiritual and temporal interests. And the view that Christianization would lead to a more efficient and submissive labor force slowly gained credibility.

Despite postulations about Methodist involvement in Vesey's Conspiracy, Southern Methodists were not antislavery, and Lowcountry planters had little real reason to suspect them as harbingers of black liberation. By their own admission they were a denomination whose Southern branch believed in slavery. The South Carolina Conference's reaction to the Vesey Conspiracy was to reaffirm their proslavery position. Andrew, in his 1830 report, stated that the church's responsibility was not to contemplate slavery as an institution. Such speculations, according to Andrew, brought much "evil" to the slaves without any corresponding benefits. "We look upon the blacks just as we find them," he wrote, ". . . hoping only to bring them into the enjoyment of freedom of a higher character; freedom from the bondage of Satan, from the control of passions and lusts."[16]

Yet such statements, undoubtedly sincere, could not immediately dispel suspicion and doubt. The burgeoning abolitionist movement, and the fact that some Northerners were already going south to do what Southern clergymen had heretofore left undone, made the task of the South Carolina Methodists even more difficult. Antislavery sentiment gained momentum among Methodists and other denominations in the North. Anxiety about the abolitionists disguised as "men of the cloth" going among slaves made any missionary a suspect until proven otherwise. One Sea Island missionary in the employment of the South Carolina Conference complained to the Missionary Society:

> My success in getting access to the colored people, as far as I flattered myself in the early part of the year, has been in some measure obstructed, growing out of the excitement got up by the abolitionists.[17]

Sea Island and Lowcountry planters were surrounded by a dense black population as compared to a paucity of whites. White communities felt particularly vulnerable. A Northern Presbyterian minister, Courtlandt

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175 Van Renssalaer, was forced out of Virginia as a missionary among the slaves. He then attempted to preach to the neglected bondspeople of the Sea Island and Savannah River regions in 1835 and 1836. His career was abruptly halted when a circular appeared stating that a gentleman of "high respectability" had information that Van Renssalaer held secret meetings with slaves, "and consulted with them on their means of revolt, their armies . . . when they expected to be ready. . . ." The "authorities" were alerted, and "Van Renssalaer would have been arrested but when sought for he had suddenly left." The missionary denied the charges from his Northern sanctuary and indicated they exemplified the opposition to the "work" which he and others endeavored to accomplish among the slaves.[18]

175 Allegations about antislavery activity being conducted by Northern missionaries, a distrust of so novel an experiment, and a traditional association of religion with rebellion evoked open hostility to Christian instruction in many cases. The idea of perfect strangers going among their "people" to preach was not one to which planters could easily adjust. The South Carolina Conference proclaimed repeatedly the official Methodist position on slavery: that it was an institution of "Divine Providence," that the issue of slavery did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Church but was "exclusively appropriate to the civil authorities," and that the Conference was resolved "not to intermeddle with it." Representing the South Carolina Conference in 1838, William Capers, Superintendent of the Missions to the Slaves, further affirmed the Methodist belief that "the Holy Scriptures . . . do unequivocally authorize the relation of master and slave." Capers, himself a slaveholder, affirmed:

> Our missionaries inculcate the duties of servants to their masters, as we find these duties stated in the Scriptures. . . . We hold that a Christian slave must be submissive, faithful and obedient . . . we would employ no one in the work who might hesitate to teach this; nor can such a one be found in the whole number of preachers in this Conference.[19]

[177] In spite of such reassurances, skepticism among slaveholders continued and invitations to instruct Sea Island and Lowcountry slaves constituted a mere trickle in the 1830s. In a letter to William Capers, C. C. Pinckney expressed his own gratitude for the services of the Methodists. But he also stated that the majority of the seaboard planters were "still adverse to missionary efforts and give us ample cause to pray that their

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eyes may be opened." Nevertheless, missionaries increased their efforts yearly and other denominations applauded the undertaking. In 1838 an interdenominational group of influential clergymen met under the auspices of the Methodist Missionary Society and asserted their growing concern and commitment to slave conversion. They agreed that areas of the large cotton and rice plantations along the sea coast from the Savannah to the Pee Dee rivers in Georgia and South Carolina would receive the bulk of attention. In most of the state, churches existed in nearly every area, but the group admitted that even there, accommodations for blacks were insufficient. However, at least no one could say, "Negroes of the neighborhood are without the gospel." Such was not the case "on the Sea Islands, and in the delta of the rivers, where the Negroes are most numerous." These thousands had no churches accessible to them, and the interdenominational group confessed, "they are as destitute as if they were not inhabitants of a Christian land." The plantation missions were undertaken for the benefit of these slaves.[20]

Southern churches and seminaries were not long in taking note of the movement. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, as well as Methodists preached sermons on the benefits of the enterprise. Gradually, some planters, convinced of the desirability of Christian instruction, publicly declared their approval at agricultural meetings and in agricultural journals. Denominational newspapers also kept up arguments in favor of religious instruction. William Capers prepared a short catechism for the missionaries' use in instructing slaves. Arguments of appeal rarely varied. Although the interest of the plantation was preemptory, the security of the country and saving of black souls were also loudly proclaimed. The 1830s was a period of persuasion and promotion of Christian proselytizing, with the Methodist church directing the campaign and receiving widespread if not unified support from a number of quarters. In the words of one church association spokesman, discussing conditions in South Carolina and Georgia during this period, "The religious instruction of our slave population, entirely suspended in some parts of the country, through the lamentable interference of abolition fanatics, has proceeded with almost unabated diligence and steadiness of purpose."[21]

In the Sea Island region south of Charleston, Methodist missionaries acquired early access to some plantations. Two missionaries, George W. Moore and Thomas D. Turpin, arrived in 1833. Moore's appointment included Beaufort and the surrounding islands. His first charge consisted

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of two plantations and two preaching appointments in Beaufort (attended by slaves from several plantations), six plantations on Paris Island, and one plantation on each of the five remaining islands around Beaufort. Turpin's appointment in the Beaufort District, called the May and New River Mission, included Hilton Head, Bull's and Dawfuskie Islands, and the mainland between the May and New Rivers.[22]

The most successful method of gaining permission to evangelize slaves involved having a sympathetic local planter approach fellow slaveholders on behalf of the missionaries. In the Sea Islands Methodists were actively supported by William E. Baynard. The Baynard family were large slaveholders with plantation interests on Hilton Head and Edisto Islands as well as on the mainland. Baynard was a frequent intermediary between planters and missionaries. Writing to him in 1833, one Hilton Head planter expressed his confidence in the cause:

> I am anxious that the mission to the colored people in this community be continued . . . that the gospel should be preached to them in their cabins and the Scriptures explained in such a plain and simple manner that they may fully understand what true religion is.[23]

Baynard was not always so successful. While some slaveholders simply refused to allow missionaries on their plantations, others gave the experiment a try but found "results" discouraging. For example, William Pope, Sr., Baptist patriarch of a Sea Island family who owned the largest amount of aggregate acreage on St. Helena, Dawfuskie, and Hilton Head, answered Baynard's inquiry of 1834 in the negative. Pope felt that Thomas Turpin, sent the previous year, had gained few converts. He wrote:

> If I am not deceived one or two of them [the slaves] will long remember him with gratitude . . . but am inclined to think he has not met with decided success . . . he has had to encounter some difficulty, discouragements and prejudices which he has not been able to fully overcome—tho' he has certainly laboured faithfully, and been zealous and diligent in the discharge of his duty.

Pope concluded his letter by stating that the missionary's services would be discontinued since the "means and opportunities" of religious instruction had improved; there were "now two churches on this Island [Hilton Head] in which there is service at least twice a month."[24]

There appeared to be a consensus among certain planters in the May and New River Mission to withhold cooperation from Turpin and the Methodists. James Sealy, also a planter on Hilton Head Island, wrote to

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Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he "could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming.

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary, "these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin:

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats belonged to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gullahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident,

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• 175 church at will, and randomly sat in on conferences or any other meetings the blacks held. Nor could black ministers preach or officiate at the church without the endorsement of at least two white Baptist ministers. Thus, the black church was separate physically but dependent upon white favor for its existence. Turpin's critics reminded him that Marshall was "nothing more than a Negro," implying that the black minister need not be taken seriously. Turpin disagreed. Marshall may be a "Negro," said the Methodist, but one authorized to baptize and preach, "and he has baptized a great many many in this low country." Slaves in the May and New River area were among Marshall's converts, but Turpin said, "he never comes to see them . . . nor any other Baptist minister." Therefore, as far as the Methodist missionary was concerned, his observations were grounded in the fact that slaves in the Sea Island region were practicing "corrupt," "superstitious" rites under a rubric of Christianity.[30]

Membership in Andrew Marshall's Savannah Church was for these slaves a contact with Christianity, perhaps the only contact. It provided them with a sanctuary for continuance of spiritual independence, though, like the ill-fated African Church of Charleston, probably serving a number of roles for various groups of African-Americans. By joining the church Gullahs became nominal Christians yet practiced religion relatively free from scrutiny. Church attendance was not an every Sunday occurrence even for white Baptists, who might attend once a month. Turpin believed the slaves had no contact with the Savannah Church, yet they must have had some. But undoubtedly most slaves who could join did so because it was an African-American spiritual organization as well as a Christian church. Membership would also hopefully keep the Methodists away. Planters *and* slaves probably wanted this at first, although for different reasons.

The Turpin report exemplifies the Gullahs' own method of putting the new religion to use. The "discouragements and prejudices" he encountered were not as much a *preference* for Baptist worship, as implied by slaveholder Pope's letter. Certainly elements of Baptist practices appealed to the slaves, just as elements of the missionaries' "method" did not. Methodism took a more persistent attitude toward its converts and its doctrines. Conversion was a serious solemn matter. Doctrine had to be memorized, and scriptures were lectured on and discussed extensively by the missionary. Preaching among the slaves was more didactic than inspiring, and "true" believers had to demonstrate a reasonable under-

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standing and acceptance of Christian teaching as presented before they became church members. Furthermore, during this early period, Methodist religious instruction among the Gullahs was entirely conducted by whites, and caused problems for a slave population unaccustomed to seeing any whites except slave masters and overseers. Gullahs did not readily adapt to Methodist concentration on learning and reciting church discipline. They were even more resistant to efforts to shift spiritual leadership out of the slave quarters and from black to white influence.

Most Gullahs wanted to to construct their own socioreligious system and not without its "Christian" elements. Few were actually affiliated with any Baptist churches during this period as compared to later. But for those who were, religious activities through association with a church acceptable to slaveholders facilitated approval of the slaves' own independent "Negro Societies." These societies were reportedly organized by the slaves themselves. As long-distance Baptists, Gullahs deviated from little-understood orthodox practices without being closely observed.

The straightforward, illuminating approach detailed in Turpin's report provides insight into the religious practices he found among the Gullahs. But his "Missionary Sketch" further increased Methodist unpopularity with planters. Nor apparently was it favorably received by the South Carolina Missionary Society, since Turpin was removed in midyear, following circulation of the report, and a circuit rider from the Orangeburg area sent to replace him. Furthermore, subsequent missionary reports never assumed the pointedness and frankness which characterized Turpin's statements in 1833. During the remainder of the period of Christian conversion in South Carolina, vivid descriptions of "superstitions" encountered by the missionaries no longer found a place in public print. Yet there were undoubtedly many. One missionary suggested that preachers write down the nature of these slave beliefs in order to provide a history of the Methodist plantation movement. Evidently nothing came of this effort. Missionary reports were first carried by the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, a widely read Methodist newspaper published in New York. By 1837, the growing schism between Northern and Southern Methodists led to the founding of the *Southern Christian Advocate* published in Charleston. But Northern religious presses, also interested in the progress of slave conversion, often published the missionary reports even after the New York based newspaper was superseded in the South.[31]

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175 The South Carolina Conference wanted favorable, optimistic reports. In their efforts to absolve the Southern Church from Northern reproach, Methodists expected missionaries to cease concentrating on the nature of "superstitions" among the slaves, on "moral degradation," or sect rivalry. Such emphasis suggested that the enterprise was not successful. Also to focus on planter impropriety undermined the confidence the Methodist church hoped to instill among the slaveholding class. Perhaps as a result of Turpin's unpopular "Missionary Sketch," late in 1833 William Capers published a notice to missionaries stating that the sort of information then being received was unsatisfactory. "General remarks," wrote Capers, "by no means furnish the requisite information." The Superintendent of Missions instructed each missionary to provide a quarterly report which, if nothing else, answered the following types of questions:

—how many preaching places have you
—how many schools, teachers, scholars, how many of these are natives
—how many since the last report
—Revivals.[12]

After Turpin's controversial report, statistics and discussions of Christian-type experiences dominated missionary information from the field. It was more significant to detail the conversion of an old African-born slave than to outline what appeared to be latent types of "Roman Catholic" ceremonies. The former type of religious experiences were dramatized in the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate* in the 1840s and later.

175 799 Missionaries assigned to the Sea Islands and coastal regions maintained a healthy optimism, but reports were often discouraging. Early support from slaveholders was spasmodic and intermittent, and bondspeople took a lax attitude toward Methodist discipline. In 1835, John Coburn reported from Beaufort that, while his charge had increased to include twenty-one plantations with 400 children under catechetical instruction, "the prospects of this mission are not considered flattering." He blamed "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" for his lack of success, yet recommended that the station be continued for at least another year. In 1836 Coburn indicated that improvement had taken place, yet church membership dropped considerably because of many expulsions and the fact that some planters had withdrawn their slaves from the mission. His work was also greatly hindered because the islands, separated by wide waters, were frequently impassable for small boats.[13]

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The "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" discussed by Coburn came from two sources. First, Gullah leaders continued to exert influence and they resented as well as resisted supersedence of their authority. Secondly, a growing number of slaves professed affiliation with Baptists of the region. Many missionaries complained that these alleged black Baptists were unfamiliar with Christian doctrines. Thus from the missionaries' point of view, the complexity was actually three-tiered: a powerful black leadership holding sway through beliefs and practices apart from Protestantism, a conflict with black "professors of the faith" whom missionaries considered mere "pretenders," and both problems compounded by the skepticism of Baptist and Episcopalian slaveholders. The missionaries admitted that religious instruction under such circumstances was a formidable task.[34]

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Methodist Sea Island missionary activity experienced various periods of growth and decline. Methodism was persistent, but there was never a massive moment into the church on the part of the Gullahs. By 1839, the May and New River Mission had been discontinued and the limited number of converts absorbed by the Beaufort and Savannah River organizaiton. Also by 1839 Methodists created a new mission in the Beaufort district, called Pocotaligo, and another in the Charleston district called Edisto Island Mission, including Jehossee and Fenwick Islands. Edisto was by far the most prosperous of the Sea Island missions. By 1842 Beaufort Mission embraced thirty plantations but contained only 310 members, with 370 children under instruction. The Pocotaligo missionary ministered at nine plantations, had 295 church members, and 156 children under catechetical instruction. Progress was slow in these areas compared to other missions north of Charleston and in the upcountry. For example, the North Santee Mission embraced only fifteen plantations but had 528 church members and the Black and Pee Dee Rivers Mission covered twenty-five plantations with 1,180 church members. By the time of national division within the Methodist church in 1844, the Beaufort Mission had dropped to twenty plantation appointments, and Pocotaligo still served only nine. The Edisto Mission however, maintained steady progress.[35]

Figures relating to church membership are not impressive considering the thousands of slaves in the coastal and Sea Island region. Still, Methodist missionaries remained active there until 1861, even after it became apparent that Baptist influence would predominate. Not only were white

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gland. Industrious masters might remain near their plantations during the "sickly season" by building homes on a high bluff. From these retreats, such as St. Helenaville, they directed plantation affairs through their drivers and overseers. The enormous black population working in the fields rarely saw a white except for overseers and their families, or through brief sometimes seasonal contact with slave masters.[17]

Bondspeople were under the direct supervision of black drivers who might report to a head driver, also a black man. Slaves recognized these supervisors' powerful position as coming from an outside oppressive force. The Gullahs had little affection or even genuine respect for black drivers. Although exceptions existed, the interests of slave drivers and those of the slave community were inimical. Francis Kemble, an English resident on the Georgia Sea Island plantations of her husband Pierce Butler, described drivers in their role:

> At the upper end of the row of houses, and nearest to the overseer's residence, is the hut of the head driver . . . The negroes, . . . are divided into troops or gangs, . . . at the head of each gang is a driver, who stands over them, whip in hand, while they perform their daily task, who renders an account of each individual slave and his work every evening to the overseer, and receives from him directions for their next day's task. Each driver is allowed to inflict a dozen lashes upon any refractory slave in the field, and at the time of the offense.[18]

Laura M. Towne, a Philadelphia osteopath who went to the Sea Islands as part of the Port Royal experiment, observed the Gullahs' attitude toward slave drivers. Towne noted that the people complained of one driver in particular named Gabriel. " 'How, boys,' " he answered, " 'You know I cut and slash you for ole Massa. Ain't you know I no do dat Massa do worse.' " The men smirked at him scornfully. Certainly the black drivers' position was unenviable. They did not usually seek the role, yet were bound to do the master's bidding or face punishment themselves. Nevertheless, antipathy toward black drivers was observed on many occasions. Yankee cotton agent, Edward Philbrick, stated that their position over the masses of slaves did not seem to derive from intelligence or respect. As soon as the artificial element of force was removed by masters and overseers fleeing, "these black foremen generally dropped back to the level from which they had been temporarily raised." They had no useful authority over the slaves and attempts to reinstate them in the management of crops "generally met with singular failure." Antebellum Methodist missionaries stated the slaves believed drivers would

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•175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
(532) secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
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> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
248 culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
461 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

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to speak. . . . Here lay women expecting every hour the terrors and agony of childbirth, others who were groaning over the anguish . . . of miscarriages—here lay some burning with fever, others chilled with cold and aching rheumatism on the hard cold ground, the draughts and dampness of the atmosphere increasing their sufferings, and dirt, noise, and stench, and every aggravation of which sickness is capable, combined in their condition.[45]

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Conditions among the female population affected Kemble deeply. She spent much time trying to alleviate deprivation and discomfort. For her concern she faced the resentment of Pierce Butler, who considered her interfering with plantation "discipline." An antislavery Englishwoman, Kemble claimed she married Butler without knowledge of his human property. Their divergent views caused dissension between them. On one occasion, Kemble wrote of Butler's reaction to the petition of a group of slave women:

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Mr. _____ was called out this evening to listen to a complaint of overwork from a gang of pregnant women. I did not stay to listen to the details of their petition, for I am unable to command myself on such occasions and Mr. _____ seemed positively degraded in my eyes as he stood enforcing upon these women the necessity of their fulfilling their appointed tasks . . . as a *duty*.[46]

The conditions of labor under the "peculiar institution" hindered longevity and a natural increase in birth rate survival among the slaves. Both races paid in different ways because cotton planters did not usually attend to their estates personally, and because they too often judged managerial quality by the magnitude of cotton profits. But illegal imports still contributed to the increase in slaves. The last slave vessel to arrive in the Sea Islands, the ship *Wanderer*, was in 1858. Sea Island planters had opposed reopening the slave trade in South Carolina in 1803, apparently because it might have decreased market value of their own slaves at a time when these planters were economically vulnerable. However, after the close of the African trade to North America in 1807, and the rise of Sea Island cotton, planters engaged in smuggling. Illegal importations continued to contribute to the native African population.[47] Even more significantly, many American-born slaves were only one or two generations from African ethnicity, because many were imported into the Sea Islands during the last two decades before the War of Independence.

Thus Methodist missionaries found very oppressed but tightly knit communities of African-Americans still clinging to patterns of social behavior and modes of worship, largely a mystery to whites, having devel-

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oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840, "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccustomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan*'?" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

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Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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sanction from planters and overseers as the "spiritual elders" of the people. One St. Helena planter who spent little time on the island, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned there in 1833 that he hoped the Methodists could improve the religious condition among the Gullahs. The biggest problem according to the planters was the black leaders whose control had to be broken.[50]

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Thus missionaries vied with black spiritual advisers for religious leadership in the slave community.[51] There was no way for the Methodists to counter the influence of slaves whom the Gullahs regarded as spiritual advisers but who made no claim to Christianity. Methodists felt that under Christian instruction customs and practices perpetrated by this leadership would die out in time. But the missionaries believed black leaders who fused "paganism" with Christianity were most detrimental to the Methodist cause. These leaders had either to be set on the "true" path or their influence undermined. The competition proved difficult. Everywhere they went among the Gullahs, missionaries found black leaders successfully impeding Methodist influence. From Beaufort Mission, T. E. Ledbetter reported in 1836 that although some "pious" Episcopalian planters allowed missionaries to preach to slaves, he saw no evidence of progress:

> . . . we combat a great many falso notions, and . . . fatal doctrines which have been elderly imbibed by the colored population through the instrumentality of ignorant and superstitious teachers among themselves. And nothing is more difficult to overcome than a strongly prejudiced understanding . . . many among them are opposed to us.[52]

Some missionaries, even without planter approval, attempted completely to halt black spiritual leadership. Others hoped to communicate with Gullahs by recognizing or even appointing certain "elders." Both tactics often bred frustration. From Pocotaligo Mission in Beaufort District, John N. Davies reported in 1840:

> A black man, one of them [the slaves] whom they claim for their spiritual father, and, as they say, "had brought them through the spirit," became corrupted and inflated with self-importance—I gave him a close talk, with a design of moving him, when he held up the wand of his sweeping influence by asserting that all the children [the people] would follow him. As we have no authority to visit them at the plantation we chose the only mode of saving them, . . . to select and appoint a zealous and upright man, of their number to be with him as an aid and guard; meanwhile a noise came from abroad of large depredations being

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committed which implicated this and several plantations . . . nearly all have ceased to attend and we fear they are rushing to ruin—Lord have mercy upon them and upon me."

This missionary's report typifies one significant aspect of white attempts to usurp black leadership — that of replacing an individual who could not be subordinated with one seemingly more controllable. Undoubtedly, the "zealous and upright" man was more cooperative than pious. The audacious missionary had no access to the plantation where his spiritual rival lived, nor apparently did he have the good wishes and confidence of the planter. Some planters left it completely up to the Gullahs as to whether or not they attended missionary services, and others specifically forbade it; this contributed to the continued presence and influence of black leaders. Moreover, as the Davies' account reveals, slaves given passes to attend preaching appointments often found other more lucrative or entertaining means of utilizing their temporary mobility. Fear of this limited movement and assembly was a continual obstruction in obtaining unified support for religious instruction from the slaveholders. When Christian conversion took on a new seriousness in 1845, large slave gatherings for religious purposes, never popular, were discontinued and the emphasis shifted to individual and family instruction on plantations. The latter type of religious teaching eventually brought the Methodists more success.[54]

Still many Gullahs displayed skepticism toward the Methodists and resisted offending their own leaders. From Pocotaligo, John N. Davies continued to inform the public of his problems:

> We have had some trouble at another preaching place, occasioned by the puffing up of father S., as he is called, but plantation authority forbids his guiding the people. They have appeared spellbound, not to move or think without him. He a poor creature of dust imagines himself to be the Great Shepherd whose voice alone "the sheep know," and whom alone the true sheep will follow. . . . We visit the plantations and explain as far as possible. God grant us brighter days and better times.

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But despite only marginal encouragement from both planters and slaves, the missionaries continued to "suffer and rejoice and pray and labor." And from the beginning, though suspicious and cautious, some slaves came to hear the missionaries by choice. The fact of their attendance was considered progress as expressed by one optimistic missionary in 1835:

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Although the colored people were generally in a lukewarm state and inattentive to preaching when I commenced, there has been an encouraging improvement, whether it is the novelty of the thing that has drawn them out, or the special regard had to them by their owners in getting a preacher exclusively for them, I know not, but one thing is certain . . . they attend the appointments very regularly and a deep concern is manifested in the congregation generally."

The Gullah's increasing attention to Methodist presence can be understood on a number of levels. In the life of a slave any occasion which brought a cessation from labor was welcomed. One can imagine the excitement as well as skepticism in the quarters when news spread of the coming of a white "spiritual man" whose sole purpose was to administer to slaves. Certainly their interest was measured. Yet for these isolated African-Americans the special attention itself was something new. Furthermore, preaching places facilitated gathering of bondspeople from various plantations, providing opportunities to visit with friends, relatives, and probably lending a gaiety and sense of freedom to the event. Missionaries recorded little lasting progress of a religious nature as a result of their preaching at these large assemblies. Planters insisted the gatherings produced more harm to the system. But these occasions appealed to the slaves for reasons other than the spiritual content of the sermons. Preaching stations provided many with their only opportunity to be away from the plantation. Monthly meetings became convivial holiday-type excursions, adding to the few outlets in a life too often dulled by pointless, profitless toil. The gatherings provided a reason for attending to personal hygiene, to don whatever their "best" attire consisted of—faded though colorful turbans and caps; their one pair of shoes; tattered, coarse and worn, yet carefully laundered gingham skirts and breeches of iridescent check. Missionaries reported with frustration that slaves readily engaged in the singing and attentively responded to the prayers, but many slept through whole sermons although at the meeting's end they heartily shook hands and thanked the missionary "fur de Wud."[56] Gullah gratitude was probably not so much for the Word as for what it represented in terms of offering an alleviation of routine. Such comments may have been expressions of cynicism. Yet some missionaries evinced a genuine concern and imparted to the Gullahs a different sense of worth and dignity. The most positive and uplifting principles of the "religion of the heart" seeped through the lessons on obedience, subordination, and prostration. And the Gullahs came to recognize a

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•175 799 relationship between Christian imagery and their own historical position. This was the triumph for which the committed amongst the missionaries labored. They added but few "true" Methodists to church rolls but won the "heart" of many slaves. Nevertheless, even at its soul searching, heartrending best, slaves employed Methodism as an exculpation from bondage. Those preaching among the slaves imparted a spiritual ideology founded upon this premise. The dualism of the religion was not lost on the Gullahs.

175 In the period before the national division of the Methodist church, missionary activity was circumspectly observed by slaveholders who feared that antislavery doctrines, inadvertently or otherwise, might be disseminated. The South Carolina Conference instructed that the content of sermons emphasize the "duty" of servants to masters, not because it would avert suspicion, but because the state episcopacy sincerely believed this was the most important element of Christianity to be taught to slaves. In any case, the textbook prepared by William Capers for the use of plantation missionaries, referred to as a catechism, reflected an interpretation of the Christian religion to an enslaved people. The introductory section consisted of hymns, prayers, commandments, the Creed, and portions of the scripture having to do with duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, and servants and masters. The remainder of the little book was in question-and-answer form, obviously designed for slave children. This portion of the text covered parts of the Bible that the South Carolina Conference specifically wanted pointed out, namely, the creation, the fall, and the life and death of Christ.[57]

For sermons, St. Paul provided the missionaries with favorite subjects and was also the apostle most quoted by proslavery elements. Other scriptural texts used ostensibly relegated blacks to a fate of perpetual bondage and aimed at convincing them to accept enslavement as the natural order. Slaves were taught a selective Christianity—a doctrine of contentment and humility. No text espousing such scriptural tenets as "The truth shall make you free" or "The laborer is worthy of his hire" could be preached. There was of course none of the militant Christianity discovered and expounded by the black rebels in Charleston years before. Most of the Old Testament was ignored except when certain passages could serve as a conduit further to reinforce white domination.

One account of the narrow latitude of preaching was left by Lunds-

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ford Lane. Lane, born a slave in North Carolina, purchased his freedom and became an abolitionist lecturer. He wrote: 175.

"I often heard select portions of the Scriptures read. . . . On Sunday we always had one sermon prepared expressly for the colored people, which it was generally my privilege to hear. So great was the similarity of the texts that they are always fresh in memory: "Servants, be obedient to your masters—not with eye-service, as men-pleasers." "He that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes"; and some others of this class. Similar passages with but few exceptions, formed the basis of most of these public instructions. . . . I will not do them the injustice to say that connected with these instructions there was not mingled much that was excellent . . . one very kind-hearted clergyman . . . was very popular with the coloured people. But after he had preached a sermon from the Bible that it was the will of Heaven from all eternity that we should be slaves, and our masters be our owners many of us left him, considering, like the doubting disciple of old, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it."[38]

Steady outpourings of sermons stressing obedience and duty would not win slaves to Christianity. Black laborers as a group refused to accept a religion filled with aphorisms that emphasized their perpetual subjugated role in the human family. But implementation of other more personal approaches brought Methodist missionaries some success. Catechizing of children, for instance, was ardently attended to, for they were the hope of the enterprise. Church emissaries were encouraged by the children's eagerness and brightness. They learned quickly, if not always perfectly, and they expressed more enthusiasm for the individual missionary than for his religion. Nevertheless, slave children of the 1830s and 1840s were expected to provide the Lowcountry with a future generation of black workers who, from an early age, imbibed and personalized Christianity as taught by white missionaries. Yet while catechism taught to children might be insurance for the future, adult slaves, considered to have "grown up in ignorance," did not readily respond to that learning process. Nor did slaveholders usually provide time for such instruction. But Methodists determined to awaken enthusiasm for Christianity among the adult slaves, otherwise not only would black laborers remain "heathen," they would not encourage Christianity among the young. Thus the efforts of slave conversion would be undermined. The Gullahs' confidence had to be acquired, and the more dedicated missionaries pursued this end diligently.[39]

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•175 The "class meeting" was an important method of personal instruction and among the slaves its function was broadened in an effect to quicken their interest in Christianity. In "class," adults were given instruction, doctrines were explained, and general check-ups were made on the progress of individuals. Here the missionary asked and answered individual questions and slaves related the nature of their religious experiences. Also, through examinations in "class meetings" missionaries ascertained the state of Christianity on the plantation, and decided who was ready for church membership. Furthermore, since "class" was held on individual estates, the missionaries could have more impact than at the preaching places. In "class," the missionary could, if he chose, be less didactic and more intimate. Some missionaries elaborated on the most dramatic portions of the Bible, hence capturing the Gullahs' imagination. Through these gatherings the missionary became acquainted with his large "flock," usually getting to know the adults and children by name. He ultimately became a familiar face on the plantations he visited, sometimes welcomed and sometimes resented. William Capers wrote to the slave missionaries:

> Class meetings are especially ours. A missionary should emphatically be these three things—a preacher, a catechist, and a class leader. He must be the class leader, whoever may engage to assist him. . . . Unvaried pains should be taken to instruct them in the nature of Christian experience, both by remarks to the class in general, and to each individual. . . . Organization is a main thing in Methodism, and a main thing for missions. Without it there can be no efficient training, little permanent instruction, no order, no discipline.[40]

But "organization," "order," or "discipline" did not impress the Gullahs as much as the sincerity of motive some missionaries conveyed as they acquainted themselves with their charges. Preachers were required to attend the pastoral needs of their widespread congregation. Although some neglected this feature of their duties, others engaged in the work with deliberate gravity. Many missionaries felt more able to open the slaves' heart to Christianity by this method. Some of the most interesting 175 "Missionary Sketches" printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* were 197 written by A. M. Chreitzberg, stationed on the Beaufort Mission and elsewhere in the Sea Island region. Chreitzberg wrote from the Sea Islands, summarizing his duties outside the pulpit. He provided illuminating insights into the ways some missionaries merited gratitude and confidence from some of the bondspeople:

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It is not only the duty of the missionary to catechize the children and preach to the adults, but also to visit the sick and aged, and it is here that many a triumph has been achieved for his Lord. Many a dark and benighted soul has been brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Here, too, does he frequently prepare himself for the exercises of the pulpit, for it is here that he learns the way to the negro's heart, and becomes acquainted with his ideas of God and religion. The negro knows that his minister is not ashamed to enter his smoky cabin, to take him by his rough and toil-hardened hand, and talk to him about the way to heaven, or to kneel beside his bed, offer prayer in his behalf, and to pour into his heart the consolation of God's word. It is this that frequently takes his heart captive, and binds him to the cross.[41]

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Here then was the religion of the warm heart at its spiritually redeeming best among the Gullahs. A disarming warmth of feeling, an effort to bridge, spiritually at least, the gap between black and white, slave and free was to serve a definite purpose. Such acts, seemingly prompted purely by human kindness, deeply affected the Gullahs, so unaccustomed to being objects of concern among whites except in matters related to labor. Gradually, the more seasoned missionaries like Chreitzberg began to stimulate a "change of heart" in the slaves. Especially affecting was the adaptation of some sermons and lectures to the daily lives and fortunes of the Gullahs. Hence they came to identify elements of Christianity with their own circumstances. Skillful variation of preaching methods, coupled with a fraternal spirit which the missionaries demonstrated toward the Gullahs, was effective. By the mid-1840s a goodly number of slaves had "professed" their conversion to Christianity under Methodist tutelage.

Missionaries such as Chreitzberg took full advantage of opportunities to service their black congregations in the hope of winning more converts. Below Chreitzberg describes the value to be derived from officiating at a Gullah night funeral:

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"What" says the not-to-be-disturbed-at-night Pastor of a Chapel of Ease, "put yourself to the trouble of burying a *dead* negro?" Why not? We have unsuperable objections to burying a *living* one, but see no reason why the last sad office of the Church should not be performed over the remains of the black man. Has he no affections, are there no weeping friends to be consoled. . . . But apart from this, may not the living be effectually warned? When the dead man lies before them in all his helplessness, stricken down in his prime and (as in this case) suddenly called to the final account,—what better time to read to them a lesson on the uncertainty of life.

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

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O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[45]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual:

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On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a

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175 764 533 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poignant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

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I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.[47]

175 771 797 567 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubtedly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[69] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
797 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
152 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural"
786 means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black
impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be
silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly
described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British work-
ers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity
of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in
the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah
preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in
more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black
converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
797 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a
total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not im-
mediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices.
The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped
for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs
in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as
175 well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural simili-
177 tude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
178 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating
humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state.
In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural
diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs
were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African
religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and prac-
tices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-
Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah
spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to tradi-
175 tions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
797 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African
customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

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from Baptist and Episcopalian masters, and limited contact with black preachers.

The Methodists' systematic religious instruction provided Gullahs with the first opportunity for a uniform type of religious culture. This socio-religious nexus did not vary from plantation to plantation or from island to island. It was based on a moral philosophy, not precluding the preservation to some extent of a continued faith in the customs of African-born forebears. The emerging religious association resembled and gave expression to a world view brought from Africa, common to the Gullahs, and suited to their circumstances. More than any other features of the Christian religion, the Gullahs embraced its moral virtues—humanity, humility, fairness, a sense of the dignity of the sufferer, and belief in the merit of all people. No matter how one regards these values, they are celebrated in Christianity, and it was this spirit in Methodist teachings that the Gullahs accepted. The letter of the law, in a strict Mosaic form, and the Pauline sanction of servitude were rejected. There was little room for internalization of the dogma present in Christianity as taught by whites. That would have negated Gullahs' previous belief patterns and their hatred of bondage. Gullah folk Christianity was an ardently felt religion. It was a religion which elevated them above their masters' efforts to make them contented slaves. Far more than Methodism perhaps, Gullah folk religion was a religion of the heart. Their spirituality helped them channel what was expected to be hopelessness, helplessness, and prostration into the forging and further enrichment of a culture. Through individual stamina, collective faith, and cultural development they merged as a people. Their collective faith kept them spiritually free in spite of physical bondage. Their collective faith, together with spiritual freedom, and matched with natural gifts and talents, provided Gullahs with a will to create, the courage to persevere, and power, as a "prepolitical" people, to use religion as a progressive force and shield against white psychological and cultural domination. This collective faith allowed them to believe in themselves and in their dream of ultimate freedom.[71]

The year 1845 was momentous for the history of slave conversion in South Carolina and for the nation as a whole. At that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention were organized. Both denominations pledged to make a more zealous thrust in Christian instruction of the black population. Also, in May of that year,

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175 South Carolina statesmen and clergy called a meeting in Charleston, inviting slaveholders either to attend or submit in writing information on the state of religious instruction among slaves on their plantations.[72] After that time, Christian conversion of bondspeople occupied a more prominent position in antebellum life and thought. It became an issue with social, economic, political, and even moral implications. What was previously viewed as a movement of questionable value soon transformed into a crusade. As the national scene became more and more polarized because of the slavery issue, it was incumbent upon Southerners, as a defense against their "national character," to see that bondspeople received some type of Christian instruction.

175 799 Although efforts to Christianize slaves became widespread, Methodist presence in the Sea Island region receded. By the late 1840s Methodism there was more symbolic than effective. Even at the time of the Charleston Meeting, Episcopalian planters most actively solicited the services of Methodist missionaries. However, the fact remains that for nearly fifteen years Methodists were the major Christian influence among the Gullahs, planting a foundation for the growth of Christianity among slaves of the Sea Islands and coastal regions. However, the Baptist denomination, once it engaged in religious instruction, claimed the harvest of "converted" slaves.

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17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

• 175 797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 (795) Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

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Even some time after 1831, general Baptist concern for the spiritual well-being of their slaves was limited. Only a small number of churches showed significant increases in church membership in about a ten-year period following the revival. This gradual progression itself was unique to older Sea Island churches. Leading Baptists stimulated to "duty" by the "revival spirit," and mindful of the currents affecting church and state nationally, attempted to generate more Christianizing activity through their influence in the Savannah River Baptist Association. In 1832 the Association formed a committee to seek funds from member churches to hire Baptist missionaries for the slaves. Since this effort was a slow process, the Association further recommended that ministers devote a certain part of their time exclusively to the slaves. The organization went on record as "feeling a deep interest for the spiritual improvement of our colored population, who have hitherto been neglected."[4]

The committee was composed of large slaveholders, many of whom were also deacons or pastors of the more prosperous churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, Black Swamp, Hilton Head, and Euhaw. These congregations had comparatively large black memberships, and the committee members were known for their "good works" in general and for the interest they took in converting their own slaves. But the resolutions expressed more of the committee's own sentiments and personal concern than a real plan of action. Baptist congregations were autonomous, and slaveholders in the Sea Island region resisted efforts of individuals in the denomination to create a Christian instruction movement. For a variety of reasons, Baptist efforts at slave conversion met with some success where it existed. But if measured in terms of church membership and frequency of exposure, such endeavors, were not extensive.[5]

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About a third of South Carolina's Baptist laymen and two-fifths of the ministers were slaveholders. Baptists in the Sea Island region, the most numerous sect since 1820, counted the wealthiest and largest slaveholders among its numbers. Consequently, antislavery sentiments were never expressed there despite early debates elsewhere in the South. On the contrary, the official opinion of South Carolina Baptists was expressed in 1822 following the Vesey Conspiracy, by Richard Furman of Charleston. "Slavery," wrote Furman, "was clearly established in the Holy Scriptures by both precept and example."[6]

Nevertheless, South Carolina Baptists confronted strong abolitionist sentiment from church members in other regions. As with Methodists, the controversy dominated national meetings in the 1830s. Abolitionists'

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175 primary target was Baptist home and foreign missions. There antislavery
797 elements labored to obtain official condemnation of their Southern breth-
567 ren not only for slaveholding but for hypocrisy in attempting to spread Christianity domestically and abroad while ignoring their own bondspeople. Accusations prompted some prestigious Baptists to encourage more attentiveness to slave conversion. However, abolitionist recriminations also infuriated Southern congregations. Sea Island Baptists raged over the presence of abolitionist-oriented home and foreign mission "agents." They also denounced abolitionist dissemination of religious newspapers. One such newspaper, *The Christian Reflector*, which argued against a scriptural interpretation of slavery, was sent to Sea Island churches. Not all Northern Baptists were antislavery. Even some of those who were did not advocate abolition, nor propose interference with slavery. Yet the situation was perceived as threatening in the Lowcountry, and it was impossible to procure a consensus on instruction from congregations whose only tie with the regional association was voluntary. Yet, larger churches continued to scrutinize and contemplate the situation. In 1837 further proclamations were used to stir congregations into activity. The Euhaw Church representatives spoke out on the "spiritual destitution of our colored population," and urged the Association to act. The committee previously formed in 1832 had apparently met with little success, and offered three resolutions on the issue. First, emphasizing the duty of ministers to pay "especial attention" to the slaves' spiritual condition. Second, that the "Domestic Missionary" preach to slaves whenever an "opportunity may be offered him." Third, that the General Committee consider the subject and adopt measures to "best secure to our colored population spiritual instruction."[7]

175 Clearly no real commitment was as yet outlined. A few individual churches were already engaging in evangelism among the slaves and attempting to persuade others. The message was one of urging a sense of responsibility, since the Savannah River Baptist Association lacked power to bind churches to a strong general policy. the Association's resources allowed them to employ one missionary, but mainly to serve whites. He ordained officers, preached at the various established churches with no regular ministers, generally superintended the constitution of new churches, and preached to "destitute" whites. Although not specifically precluded from preaching to slaves, the missionary's other extensive obligations prevented his going to plantations where he was needed or so-

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cepted. The Association did not gain approval to hire a missionary for the bondspeople until 1839. But he encountered so much opposition that by the end of that year, he had no progress report to make and refused to continue in the position.[8]

Among Northern and Southern Baptist clergymen scriptural arguments over slavery were hotly debated and further hindered Baptist planters' involvement in Christianizing activity. According to planters, Northern Baptists were attempting to "procure the massacre of our wives and children" by preaching that all people of the South had a God-given right to freedom.[9] Certainly slaveholders realized that the Bible denounced bondage as well as supported it. Why else would clergymen emphasize "oral" instruction as a means of Christian instruction? Faced with the double meaning of scriptures and fearing the impact of an egalitarian interpretation of the teachings of Christ, religious instruction of the slaves remained unimpressive in the 1830s among most Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association. The Association attempted to meet the issue head on. To pave the way for a Baptist missionary enterprise, the question of the biblical sanction of slavery needed to be firmly and convincingly laid to rest. In 1841 Association ministers issued their position, hoping the resolution would be accepted as official so the work of Christian conversion could commence:

> Resolved, that the subject of slavery has been discussed until all men who seek candidly for truth must be satisfied. The whole Bible, and all history concur to settle this point, there where Christianity finds slavery existing as one of the institutions of a nation, it tolerates it, and seeks not to disturb the relation of master and servant by violence—but to infuse the spirit of love into each of these parties, and prescribes their respective duties—duties which it becomes us to perform on our part, and which, if performed, would render our slaves the happiest and most contented peasantry on earth.[10]

Thus the spirit of Christianity would inspire "love" and stimulate both master and slave to perform their "duty." For the slave, this duty entailed acceptance of a Christianity that taught meekness, subordination, docility, inferiority, and recognition of the rights of master over slave. The master was "burdened" with the "duty" or instilling these "virtues" in bondspeople to make the slaves' "happiness" and "contentment" complete. Some Baptists became reeducated to this manner of thinking, for the resolution was followed by a request from two Sea Island congrega- (199)

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175 tions for the services of a missionary, approved by the Association of
797 course.

The Hilton Head Church, and Dawfuskie Church, request your body to send a missionary to preach on these islands. We want, say they, a man of piety and talents suited to our colored population. Your committee recommend that your messengers to the Sunbury Association be requested to solicit our Br. Farley R. Sweat, of Savannah to engage at once in this work, and to occupy this post. These churches have had their desires turned towards this brother, and God has so clearly intimated his will as to Br. Sweat, that your committee cannot believe he will refuse to yield himself to the call of his master. These churches will contribute liberally to the support of their missionary.[11]

Here we observe the close relationship between the Sunbury Association in Georgia and the Savannah River Association in South Carolina. The African Baptist Church was part of the Sunbury Association, and as previously discussed, South Carolina slaves sometimes joined or attended the black church in Savannah. The proximity of Hilton Head and Dawfuskie Islands to Savannah made this possible. Thus in some areas of the coast, slaves not regularly instructed by white Baptists, were exposed to the faith through members of their own race. This contact went further back than the first Baptist missionary to Hilton Head and Dawfuskie.

These two churches' requests did not stimulate a large-scale movement to hire missionaries, but other Sea Island congregations began individ-
175 ually to engage in spreading Christian influence among the Gullahs. Some Southern religionists and "enlightened" planters had, since the Vesey Conspiracy, been convinced that Christian inculcation of slaves was the best security for the plantation system. But when the Northern and Southern churches severed relations in 1844, such approaches were pursued in earnest. While a sense of obligation was expressed, the prominence which secular motives received in the course of the Christian conversion movement was evident at the Charleston Meeting in 1845. Notables who gathered there to champion the cause of Christianizing African-Americans specified their major concerns:

The degree of benefit apparently derived by the Negroes generally from the instruction imparted, and particularly as it regards their morals—their tempers and their conduct . . . their regard to truth—the rights of property—and their observance of the Sabbath.

The influence of this instruction upon the discipline of the plantation and the spirit and subordination of the negroes.[12]

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Emphasis shifted away from old arguments related to a fear of militant principles within Christianity and toward the pacific features of that religion. The idea that Christianity could serve as the safeguard of the Southern white community was a minority opinion in the 1820s when, because of the Vesey Conspiracy, Northern clergymen were blamed for inspiring and encouraging religious teachings inimical to Southern survival. However, after 1845 arguments favoring Christian instruction of slaves as a societal safety valve became the pillar of clergymen's reasoning in attempting to awaken planters. Now religious instruction was undertaken and accomplished without interference from non-Southerners. Slaves were instructed in a manner that planters believed did not weaken the South's socieconomic structure. On the contrary, the training was expected to strengthen and solidify the master-slave relationship. By employing a selective type of teaching and promoting Christianity as an individual not a collective experience, Baptists and others felt they quelled concerted rebellious attitudes.

In their published sermons intended for black audiences, ministers of all denominations emphasized the life of "meek and lowly Jesus," his ability to quietly bear personal suffering, his abhorrence of violence and of disorder. Missionaries and ministers concentrated on miraculous aspects of Christianity, parables, and historical events such as the lives of holy and profane men to illustrate doctrine and practice. Catechisms stressed discipline, especially the Ten Commandments. Presbyterians and Episcopalians became leaders in articulating the positive aspects of Christianizing slaves, by publishing catechisms, sermon books, and penning suggestions on the methods to be employed in this endeavor. In 1850, James Thornwell, a prominent Charleston Presbyterian minister succinctly capsulized the most "progressive" attitudes among clergy regarding how well the teachings of Jesus suited the condition of people in bondage. Thornwell sermonized in support of a separate church building in Charleston for black communicants of all denominations, because "the galleries of the white churches could not contain more than one-fourth of their numbers." Those supporting the enterprise met with strong opposition because the plan brought back memories of the Vesey Conspiracy and its relationship to scripture as perceived by the rebels, away from the watchful eye of whites. But Thornwell counseled that none need be afraid of the lessons of Jesus, "who was no stirrer up of strife, no mover of sedition." On the contrary, insisted Thornwell, the religion

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•175 taught by Jesus was "the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order." This religion alone possessed the power to curb passions and to accord each group their rights: "to the laborious, the reward of their industry; to the rich, the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles, the preservation of their honors, and to the princes, the stability of their thrones." Jesus, said Thornwell, did not teach insurrection, anarchy, bloodshed, or revolt against masters. "Christian knowledge inculcates contentment with our lot," he preached, and "renders us comparatively indifferent to the inconveniences and hardships of time." Christian knowledge, persuaded Thornwell, subdued the "passions and prejudices" responsible for endangering the "social economy."[13]

175 797 In 1848 delegates of the Savannah River Baptist Association took definitive action, making Baptists of the Sea Island region among the last to engage in the religious instruction enterprise. Even then only "two or more" missionaries were approved to go among the slaves, and money to support the preachers was solicited not guaranteed. As if planter and congregational opposition were not enough, filling missionary posts also proved a trying task. Ministers often refused to accept the charge. This reluctance can be partly explained by the lack of financial support, which is an index for gauging the degree of earnestness. Contributions were never large, generally ranging from thirty-five to fifty dollars annually, but on several occasions were as low as fifty cents. Not until 1853 did Sea Island slaves receive a missionary through the Association. Yet the cause was not totally lost. The Savannah River Baptist Association succeeded in creating interest in the Sabbath School movement for the young after 1849, and some churches as well as individual planters furthered the Baptist cause through this institution while they spurned organized efforts. Other Baptist slaveholders periodically employed their own missionary, or hired Baptist "exhorters" as overseers.[14]

175 Considering conditions among white Baptist churches during the antebellum era, it is not surprising that so little enthusiasm was expressed over the religious welfare of slaves. Many churches met infrequently, once a month, and shared the same pastor. Often a congregation was without a pastor for whole seasons, and the only services were provided by the Association missionary whenever he had the opportunity. This dearth of spiritual ardor was matched by internal strife in various congregations and general unruliness on the part of members. The missionary was sometimes given the task of settling disagreements which dis-

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rupted a church. He was often unsuccessful. The Savannah River Baptist Association consistently commented on the languid condition of the majority of churches in the 1830s. During the 1840s and 1850s the Association promoted Sabbath Schools not only as a means of instructing slaves, but also to combat the "declension and prevailing coldness" as well as "lack of grace" in white churches. It is surprising that slaves ever received Christian instruction considering the circumstances of Baptist churches without "grace" or filled with "paranoia" about abolitionists. Yet some planters provided plantation meetinghouses for the slaves especially after 1845. Here African-Americans met among themselves under supervision of some "trusted" black elder. Through these "invisible institutions" slaves received some Christian instruction. More significantly, they used these opportunities to interpose their own interpretations on Protestantism. Nowhere was this development more evident than in the Sea Islands. Congregations there were far ahead of their sister churches in terms of wealth, stability, leadership, and an early though gradual commitment to ostensibly integrating Gullahs into the Christian religion.[15]

Two significant events occurred in the Sea Island region in 1831. First, the presence of Methodist missionaries among the slaves. Second, the appearance of a fiery revivalist named Daniel Baker. Both happenings were determining factors in initiating a "change of heart" among Sea Island Baptists about teaching some Christian doctrines to the Gullahs.

Baptist planters of the Sea Island region laid claim to a tradition of religious dissent that began long before American independence. Some Baptist founders in the region were early disciples of George Whitefield when the established church refused to admit him to the pulpit.[16] Prominent Beaufort District Baptists of the 1830s, such as the Fripps, Fullers, Lawtons, Chaplins, and Robertses, were descendants of pioneer homeseekers, and identified with a legacy of an evangelism older than American Methodism. Given such claims to revivalist tradition and considering the apostolic dictates of the Faith, Baptist planters may well have experienced some degree of guilt and embarrassment as Methodist "knights of the saddle bags" descended upon the Sea Islands to undertake what thier spiritual brethren had neglected.

Further pressure was brought to bear in 1831 and 1832 as Beaufort District quaked under the forceful impact of a revival initiated by a cultivated and spirited evangelist. Daniel Baker was a Southern Presbyte

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rian and former pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Washington, of which both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson were members. He left the Washington Church to accept a pastorship in Savannah and there heavily engaged in evangelical preaching. The impact of Baker's sermons was reportedly felt along the entire seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina. Wherever he preached a steady stream of converts came forth. His was not a mass revival since the seaboard white population was sparse. But hundreds attended the protracted meetings which Baker conducted in "the little sea coast towns and villages" mainly inhabited by planter aristocracy. And his sermons reputedly "moved whole communities." Baker wrote in his autobiography that his South Carolina efforts led to "important results" in places such as Gillisonville, Grahamville, Robertville, May River, and Beaufort. The meetings at Beaufort he deemed "the most remarkable." There was no Presbyterian church so Baker preached alternately in the Baptist and Episcopalian churches. "Oh, what blessed meetings we had!" he wrote. Baker preached three times a day "to full houses," and the numbers "hopefully converted amounted to about eighty."[17]

In regard to the number "hopefully converted" in Beaufort, Baker apparently took only white converts into account. Another section of Baker's autobiography quotes the Episcopal minister as stating that there were "two or three hundred conversions in Beaufort under Mr. Baker's ministry," consisting of "a number of whites," seventy of whom presented themselves for confirmation at the Episcopal church, and "very many blacks," who united with the Baptists.[18] Thus at least some of the slaves from the town of Beaufort participated in the Baker revival.

At the time of Baker's appearance the two houses of worship in Beaufort were described by one of thier "eminent laymen" as "little better than masonic lodges." The churches had the form of godliness but were "destitute of its power." The "layman" observed that "frequenters of the race-course and the theater found their places at the communion table," and that not even the duelist was excluded. Baker was credited with stimulating religious enthusiasm among "decadent" members of the planter class. An observer of the 1831 revival noted that in at least one instance derision of Baker's mission was transformed into contrition. Notice of Baker's services was sent from house to house. The announcement was received at a whist club during their weekly meeting. The notice was read aloud "amidst shouts of merriment." The group ridiculed the reli-

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17 in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

175 797 Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, long-time residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

175 569 797 Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white [995] membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

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day worship as well as during the week. Slaves attending Beaufort Church were sometimes instructed by their own masters who were also prominent church elders. Aside from scripture, church discipline and rules of conduct were emphasized.[25]

As a Sea Island planter and a favorite son of the community, Fuller could combat some resistance to religious instruction of the slaves. By 1840 he had organized a system of preaching places on the Islands where he or a member of his staff made periodic appearances. Establishment of these preaching stations furthered the Baptist cause, leading to "conversion" of many plantation slaves. While pastor of Beaufort Church, Fuller was respected among the whites as a sincere, inspiring, and effective minister. He was also popular with the Gullahs. Fuller was one of the very few planters who openly denounced the separation of families. He considered this morally wrong and against biblical law. He refused to sell or divide his bondspeople, an important consideration to black people accustomed to seeing "pious" planters disregard slaves' familial ties at a moment's notice. In addition to observing (like a true patriarch) this fundamental principle of humanity, Fuller adopted an evangelical style of preaching said to be filled with "earnestness, fire and melting pathos." An associate who often heard Fuller preach wrote:

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> His whole mien was imposing. When he rose to address a congregation, his very attitude was that of a man conscious at once that he had a most important message to deliver, and that he had the capacity to deliver it worthily. . . . His voice was singularly sweet and of great compassion and managed with such exquisite skill, that his softest whispers were distinctly heard in the remotest parts of a crowded congregation; while his loudest tones did not jar upon the ears of those nearest the speaker. His gestures were always graceful. . . . He subdued others, because, in the loftiest flights of his imagination and the deepest feelings of his heart, he was master of himself.[26]

Apparently a skillful and arousing speaker, Fuller captured the imagination of the bondspeople, something few white preachers could do. The Gullahs also viewed him as a kind and sensitive man whose "good works" were equal to his "faith." No doubt these considerations explain the eagerness with which he was received and accepted by the Gullahs as a preacher and for the warmth with which they remembered him to the Northern missionaries during the course of the Civil War. The Gullahs even created a stanza for Fuller in one of their most revered spirituals: "Massa Fuller on de Tree ob Life, Roll, Jordan, Roll."

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175 567 797 [795] After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association missionary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Beaker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 795 794 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District [162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29] [567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

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In the latter and generally most vigorous period of the movement for Christian instruction from 1845 to 1861, Baptist involvement continued to center in areas where evangelizing efforts were already in progress, such as the Sea Islands. Although several Lowcountry churches did increase their black membership during the period, such augmentation was numerically insignificant. Most membership returns submitted to the Savannah River Baptist Association had racial designations by 1848. These reports indicate that a few individual Sea Island churches maintained fairly large memberships and Beaufort Church had unusual increases. But the majority of Baptist churches in the Lowcountry south of Charleston seemed to fall short of the goal of religious conversion of bondspeople. Actually neither Sea Island Baptists, Baptist missionaries, nor lukewarm Baptist churches adequately "served the spiritual needs" of so large a black population. In 1859, as civil conflict approached, the total black membership of the Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association was not yet 7,000.[30] In some ways these figures are unimpressive, but they nevertheless demonstrate black exposure to Christianity through Baptist efforts. We can also surmise that black church members were the best conduits of the faith in the slave quarters. When this is considered, Baptist influence is even more manifest, for few Gullahs actually joined the Methodist church. Most Gullahs "converted to Christianity" or even adherents of it accepted the denomination of their masters, a preference that continued even after bondage. This raises questions about the nature of Baptist activity among the Gullahs, and why the denomination of slaveholders so strongly appealed to slaves.

Superficially, Lowcountry planters appear to represent "paternalism" par excellence. Those "young and refined" citizens of the Sea Island communities who claimed Daniel Baker for their spiritual patron included such men as C. C. Pinckney, William H. Barnwell, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Stephen Elliott, and Richard Fuller. These men represented the quintessence of South Carolina Lowcountry aristocracy, dominating landholdings and counting their slaves by the hundreds. Beaufort was the chief place of residence for most Baptist planters. But some of the stauncher Baptists such as the Lawtons, Robertses, Bosticks, and Nortons shunned "iniquitous" recreations offered by the Sea Island resort town and created their own manorial splendor at Robertville, Lawtonville, and Gillisonville. These planters reportedly excelled in erudition

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• 175 as well as wealth, and during the Civil War Northerners occupying their homes found extensive libraries. Sons were often educated at Harvard, at Princeton ("very popular" because "no Negroes" were ever allowed), and Yale. Daughters were sometimes taught refinement of manners and grace of carriage at exclusive Northern finishing schools. According to a contemporary who resided in Beaufort, nowhere on the continent was "family hauteur and pride carried to such extremes," and nothing in the largest cities North or South could "equal the display of carriages and equipages with the servants in livery" seen on a pleasant afternoon in Beaufort, "when the mothers and daughters of these cotton lords took their accustomed airing."[31]

An Island planter's occupation, then, was both remunerative and often conducted by proxy. And, since his education was usually unsurpassed by others in the state, the question may be asked, what did he consider his *raison d'être?* According to Jenkins Mikell of Edisto Island, the planter seldom pondered this question. "He followed the path of least resistance and enjoyed life after his own idea." "But," Mikell added, "if forced to be specific," the planter "would assert that politics and the Church stood out most prominently and more generally occupied his attention than other things. It was either one or the other—sometimes both at one time." Some of South Carolina's most illustrious statesmen and clergymen hailed from the Sea Islands. Naturally, since the wealth of these individuals directly depended upon continuation of their "peculiar institution," they were bound to its protection and defense against governmental encroachment. The Sea Islands, then, were also a hotbed of Southern nationalism and the home of the most vociferous South Carolina fire-eaters. When statesmen met in 1861 to discuss and vote on secession from the Union, one tempestuous Sea Island patriot declared impatiently, "If South Carolina does not secede from the Union, Edisto will!"[32]

The concern manifested toward religious matters by some of these "first families" of the South was noticed by Northern observers during the Civil War. The deserted mansions "were generally found strewn with religious periodicals, mainly Baptist magazines."[33] Implicitly then, the letter if not the spirit of Christianity occupied the minds of these slaveholding Baptists at one time or another. And, in keeping with their aristocratic affectations, some probably had an esoteric flair for leisurely contemplation of theology and doctrine. More significant for the slaves,

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some planters practiced a self-fashioned mode of paternalism through religious instruction. The example of Richard Fuller is a case in point. 175

As a large slaveholder, Northern-educated lawyer, and Southern Baptist preacher, Fuller's position on slavery was curious and filled with the dialectical trappings that reveal the nature of paternalism as a self-serving, conscience-assuaging ideology of a dominant group. Fuller upheld the right to hold slaves and used scripture to support his arguments. Yet he spoke out against slavery in the United States and against some evils of the system, insisting that its existence be limited. Like other slaveholders such as Henry Clay, Fuller was an avid member of the American Colonization Society. The stated goal of the Society was colonization of free blacks in Africa. Many Southerners such as C. C. Pinckney abhorred the organization, seeing it as seeping antislavery sentiment. Yet others, such as Fuller, supported the scheme mainly as a vehicle to channel reformist evangelical zeal, since black Americans could convert Africans, and as a public example of concern for black welfare. In 1851 at one of the organization's most important meetings, both Fuller and Clay addressed the members. Fuller's statements attracted wide national attention, temporarily alienating him from many of his slaveholding friends and former white parishioners in Beaufort. Fuller lauded missionary efforts among slaves in the South and condemned the North for its impatience. His address, though certainly not abolitionist, seemed antislavery in tone, and much of it was directed at fellow slave masters. Fuller stated that "we of the South" should make concessions, and candidly admit that while slavery "enriches the individual, it impoverishes the State." Slavery, said Fuller, fostered indolence and luxury, "the bane of governments." Additionally, he appealed, the South should consider, as "honest," "Christian" men, "whether, when Jesus Christ says 'What, therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' husbands and wives ought to be separated; whether labor ought to be received without compensation." Recalling a conversation he once had with recently deceased John C. Calhoun, the latter insisted that planters did "pay fair wages for the labor of our slaves." But it was not "the calculation," said Fuller, nor "the dollars and cents: it is the principle I am contending."[34]

But several years earlier, while still pastoring in Beaufort, Fuller had engaged in a dialogue with Francis Wayland, President of Brown University. Fuller argued in favor of slavery from the Old Testament and

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•175 while he found nothing explicit to support slavery in the New Testament, Fuller maintained that this silence was tacit approval. "What God sanctioned in the Old Testament and permitted in the New," Fuller proclaimed, "cannot be a sin."[35]

Also, despite Richard Fuller's "professed" views against slavery, he maintained his plantations after leaving Beaufort for Baltimore. During the Civil War he was loyal and remained in Baltimore. Following the outbreak of the war he went to Washington, D. C., and called upon Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire about his rights "in regard to his plantations and slaves in Port Royal." Chase wrote:

> Told him that, as a loyal man, he was Proprietor of the land. "How about the Negroes?" he asked. "They were free," I replied. He thought his right to them was the same as his right to the land. Told him opinion would differ on that point, and that, for one, I should never consent to the involuntary reduction to slavery of one of the Negroes who had been in the service of the Government. Told him further what I thought of the character of the rebellion and its results, etc.

The conversation concluded with Fuller indicating his willingness "to acquiesce in the experiments of the Government," but having "grave doubts" about the ability of the Gullahs to behave responsibly as free people. Fuller quoted Machiavelli's saying, "Next to making free men slaves, it is most difficult to make slaves free men."[36]

Richard Fuller may have been antislavery in "principle" and in theory. But in reality he upheld American slavery as a white man's right. Yet, while his theoretical position on slavery was ambiguous, he was unwavering in efforts to expose the black population in St. Helena Parish to Christianity and in his support of such endeavors all over the state.

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175 199 At a glance, it appears that during the apex of the antebellum era, Sea Island Baptists combined the qualities of material wealth and an exhibition of missionary zeal. The small white memberships and disproportionately large black galleries ostensibly imply that in the wake of paranoia about abolitionists and general inertia among most Lowcountry churches, Sea Island Baptist planters were exemplary in Christianizing slaves. Yet to what extent did Sea Island Baptist planters actually further the cause of Christianity among the Gullahs? And, insofar as they did, were such teachings instituted out of an acknowledgment of Christian duty? Without denying the individual motivation and limited sense of moral obligation expressed by one such as Richard Fuller, Baptist con-

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cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo.

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### *"Christian" Slaves*

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave:

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> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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> The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the eklers] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

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Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

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Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

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175 he left), and late-coming Baptist missionaries who brought the last surge
567 of slave baptismal activity in the mid-1850s. Apparently little screening
797 occurred prior to uniting with Baptist churches, except examinations imposed upon the slaves by black leadership. Slaves were accepted into the
[795] Church from the societies, and admission was based on a profession of
[794] faith, evidence of "good character" from the slavemaster, and recommendation from the white brother in charge, who relied on intelligence received from the black elder.[46]

195 This lack of a meaningful conviction to teach Christianity raises the
567 question of why some slaveholding Baptists accepted such large numbers
795 of slaves into the churches at all. Neither a revival spirit nor Northern
797 agitation fully explain the motivation. But activities of the Church Committee on Discipline perhaps express the manner in which Baptists expected Christianity to best serve them as slaveholders. Their change in attitude reflected the general shift away from paranoia about Christianizing slaves. After 1845 many believed that practical Christianity could work for the slave system. And although the majority of Gullahs had little or no contact with the Baptist church itself, church members felt the restraining arm of the faith through the Committee on Discipline.

175 Church discipline is an old concept, dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Early Baptist discipline was similar to the English Separatists' 1696 "Confessions of Faith," and integral to views of Christian fellowship for believers. This spiritual and communal sense revolved around creating a "true and orderly gospel church," with members conducting personal behavior according to Old Testament biblical tenants. Later, London Baptists' "Confessions of Faith" reflected concern for "order and discipline," and this was emphasized by their American counterpart, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, when in 1742 they composed their confessions and annexed a particular discipline code to it. In 1769 the Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia model. Not all, probably not most, American Baptist churches had explicit discipline references in their confessions although discipline was a reality in the churches. But Charleston Baptists and their Lowcountry congregational extensions were products of the Calvinist-Baptist tradition as is reflected in their patent emphasis on discipline, and in other ways previously discussed.[47]

Nineteenth-century Southern and frontier evangelical congregations fostered a sense of community through worship, revivals, camp meet-

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ings, prayer meetings, and discipline. Church discipline kept alive the "heavenly pattern" which each church personified. This "city set on a hill" meted out censure and excommunication regularly to offending members who paled its self-image of purity and piety. As the country expanded, church discipline was used to control the raw excesses of new communities struggling against such "immoralities" as "drinking, fornication, gambling, dueling and profanity." Evangelical churches grew increasingly more powerful and espoused an increasingly conservative theology in the South and perhaps elsewhere. This trend toward religious conservatism was tied, though not exclusively, to political and social developments in the South, most notably to slavery. An obvious manifestation of this was the national polarization of church denominations.[48] In the Lowcountry, another significant and more immediate expression of efforts to protect the existing social and political order through religion is found in the function of discipline committees on plantations. Every Lowcountry church examined for this study with a large black membership had such a committee. The nature of this committee's concern with the slaves' activities reveals how Baptists intended to make Gullahs "good Christians" mainly insofar as Christianity made them better slaves. The work of the Committee on Discipline in the largest Sea Island church amplifies this thesis.

Once attention focused on slave conversion, the most pressing church business was discipline of slave members. The Committee existed previously, but was reorganized and restructured in 1840, and its function broadened. According to the Minutes, the disciplinary body governed behavior of all church members, "both bond and free," but was specifically charged with looking into breaches of conduct committed by bondspeople. This committee of eight brethren investigated a few white cases, mostly involving social lapses. But in the "inquiry and investigation" of slaves, the "Committee on Discipline" had "broad" but "conservative powers."[49]

As with white "brethren in charge" of black societies, prominent Sea Island slaveholders, such as Benjamin Chaplin, Saxby Chaplin, William Fuller, James Fripp, and Edward Fripp dominated discipline of the Gullahs. Furthermore, members of the Discipline Committee might also double as superintendents of a black society. Sea Island planter Benjamin Chaplin, for example, was a member of the disciplinary body and also superintendent of the Beaufort Society. Noted for cruelty to his

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slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

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Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

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> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

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175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
795 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[11]

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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lak white man's," that is, with no marks of the whip. "Talk o' lick um sar?" answered one slave when queried about floggings, "yes, sar, nebber did noffin but lick um sar." He insisted that they were whipped when they didn't work and "when we work, hard lick um all same sar." A "devil" for cruelty was Alviro Fripp who "before he got religion use to cuss and cuss and cuss." But when he joined the Baptist church, he could no longer cuss, "so he used to lick 'em instead." The "richest man on St Helena," Edgar Fripp, was reportedly the meanest, and his temper knew no bounds at "full moon." He also worked his slaves all night in full moon at cotton-picking time. The Gullahs went out of their way to avoid him for if a hat was not tipped quick enough or a bow low enough, Fripp would "lay his horsewhip on them well."[60]

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Of the many cases of harsh treatment and sometimes actual barbarity, few compared with the 1849 incident recorded by Thomas Chaplin in his Journal. Chaplin's neighbor, James Sandiford, was brought before an inquest of planters regarding the death of his slave, Roger. In examining the slaves' remains, Chaplin wrote that "such a shocking sight never before met my eyes." The slave, a born cripple who "used his knees more than his feet," had been instructed, on a "cold and bitter day," to paddle a boat downriver for oysters and then to cut a bundle of mud marsh. Roger, instructed to return before "high water," did not show up until "ebb tide." But he brought back seven baskets of oysters and a small bundle of marsh. "That," commented Chaplin, "was more than the primest of my fellows would have done." But Sandiford gave Roger thirty lashes for not returning sooner, for not cutting more marsh, and for hollering loudly while being flogged for the first two offenses. Sandiford later eavesdropped on a conversation Roger had in the kitchen with another man. Two versions of the exchange were reported. According to the planter, Roger stated that if he had "sound limbs" he would shoot down a white man before he took a flogging. The man to whom Roger spoke denied this, informing the jurors that Roger said "he would turn his back on them if they shot him down," which Chaplin believed was the truth. Neither comment, in Chaplin's opinion, warranted the punishment Roger received:

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For these *crimes*, this man, this demon in human shape, this pretended Christian, member of the Baptist Church, had this poor cripple Negro placed in an open outhouse, the wind blowing through a hundred cracks, his clothes wet to the waist, without a single blanket & in freezing weather, with his back against the

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partition behind him, & fastened on the other side—in this position the poor wretch was left for the night. . . . The wretch [Sandiford] returned to his victim about daylight next morning & found him, as anyone would expect, dead, *choked*, *strangled*, frozen to death, *murdered*.[61]

That same day the jurors reached a verdict—the slave met his death by choking on the chain his master put around his neck, "having slipped from the position in which he was placed." The verdict, Chaplin wrote should have been Roger died from "inhumane treatment," for he not only strangled from trying to disengage himself, hence becoming entangled in the most "shocking position," but was also "stiff dead" from the cold. In Chaplin's "individual" opinion, the act was deliberate, but unpremeditated murder. Whether Chaplin attempted to convince the court of this is unknown. The case, like many such situations was certainly murder, but it behooved slaveholders to protect their position. The "witness" against Sandiford was a slave, the planter was related to at least four of the eight jurors and property rights were supreme in the South. Whatever Chaplin felt in private, his public posture was another matter. Furthermore, five years later, he defended an overseer who killed a runaway slave for stealing watermelons.[62]

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Since Sandiford was a Baptist planter, his conduct came before the Beaufort Church where he held membership. The crime apparently occurred on February 18, 1841, and the inquest was held the next day. However, not until March 31 was the incident was brought to the Beaufort Church's attention according to the Minutes. At that time it was discussed at the "Business Meeting," and Sandiford ordered to appear at its next session. On May 5, after receiving "a letter" from Sandiford, his case was "postponed for further consideration." On June 30, "the case of Brother Sandiford was again postponed," and never mentioned after that time. Sandiford's letter was not part of the Minutes and its contents are unknown. Undoubtedly he defended his actions, and though the case probably made him an unpopular communicant, he was never "disciplined." He eventually sold his property and left the region. But more significant, this rawly violent, not to say un-Christian act went uncensored by the Baptist Church.[63] One can imagine what a stir it caused among the slaves, some of whom probably had sanguine expectations that at least ecclesiastical action would be taken. Such occasions reinforced for slaves the fact that even in matters of "Christian" justice, a double standard applied.

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Thus during the Civil War, observers commented on a "total absence of any trace of feudal affection among these people." Even on supposedly "model" plantations with well-built, neat-appearing cabins like the Smith Estate on St. Helena, slaves related tales of white cruelty and black defiance. One slave who did not salute his master "respectfully enough," was ridden "down and over and left in the road until night." When brought back to his cabin, the man was "more dead than alive." Another man helped his wife finish her task after doing his own. He was ordered to flog his wife but refused. For his "obstinance," slaveholder Smith, a "kind" master, gave the man "500 lashes with his own hand." The slave, previously one of the strongest workers, was "completely broken down." Susannah, the sickly but high spirited seamstress on the Oaks plantation, told Laura Towne she once raised pigs but her harsh, domineering master, Baptist patriarch Daniel Pope, forbade this and threatened to shoot them. "'I don't mean impudence Massa, but you cawn't shoot my hogs. What can I do for my children's winter shoes and our salt.'" Pope's slaves were some of the worse off, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-fed. However, Susannah's mistress, though full of threats and scoldings, never lashed her seamstress. Susannah attributed this good fortune to "my pride and principle." Another bondswoman, Celia, told Towne how "Driver John" abused the people and how she once "clutched him by the throat when he whipped her husband and two children."[64]

Gullahs who took "to de swamps and marshes" usually either returned voluntarily or were caught. Sometimes "patterollers" apprehended Gullahs as they returned from or embarked upon some innocent but unauthorized personal errand. Brutal corporal punishment and church censure were certain, yet no amount of flogging, stays in the stocks, ball and chains, sermons, suspensions, or excommunications could daunt the Gullahs' high spirit or their natural inclinations to independence. Incidents of flight express these slaves' refusal to accept their masters' conceptions of moral behavior. Although no reliable avenues of physical escape from bondage existed, Gullahs resisted servitude instinctively, undermining plantation and church discipline. When Northern forces occupied the Sea Islands and masters fled, chances for freedom did seem imminent. Masters endeavored to take as many slaves as possible with them to the mainland, telling the Gullahs that the Yankees intended to carry them to Cuba, take their children, and "knock out der brainses against de treeses." Few Gullahs went willingly with their masters to the main-

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175 56R land, but many were taken forcibly. Gullahs risked and often lost their lives to flee, telling horror tales of death and suffering inflicted upon anyone suspected of desiring either to remain on the Sea Islands or to escape from the mainland where the planters "refugeed." The fact that they continued to flee under these circumstances is the best testimony to their sense of independence and will to freedom. One such incident was told to Laura M. Towne:

> A woman today just escaped from her owners on the Mainland. She said she had hard work to escape, sleeping in the marsh and hiding all day. She brought away her two little children. Her master had just whipped her oldest son almost to death because he was suspected of trying to join the Yankees.[65]

Although the Battle of Port Royal ended in an easy Northern victory and occupation, the rest of South Carolina remained in Confederate hands. Planters fled the Sea Island region but returned, sometimes under cover of darkness, hoping to force slaves back to the mainland. Blacks and whites picketing the region could not place men at every landing spot and Gullahs lived in apprehension of the slaveholders' return. Susannah's master returned several times, once telling slaves to burn the cotton. "Why for we burn de cotton? Where we get money then for buy clo' sho' and salt?" So instead of burning cotton, they guarded it nightly. Women kept watch and men stood ready to defend their interests when the alarm sounded. At the Oaklands plantation of rebel Baptist Dr. Sams, a field hand named Cupid told Charlotte Forten how his master had daringly returned to St. Helena, risking capture by Northern soldiers, solely to retrieve slaves. Sams attempted to cajole Cupid into cooperation:

> He ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he [Sams] came to look for them, not one of his "faithful servants" was to be found.[66]

688 195 To the end Baptists had "faith" in the "faithfulness" of their slaves, apparently believing that the white church had secured fidelity among the Gullahs. Just how far some whites took this assumption is illustrated

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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865:

> Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67]

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68]

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures.

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions

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175 567 584 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Baptist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery" and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 [836] [583] Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> [587] [765] If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
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> [586] . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 567 581 577 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted

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how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life."[73]

Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slavery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were separated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

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175 581 586 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 795 797 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches operated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gullahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 993 [554] [797] The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those chosen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

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tical about employing blacks even as helpers. William Capers insisted that "helpers" only be "a feeble staff—not leaned upon. They can no more do the missionary's work than a staff can walk." On the other hand, Sea Island Baptists placed much Christian teaching on the shoulders of black leaders. Methodists were consistently confronted with the problems created by this difference in tactical approach. After 1845 most black elders operated with the approval of slaveholders. Some, according to Methodists, had rudimentary knowledge of Christianity. But most, said the missionaries, represented "the very essence of ignorance and superstition." Some slaves came to Methodists' preaching and "precious seasons" and "effusions of tears would ensue." But Methodists lamented that slaves immediately deserted them for "one of their own":

> Let it be known that one of these [slaves] is to preach on such a day and there is such a rush . . . that they may have the pleasure of hearing one of their own color . . . what else than mischief can be expected from the teaching of an ignorant enthusiast who knows nothing of God's word, and puts his own delusions in the place of divine truth? . . . and they say that whenever they come to hear me, it is from duty . . . because I am employed by their owners."

Wherever Baptists authorized Christian instruction, Methodists found black leaders and black societies. "The society exerts its influence against us which is remarkably strong," wrote the missionary at Pocotaligo in 1844. "This 'society' is altogether in the hands of the colored people who are actively engaged against us." Thus black leaders struggled to maintain their position among their people and continued preaching and practicing their own version of "Christianity." Methodists hoped the establishment of missions would fragment the influence of black teachers and thus foster the cause of "true" religion. A lengthy editorial was printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* in 1846 where the author discussed the "deplorable exhibition of pseudo religion" among slaves of the large plantations in coastal South Carolina:

> The superstitious notions prevalent here and there, are probably the reflects of—more ancient superstitions, handed down by tradition and propagated by so called *leaders*, who prior to the preaching of the gospel by . . . the missionaries . . . wielded a fearful amount of spiritual influence among their followers, and the negro communities of the plantations generally. And it is what with remarkable tenacity these superstitious actions still maintain their hold in spite of a better teaching. Instead of giving up their visionary religionism, embracing the simple truth . . . our missionaries find them endeavoring to incorporate their

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tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation.

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently.

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*The Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Colored Regiment. Harper's Weekly.*

[p. 255]

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[3]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

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•175 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the
771 Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "Gen-
797 eral Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the De-
partment of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school
(533) children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:
(539)

> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
>
> .....
>
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
>
> .....
>
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
>
> .....
>
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

175 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their
771 attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude to-
779 ward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood
795 the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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the evergreens, typical of Christ's life and teachings. They gave breathless attention to all this, ejaculating from time to time, "My Lord! is dat so?"
I know now they understood very little of all I said, but no speaker ever had more interested and attentive listeners. When I sat down, one of the leaders chanted rather than spoke a touching prayer, in which he styled me his "dear imperial preacher."
Then the white friends sang,—"Joy to the world, the Lord has come."
By this time the entire audience was aroused and ready to pray and sing all night. In each prayer the speaker tried to introduce, in his uncouth phraseology, some of the passages of Scripture he had heard read.[5]

Though lacking a basic background regarding the teachings and historical importance of Christ, Gullahs strongly identified with his suffering, crucifixtion, and resurrection. This, to them, was Christianity, and since they felt their earthly lives so closely paralleled that of Jesus, becoming "Christians" was for Gullahs somewhat of an apocalyptic fulfillment. In fact, much of the essence of their understanding of Protestant religion centered around Jesus and His followers. Other writers have suggested that African-American slaves saw themselves primarily in the same light as the Children of Israel. This association certainly inspired some of the Charleston rebels in 1822, as already discussed. Also, the commander of Gullah troops, Thomas Higginson, stated that the men's memories were a "vast, bewildered chaos of Jewish history and biography," and that most great events from the past, up to "the American Revolution, they instinctively attributed to Moses." How the experience of the Jews aroused the Gullahs was witnessed by a Civil War missionary:

Last week I read to the *church full* the account of the escape of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. I was amazed at the impression it seemed to make. The remarks the old men made were graphic and eloquent. It made them recount with praise to God their escape. The little church seemed like dreamland to me almost when they got stirred to talk.[6]

Yet most Gullahs conceptualization of Christianity centered on the experiences of Jesus rather than the Jews, as is evident in their songs, prayers, and conversations. The militant nationalism so strongly associated with the Jewish struggle was a prominent ideology of Christian-oriented slaves during the Vesey Conspiracy but was not a major orientation in Gullah religion. Instead, as far as Christianity was concerned, Gullahs relied on a conviction that a moral wrong had been committed

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she
567 had the following dialogue:

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
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witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She noticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but Maurice's story was a tragic one:

> His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' rationalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ, were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival.

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative inclinations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by General David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much:

> We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

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175 177 771 brethren they must be just like birds when the gunner is about, expecting a crack every minute. "Dey ain't neber know what gwine to befal dey, pore black folks must wait and hab faith, . . . Massa laff one day. Ask me if I tink Christ want black nigger in heben. One ting I sure. We'uns gwine to be where de crucify Lord am. And if dat place be Hell, He gwine make it heben for we."[9]

175 771 Gullah religion was not quiescent, nor an enslavement of the mind, despite the "Christian" and long-suffering attitude seemingly responsible for their sensitiveness and lofty, visionary approach toward oppression. Many observers were appalled at what they interpreted as resignation among Sea Island African-Americans. Arthur Sumner wrote from St. Helena Island in 1863, "I am astonished that they should be fit to live after such generations of mere animal life. A higher race would have lost all moral sense." Even one of the Gullahs' staunchest advocates, Elizabeth Botume, believed that "the patience of the freedpeople in sickness was so general and remarkable, it seemed like apathy." If what Botume observed was only resignation, it probably was a function of Gullah affiliation with Christianity. Yet their coping capacity was also possible because of the sense of protection that spiritual association offered, with religious and community membership forging ties that strengthened the Gullahs' resolve. Thomas Wentworth Higginson was surprised to find Gullahs so little demoralized and he accurately attributed this to religion:

> I learned to think that we abolitionists had underrated the suffering produced by slavery among the negroes, but had overrated the demoralization. Or rather, we did not know how the religious temperament of the negroes had checked the demoralization. Yet . . . it must be admitted that this temperament, born of sorrow and oppression, is far more marked in the slave than in the native African.[10]

771 Higginson perceptively realized the lack of "demoralization" wrought by slavery. But the personality and "religious temperament" of Gullahs owed much to a non-Christian tradition, and was not "born of sorrow and oppression" or as foreign to the "native African" as Higginson imagined. As previously suggested, African religion and philosophy emphasized the celebration and affirmation of human life, and within this scheme, while God was the apex of the theory of being, humankind was the center, or pivotal point, of earthly existence. Gullahs were very much a part of this world view. Even though on the conscious level the pillar of their faith rested on their association with Christ, this may have primarily provided Old World ideology with an organized, plausible New

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World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12]

For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time, but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future.

The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization, there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails,"but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But

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the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]

Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the botton of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

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In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory, mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

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merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem": (186) (539)

> De Talles' tree in Paradise
> De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
> an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my new Jerusalem!
>
> Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem!
>
> Paul and Silas jail-bound
> Sing God's praise both night and day,
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 539 533

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

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alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis.

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Litwack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?"

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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

•175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew, through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

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175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands
195 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern
194 occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur
829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
> "No Chillun?"
> "I'm not married."
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
> "Oh, you'r joking."
> "Fact."
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
> "You a member sure."
> "Eh?"
> "A member, a church member."
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant
771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a
829 contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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have a tradition of politeness. Among the Limba of Sierra Leone for example, "shame" (Kulaku) and "honor" (yiki) are spoken of often. According respect to leaders, strangers, one's wife, and her relatives, is of great importance. Fear of shame is a very real sanction in everyday life. Rudeness or abusive behavior also brings shame, which only an apology can erase. Ceremonious welcomings involving hand shaking are greatly stressed among Africans. Thanks, greetings, and farewells are often reinforced by a gift, approved of as much for its token value of "giving the words weight," as for its economic worth. A gift of a fowl, eggs, or rice is commonly offered when guests arrive. A physician assigned to the colony of Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century, wrote that the people possessed a "great share of pride, and are easily affected by an insult." They could not even bear a harsh expression, or raised voice without distaste. One of the severest insults toward an African was to "speak disrespectfully of his mother," which the Africans called "cursing her." More recently, a researcher in the Kongo was told that there were two things he should know right away about BaKongo peoples. "The first is that we all came from Mbaza Kongo. The second is the importance of good manners."[11]

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Aside from a spirit of cooperation, Gullahs used their religion to foster a sense of justice. Undoubtedly, since they were exploited so unjustly on all quarters, it was important that among each other fairness predominate. The power of the community and the extent to which slaves could pursue their indignation against erring members was not always peaceful, and could reach extreme proportions. Jenkins Mikell's recollection of a grisly event on Edisto Island represents a case in point. Crimes within the slave quarters were infrequent, but they did occur:

> Early one morning, we were awakened by the repressed excitement we felt around the dwelling. We soon found that all the people on the home place were in a terribly wrought up state and waiting for the Master to appear. A murder had been committed among them. A man had killed his wife in anger. The poor woman had been found dead hanging by her neck to the rafter of the cabin, and the guilty husband had run away and left her there. He was caught during the day . . . he was tried and convicted and remanded to the scene of his crime for execution. . . . On the day of his execution very little work was done in the community by the negroes. All attended the tragic scene. His coffin was made on the plantation and placed in a wagon. The doomed man, tied, seated upon this coffin rode six miles to the place of execution, and by his side seated on the same gruesome seat was his companion in guilt—a woman. She was made to witness at close quarters his dreadful end. She returned to the place of burial,

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

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standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'" process:

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> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river.
> When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

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normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of burials), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote:

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back.". . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation:

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body—all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[21]

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More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

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code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. 000
The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with 175
Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah 171
spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who main- 569
tained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote: 792

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers 554
> worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this
> country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, (791)
> or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual
> children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' 175
from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the 569
two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the 554
Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary 791
correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church 792
membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership 175
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began among the Gullahs and the other ended, or if in slavery a shared authority and governance was practiced. Among Windward Coast Africans authority rested with two bodies—the chief and his elders, and cultural authority, which consisted of Poro and Sande leaders. The latter was called the Poro Council. "All grave and problematic questions touching the interest of the section or tribe in general were handled by this Poro Council, and their decisions, after due deliberation, were preemptory." Among the BaKongo, governance was far more centralized and hierarchical. Authority was in the hands of a king, and on the village level, a chief, who might have advisers, among whom was a medicine man (*Nganga Nkisi*).[28] But the importance of the priest in all African societies may explain the continued presence of the spiritual parents. Because spiritual parents, like their African counterparts, held their positions for life, and since they comprised the "religious court," they possibly represented the communal soul of the people while the elder personified the individual soul in a more Christian context. From the spiritual leader a Gullah candidate not only received religious guidance but also instruction in conduct or "manners," thus preserving values as well as maintaining authority. Different social conditions make it impossible to actually compare types of instruction given to African and Gullah initiates. But in both situations such qualities as good conduct, allegiance, generosity, and group responsibility were emphasized. Secret society initiates received a rich background in physical survival, social interaction, instruction in ethnic-group history, and art. They were also schooled in their particular occupation for the future. For Gullah "seekers," instruction was probably a mixture of Christianity, Africanisms, and practical information. Candidates were taught how to pray, an interpretation of the nature of God and Christ, concepts about death, and especially about the realities of life, all within a context relevant to their circumstances as bondspeople.[29]

When African initiates left the bush, they returned to the village as "reborn," and were said to have "crossed the water." Their former existence was obliterated—old animosities, debts, even crimes no longer existed. The person was entering a new life with new responsibilities. Neophytes were expected to take their place in the village, to serve it when called upon, and to obey its regulations as interpreted by the Poro Council. When initiates were led back to the village, they underwent a washing ceremony in the creek or river. After "washing," new members were dressed up for their final return. Parents publicly expressed pride

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in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism. Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena:

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . .—near the water stood a large

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band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

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Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

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gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature."

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith. Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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•175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
79 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a
567 corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60
years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[186] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spiritual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Chris-
[178] tianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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*Laura M. Towne, Dick, Maria, and "seeker" Amoretta, February 1866. From the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library.)*

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# Epilogue

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*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Broke at last! Broke at last!*
*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Gonna praise God till I die!*

*Way up in that valley,*
*Pray-in' on my knees,*
*Tell-in' God a-bout my troubles,*
*And to help me if He please.*

*I did tell him how I suffer,*
*In the dungeon and the chain;*
*And the days I went with head bowed down,*
*An' my broken flesh and pain.*

*I did know Jesus heard me,*
*'Cause the spirit spoke to me,*
*An' said, "Rise, my chile, your children*
*An' you too shall be free."*

*I done 'p'int one mighty captain*
*For to marshal all my hosts;*
*An' to bring my bleeding ones to me,*
*An' not one shall be lost."*

*Now no more weary trav'lin',*
*'Cause my Jesus set me free,*
*An' there's no more auction block for me*
*Since He give me liberty.**

The Thirteenth Amendment, which ended all slavery in the United States, barely slipped through the House of Representatives with the necessary two-thirds vote on January 31, 1865. But for the Gullahs, the "Year of Jubilo" was January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared them "forever free." It was the first truly Happy New Year the Gullahs ever had, and they marked it with a festive occasion organized by General Saxton. The celebration took place in Beaufort. The multitude consisted of the "First South" Regiment, many "white visitors," superintendants, officers, dignitaries, and the band of the Eighth Maine. From the Islands and surrounding mainland came the now for-

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* Quoted from Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 167.

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•175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
571 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and
178 Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

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APPENDIX A

# Ethnic Origins of Carolina Slaves

This appendix explains my own tabulations for ethnic origins of Carolina slaves. A valuable source of information for studying African origins was published in four volumes by Elizabeth Donnan. Her works are based on primary sources consisting of ships' records, newspaper advertisements, records of the Royal African Company, the correspondence of Henry Laurens and other merchants, and various documents illustrating the pattern and magnitude of the international slave trade. Donnan's volume on the Southern colonies was particularly useful for examining the slave trade to Carolina because the records of that colony were so well preserved and because white Carolinians made a fetish of regional provenance where human cargo was concerned. From these data we obtain an impression of the coastal origins of many cargoes entering Charleston harbor, and it appears that Africans of the Windward Coast and Senegambia regions provided South Carolina with the majority of its forced laborers for nearly forty years. 127 567 175.

Table A.1 represents my calculation of the ethnic origins of slaves entering South Carolina during the middle period of the international slave trade. It was compiled from a tabulation of lists of cargoes published by Elizabeth Donnan. Table A.2 is a rough numerical calculation of slaves identifiable by African origins entering Charleston during the middle period of the trade. Since many cargoes did not indicate size, our estimate for this unknown was based upon the average number of slaves on vessels which did indicate the size of their cargo. Deliberately ex- 175 567 128

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TABLE A.1

*Number and Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 102 | 32.4 |
| Windward Coast | 90 | 28.6 |
| Gold Coast | 54 | 17.2 |
| Bight of Benin | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 25 | 7.9 |
| Angola (including Gaboon and the Kongo) | 35 | 11.1 |
| Others: Whydah, Bance Island, Isle de Los | 9 | 2.8 |
| Total | 315 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935) vol. 4, passim; and *South Carolina Gazette*.

TABLE A.2

*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Est. Slaves* | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
| Senegambia | 66 | 10,499 | 36 | 5,724 | 102 | 16,223 |
| Windward Coast | 65 | 11,135 | 25 | 4,275 | 90 | 15,410 |
| Gold Coast | 37 | 6,240 | 17 | 2,856 | 54 | 9,096 |
| Angola | 33 | 7,480 | 2 | 454 | 35 | 7,934 |
| Bight of Benin | | | | | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 18 | 3,343 | 7 | 1,302 | 25 | 4,665 |
| Others | 7 | 956 | 2 | 274 | 9 | 1,230 |
| Total | 226 | 39,653 | 89 | 14,885 | 315 | 54,538 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

cluded from tables A.1 and A.2 are those vessels which indicated only the West Indies as the source of origin. Such listings meant the slaves were purchased in the West Indies from an arriving African cargo, or that the ship had stopped in the West Indies and disposed of most of its African cargo. Cargoes listed as simply from the West Indies were usually quite small and often contained Creole New World-born slaves.

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As discussed in the text, research indicates that the majority of slaves in Carolina by 1740 were chiefly from Kongo-Angola. This was also the largest group imported into South Carolina during the entire slave trade as illustrated in table A.3, which was taken from Philip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade*. However, Curtin's percentages may be misleading for purposes of examining African cultural influence in coastal Carolina because he lumps the entire slave trade period together. Up to 1740, the end of the first period of the Carolina trade, Kongo-Angolans were the majority. But as evident from tables A.1 and A.2, during the period of high economic growth and large-scale slave importation in the Sea Island region, these Africans composed a relatively small percentage of total cargoes with known coastal origins. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region do not again figure heavily in South Carolina trade until the nineteenth century. Curtin has no separate breakdown for these years (1804–1807), when many Kongo-Angola peoples were imported (see tables A.4 and A.5) chiefly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of up-country plantations and new territories. At the time, South Carolina was the only state importing slaves and supplied other states as well. In the nineteenth century, despite the emergence of Sea Island cotton as an export of growing significance, many coastal and Sea Island planters were well supplied with slaves and expressed strong hostility to reopening of the international trade in 1803. Concerned about the depreciation of their own slave property, as well as the prospect of slave revolts, these planters were instrumental in the near-defeat of the bill to reopen the African slave

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TABLE A.3
*Percentage of Slaves of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1733 to 1807*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Senegambia | 19.5 |
| Windward Coast (including Sierra Leone) | 23.1 |
| Gold Coast | 13.3 |
| Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3.7 |
| Angola | 39.6 |
| Mozambique, Madagascar | 0.7 |
| Total | 100.0 |

*Source:* Philip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison-University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 157, Table 45.

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TABLE A.4
*Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 11 | 7.5 |
| Windward Coast | 44.5 | 30.5 |
| Gold Coast | 23.5 | 16.0 |
| Bright of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3 | 2.0 |
| Angola | 55 | 37.7 |
| Others | 9 | 6.3 |
| Total | 90.0 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

TABLE A.5
*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
| Senegambia | 4 | 290 | 6 | 73 | 10 | 435 |
| Windward Coast | 33 | 4,374 | 16 | 2,096 | 49 | 6,470 |
| Gold Coast | 16 | 2,416 | 7 | 1,057 | 23 | 3,624 |
| Angola | 50 | 14,440 | 5 | 1,694 | 55 | 16,134 |
| Bight of Benin | | | | | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 6 | 1,809 | 1 | 301 | 7 | 2,412 |
| Others | 2 | 473 | — | — | 2 | 473 |
| Total | 111 | 23,802 | 40 | 5,221 | 151 | 29,023 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol v. 4, passim.

[114] trade in South Carolina. Thus, Philip Curtin's percentages, which cover the years 1733–1807, are too broad chronologically to adequately represent the pattern of the slave trade in regard to cultural geography.

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In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits provided what appeared to be a good source of ethnic information. Using raw material supplied by Elizabeth Donnan, Herskovits developed a numerical tabulation of slave imports into South Carolina for the years 1733–1785 in

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TABLE A.6
*Number of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1733 to 1785 (Middle Period)*

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| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. Imported* |
|---|---|
| Origin given as "Africa" | 4,146 |
| From the Gambia to Sierra Leone | 12,441 |
| Sierra Leone | 3,906 |
| Rice and Grain Coasts | 3,851 |
| "Guinea Coast" (Gold Coast to Calabar) | 18,240* |
| Angola | 11,485 |
| Congo | 10,924 |
| Mozambique | 243 |
| East Africa | 230 |
| Total Imported from Africa | 65,466 |
| Total Imported from the West Indies | 2,303 |
| Total Number of Imports | 67,796 |

*Herskovits notes that of this number only 1,168 slaves were brought in ships sailing from "Benin," "Bonny," "New Calabar," and "Old Calabar." Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 305 n.

*Source:* Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston-Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.) p. 48.

order to determine ethnic origin and influence among Africans imported into that state (see table A.6). However, Herskovits' computation somewhat confuses the issue of provenance in regard to the Sea Island region because it is based only on the available number of slaves from various regions rather than on the number of cargoes as well, and the percentage of cargoes from a particular area. In many cases, neither Donnan nor the Charleston newspapers (which were her main source) reported the number of slaves in a given cargo. Donnan's information on total yearly imports was not based on individual computation but derived from annual figures printed in newspapers that did not distribute imports on the basis of coastal origin. Thus, Herskovits apparently tabulated only cargoes which listed the African *coastal origin* and indicated the *size* of the cargo as well. This makes his numerical tabulation unreliable.

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Another problem with Herskovits' tabulation for this study is that his estimates partly cover the period in which the Sea Islands were only sparsely settled (the early period). Hence, we cannot obtain a clear indication of the ethnic origins of Sea Island Gullahs from Herskovits' information. It seems that a more reasonable estimated of sources of or-

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igin can be obtained by using the *number* of cargoes of known African origin, as is done in table A.1, rather than using *cargo size* as a primary indicator. Yet, both table A.1 and table A.2 illustrate that during the middle period of the slave trade a large, new migrant group was added to the African-Carolinian population.

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APPENDIX C

# Baptist Churches

TABLE C.1
*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| | Churches | Constituted | Number Baptized | Membership |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| * 1 | Euhaw | 1745 | 43 | 841 |
| 2 | Beach Branch | 1759 | 65 | 132 |
| 3 | Healing Springs | 1772 | 7 | 143 |
| * 4 | Pipe Creek | 1776 | 38 | 287 |
| 5 | Treadaway | 1776 | 6 | 66 |
| 6 | Columbia | 1780 | 2 | 115 |
| * 7 | Black Swamp | 1786 | 11 | 294 |
| 8 | Great Saltcatcher | 1793 | 59 | 127 |
| 9 | Barnwell | 1803 | 13 | 126 |
| 10 | Springtown | 1803 | 66 | 244 |
| *11 | Beaufort | 1804 | 239 | 1,292 |
| 12 | Rosemary | 1804 | 11 | 114 |
| 13 | Willow Swamp | 1805 | 0 | 34 |
| 14 | Union | 1805 | 7 | 220 |
| 15 | Little Saltcatcher | 1807 | 21 | 50 |
| *16 | St. Helena | 1809 | 138 | 536 |
| *17 | May River | 1811 | 36 | 621 |
| 18 | Beulah | 1811 | 0 | 20 |
| *19 | Prince Williams | 1813 | 70 | 140 |
| 20 | Steep Bottom | 1814 | 3 | 44 |
| 21 | Cypress Creek | 1814 | 41 | 144 |
| 22 | Double Ponds | 1825 | 1 | 58 |
| 23 | Philadelphia | 1827 | 9 | 75 |
| 24 | Kirkland | 1827 | 12 | 162 |
| 25 | Black Creek | 1827 | 69 | 111 |
| 26 | M't Pleasant | 1828 | 4 | 38 |

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TABLE C.1 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| *Churches* | *Constituted* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 3 Mile Creek | 1829 | 29 | 64 |
| 28 Matlock | 1830 | 0 | 33 |
| 29 Bethesda | 1830 | 8 | 30 |
| 30 Steel Creek | 1830 | 23 | 71 |
| 31 Joico's Branch | 1831 | 3 | 30 |
| 32 Ebenezer | 1831 | 3 | 21 |
| 33 Coosawatchie | 1832 | 34 | 196 |
| 34 Beach Island | 1832 | 0 | 38 |
| *35 Hilton Head | 1832 | 86 | 212 |
| 36 Sardia | 1833 | 14 | 33 |
| 37 Pleasant Prospect | 1833 | 0 | 43 |
| Total | | 471 | 6,805 |

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 23, 1833, 11, BC.

TABLE C.2

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1842*

| *Churches* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* | *By Whom Supplied* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | . . . No Report . . . | | W. A. Lawton |
| Beach Branch | 0 | 71 | E. Estes |
| Healing Springs | 1 | 104 | D. Peeples |
| *Pipe Creek | 12 | 131 | I. Nicholes |
| Treadaway | 1 | 31 | H. D. Duncan |
| Columbia | 17 | 141 | L. M. Brown |
| *Black Swamp | 13 | 278 | George Kempton |
| Great Saltcatcher | 18 | 130 | James Fant |
| Barnwell | 2 | 140 | D. Peeples, M. Shoares |
| Springtown | 0 | 183 | L. B. Brown |
| *Beaufort | 152 | 1,947 | R. Fuller |
| Rosemary | 0 | 111 | D. Peeples |
| Union | 8 | 240 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Little Saltcatcher | 0 | 70 | George Walker |
| *St. Helena | 61 | 762 | W. Hall |
| *May River | 30 | 888 | W. A. Lawton |
| *Prince Williams | . . . No Report . . . | | L. G. Bowers |

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| Churches | Number Baptized | Membership | By Whom Supplied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deep Bottom | 1 | 33 | C. J. Robert |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 37 | I. Nix |
| Philadelphia | 4 | 87 | L. M. Brown |
| Smyrna | 3 | 207 | M. Shoures |
| Black Creek | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Mount Pleasant | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| St. John's | 1 | 3 | George Walker |
| Matlock | 0 | 9 | (No Pastor) |
| Bethesda | 0 | 57 | William Baxley |
| Steel Creek | 19 | 131 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Joico's Branch | 25 | 73 | H. D. Duncan |
| *Coosawhatchie | . . . No Report . . . | | H. D. Duncan |
| Beach Island | 5 | 189 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Friendship | 0 | 66 | (No Pastor) |
| *Hilton Head | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sardia | 9 | 34 | John Youmans |
| Pleasant Prospect | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sandy Run | 11 | 61 | J. Fant |
| Gent's Branch | 9 | 32 | (No Pastor) |
| Beaver Dam | 1 | 43 | John Youmans |
| M't Temperance | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Long Beach | . . . No Report . . . | | J. Munch |
| Beulah | 14 | 51 | J. Fant |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | 20 | W. Price, B. Ferguson |
| Mount Aaron | 2 | 33 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Three Lower Runs | 2 | 39 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 0 | 76 | (No Pastor) |
| Total | 421 | 6,508 | |

795
162
175

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1842, 16, BC.

TABLE C.3
*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

| Churches | Baptized | Black Members | White Members | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | 8 | 442 | 32 | 474 |
| Beach Branch | 12 | 70 | 64 | 140 |
| Healing Springs | 0 | 23 | 31 | 54 |
| *Pipe Creek | 20 | No Breakdown | | 179 |
| Columbia | 0 | No Breakdown | | 146 |

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TABLE C.3 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

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| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Black Swamp | 10 | 259 | 64 | 323 |
| Great Saltcatcher | 0 | 43 | 106 | 149 |
| Barnwell | 1 | 71 | 3 | 105 |
| Springtown | 8 | 73 | 107 | 180 |
| *Beaufort | 32 | 2,477 | 196 | 2,673 |
| Rosemary | 3 | 20 | 98 | 118 |
| Union | 6 | 148 | 39 | 187 |
| Little Saltcatcher | 4 | 17 | 162 | 179 |
| *St. Helena | 16 | 866 | 34 | 900 |
| *May River | 25 | 510 | 30 | 540 |
| Steep Bottom | 9 | 54 | 38 | 92 |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 14 | 46 | 60 |
| Philadelphia | 9 | 120 | 10 | 130 |
| Smyrna | 7 | 223 | 43 | 266 |
| St. John's | 0 | 6 | 30 | 36 |
| Matlock | 20 | 26 | 70 | 96 |
| Bethesda | 9 | 11 | 91 | 102 |
| Steel Creek | 2 | 64 | 11 | 75 |
| Joico's Branch | 0 | 1 | 57 | 58 |
| *Coosawhatchie | 29 | 258 | 38 | 296 |
| Beach Island | 19 | 22 | 38 | 60 |
| Friendship | 0 | No Breakdown | | 90 |
| *Hilton Head | 1 | 106 | 2 | 108 |
| Black Creek, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 104 |
| Pleasant Prospect | 5 | No Breakdown | | 57 |
| Sandy Run | 17 | 44 | 56 | 100 |
| Gent's Branch | 0 | 7 | 38 | 45 |
| Beaver Dam | 0 | 1 | 40 | 41 |
| Long Beach | 3 | 12 | 75 | 87 |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 25 |
| Mount Aaron | 0 | 3 | 37 | 40 |
| Lower Three Runs | 1 | No Breakdown | | 38 |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 8 | No Breakdown | | 47 |
| Round O | 0 | No Breakdown | | 48 |
| Great Swamp | 0 | 15 | 18 | 33 |
| Blackville | 0 | 15 | 55 | 70 |
| Sand Hill | 10 | No Breakdown | | 35 |
| Bedon's | 0 | No Breakdown | | 44 |
| Peniel | 12 | No Breakdown | | 66 |
| Mount Olive | 2 | 6 | 17 | 23 |

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**BAPTIST CHURCHES** 34[1]

| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cypress Chapel | 0 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| Bethel | 0 | No Breakdown | | 12 |
| Beulah | 0 | 25 | 7 | 32 |
| Total | 308 | 6,052 | 1,805 | 9,282 |

795
162
175

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands. These churches claimed 4,918 members out of a total black membership return of 6,052. Most of the 4,918 blacks were members of the Sea Island congregations at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River, and Hilton Head.

*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1851, 20, BC.

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rod-
567 ney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to
567 the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
197 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968;
113 repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

18. Charles Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC. See also Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 218–19; Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849), I: 244–45; *SCA*, July 14, 1863 and December 29, 1863; Allen Diary, 18, 127–28, 151–54.

19. For an extensive bibliography on works about Gullahs and the need for more modern approaches, see Mary A. Twining, "Sources in the Folklore and Folklife of the Sea Islands," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 39 (1975): 135–50; In 1980 the *Journal of Black Studies* devoted an entire issue to Sea Island culture. Twining and Baird, eds., *Journal of Black Studies*; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, passim; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), passim.

20. Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 291; Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," quoted in Edwin C. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79; Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed. and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), 13–14, 76–79; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row. 1965), 72–76; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860" (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16–17; Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Henry Irving Tragle, *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Materials* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Rev. Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism Among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 79–79.

21. Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1847 ed.), 16–18; 80; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), passim; Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism*, 13–34, HSSCC; Report of the Board of Managers of the South Carolina Missionary Society, in *SCA*, January 3, 1851.

### *1. Gullah Roots*

1. James Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers: A Study of the Atlantic Slave Traders, 1441–1807* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 38; Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 34–36; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: Precolonial History, 1450–1850*,

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originally published as *Black Mother* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 105; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 34–40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), passim; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 14–20; The term Upper Guinea Coast has altered over centuries. Here our definition is taken from Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2, 7; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935), vol. 4, *The Southern Colonies*, passim; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1975), 58–60.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 131; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156; Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review* 33 (1927–28): 816–17; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734; London: Frank Cass, 1971), 173–74; William Smith, *A Voyage to Guinea* (London: John Nourse, 1744; London: Frank Cass, 1967), 135; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 56–68; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, 17–18; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 35; Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers*, 58–59.

3. Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, 282.

4. Ibid., II:xxxi–xxxiii, 355; IV:301, 382.

5. Wood, *Black Majority*, 301–4, Appendix C, 333–41.

6. Douglas L. Wheeler and Rene Pelissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 28–51; Davidson, *African Trade*, 144–52; Donnan, *Documents*, II:xvii–xviii; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37. Roger Bastide has written that the official documents concerning the Portuguese trade were burned after slavery was suppressed "in an effort to expunge a blot on the country's escutcheon." See Roger Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), 33.

7. Jan Vansina, "Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 375–90; Walter Rodney, "Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 431, 440; Quoted from Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37–38.

8. Vansina, "Trade Routes," 375–83; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), passim; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 9–19. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 38; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 157, Table 45.

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9. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 59–67, 82–102, 125–33; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (October 1764): 487; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 143; Augustine Smyth et al., *The Carolina Low Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 173; Vass, *Bantu Heritage*, 3–5; Wood, *Black Majority*, 96–130, 195–217, 272–326; Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 11–15.

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10. Wood, *Black Majority*, 52–153, 324–35. From 1741 to 1743 a prohibitive duty was imposed. In 1744 four African cargoes arrived. No slave cargoes entered Charleston in 1745 and from 1746 and 1748 another prohibitive duty was in effect. Three African cargoes arrived in 1749 and 1750, respectively. By 1752 the trade was once again in full swing. Donnan, "Slave Trade before the Revolution," 807–8; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 9–10; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 42–43. 175 113 567 [669]

11. Wood, *Black Majority*, 148, 323; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 69–70; 72; Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1730–1760* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 206, 230–32. Rice was never raised to any large extent on the Sea Islands since salt water in poisonous to the rice plant. Some Sea Islands did have a few fresh water ponds where rice was grown, but the amount was small and only for local consumption. Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of the North Carolina Press, 1930), 18; Frederick V. Emerson, "Geographical Influences in American Slavery," *Geographical Society Bulletin* 63 (1911): 108–9. [669

12. William A. Schaper, *Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 51; Emerson, "Geographical Influences," 108–11; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 386–88; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 35, 37, 46–47; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1728–1765*, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 37–38; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 84; Peter Wood offers interesting evidence which points to Africans' immunity to certain diseases, such as malaria. Yet, as he states, this was not "absolute." Moreover, Todd L. Savitt notes that malaria certainly took its toll in human losses among slaves. He maintains that some blacks did possess an inherited immunity to one or another strain of malaria. But adds that even adult African-born slaves had to go through a "seasoning" period because the "strains of malarial parasites in this country differed from those in their native lands." The "acquired" immunity that blacks reportedly developed was "risky," according to Savitt, since this involved repreated, uninterrupted exposure to malaria over a period of years. Furthermore, we must rely heavily on the words of colonial whites with a vested interest in rationalizing that blacks were more suited to labor in the Carolina swamps and marshes. Africans may have had a varied immunity to certain diseases, but it appears unlikely that this determined white attitudes toward black labor. For Wood, See *Black Majority* 85–88, 90–91. See also Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illiois Press, 1978), 21–26.

13. Schaper, *Sectionalism* 55–56; Emerson, "Georgraphical Influences," 112; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 40–46; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–19; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 267–69; Donnan, *Documents*, IV: passim; See Appendix A.

14. Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 48; Philip M. Hamer, et al. eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), IV: 294–95. 175 113

15. *SCG*, July 14, 1759.

16. Hamer, *Laurens Papers*, I:252, 331.

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175 113 [197] [177] 17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

[567] 20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

17 113 21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

175 113 23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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28. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 236–53; Appendix A.

29. Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), Paul, 1951); 28–29, 37–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 5–6.

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33. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 253.

34. Diary of William F. Allen, 63, in William F. Allen Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconisn, Madison; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84, 87; Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 20–21.

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2. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 32–33, 65–67; Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro," Part I, *Africa* 35 (October, 1965): 349–50.

3. Nicholas Owen, *Journal of A Slave Dealer, A View of Some Remarkable Accidents in the Life of Nicholas Owen on the Coast of Africa and America From the Year 1746 to the Year 1757* (London: George Routledge, 1930), 30–31.

4. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr. from 1788 ed.), 82–83.

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26. Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27A, 27B, WPA, SCL; Lowrey, *Old Plantation*, 83–87; Towne Diary, 98; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folk-lore Society 1923), 211–13; E. Horace Fitchett, "Superstitions in South Carolina," *The Crisis* 43 (1936): 360–71; Henry F. Davis, "Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 245–49; Leonora Herron and Alice M. Bacon, "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," *Southern Workman* 24 (1895): 118; Louis Pendleton, "Notes on Negro Folklore and Witchcraft in the South," *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 301–17; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 216–21; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 834–36; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; Charles A. Raymond, "Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 27 (June–November, 1963): Part I, 478–80, Part II, 676, Part III, 821; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 113 567 771

27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 771 113 [171]

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592. [171]

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

### *3. Missionaries and Masters*

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The* 175 771 113

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*Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 25; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 196–97. There was a tendency among some early missionaries to indiscriminately refer to Indians and Africans as "blacks." See Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 39, n. 20.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 37–38; Samuel Thomas to Dr. Bray, January 20, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Thomas Nairne to Dr. Marston, August 20, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 2.

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3. South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8; William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Gilbert Jones to SPG, November 16, 1716, SPGLL, BV 6. reel 13, series B vol. 4 (1).

4. Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 4; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

5. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 5.

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6. Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11,series A, vol. 19; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; Robert Stevens to SPG, February 21, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 2, series A, vol. 2.

7. Frank Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle, the Papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston, 1707–1716* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 118–19; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

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8. Thomas Naire to Dr. Marston. August 20, 1705, SPGLL; Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28 SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 20; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 127–30; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 111–16; Verner W. Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 1670–1732 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 168–69, 184–85.

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9. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 81, 99.

10. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Wood. *Black Majority*, 150.

11. Verner W. Crane, "Dr. Thomas Bray and the Charitable Colony Project, 1730," *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, 3d. ser. (January, 1962): 58–61; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 168–69; Henry A. M. Smith, "Purrysburgh," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10 (October, 1909): 189–91; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 1–18.

12. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 18–19.

13. Smith, "Purrysburgh," 187–95; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 17–18; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 506; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–96; "Letters Showing and Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January 1916): 69–92; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139–42; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, June 20, 1834.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68, 69–70, 72; Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–26.

15. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–74; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colo-*

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*nial Slavery*, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606.

16. A. S. Salley, ed., *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726–1812* (Columbia: State Co., 1919), 22–25; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; repr. from 1820 ed.), 379–81; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 72–74; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 602–3.

17. John Wikhead to SPG, September 26, 1715, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

18. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL.

19. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL; Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 20, 1712, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 7; Letters of J. Ottolenghe, July 12, 1758, SPG, London Ms. of Dr. Bray's Associates, Letters from the American Colonies, BX 19, reel 10; Klingberg, *Carolina Chronicle*, 118–19.

20. *SCG*, May 4, 1734; Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapter 10; *SCG*, April 16 and 23, 1737; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 342.

21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19.

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51.

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13.

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

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*First Baptist Church of South Carolina, 1683–1883* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodland, 1899), 7, 39, 56–59, 84–86, 94–97; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 1–79, 221–26, 242–52; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848), 700–702; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 172–73; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 26–35. There is some controversy over Screven's actual arrival with the largest group of Baptists. The Charleston Baptist Church maintains that the date of its establishment and Screven's arrival is 1683. Baptist historian Joe M. King places it at 1696. Here we use the generally accepted date of 1683. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 13.

27. Samuel Thomas to SPG, January 25, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Le Jau to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

28. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28, SPGLL; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 74–75; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 25–35.

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29. Francis Le Jau to SPG, February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 7; William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 497–501.

30. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptist Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98; New Jersey prescribed death for slaves convicted of murder, arson, mutilation or rape of a white woman, and castration for attempted rape. The Lords of Trade (in London) denounced such "inhumane penalities on Negroes," and the Privy Council voted to disallow the law. See Edgar McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 84–85; *Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey* 42 vols. (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society), 3:473–74; W. L. Grant and James Munro, eds. *Acts of the Privy Council: Colonial Series, 1613–1783*, 6 vols. (London: Wyman Publishers), 2:848.

31. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98.

32. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 14–17, 26–35.

### *4. Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening*

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1. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 77, 81, 308–9; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 180, 185–88; Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 207–8; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–96.

2. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to England* (London: James Buckland, 1740), 5; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 418–19, II: 60, 139–43; John Pollack, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 3–10, 47–54, 62–68; *George Whitefield's Journals* (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1960; repr. unabridg, from 1905 ed., with unpubl. Journal, first publ. 1938), 82–93, 156–59, 302–11, 571–88; Sir James Stephens, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1837), 382–83, 389–90.

3. Whitefield, *Journals*, 165.

4. Ibid., 302–5; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 45–50, 63–71.

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5. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 413–42; Whitefield, *Journals*, 338–62 and passim.

6. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 442–43; Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

7. Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

8. Ibid., 386–89.

9. Ibid., 400–401.

10. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 482–83; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization*, (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 71–73; Seward, *Journal*, 5; Whitefield, *Journals*, 401, 439–49; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 596–602. Whitefield was preaching to up to 4,000 listeners in Charleston in 1740 on his summer tour. He finally grew tired of listening to Garden bewail against him and no longer attended St. Philip's when he was in the city. Instead he "went to the Baptist and Independent meeting-houses, where Jesus Christ was preached." Whitefield, *Journals*, 449–50.

11. McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 246–47; Rev. Alexander Garden to Rev. Samuel Smith, September 24, 1742, in John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: the Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 93–94, 338; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 101–17.

12. Klingberg *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–14, 119–22; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 245–46, 439–40.

13. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 121, n. 56; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 247.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 119–21; Clarke's population estimate was very close to the mark. Philip D. Morgan's recent article places the Lowcountry population at 53,257 in 1760. See his "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1983), 85, Table 1.

15. Seward, *Journal*, 6, 7, 11; Whitefield, *Journals*, 379; Stephen J. Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church History* 42, no. 2 (June, 1973): 243, 248.

16. Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 124–26; Dallimore, *Whitefield Great Evangelist*, I: 482–84, 495–501; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Alexander Garden, *Six letters to the Rev. George Whitefield*, 2nd ed. (Boston: T. Fleet, 1740), passim; Stein "George Whitefield on Slavery." 244.

17. Whitefield, *Journals*, 406–7; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 495; *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740), 13. Whitefield's "Letter . . . Concerning . . . Negroes" was written in Savannah in January 1740, *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

18. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 13–14.

19. Ibid., 14–16.

20. Ibid.

21. Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL: Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vols. 4–7.

22. John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 13, series A, vols. 24–25.

23. Francis Le Jau to SPG, June 13, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and July 18, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 6.

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24. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 130–31; Garden, *Six Letters to Whitefield*, 50–53; *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

25. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 221–25; Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 66–67; Stein "Whitefield on Slavery," 245; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 391; Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 116–17; James Habersham to Countess Dowager of Huntington, December 31, 1770, *Letters of James Habersham 1756–1775*, Collections, Georgia Historical Society, vol. 6, 109–11.

26. Quoted from Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 117.

27. Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 5–6; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446–50; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 219; *Hugh Bryan and Mary Hutson, Living Christianity, Delineated in the Diaries and Letters of two Pious Persons lately Deceased; Mr. Hugh Bryan and Mrs. Mary Hutson, both of South Carolina* (London: J. Buckland, 1750), 13, 70, 91, passim; William Maine Hutson, "The Hutson Family of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 9 (July, 1908): 127; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan, 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 31–45; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 19.

28. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 1–4, 13; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 7–9, 32; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 440, 502–4; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in Colonial South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3d ser., no. 4 (October, 1986): 596–98; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 70; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 238–43; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 71; Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 248–51.

29. Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 450; Hutson, "Hutson Family," 127; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1741–42*, 404, 406–8, and *1742–44*, 72; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 241–43; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 594, 605–9; David S. Lovejoy, " 'Desperate Enthusiasm': Early Signs of American Radicalism," in Margaret Jacob and James Jacob, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 237, 241, n. 24.

30. Whitefield, *Journals*, 502–4; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 586; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 600–3.

31. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 605–10; Lovejoy " 'Desperate Enthusiasm,' " 237; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 240–42; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; *Journal of the Assembly, 1741–42*, 406–8, 461–62.

32. *Journal of the Assembly, 1742–44*, 72–73, 364–368, 394, 398; Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 55–126; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 604, 609, 613–14.

33. Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 599–601; Mrs. R. W. Hutson, "Register kept by the Rev. William Hutson of Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church and (Circular) Congregational Church in Charles Town, S. C., 1743–1760," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 38 (January, 1937): 21–33; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 606, 612–13.

34. Whitefield, *Journals*, 501; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 66, 92, 209, n. 12; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 11–20, 29–30, 32–33.

35. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 84–87, 111, 114–15, 159–66; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–77; "Letters Showing the Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January, 1916): 73, 77–78.

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36. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 164–65, 195; "Early Negro Churches," 77–78, 83–86; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 177, 182–84; William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785).

37. Thomas Hassell to SPG, December 2, 1731 and March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series A, vol. 4 (2); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); Peter H. Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee at Last," *Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (November, 1979): 2–5.

38. Quoted from James B. Lawrence, "Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 14 (March, 1930): 46–47.

39. Ibid.

40. Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–85, 87–88. For a discussion which denies, incorrectly I think, that there is a distinction between Gullah and "generalized Black English vernacular," see J. L. Dillard, *Lexicon of Black English* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 103–4. An interesting discussion of Gullah as a Creole language is found in Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Chapter 7: see also Wood, *Black Majority*, 172–90. For a discussion of cultural unity joining Gullahs with blacks of the Caribbean, see Velma Pollard. "Cultural Connections in Paule Marshall's *Praise Song for the Widow*," *World Literature Written in English* 25, no. 2 (1985): 285–98. For a fascinating, informative debate over the formulation of Creole and the impact of Upper Guinea versus Gold Coast and Angolan influences see Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," 3–16, and Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 17–35.

41. See Chapter 2. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1971). Thomas discusses systems of beliefs current in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and retention of some beliefs after that time. As Thomas states, almost every "primitive" religion was for the adherents a means of gaining supernatural power. Yet this does not preclude religion as a means of explanation, decreeing of moral imperatives, or representation of social order.

42. Benjamin Pownall to SPG, October 24, 1723, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4(2); Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; J. Ottolenghe to SPG, July 12, 1758, November 18, 1754, SPG London Mss of Dr. Bray's Associates.

43. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, and, Francis Le Jau to SPG, October 20, 1709, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5.

44. Ibid.; Thomas Hassell to SPG, March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

45. Whitefield, *Journals*, 382–83, Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 246–47.

46. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 14; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1).

47. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 56, 57, 63, 72, 90, passim; Hutson, "Register of Stoney Creek Church," 22–26; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," passim.

48. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 70–91.

49. Ibid., 63; *Journal of the Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505.

50. Whitefield, *Journals*, 419, 422, 444, 446; Seward, *Journal*, 6–7; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*.

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51. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 6–9; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 1–2.
52. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
53. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
54. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 13.
55. Ibid., 14, 36–37.
56. Ibid., 15–28, 31–33, 36–39.
57. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 45–56, 364, n. 3; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 27, 61.
58. Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 96–98; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 400.
59. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 484, 498–501 and II: 436–38; Anon., probably George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America* (London: J. Hart, 1743), 3–6; Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery," 243–56.
60. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 438; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 5–6; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 162.
61. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 499–509; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–22; Joseph Ottolenghe to SPG, December 4, 1751 and July 12, 1758, SPG, London Mss. of Dr. Bray's Associates; Habersham to William Knox, July 17, 1765 and November 26, 1770, *Habersham Letters*, 38, 95–99, 102, Wood, *Black Majority*, 324–25; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 40; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–86.
62. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 160–65; Darold D. Wax, "Georgia and the Negro Before the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1967): 73–75.

### 5. *An Almost Chosen People*

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1. Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), Bibliographic Note; Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September, 1863): 295; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 11–12.

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2. Robert Starobin, ed., *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 11; John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 132–37; updated ed. of *Insurrection in South Carolina: The Turbulent World of Denmark Vesey* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1964); Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, 1744–1849, SCHS; William Jones to Samuel Jones, Jane Bruce Jones Mss, 1784–1831, SCL; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 4–14, 18, 21–22, 57–59, 111; Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 133–36.

3. Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition* 6 no. 3 (1985): 57–58; Joseph Cepas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1938), 17, 19–24; Peter H. Wood. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 285–307, 314–35; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 31–36; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 157. Although Morgan offers no explanation for the discrep-

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ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the presence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina. Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of the difference between the two colonies.

4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

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5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 118.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

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8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its harshaness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

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12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*

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17 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10,
113 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

•175 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöepf,
567 *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29; Avonor Samuel to William
113 Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahm, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP;
113 Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers. Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New
(567) York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel
G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical*
(669) *and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 66–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

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29. Ibid., 113–30.

30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

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51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

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54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

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58. Article written by Sancho, a former slave, in the Papers of Hugh A. C. Walker, HSSCC.

59. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10, 22–23; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 122; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 79, 91; Wightman Ledger and Notebook, 1801, Papers of William May Wightman, HSSCC; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 9, 14; Jenkins, *Experiences, Labours and Sufferings*, 102–3, 105–6.

60. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 22–26; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 467.

61. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 156; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 61–62; Jenkins, *Experiences, Labours and Sufferings*, 96–97; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, passim; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64.

62. George, *Segregated Sabbaths*, 69–86; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 80; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 14–15; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–93; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 120–124; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 70–72.

63. Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 124–26; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 2–3.

64. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 93, 145; Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement," 71, 75; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 74, 87–88, 125.

65. The most thorough study is Lofton, *Denmark Vesey*; Also see Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 113–153; Richard Wade, "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Social History* (May, 1964); Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Black Rebellion* (New York: Arno Press, 1969; repr. from 1889 ed.), 215–75; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 49–86; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*; Richard Wade has maintained that the conspiracy never really existed. Wade is refuted by Sterling Stuckey in "Remembering Denmark Vesey," *Negro Digest* (February, 1966); and to a lesser extent by Freehling, in *Prelude to Civil War*, 53–61. Yet John Oliver Killens has made objections to Freehling's and Wade's presentations of the conspiracy, describing their interpretations as distorted. Freehling adopts the language of the slaveholders. He portrays Denmark Vesey as "a powerful unscrupulous man who was given to fits of rage and violence," and as a man who employed a "skillful fusion of the high ideals of the Age of Reason with the ruthless savagery of a barbaric chief." Bibliographic note in Kennedy and Parker. (*Trial*, xiv.) Freehling's characterization of Gullah Jack is also taken from the slaveholder's presentation. The author wrote:

> Possessed of tiny limbs, which looked *grotesque* despite his small frame, Gullah Jack had enormous whiskers, which seemed monstrous on the *balking* Denmark Vesey. No witch doctor ever looked more the part . . . a sorcerer whose bizarre appearance, wild gestures and malevolent glances could terrorize the bravest slave. (55–56).

66. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 45, 58, 63–65, 114–15; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 21, 62, 25. The late Professor Starobin's excellent edition of primary sources related to the Vesey Conspiracy was most useful. Testimony not in the official record but part of manuscript collections, contemporary reactions to the plot, and private letters are contained in his volume. Starobin's edition adds to the body of literature on this little-studied rebellion effort and reveals that some sources related to it have yet to be fully utilized.

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67. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 142; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 25, 50, 61, 64; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 46, 58–59.

68. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 66; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64; Gayraud S. Gilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 57–58.

69. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64.

70. Ibid., 43.

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71. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins, Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Vintage, 1963), 83–89, and passim.

72. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 13–14, 76–79, 89; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 26, 32, 41–42, 45, 46.

73. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 117, 121; Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), passim.

74. See Chapter 2; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 45; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 76–77, 163, 17, 37–38, 81, 85–86, 95–102, 105–6, 125.

75. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 50, 88, 90, 95, 130; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 144; James, *Black Jacobins*, 86–87.

76. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39; Killens, *Trial*, 75, 89, 86, 109, 117, 122–23, 125, 134–35, 164–65.

77. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 79, 81–82, 95–96, 140–41; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 52.

78. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39, 42, 63–64, Killens, *Trial*, 28–38, 42, 74–75, 77, 79, 86, 112–13, 125.

79. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.

80. Ibid., 38–40, 79.

81. Ibid., 137.

82. Ibid., 94–95, 131; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 38, 40.

83. Among them are Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*. Here Wade argues that the urban environment was "inhospitable to conspiracies because it provided a wider latitude to the slave, a measure of independence within bondage. . . ." According to Wade, this environment served to deflate the insurrectionary impulse, 241–42. Also see Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*. Vesey did not make the mistake which Mullin claimed was made by Gabriel, that is, not providing an appealing ideology to country slaves and the African-born. We will never know if indeed Gabriel did make this mistake since the record reveals no spiritual presence in the 1800 revolt. This does not however preclude the existence of a spiritual force undetected by the court.

84. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 38–53, 96–99; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 64–65, 83.

85. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 26.

86. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 19, 23–25, 39, 47, 65; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 19–22, 50–54, 56, 62, 78, 80–81, 86, 92, 97, 100–5, 109–10, 119, 130–31.

87. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 18, 20–21, 26–27, 62, 78–79, 85; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, passim, Beaufort Township Library; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter, The Story of Robert Smalls* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1958), 24; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 36–37; Rosengarten, *Tomboy*.

88. William Jones to Samuel Jones, July 23, 1822, Jane Bruce Jones Mss., 1784–1834, SCL; Jacob Rapelye to Paul Rapelye, August 5, 1822, Napier, Rapeley and Bennett Papers, SCL; E. M. Starrs to Zalmon Wildman, July 19, 1822, Zalmon Wildman Papers, 1812–1840, SCL; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 184; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 29.

89. Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," as quoted by Edwin C. Holland in *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institutions and Existence of Slavery Among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79.

90. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

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91. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Ibid., 132–33; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 173–75, 182–84.
94. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL.
95. Richard Furman, *Exposition on the Views of the Baptists*, 15.
96. Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–17; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 60–61, 72–73; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 27, 33–49; Harding, *There Is a River*, 81–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 82, 163–64; Aptheker, *Negro Revolts*, 273, 279; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 182–85.
97. Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 11–13; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64. Cornelius maintains that international events such as Latin American independence movements and West Indian slave revolts were among the factors which hindered religious instruction.

### 6. *"Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantations Missions and Methodist Impact*

1. Anon., "Letter to the Editor," *Christian Advocate* 4 (January, 1826): 96; Not to be confused with the *Southern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist newspaper.
2. Ibid., 4 (June, 1826): 258–59.
3. See Chapter 5 for references to "Philemon"; *Wesleyan Journal*, July 1, 1826 and July 22, 1826, HSSCC.
4. Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 83–84; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 68–69, 71–72; William W. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 291–92; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 46–47; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 15, 40–42; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina at Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim and 1–9, 10.
5. Pinckney, *Address*, 11–12.
6. Ibid., 13.
7. Ibid., passim; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 101–53; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 73, 78; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831) 315–17.
8. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 70–71; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860," (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16, Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 81–83; Andrew, "Slave Population," 291–92, 315–17; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 161–66.
9. Andrew, "Slave Population," 316–19; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71.
10. L.J.C. Lambert to Methodist Conference, South Carolina, January 10, 1829, HSSCC; "Statistical Report," *MMQR* (1828): 40; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288, 292–293; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 45–47. Much of the work of religious instruction in coastal Georgia was done by a Presbyterian, Charles Col-

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cock Jones. But Jones began about ten years after Capers. See Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 39–45 and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155–57.

11. Andrew, "Slave Population," 314–15.

12. Ibid., 316–19, 322.

13. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 356–61, 365–66, 452–53, 460–62; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 350–62. For a different, more sympathetic view of the Methodists, see Sidney G. Diamond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), passim, especially 18–41, 87–103, 254–73.

14. Andrew, "Slave Population," 321.

15. Letter about the life of George W. Moore, missionary to the slaves in South Carolina, written at the time of his death in 1863 (name of writer of the letter is illegible), HSSCC; Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; *CAJ*, March 16, 1932. Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Pinckney, *Address*, 23, (Appendix); Andrew, "Slave Population," 314; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 66–69. Both Jackson and Fickling take the position that the South Carolina Conference made the first moves toward religious instruction. They probably got this impression from Jones, *Religious Instruction*. In Georgia, two associations were formed by planters for religious instruction in 1830–31. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155.

16. *CAJ*, April 12, 1833, January 22, 1836; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, January 9, 1839, 14–18, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288–91, 295–96; Andrew, "Slave Population," 315–16; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 72–73.

17. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer letter, n.d. (between 1835 and 1836), SHC; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 90–91; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 93–96; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, *CAJ*, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 86; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96.

18. Van Rensselaer letter, SHC.

19. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

20. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 78–79; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

21. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 74–80; Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–18; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 86–87. For an excellent treatment on this surge of activity, see Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4.

22. *CAJ*, May 3, 1833, October 22, 1833.

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23. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Virginia C. Holmgren, *Hilton Head: A Sea Island Chronicle* (Hilton Head, S. C.: Hilton Head Publishing, 1959) 61–67; James Kirk to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 12, 1833, HSSCC.

24. Holmgren, *Hilton Head*, 130–31; William Pope, Sr. to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

25. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834: James Sealy to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

26. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

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27. George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of*

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175 *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University 19 (1941): 3, 7; Wilfred D. Hambley, "Initiation of Boys in Angola," *American Anthrologist*, 37, ser. 2, (1935): 36–40.

28. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

29. Ibid. and June 20, 1934.

175 30. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–90. The First African Church's association with white ministers and with the regional Baptist Association was anything but smooth. Because many members were slaves, the African Church was subjected to jurisdictions contrary to Baptist policy. In January 1833, Marshall was barred from preaching in his own pulpit, and the Church expelled from Georgia's Sunbury Association. This struggle and turmoil lasted for five years. The Church managed to keep its status, but lost many members before returning to the good graces of white Baptists. See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–94.

31. *CAJ*, October 4, 1833.

32. Ibid.

175 33. John Coburn to the Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 16, HSSCC.

34. John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 14, 1834, January 31, 1834, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836. Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, July 29, 1836; Pierce Butler to James Smith; March 19, 1839, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 38 Letterbook 1838–1840, HSP; *SCA*, June 26, November 13, 1840.

35. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 9, 1839, 18 and December 25, 1844, 19, HSSCC.

36. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14, HSSCC; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 71–72; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 35; *SCA*, February 23, 1844; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, January 13, 1847, 11, and February 10, 1855, 18, HSSCC; *SCA*, May 25, 1855; *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 13, 1860, HSSCC; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 188.

175 37. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but see especially 3–7, 91–93, 119–20, 135–36, 89–91, 597–98, 658–59; Records of Coffin Point Plantation, St. Helena Island, 1800–1821, SCHS; John Stapleton Papers, St. Helena, 1790–1839, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, Beaufort Township Library; Kemble, *Journal*, 42–45, 75; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tumber, Portrait of A Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986) 30, 55; Diary of Laura M. Towne, Penn School Papers, SHC; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 74–77, 104, 108–12; Major Pierce Butler to John Cooper, March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

38. Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 134–35; R. King, Jr. "On Management of the Butler Estate and Cultivation of Sugar Cane," *Southern Agriculturalist* (December, 1828): 597; Kemble, *Journal*, 42. For a different version, one which views the power of the driver as representing an enlargement of black autonomy for Lowcountry slaves in general, see Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the*

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88.

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21.

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A French Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21.

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal* 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27.

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

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65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

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67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

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70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

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71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

## 7. *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

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1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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17 113 stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

175 797 797 113 [795] 2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10, BC; see Appendix C.[A] Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

175 797 567 113 3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 41, February 18, 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C.[A] see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

175 113 8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839, 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A. [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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•175 113 *of Charleston Meeting*, 5–6, 14; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, October 21, 1841, 4, BC.

12. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 14–15.

13. "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Almira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," John H. Tucker to T. D. Grimke, n.d., early in 1845, SCHS; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72; "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6, November 24, 1849, 7–8, BC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; John B. Adger, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev. J. B. Adger of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*, May 9, 1847 (Charleston: T. W. Haynes, 1847), 12–13, and *Life and Times*, 164–99; Reverend Alexander Glennie, *Sermons Preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844), passim; Charles Colcock Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, 27–33; and *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Savannah: T. Purse, 1844), passim; Reverend A. F. Dickson, *Plantation Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855), passim; Tupper, *Baptist Church of South Carolina*, 317–18; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 71–85; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4; Rev. J. H. Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters. A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of A Church Erected in Charleston, S. C., For the Benefit and Instruction of the Colored Population* (Charleston: Steam-Power Press, 1850), 48–51.

14. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6–7, November 24, November 26, 1853, 10–11, November 25, 1854, 19, November 23, 1855, 12, November 14, 1857, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, November 11, 1843, 66, BC; Benedict, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, 39.

15. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, passim, BC; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 7, 1853, 179, BC; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History: A Historical Sketch of the Old Black Swamp Church," Lawton Family Papers, SCL.

16. See Chapters 3 and 4.

175 113 197 17. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1831, 18–20, BC; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Diary of William P. Hill, 1833–39, SHC (Hill was a Universalist from Maine who went South for health reasons and became a Baptist preacher); Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 67–68; W. H. Dowling, "Black Swamp Church," n.d., SCL; Baker, *Life and Labours*, 144–45, 157, 169–73.

18. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed. "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 34–36.

17 19. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–36.

113 20. *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Stoney, "*Autobiography of Grayson*," 34–37.

21. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 154–55.

(194) 22. Racial designations were not yet indicated nor names of slaves included on membership rolls. But the slaves' acceptance into the church was recorded in the Minutes. *Minutes,*

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 57–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–99.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Laborers*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller, 140–58;* Smith, *In His Image, But,* 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerasulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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175 113 567 BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145, 147, 151.

[795] [794] 46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197; November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

175 113 47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

175 113 795 794 49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

175 113 685 [795] [794] 55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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57. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Allen Diary, 37, 71, 87–88; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Whipple, July 3, 1863, AMA; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 32–33, 40–41.

58. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 377; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 674; Allen Diary, 32, 143; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158–59, 162, 179–81, III (3) 273–75.

59. Allen Diary, 47–48, 103, 118, 136; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 150–54, 164–65.

60. Allen Diary, 48, 62, 72, 84.

61. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 456–58.

62. Ibid., 124.

63. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, March 31, 1849, 133, May 5, 1849, 134, June 30, 1849, 135, BC.

64. Thomas Wentworth Higginson to Louisa Higginson, October 23, 1863, Papers of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Allen Diary, 91–92; Typescript copy of Diary of Laura M. Towne (varies from Ms. Diary), April 3, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. I, SHC. Theodore Rosengarten perhaps in support of arguments favoring paternalism on the Sea Islands (a point on which we disagree), maintains that black sentiments toward masters "were sometimes not always understood or accurately rendered by the people who solicited information." He cites by example, Laura Towne's reaction to Clarence Fripp's relationship with his slave Rachel. They lived together openly, and during the war, Fripp deeded over his plantation to Rachel. Towne said Fripp "led an infamous life, too bad to write of, to vile to speak of." Rosengarten implies that Towne's disgust toward Fripp centered on his living with Rachel. Yet Laura Towne was not so naive as to condemn Fripp for this alone, However, she was very upset upon learning that Clarence and his two brothers passed Rachel around for sexual favors. "She lived with her master and his two brothers infamously and her children are almost white," wrote Towne. Thus Towne reacted to the wanton license exercised by the Fripps toward slave women. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 166; Towne Diary Typescript, February 14, 1864, Penn School Papers, vol. 2, SHC.

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65. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 162–274; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 358–61, 450–53; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 34; Fripp Diary, 60; Allen Diary, 103; Towne Diary, 14, 20.

66. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 214–20; Towne Diary Typescript, April 3, 1862; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 593.

67. *Minutes, Prince William Baptist Church*, May 20, 1865, 107, SCL.

68. March 14, 1824, in Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Black Swamp Church Mss., SCL; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 138; William Tillinghast, *Address to Baptist Ministers of the U. S. Who Hold Slaves by A Minister of the Ministerial Conference of the Black River Association* (Antwerp:, 1845), New-York Historical Society.

69. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 3–4; November 25, 1849, 9, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, April 9, 1841, 15, BC.

70. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1839, 9, BC.

71. Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 158–61; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 201; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

72. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 374–76.

73. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 155; Laura M, Towne to Wendell Phillips Garrison, June 8, 1867, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room Cornell University.

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•175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[195] [797] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[193] [797] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 113 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### 8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 175 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 113 797 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn., 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 113 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

799 795 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779) [795]

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81.

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 175 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. [701]

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977). 113

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5. 113 626 794

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70. 113 175

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22. [794] [592]

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592. [576]

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Winter, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13. [431]

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

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15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

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19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

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21. Mikell, *Charist Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Charist Wheels*; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

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24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Devouin People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Globo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* I (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Sociein and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

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202, 210–12; Gibbs, "The Kpelle," 221–22; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 666–68, 670–72. The fact that initiation into society was not peculiar to Windward Coast and Gambia groups has been mentioned in Chapter 2. Yet its existence elsewhere could reinforce the Poro and Sande influence since no initiation process was as pervasive and germane to sacred and secret life as these associations and their equivalents under different names. In other African-American societies, such as Jamaica, there is evidence of Poro power in socialization and group authority. This is reflected through the Jonkonnu masquerade tradition. Masks were central to some African Poro and Sande means of expression, leadership concealment, and instilling obedience through intimidation. The masquerade and other apparent manifestations of Poro power have been discussed by researchers of Jamaican history and culture. The mask-wearing conveys "supernatural authority" in the Jamaican Jonkonnu, but appears in a "secular/entertainment context." Mask-wearing has no part in Gullah culture but this may be the result of Gullah incorporation of secret society elements into Christianity. In Jamaica, where little Christian instruction of slaves was conducted, the masquerade and festive aspects of the association could continue, whereas there was no base upon which the religious element could remain. Also, covering the face with ash, as done by Gullahs, may be a substitute for the mask and for clay, since both are used in African supernatural and spiritual rituals. For an account of the relationship of Poro and Jamaican culture, see Cheryl Ryman, "Jonkonnu, A Neo-African Form," Part I, *Jamaica Journal* 17, no. 2 (May, 1984): 50–56.

26. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 2–5, 21–22; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), 219–20, 231–32, Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 351; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–14; Little, *Mende*, 121; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 669–674; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–100.

27. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1846; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 145, 162; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152; Kemble, *Journal*, 84.

28. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–16; Little, *Mende*, 183–85, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 204–5; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 355; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 5; John H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive BaKongo* (London: Seeley, Service, 1914), 100–102; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 71 (November–April, 1890–91): 826–27.

29. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 176–86, 222–26; Little, "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–200; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 670–71; *SCA*, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; Lawton, "Religious Life," 138–43; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152.

30. Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 673–74; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 214, n. 1; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 15–21; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 228–29; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 103.

31. Towne Diary, 52.

32. Thorpe to Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

33. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 17; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 671–73; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–104.

34. Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York; Harper & Brothers, 1849), I: 231; *SCA*, August 111, 1843.

35. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 145–46; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, and March 6, 1863, AMA; Laura Towne to J. M. McKim, July 1 and August 2, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rarebook Room, Cornell University, AMA; Towne Diary, 75, 104.

36. Lyell, *Second Visit*, I: 269–70; Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion of the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 34–37.

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37. *SCA*, April 18, 1843.

38. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20–22; Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99.

39. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99; 199; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 22–23; Higginson, *Army Life*, 41; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672.

40. Allen Diary, 155; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 199; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xii; Wister, "Recollections," 17.

41. Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20; Wister, "Recollections"; Sumner to Clark, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, SHC; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xii; Cooley, *School Acres*, 150–51; Towne Diary, 83.

42. John Beattie, *Other Cultures* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 229; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 190; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36.

43. Erika Bourguignon, "Ritual Dissociation and Possession Belief in Caribbean Negro Religion," in Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John F. Szwed, eds., *Afro-American Anthropology. Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 96–97; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–3; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 349–50, 359–65; Sciela S. Walker, *Ceremonial Spirit Possession in Africa and Afro-America* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 3–9, 52–58.

44. Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36–40.

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### *10. Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

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2. Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4.

3. *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 11, 1843, January 19, 1844, August 20, 1847, May 5, 1844.

4. South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

5. James Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, or the Life of an American Slave* (New York: H. Dayton, 1860), 150.

6. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

7. Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr. from 1906 ed.), 253–54; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 64, 75, Penn School Papers, SHC; Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

8. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 252; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–83; Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27, WPA, SCL; T. W. Richardson to Rev. George Whipple, September 14, 1863, AMA.

9. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 31–32; George W. Ellis, *Negro Culture in West Africa* (New York: Neale Publishing, 1914), 70; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969, repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 236–37; Dennis Benjamin, *The Gbandes, A People of the Liberian Hinterland* (Chicago: Nelson-

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# CHAPTER 2

## THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

### 2.0 Overview

128 Section 2.1 describes the culture which developed in coastal South Carolina during the period of early European and West African settlement. The history of Georgetown County is summarized briefly in section 2.2, with a fuller discussion devoted to a closed community of West African heritage within this county in section 2.3.

### 2.1 Culture of Coastal South Carolina

• 175 Among the malaria-infested marshlands of coastal South Carolina, a culture developed between the early and mid-1700's, to which the roots of a distinctive Southern heritage might be traced. As the major port of entry of African slaves imported first from Barbados, and then directly from West Africa, Charleston and its environs provided both a center for acculturation into the ways of the European landowners, as well as a constantly renewed source of contact with West African cultural traditions. Acculturation of the European settlers into the ways of the Africans was inevitable as the population of the Carolina territory became predominately West African in origin by 1720, a dominance lasting

•175 into the late 1700's. The significance of this population balance for setting the tone for subsequent development of this important English colony has been largely overlooked. Unlike other major immigrant groups who colonized the Atlantic coast, the West African group brought no written language through which to preserve a record of its activities in the early colonization. Inheritors of a vigorous oral tradition, the settlers from West Africa brought stories, customs, and traditions which are as yet preserved only sporadically in written form by folklorists and in Southern short stories and novels. As the two groups from northern Europe and western Africa lived and worked together in approximately equal numbers, a new culture evolved which has been different enough from mainstream culture in the United States to evoke stereotyping, and which bears testimony to the impact which West African traditions has had upon its development.

121 The Southern heritage which took root in this colony and spread west to Mississippi, and even into Texas in later years, embraced many complex patterns of human interaction: a hospitality familiar to the chiefs' homes in southern Nigeria; an orientation to family and kinship strong enough to foster jokes about Southern cousins; musical and story-telling traditions which defy description as a blend of their two major sources, and yet seem different from either; and distinctive speech patterns which have been used by various dramatists and novelists to evoke humor and scorn, while

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121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
147 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
• 175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

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## 2.2 History of Georgetown and Its Environs

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In the earliest days of the Carolina colony, the Georgetown area served as a frontier for the first permanent settlement at Charleston. The port at Charleston had been successfully established by a small group of planters and slaves from Barbados in 1670. European settlers in the Georgetown district engaged in Indian trade and supplied naval stores for the Charleston port. The major trade of the Carolina colony initially was with European colonies in the West Indies; Carolina functioned almost as a colony of Barbados and other Caribbean islands (Wood, 1974), supplying food for the labor force of the sugar plantations and wood for the barrels in which the finished product was shipped. The economic base of the colony and of the Georgetown district changed as rice cultivation became established around 1730. One of two new ports opened at this time to handle the growing rice trade, Georgetown was soon surrounded by large rice plantations. According to figures provided by Rogers' history of Georgetown County (1970), the Georgetown district was producing almost half of the total U.S. rice crop by 1840. Its sister port to the south of Charleston, Port Royal, came nowhere near this production level. Except for two decades of indigo cultivation to supply the English trade when the French and Indian Wars cut off England's previous source in the French West Indies, rice remained the economic base of the district until the late 1800's. In the period following

175 the Civil War, a combination of planter bankruptcy, successive years of disastrous flood tides, and the opening up of lands further west which could be cultivated by machinery instead of expensive hand labor, put an end to the rice economy. The economic base of the district again became chiefly forest products. In the early 1900's the former rice plantations were bought up by rich Northern industrialists for use as vacation homes, bringing welcome outside money to an economically depressed region.

175 567 The close relationship between rice as Georgetown's economic base and the large numbers of African immigrants brought to this district can be seen in the South Carolina figures for slave importation during the period of the establishment of rice as a major crop. Rogers reports, "From 1720 through 1726 the average annual importation was 616 slaves. The average for the years 1731-1738 was 2,089. The opening up of the lands around Georgetown was one of the chief reasons for the increase" (1970:29). Most of the slaves were bought in Charleston and then transported up to Georgetown by boat through Winyah Bay. A few, however, were brought directly from West Africa through the Georgetown port, with 112 in 1774 being the largest number reported by Rogers. For a five-year period between 1735 and 1740, a full seventy percent of the slaves brought to South Carolina seem to have come from the Angola region of Africa (Wood, 1974:335), long considered a possible source of the term Gullah used for both

175 the coastal blacks and for their language. Other large
567 numbers came from the Coast of Guinea, Gambia, the Gold Coast, the Windward Coast, and other undesignated parts of West Africa. Very few originated in the West Indies during this period. From reports of travellers and missionaries, indications are that the earliest slaves imported from the West Indies around 1700 spoke a more standard variety of English than did the large number of immigrants who came directly from West Africa (Wood, 1974:175). Hancock (1975) maintains that the variety of English spoken in Barbados, the source of the first South Carolina slaves, was never a creole, but was a local metropolitan variety of English. For the direct ancestor of Gullah, Hancock posits a Guinea Coast Creole which developed in the latter half of the sixteenth century on the upper Guinea Coast, and was brought to the new colony by the slavers and immigrants from that area. While the time and place of origin of the language adopted by the immigrants from West Africa may be impossible to determine with certainty, the conditions for the development of an interlanguage were present. Large numbers of people were uprooted from their homelands and cultural traditions and thrown together with others of similar status, speaking several different languages and needing to communicate with each other on a frequent basis.

175 The language background of the European settlers in the Georgetown district was primarily English, although some

175 French Huguenot families were in their number and were allowed to use the Book of Common Prayer in a French version (Rogers, 1970:20). The early landowners were usually sons of English and French planters in the Charleston area, trying their luck in the northern frontier. To the west of Georgetown proper, in what is now Williamsburg County, townships were established by Scots-Irish and Welsh settlers. Scots were frequently merchants and officeholders in the district. From such a mixture, it is safe to assume that it was not always the standard English dialect of southern England which was spoken by the European landowners and their overseers to the West African slaves. The McDavids (1951) and others have noted the preservation of seventeenth century English dialect forms in isolated Gullah-speaking areas.

175 562 (162) Very early in the history of the Georgetown district, Africans outnumbered Europeans. Federal census figures of 1830 indicate that 1,940 white persons and 18,000 persons of color (both slave and free) resided in the district (Wikramanayake, 1973). An important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which constituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite. A Grand Jury Presentment in Georgetown for the fall term of 1835 reported

175 that ten masters of 1,700 slaves had been absent from their
567 property for the last twelve months, and that some 15,000 slaves on the tide swamp plantations were managed by no more than forty proprietors during the summer months (Wikramanayake, 1973:158-9). The general picture which emerges of the district in the century between 1730 and 1830 is that of a region whose population was overwhelmingly of West African descent, whose economy was based on intensive hand labor of a crop familiar to many of these immigrants in their homelands, and whose most prevalently spoken language was an English creole.

175 While in its more prosperous days Georgetown was a cultural center and was far from isolated either economically or socially from other populous centers in the state its position after the Civil War was one of geographic isolation in important respects. With the fall of the plantation economy, boat traffic along the extensive network of rivers in the county was no longer reliable nor frequent. The rivers and marshes which had provided the flood waters for the rice fields impeded the building of roads. As late
484 as 1918, a trip inland to the state capitol, some one hundred miles away, could be a two-day trip over unmarked sand or mud roads (Vaughan, 1969). Until the major bridges were built to span the rivers emptying into Winyah Bay in the early twentieth century, a trip from rural areas to the county seat at Georgetown for supplies or legal transactions could

162 Wadmalaw has 2,024 people. There are 963 males and 1,061 females. The median age is 19.6 years. Forty-seven point three percent are under eighteen years and 6.8% of the island's people are 65 years old and over. Over 90% of Wadmalaw's population is Black.

Tonges (St. Pauls) Island has 9,235 residents; 6,314 of this total are Black. The median age is 19.9 years. Forty-six point five per cent of the population is under eighteen years and 6.7% 65 years old and older.

Edisto has 1,374 residents. There are 672 males and 702 females. The median age is 19.7 years. Nine per cent of this community is 65 years and over, 46.1% are under eighteen years old. One thousand one hundred and fifteen of Edisto's population is Black.

BLACK SEA ISLAND FAMILIES

361 Black islanders generally live on the inner acreage of the islands. This pattern exists and has been maintained for a number of reasons: (a) a strong agricultural history in which farmers built homes on or close to their planting acreage, (b) long term economic deprivation where Blacks could not afford new homes which in part contributed to (c) the generational building habit of constructing newer dwellings either close to or as extensions of existing houses.

[175] With the exception of (imported) Black city and military

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[551] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their
484 residence since and before the turn of the century. While many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth - versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encoutors to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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•175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- [248] tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who [197] grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

'If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

175 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special 567 quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[4]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[5] in the broom-sedge

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[197] [4]Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[5]How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves 567 died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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•175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.' Living close to nature they are

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[567] case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognising him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

'This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

[113] For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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19 fied form of English," both in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, with elision of difficult sounds, shortening of words, modification of every difficult enunciation, and a minimum of forms for person, number, case, and tense.

Thus, simple to begin with and uniformly responsive to all possible leveling influences, Gullah is as nearly an uninflected tongue as it is possible to conceive.

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19 •175 567 "George Philip Krapp in "The English of the Negro" (*American Mercury*, June, 1925) gives the following conjectural picture of its origins: "The assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once. Though the historical evidence is not as full as might be wished, the stages can be followed with some certainty. When the Negroes were first brought to America they could have known no English. Their usefulness as servants, however, required that some means of communication between master and slave should be developed. There is little likelihood that any masters exerted themselves to understand or to acquire the native language of the Negroes in order to communicate with them. On the contrary, from the very beginning the white overlords addressed themselves in English to their black vassals. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of English this would be. It would be a very much simplified English—the kind of English some people employ when they talk to babies. It would probably have no tenses of the verb, no distinctions of case in nouns or pronouns, no marks of singular or plural. Difficult sounds would be eliminated, as they are in baby talk. Its vocabulary would be reduced to the lowest possible elements. In short, it would be a language of very much the same kind as those which have developed elsewhere under similar circumstances. It would have resemblances to the Beach-la-Mar of the Western Pacific, the Pidgin English of China, and the Chinook jargon of western America. As the Negroes imported into America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another, they themselves were driven to the use of this infantile English in speaking to one another."

See also a similar account by *James Weldon Johnson, The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1925, pp. 42, 43.

The actual historical picture is thus sketched by Mr. Bennett: "At the time of the arrival of these negroes in the American provinces a considerable proportion of the population was composed of white bondsmen, indentured mechanics and 'redemptioners', the laborers of the colony, among whom the newly-arrived negroes learned their English. Their vocabularies were small and very markedly dialectal, in the majority of instances a dialect which had been handed down from father to son for several generations, preserving closely the peculiarities of earlier times, in many cases Elizabethan and Jacobean.

"The Africans, plastic as they are by nature, quickly lost their own language, and acquired imperfectly the dialects of the British peasantry among whom they worked, and by whom very generally they were directed. The main reason was, perhaps, that, at the height of the trade, owing to the danger of conspiracy, large groups of negroes upon great plantations and in any considerable establishments, were generally made up, by preference, of negroes of different tribes, speaking languages and dialects unknown to one another. They were mostly young, for youth retains no lasting memories and acquires a new language with greater ease.

"The new negroes were parcelled out among the early bond-servants, and, later, among the trained servants, preventing their congregating in a body, hastening their familiarity with their new duties, and more quickly learning the language of their monitors and wardens. This plan was operative from very early days in obliterating the many African dialects and tongues native to the Negro slaves." Personal letter to Professor Yates Snowden, of the University of South Carolina, Jan. 23, 1918.

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origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

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But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

[6] Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.

[7] Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.

[8] Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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•175 These transplanted New Englanders were outstanding people, and undoubtedly made their influence felt in South Carolina just as it always has been in Georgia. The center of Revolutionary ideas was in their community at Midway. It sent two signers of the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, and among its notables were six foreign missionaries and eighty-two ministers. When the British burned their church, during the Revolution, the members built another—in 1792—that was a replica of the Congregational churches seen throughout New England; and, when the parishes became counties after the Revolution, they called theirs Liberty County. Although the members of this church—organized in Massachusetts, removed to South Carolina, and then to Georgia—had been in the South for generations, their sympathies were clearly with their Northern co-religionists: their pastors came from New England and one of them was the Calvinist, the Reverend Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Under these conditions it is unlikely that they omitted the use of the *Bay Psalm Book*, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1640), of which the revised and enlarged edition of 1651 was called the *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments*. The first edition having been adopted by nearly every congregation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, there is no reason to believe that it was any less popular with the God-fearing colonists who went to the Southern outposts. The slaves of the group of Puritans who had settled on the Ashley River probably sang *Spiritual Songs*[9] with their owners just as the slaves of their descendants at Midway undoubtedly did. In all likelihood the name "spiritual" struck the fancy of the Negroes, and accounts for its application to the songs of their own composition. Naturally enough these songs had little in common with the hymns sung with the white people, and were used only at such services as took place—apart from the slave-owners—during the week at prayer meeting held at the praise-house or the cabin of a deacon, or at a "settin'-up" or a funeral.

(533) Before the year 1800 the old hymn book, which had gone through more than

church, but in the South, they have always been welcomed—a survival of an earlier custom. If I had known this when I first went to St. Simon's I could have learned what I needed to find out without the delay to which I was subjected. But I was from the North—and was told nothing about the Negro. Before the first World War pushed the War Between the States into the background, anyone who hailed from New England was suspect if he showed an interest in the colored people. This attitude still exists in certain places on the South Carolina coast. To those who know the unsavory record of Northern carpet-baggers, such a situation is not surprising.

[9] Before 1745. Spiritual Songs for Children, by J. Wright, was published by John Newbery.

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175 533 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)

> Narrow road is Heaven road
> Believer I know
> With here and there a traveller
> Believer I know
> The broad road is Hell road
> Believer I know
> Thousand walk together there
> Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy. 533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to 123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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CHAPTER ONE

## *Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation*

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

533 177 178 The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration provided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

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[1] In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.

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533 through the corrections that are likely to follow—which may perhaps be a quicker way.

As already mentioned, the lack of a system of musical signs is a serious handicap which interferes with a better knowledge of the authentic slave songs, and makes any estimate of their age pure guesswork. Nevertheless, we do know that 533 twenty blacks from Guinea were sold from a Dutch man-of-war to the tobacco •175 planters of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Sometime between that date and, let us say, 1760, these songs probably assumed the characteristics they now bear, for they appear to have become as crystallized by 1776 as folksongs ever are. But unless old church or family records turn up describing the musical reaction of the slaves to their owners' interest in the salvation of their souls, we are unlikely to find out when, how, or where the songs originated.

533 The slave songs or "ant'ems,"[3] as they were sometimes called in Georgia before the Civil War and are called in the Bahamas to this day, may have resulted from a spark of divine fire; and the blacks, like so much tinder, may have carried them far and wide through the agency of the slave markets or the removal of the planters from one state to another. Then again, they may have been the outcome of nothing more than an elaboration of simple African themes under the influence of the richer harmonies of the Colonial planters. In other words, the tunes may represent a gradual development over a period of a hundred and fifty years, rather than a full-blown inspiration.

175 For all we know, the songs may have originated in Virginia, for there were two 533 hundred thousand blacks in the state at the time of the first census in 1790. It is possible, however, that South Carolina provided the nursery, as the majority of the Negroes in the coastal section of that state and Georgia who today sing primitive "shout" songs and spirituals are Baptists, and Charleston was one of the first proselyting centers of that denomination in the Colonies between 1684 and 1746. It is on record that the zealous efforts of William Screven caused the Baptist principles to be "widely disseminated throughout that region" and the preponderance of Negro Baptists in all the Low Country of South Carolina and Georgia indicates the success of his activities. But we have only historical data to bolster up any of these suppositions, and the chances are that details concerning the origin of the songs will never be learned.

[3] *Old English for anthem. Diana, from Turk's Island, B. W. I., snorted when I called "Study War No Mo'" and "Who Built the A'k?" spirituals. "Them's not spirituals, them's ant'ems!"*

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Evidence of their pre-Revolutionary existence found in Professor C. L. Edwards' *Bahama Songs and Stories* led me to several of the out islands for the purpose of verification. I discovered that Professor Edwards' book included many tunes and verses still sung, though not consecutively, throughout the "Black Border" of South Carolina and Georgia—a fact explained by the author when he says: "The first settlements were in some cases made by families of loyalists who fled from the American colonies during the Revolution." Miss Mary Moseley, in her *Bahama Handbook*, states that the number of whites and Africans was about equal before the arrival of the American loyalists with their slaves—an influx which doubled the white and trebled the Negro population. Elsewhere, Miss Moseley tells us that the slaves numbered from six to seven thousand, and that the Caicos Islands were originally settled by loyalist refugees from Georgia. Stark's *History of the Bahamas* gives further information about the Georgia contingent: "At the close of the American Revolutionary War, twelve families of loyalists settled here with from two to three hundred slaves; previous to that time there was not more than thirty acres of land cleared in all the Caicos." [4]

Such references explain why "much community of both poetical and musical phrase" came to exist between the songs given in Professor Edwards' collection and those found in sections from which the loyalists fled at the time of the Revolution. In H. E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs*, their common origin appears to be overlooked in the assertion that the Bahama songs "show a higher development than do the slave songs of the States"—a fact which is undeniably true of those found in books, but not of those that have escaped, through isolation, the corrupting influence of such Western music as the Negroes usually hear.

The remoteness of the Bahama out islands accounts for the preservation of the genuine eighteenth-century Negro melodies; and on one of the islands may still be heard the tune that accompanied the "ring-play" called "Emma, You My Darlin'," done on their knees—forty years ago—by the barefooted Negro children of St. Simon's Island. How this game song as well as many of the religious songs given in *Bahama Songs and Stories* came to exist on such widely separated islands as those of the Bahama group and St. Simon's may be explained by local history in two ways.

[4] *Diana, from Turk's Island, told me one of the Caicos Islands was near her old home. Her sister lives there, and I could get plenty of "ant'cms" from her. Bethell, in* The Early Settlers of the Bahamas, *lists the names of one quarter of the two thousand loyalists who took up land on the various islands of the group.*

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The first possibility is that they arrived in both places from the mainland of South Carolina. In 1795, a few years after the exodus of South Carolina and Georgia loyalists to the Bahamas, Major Pierce Butler gave up his estate on the Ashley River near Charleston and established about eight hundred slaves on his rice plantation on Butler's Island and his near-by cotton plantation on the "North End" of St. Simon's. Or the songs may have come from Savannah, via Nassau, with the entourage of Captain Alexander Wylly, a loyalist, who was obliged to flee from Georgia to the Bahamas immediately following the Revolution. However, when England began to consider the abolition of slavery in her colonies, this gentleman—who apparently had slaves to lose—became indignant and returned to Georgia. After he had fought against his friends and relations and suffered exile, it seemed outrageous to him that he should be robbed of his property. The fact that a thriving trade existed at that time between Nassau and Darien, only a few miles—by water—north of St. Simon's, and the ease with which he could transport his family and his belongings to this island, probably account for his choosing it as a final resting-place.

In addition to the circumstantial proof of the age of the songs given by history, there is also evidence of continuity of development in the singing of such old Bahama Negroes as Elvira Albury of Harbor Island, born in 1849, and Isabella Bean of Eleuthera, born before 1860, and of such centenarians as Liverpool, born on St. Simon's in 1828, and Janey Jackson, also born on St. Simon's in 1826—to say nothing of Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County in 1844. At the same time it would be reassuring to have more references in books concerning the character of the songs of the slaves. William Bartram provides in a brief passage in his *Travels* the only eighteenth-century description of Negro music I have been able to find.[8] Apparently he was favorably impressed with what he heard and saw on a model plantation in Georgia, on the banks of the Savannah River. In a description of life on board a slave ship that occurs in *Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Slaver* (1827–1847), there is presented in the following words a pleasanter picture of the Middle Passage than is usually given us: "During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed while on deck to unite in African melodies which they always enhance by an extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle." This short paragraph contains the only admission I have seen in ante-bellum books that the slaves brought their "melodies" with them. (Illustration 6).

[8] "The sooty sons of Africa, forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung the virtues and beneficence of their master in songs of their own composition." (April, 1776)

A. [For Illustration 6, see Category 142, plate facing p. 33.—Analyst]

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Of all the descriptions of slave music that have come down to us, there is none to equal in closeness of observation those given by Fanny Kemble in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*. The fact that she was a musician as well as an actress no doubt accounts for the keenness of her perception.[6] The lines that follow have been so widely quoted that I hesitate to give them again, yet it would be unfair to leave them out of such an account as this, since they apply so perfectly to the singing of the descendants of the very slaves who inspired them.

"The high voices all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these . . . performances. With a very little skillful adaptation and instrumentation, I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make the fortune of an opera."

Although Liverpool, the last of the Pierce Butler slaves, claimed to remember his former mistress, her anti-slavery views[7]—voiced to the slaves and the free alike—clearly fell on deaf ears, for the patriarchal Negro lost no opportunity to tell what a fine master he had, and when explaining that he was "Butler born," he invariably added, "an' Butler I shall be until I die." Seated on the whiffletree bar of his ox cart, (Illustration 4)[A] accompanied by a few descendants of other Butler slaves, this Negro with the courtly dignity of the Old South gave such a dramatic demonstration of ante-bellum singing for the benefit of his Maussa's granddaughter, Lady Butler, as the actress herself would have approved. With whole-hearted fervor and more accuracy and sweetness of tone than one would have expected from a centenarian, Liverpool proved what I have so often noticed: that primitive Negro music is more dependent upon the perfection of its rhythm and the precision that a good leader can inspire in the responses of the chorus, than upon the virtuosity of the individual.

In the Negroes' lack of concern for mere sweetness of sound as an end—with their major interest invariably shown in rhythm, in the melodic balance of a song, and in the performance of the group as a whole—can be seen the same fundamental approach as is displayed in primitive African sculpture. Some examples, dug up by Leo Frobenius at Ife, on the Niger River, are believed by him to belong to the tenth century. This date is of interest in giving an idea of the age of the African cul-

[6] It is unfortunate, however, that her capacity for self-identification led her astray when the atrocity tales told by her husband's slaves aroused her emotions.

[7] Her Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838–39, was first published, for purposes of propaganda, in 1863.

A. [For Illustration 4, see Category 142, plate facing p. 32--Analysis]

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533 534 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted. [202]

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Lomax once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

[21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.* [175]

[22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.* [171]

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144.—Analyst]

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181 aloof, and never lose a chance to mislead and to poke fun at the white man behind his back. But I have noticed that they often reflect the treatment meted out to them in slave days. Geoffrey Gorer, in *Africa Dances*, calls attention to this fact: "If you can watch a man dealing with negroes you have no need to ask his opinion about them; and if you can watch a man's negroes you will know the chief points of his character. They mirror their masters faithfully and terribly." This approach has always interested me, and I have traced the ancestry and former ownership of many of our Glynn County Negroes. Cusie [9] Sullivan provided me with a striking exemplification of Gorer's statement. His good manners excited my curiosity, and when I encountered his father, Ben, at a Negro funeral, they were explained. Mrs. Shadman, who had known Cusie's grandfather, Bilali, gave me his history. He was the butler at the Couper plantations, at Cannon's Point on St. Simon's, and at Hopeton on the Altamaha River. The courtesy of the three generations of Sullivans known to Mrs. Shadman is a tribute to the genuine distinction of the Couper family.[10]

181 567 175

However, the self-respecting dignity [11] of this group of Negroes undoubtedly had its roots in Africa. Sir Charles Lyell devotes considerable space to a description of life on Hopeton plantation and to "African Tom." [12] Lyell tells us: "Under the white overseer, the principal charge . . . is given to 'Old Tom,' the head driver, a man of superior intelligence and higher cast of feature. He was the son of a prince of the Foulah tribe [West Soudan], and was taken prisoner, at the age of fourteen, near Timbuctoo. The accounts he gave of what he remembered of the plants and geography of Africa have been taken down in writing by Mr. Couper, and confirm many of the narratives of modern travelers. He has remained a strict Mahometan, but his numerous progeny of jet-black children and grandchildren, all of them

[9] *In West African Studies, Miss Kingsley says that among the Fanti Negroes a boy born on Sunday is called Quisi.*

[10] *By the same token, one of my most helpful singers—Ben Davis—who was trained from early childhood by Mrs. Shadman, mirrors the thoughtful dependability of her character.*

[11] *Egerton, in African Majesty, makes it very clear that he was impressed with the great dignity and presence of the uncle of the King of Bangangté in the French Cameroons. The many wives of the King also excited his admiration: "They were dignified, self-possessed and definitely regal."*

[12] *Professor James A. Grant of Darien, tells me that his great-grandfather, Thomas (called Carcastone among his own people), was a driver on the Couper plantations. In his youth he had heard his grandfather, Thomas (brother of the Couper's Bilali), say that he was named for his father who was an African prince and a Mohammedan. Apparently "African Tom" and Bilali's father, Thomas, were one and the same.*

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181 marked by countenances of a more European cast than those of ordinary negroes,
569 have exchanged the Koran for the Bible. . . . During the last war [1812] when Ad-
• 195 miral Cockburn was off this coast with his fleet, he made an offer of freedom to all the slaves belonging to the father [John Couper] of my present host, and a safe convoy to Canada.[13] Nearly all would have gone, had not African Tom, to whom they looked up with great respect, declined the proposal. He told them he had first known what slavery was in the West Indies, and had made up his mind that the English were worse masters than the Americans. About half of them, therefore, determined to stay on St. Simon's Island, and not a few of the others who accepted the offer and emigrated had their lives shortened by the severity of the climate in Canada."

Z. Kingsley, in his *Treatise on the Patriarchal Form of Society*, published some time before 1829, cites "two instances to the southward [of Charleston], where gangs of negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers . . . and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Afri-
cans, and professors of the Mohammedan religion." It is clear that Kingsley had
(212) John Couper's "Old Tom" in mind, and that the other Mohammedan was Spaulding's Bilali,[14] whose so-called *Diary*, written in Arabic, on Sapelo Island, is now in the possession of the Georgia State Library in Atlanta. Pages from the *Diary* have been incorporated in the end-paper designs of this book.

212 This manuscript has aroused keen interest among anthropologists, and the
569 photostatic copy I sent to Melville J. Herskovits has been translated by Joseph Greenberg.[15] During the summer of 1939 Mr. Greenberg visited Northern Nigeria, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, and through his fluent knowledge of Arabic won the confidence of educated Malams in the city of Kano. They assisted him in deciphering certain parts of the "diary" and in locating the places in an important Mohammedan legal work [16] from which most of the manuscript derives. It is amusing that the first result of Mr. Greenberg's study was to

[13] Admiral Cockburn harried our coast during the War of 1812, and as late as January, 1815, destroyed the orange orchards on Cumberland Island.

[14] Charles S. Wylly, in Seed Sown in Georgia, tells us how, in 1813, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding, relied upon Bilali to aid in the protection of his property on Sapelo with its "five hundred slaves, many fresh from . . . Africa."

[15] A résumé of the results of his work has been published in the Journal of Negro History, July, 1940.

[16] The Risala of 'abu Muhammad 'abdullah b. 'abi Zaid 'alquairawani.

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175 Yarraboh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
569 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
185 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
194 This fact raises still another interesting question.
191

Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika," [20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

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Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

[55] 190

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175 had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to
567 Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times
[782] each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and pray-
ing sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority." [22]

124 Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old
notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two
Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others.
822 Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the
175 Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the
567 deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

[21] *Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lent, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."*

[22] *It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.*

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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
669 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
[822] did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
[354] or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
[775] kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
[782] were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in* West African Travels, *that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

[25] *A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used*
[177] *to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.*

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175 her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him
567 by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went
764 to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

764 In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed
171 in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our
764 Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine
[775] torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away
[784] a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress,
[777] you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored
764 man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in
775 piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry
775 it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[775] [28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the
567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa." [36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the Wanderer, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between
538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations
171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] J. A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."

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•175 567 [159] gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's 567 appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of 757 her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old 159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, 175 and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her [683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in* [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

[2] Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."

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533 [177] them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it, either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping, which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to 1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

175 567 Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820 to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was "sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

175 567 533 [177] 175 533

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CHAPTER FIVE

## *Religious Songs*

533 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro, 175 the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black [533] population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections.

121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

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794 796 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

•195 159 This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about (533) 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of (291) the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her (829) family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533 539

I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[171] [22] *The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."*

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
567 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(342) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"
—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
(243) a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
(162) there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
567 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
(164) for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
743 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
799 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
114

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners, on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[38] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[38] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense
[177] tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers (101) 101 175 567

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113)

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101 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence
•175 as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate
567 that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fanter, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor
174 Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

• 175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (567) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-(178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 177 567 191

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•175 177 191 567 197 Another important factor in the development of Gullah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his language to a lower level when communicating with someone who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.* Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 567 The Civil War and emancipation made very little difference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their 177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

*The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

•175 567 191 197 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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## FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175. 569

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CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

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## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

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131 504 175 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]

133 175 The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens, rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 134 [491] [489] 491 [484] These geographic conditions have also made for the isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discoverye of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.

[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

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arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

### THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

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175 was the first Protestant settlement in North America and the first white settlement near St. Helena Island.[5]

In 1566 Pedro Menendez de Avilés, adelantado and captain-general of Florida and its provinces, erected the presidio San Filipe near the site of Charlesfort, which had been destroyed by Hernando Maurique de Rojas in 1564. Here Spain maintained a garrison for ten years, when the Indians burned the fort after having forced the Spanish to evacuate it.[6] In 1577, however, the Spanish erected Fort San Marcos, a larger and more substantial building, and about it there grew a town of more than sixty houses, for here Spain maintained a garrison and a mission until 1587 when Santa Elena was again abandoned.[7] The activities of the Spanish after the abandonment are not clear, but by 1655 missions had been reopened.

175 797 These missionary efforts were carried on first by Jesuits and later by Franciscans. Spain's frontier policy, unlike that of England, was based upon the mission.[8] At Santa Elena, just as at every other Spanish frontier in North and South America, missionaries, under the protection of a guard and a fort, sought to instruct the Indians in religion, agriculture, and the arts. They settled the barbarous tribes in a village adjacent to the mission-fort, instructed them in the faith, and attempted to teach them the ways of civilized life.

[5] For an account of Ribaut's activities at Port Royal see Connor, *Jean Ribaut.*

[6] For a description of the three forts built on Parris Island in the sixteenth century see A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Site of Charlesfort," in Connor, *Jean Ribaut*, pp. 113-124.

[7] For a comprehensive account of Spanish activities in Georgia and South Carolina, see Herbert E. Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia: A Contribution to the History of One of the Spanish Borderlands.*

[8] H. E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, XXIII, 42-61.

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## THE ANGLO-SPANISH CONFLICT

When Captain William Hilton in 1663 explored the Carolina coast southward from Cape Fear under the auspices of a group of Barbadians, the Anglo-Spanish contest for Santa Elena began. Upon his arrival at Parris Island, Hilton found there a Spanish garrison from San Augustín, and he immediately withdrew to avoid capture.[9] Three years later when Robert Sandford explored this region he found signs of preparations for new buildings on Parris Island and "a faire wooden Crosse of the Spaniards erecton" in the Plaza of the town. Sandford considered Santa Elena, or Port Royal, as he called the territory, the most favorable site for the settlement of a colony and recommended it highly to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina who sent him on the expedition.

Dr. Henry Woodward who went with Sandford remained with the cassique of Santa Elena who gave him "formall possession of the whole Country to hold as Tennant at Will of the right Hono[ble] Lords Proprietors." But the English had to face twenty years of conflict before they could claim the possession of Santa Elena.[10] In this conflict Dr. Woodward played an important role, for his sojourn with the Indians and his subsequent capture by the Spaniards taught him not only the tongues of the natives, but the methods of the Spanish as well.[11]

[9] For the accounts of Hilton, Sandford, and Woodward in the Santa Elena, or Port Royal, territory, see Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, pp. 31-57, 75-107; "Shaftesbury Papers," *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, V, 18-28, 57-82.

[10] Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia*, pp. 28-44.

[11] For a biography of Woodward see Joseph W. Barnwell, "Dr. Henry Woodward, The First English Settler in South Carolina and Some of His Descendants," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VIII, 29-41.

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The impetus for the settlement of Carolina came from Barbados where there was a clamor for more and cheaper lands. Sir John Colleton, a Barbadian planter, interested seven other English noblemen[12] in the Carolina country, and they joined him in a petition to King Charles II for a grant of the region. In 1663 the King issued a charter to these eight Lords Proprietors for all the region from 36° to 31° north latitude and two years later he extended the boundaries north to 36° 30′ and south to 29°.

Following Sandford's recommendation of Port Royal, the Proprietors chose this place as the site for the first settlement of their province.[13] In August, 1669, they sent from England three vessels under the command of Joseph West with about one hundred and fifty settlers. After many hardships and misfortunes, including the wreck of one ship at Barbados and of another at Nevis, the adventurers finally reached Port Royal in March, 1670. Here they learned that the Westoes, a war-like tribe of Indians, had scourged Santa Elena and the northward country as far as Kiawah (Ashley River). Fearful of planting in a region under such conditions, they examined the land and found on St. Helena Island "that the land was good land supplyed with many Peach trees and a competence of timber, a few figg trees and some cedar here and there and

[12] The Earl of Clarendon; the Duke of Albemarle; William, Lord Craven; John, Lord Berkeley; Anthony, Lord Ashley (later Earl of Shaftesbury); Sir George Carteret; Sir William Berkeley.

[13] An earlier settlement had been attempted in 1665 when a company "of adventurers for Carolina," organized at Barbados, located on the Cape Fear River, calling their settlement Charles Town. The settlers abandoned this region in 1667, some going to Albemarle settlement, some to Nansemond County, and some to Boston. See Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719*, pp. 75-93; and *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 148-151, 157-159, 177-208.

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that there was a mile and a half of cleare land fitt and ready to plant."[14] The governor, William Sayle, sent, however, one of the vessels to Kiawah "to viewe that land soe much commended by the Caseeka" of that region. Those waiting at St. Helena soon received word that the land on the Ashley River was "more fit to plant in," and they at once took up anchor for that place, landing at "Albemarle Point," which was soon renamed Charles Town, the first high point on the western bank of the Ashley, where they settled.[15] A few weeks later Spain made this settlement legal by recognizing in the treaty of 1670 all English occupations then actually established.[16]

While Spain conceded Charles Town to England, she did not admit that Santa Elena was English territory. Accordingly, in 1686, the Spanish wiped out the colony of Scots which Lord Cardross had established at Port Royal two years earlier.[17] Coming in three galleys, the Spaniards, aided by a force of Indians, assaulted the Scotch colony of Stuart's Town "where there was not above 25 men in health to oppose them."[18] They burned the settlers' houses and "destroyed and carried away all that they had because (as the Span^ds pretended) they were settled

[14] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 119.

[15] In 1672 another Charles Town (Charleston) was laid out on the east side of the Ashley and soon became the heart of the settlement.

[16] For the treaty see Chalmers, *A Collection of Treaties*, II, 35.

[17] Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732*, pp. 28-30; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 195-196.

[18] "Edward Randolph to the Board of Trade," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 205. For a list of settlers see *ibid.*, p. 292. For an account of the attack see Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof*, pp. 41-43; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, 1685-1690*; Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, p. 31; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 216-217; "Introduction to the Report on General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in B. R. Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 350-351.

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upon their land." The settlers, except several who were killed in action, escaped to Charles Town. Then the Spaniards proceeded to Edisto Island where they sacked the plantations of Governor Morton and Paul Grimball, secretary of the province.

### THE COMING OF THE HOME-SEEKER

The Spanish threat was effective in preventing the establishment of a colony at Port Royal, but it was not sufficient to frighten away the lone settler in search of land and timber. The provincial officials and others settled at Charles Town encouraged the movement southward. Governor John Archdale, in his *Description of Carolina*, expressed himself as being eager to see "the principal place in Carolina, call'd Port-Royal . . . seated with English and Scots in a considerable Body, because 't is a bold Port, and also a Frontier upon the Spaniard at Augustine."[19]

The first person daring enough to take out land on St. Helena Island seems to have been Thomas Nairne who was "imployed by the Generall Assembly of this Province [Carolina] in the quality of an Agent, and itenerary Justice Among the Indians, subject to our Government,"[20] but the warrant for his tract does not appear among the records of this period. The first warrant on record was issued in 1698 and ordered that the surveyor lay out "unto M.r John Steuart a Plantation Containing One Thous.d Acres of Land on y.e Island of St. Helena, being a

[19] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 292.

[20] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*, XXIV, 632; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Journal of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, 1710-1715*. For the subsequent history of Thomas Nairne and his death at the hands of the Yamasees, see Crane, *Southern Frontier*, *passim*.

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Neck of Land formerly Inhabited by the Pocatalagoes, Lying North West of y.e Lands Settled by M.r Thomas Niern[e]."[21] 1750

Other warrants[22] were issued from time to time, one in 1699, two in 1700, four in 1701, until by 1711 twenty-five warrants for 11,085 acres of land on the Island had been issued.[23] The acreage authorized by these warrants varied in size from 70 to 1,018 acres with half of the settlers taking out from 200 to 500 acres.[24] In a few instances one person obtained several warrants over a period of two or three years. For example, John Stewart, after having received a warrant for 1,000 acres in 1698, obtained in 1701 three other warrants for a total of 2,590 additional acres. In the meantime land was being taken up slowly on the adjoining islands, and in 1700 the birth of the first white child was recorded.[25] In this year it was reported "that the River of Port Royal becomes every Day better known and more inhabited."[26]

As early as 1706 the settlement around Port Royal was important enough for the provincial officials to recommend the establishment of a garrison there.[27] The earliest mention of the town of Beaufort seems to have been in

[21] A. S. Salley, Jr., *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina, 1692-1711*, p. 152.

[22] The issuance of a warrant for land was the preliminary step in obtaining the land. It did not necessarily follow that a person who obtained a warrant for a given tract of land also obtained the grant, or legal title, for it; nor did it mean that he actually settled there.

[23] Those who had obtained warrants by 1711 were John Stewart, John Watt, Thomas Nairne, John Cowan, John Norton, William Meggett, James Cockran, William Kimball, Daniel Dicks, Arthur Dicks, Randolph Evans, Richard Capers, William Capers, Sarah Norton, John Cowan, Jr., and Edward and Hugh Heat.

[24] Salley, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

[25] Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 366.

[26] Crane, *Southern Frontier*, p. 61n.

[27] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIII, 286.

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1710 when the Lords Proprietors in a meeting on December 20 agreed that a seaport town should be erected at Port Royal in Granville County to be called Beaufort Town.[28] The charter was issued January 17, 1710/11. In 1712 St. Helena's Parish was established by an act of the General Assembly. This act states that "several persons are settled to the southward of Colleton County on Port Royal Island, St. Helena Island, and several adjacent islands in Granville County.[29]

The Yamasee War suddenly interrupted the growth of settlement.[30] The Yamasees, once the friends of the English and Carolina's chief means of destroying Spanish Guale, having been ill treated by some of the traders among them, without warning opened war upon the English in May, 1715, at the Yamasee town of Pocotaligo. The inhabitants of Port Royal and adjoining islands, with a few exceptions, received word of the attack in time to escape to Charles Town in a ship which had been seized for smuggling and lay in Port Royal River. But two hundred Carolinians were slain in the revolt.

The war, however, opened the Yamasee lands to settlement, for the Indians were forced across the Savannah to San Augustín. The following spring, the General Assembly of the province, at the suggestion of the Proprietors, passed an act granting certain privileges and exemp-

[28] *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, I, 181. For the early history of Beaufort see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort—The Original Plan and the Earliest Settlers," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 141-160.

[29] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

[30] See Crane, *Southern Frontier*, pp. 162-186; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 531-536; "Introduction to the Report of General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 354-355.

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tions to those taking up land in the region which in 1707 had been set aside for the sole use of the Yamasees. The land, however, was to be opened only to actual settlers, "New Comers," from Great Britain, Ireland, or any of His Majesty's plantations in America, who were not to be permitted to convey their tracts for seven years. Each person was to be allowed 300 acres of river land and 400 acres of back land at a quit-rent of 12 pence a hundred acres and £3 purchase money for every hundred acres, to be paid within four and a half years.[21]

The settlement around Port Royal grew more rapidly after the opening of the Yamasee lands, but at best the increase in population was slow. The date of the earliest grant to a lot in Beaufort found on record is July 25, 1717, but before the middle of August more than seventy lots had been granted. Yet in 1722 the General Assembly of the province was found passing an act stating that "the fort at Beaufort is so much out of repair and the great gun carriages so rotten that the same is defenceless and of no service, whereby the inhabitants have no place of security for their families in time of alarm, which so much dispirits them that it may occasion a desertion of those frontiers."[22] In 1728/29 Thomas Lowndes of Charles Town, in a letter to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, stressed the necessity of their encouraging "a good settlement" at Port Royal for the purpose of "obstructing . . . the Spanish navigation" from that port.[23] About 1730 the population

[21] The quit-rent at which lands had been taken up previous to this act was one shilling per hundred acres. See Grant Books in the office of Secretary of State, Columbia, S. C., and Memorial Books in the office of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, Columbia.

[22] *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, 180.

[23] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, III, 11.

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of St. Helena's Parish was estimated at seventy families,[34] and the parish at that time included the large territory bounded on the east by St. Helena Sound and Combahee River, on the north by a line from the head of Combahee River to the Savannah River, and on the south by the ocean.

The growth of Beaufort may be taken as an index to the growth of St. Helena Island. Various acts passed by the General Assembly in behalf of Beaufort indicate that the town was small and had but little commercial business even to the time of the American Revolution.[35] An act of 1740 sought "to encourage the better settling and improvement of Beaufort Town," and one of 1748 mentions that "the small number of vessels trading to Beaufort Port Royal are not sufficient to encourage a pilot or pilots to furnish themselves with boats for the use of the harbour." Acts of 1752 and 1762 indicate that the town was still small and its commerce unimportant.

### TYPES OF SETTLERS

The inhabitants of St. Helena's Parish, like those of Charles Town, were "persons of all sorts" coming "from the more Northern English Collonys, and the Sugar Islands, England, and Ireland."[36] They came, seasoned planters from Barbados with a knowledge of the slave regime which was well established there as early as 1643,[37]

[34] David Humphreys, "An Account of Missionaries Sent to South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 541.

[35] For a review of these acts see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 142-150. For the acts see *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, IV, *passim*.

[36] Samuel Wilson's statement concerning Charles Town in his "Account of Carolina" found in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 167.

[37] Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 46-47.

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merchants from England with white indentured servants, adventuresome tradesmen who had scarcely more than enough to pay their passage money, indigent persons who sold themselves into servitude for seven years that they might have the opportunity of making their fortunes in the new world. The Proprietors at first encouraged only those to settle in Carolina who had capital with which to begin planting. The reason for this attitude is indicated in one of Lord Ashley's letters to Sir John Yeamans, written when the Ashley River colony was only a year old:

> I am glad to heare soe many considerable men come from y^e Barbados for wee finde by deare experience y^t noe other are able to make a Plantacon but such as are in condition to stock & furnish themselves y^e rest serve only to fill up numbers & live upon us & therefor now we have a competent number untill we are better stocked with provisions I am not very fond of more company unless they be substantial men.[38]

Soon, however, the Proprietors were not so choice in regard to the type of person settling in Carolina and advertised the new country to rich and poor alike.

The register of St. Helena's Parish, which was begun in 1752 but which gives information of the inhabitants as early as 1710, indicates the various places from which came the settlers of St. Helena Island as well as of the entire parish. The places mentioned as the former homes of inhabitants are Bridgenorth and Ludlow in Shropshire, Bristol, Canterbury in Kent, Dorchester, Liverpool, London, and Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Barbados, and Bermuda.[39]

[38] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 210.

[39] Joseph W. Barnwell and Mabel L. Webber (eds.), "St. Helena's Parish Register," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXIII, 8-25, 47-71, 102-151, 171-204, *passim*.

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The register also gives some information as to the life of the settlers, for in some instances a person's occupation is recorded after his name. The register indicates that the following types of settlers were to be found among the inhabitants from 1752 to 1785: barber, boatman, carpenter, cooper, cordwainer, Indian trader, leather dresser and breeches maker, labourer, mariner, master of a piragua, merchant, overseer,[40] painter, planter,[41] pump maker, sailor, schoolmaster, ship carpenter, shipwright, shoemaker, soldier, surgeon, tailor, and weaver.

These early invaders of the southern frontier were adventurers from many sections and from many stations in life. Very few had any previous experience in wresting a livelihood from virgin land or building a home in the wilderness. Yet they were the men who laid the foundation for the prosperity which made possible one of the highest types of ante-bellum culture.

[40] "Overseer of Ireland" is also mentioned.
[41] "Planter of England" is also mentioned.

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CHAPTER II

# THE STAPLE CROPS

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ALTHOUGH the Lords Proprietors of Carolina encouraged the settlers of their province to grow tropical and semi-tropical plants, such as indigo, cotton, and ginger,[1] these were not the products to which the people turned their chief attention. Thomas Ashe, in mentioning the occupations of the settlers in 1682, described conditions which prevailed in the province for the first half century. Of the planters he wrote:

> Their Provision which grows in the Field is chiefly Indian Corn . . . they do not much regard or encourage its [tobacco] planting, having already before them better and more profitable Designs in Action. Tarr made of the resinous Juice of the Pine (which boyl'd to a thicker Consistence is Pitch) they make great quantities yearly, transporting several Tuns to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the Caribbe Islands.[2]

## NAVAL STORES AND PROVISION CROPS

The settlers on St. Helena Island followed the example of those about Charles Town and turned their attention to the manufacture of naval stores. They converted their fine live oaks into ships beams and masts; the pines, into pitch and tar. In 1712 the charter of Beaufort points to the chief occupation of the inhabitants, stating that "a port upon the River called Port Royal in Granville County" would be "the most proper place in that part of the province for ships of Great Britain to take in masts, pitch, Tar, Turpentine, & other naval stores."[3]

[1] McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 115-116.
[2] "Thomas Ashe's Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.
[3] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

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175 While thus exploiting the natural resources of the Island, the settlers raised only provision crops and hogs.

175 243 Although rice culture[4] was begun in South Carolina before 1690 and had become one of the staple commodities by 1724, rice was never raised to any extent on St. Helena Island. Rice culture during the colonial period was confined for the most part to the inland swamps which could be flooded from fresh-water ponds and rivers, as, for example, Combahee River. Salt water is poisonous to the rice plant,[5] and St. Helena Island has only a few small fresh-water ponds. In these few ponds some rice was raised of a different variety from the famous Madagascar rice, but the amount was necessarily small.

### INDIGO CULTURE

175 249 Almost from the first settlement of South Carolina, indigo was grown in the province and at intervals a bounty was allowed for its production, but it was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century that it became an important article for exportation.[6] In it St. Helena Island found a staple which supplemented and to some extent supplanted the provision crops and the export of naval stores. As early as 1748 the dye was exported to Eng-

[4] See A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Introduction of Rice Culture into South Carolina," *Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South Carolina*, no. 6. For a discussion of rice culture during the ante-bellum period see Edmund Ruffin, *Report of the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina for 1843*, and R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, which appears also in *De-Bow's Review*, XVI, 589-615.

[5] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 469.

[6] In a letter written by Elizabeth (usually abbreviated to Eliza:) Lucas in 1739 she refers to her efforts to produce indigo on her father's plantation in South Carolina. This has led some writers to assert that she first planted indigo in South Carolina and that from her experiments the great indigo industry in the province developed. The records of the province show that some indigo was produced in South Carolina before Miss Lucas was born.

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land and attracted immediate attention, for Great Britain was at that time importing annually 600,000 pounds of indigo from France at the rate of about £150,000 sterling. The following year Parliament allowed a bounty of 6 pence a pound on indigo from the British colonies, and indigo culture at once grew in the favor of South Carolina planters. By 1754 the export from Charles Town had reached 216,924 pounds, and on the eve of the Revolution it had mounted to more than a million and a half pounds.[7]

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Indigo had become, next to rice, the most important source of wealth in the province. Moses Lindo, a London Jew and expert indigo sorter, had done more to stimulate the growth and the excellence of the dye than any other man in South Carolina.[8] As surveyor and inspector-general of indigo for South Carolina, he taught the planters to distinguish the grades and to improve the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the dye. The prices were usually excellent, ranging generally from 4 to 6 shillings a pound.

A light, dry soil was best suited to indigo culture; hence it was cultivated in considerable quantities on the Sea Islands. During the colonial period both the annual and perennial plants were grown. About 1760 Governor Glen wrote that the plant most frequently used in South Carolina was the annual, the sort generally cultivated in the West Indies.[9] The perennial, however, was less trouble

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[7] *Year Book*, City of Charleston, 1883, pp. 402-403.

[8] B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, chap. III.

[9] "A Description of South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 203. George Milligan, writing in 1763, quotes "an ingenious planter" as saying that there was in the province a great variety of seed, "and from every sort good indigo may be made but none answers so well in this colony as the true Guatimala." Carroll, *op. cit.*, II, 533.

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to grow and thrived on poorer land, provided the soil was dry and loose.

Planting began about the first of April. The soil, after having been well prepared, was furrowed with a drill-plough, or more often with a hoe, two inches deep, and the seed sown thinly in these trenches. A South Carolina planter estimated in 1763 that a bushel of seed would sow four acres.[10] In ten or fifteen days the young plants appeared and were immediately hoed to loosen the earth about them. When the plant was in full bloom, in June or July,[11] it was cut regardless of its height, for at that time the leaves were thick and full of juice.

With the cutting of the weed, the planter was ready to begin the process of manufacturing the dye. The plants were cut off near the ground and placed under water to ferment in a shallow vat, or steeper, as it was called. This process, which usually required some twelve hours, took the dye stuff out of the leaves. The fermenting solution was then drawn from the steeper into another vat, known as the battery, where it was violently agitated with paddles for fifteen or twenty minutes to complete the fermentation and to collect the particles of dye.

As soon as the solution acquired a blue tinge, lime water from the lime vat was carefully stirred into it until a cloudy hue appeared. The indigo water was then beaten again until granulation began and the dye stuff left to precipitate to the bottom of the vat for four or five hours. The water was drawn off and the paste which had settled in the bottom carefully strained through a horse-hair sieve

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

[11] Milligan's authority states that the blooms usually appeared four months from the time of planting.

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to clean it and then hung up in bags for several hours to drain out the water. Afterwards the bags were put through a press to free the indigo from any remaining water and the stiff paste spread on a plank, cut into small pieces about two inches square, and placed in a drying-house so that it might have a free circulation of air without being exposed to the sun which might burn it to a cinder in a few hours. While in the drying-house, the indigo had to be turned carefully three or four times a day until it was sufficiently dried to prevent its being spoiled, and it had to be kept as much as possible from flies. When thoroughly dry, the dye was packed in barrels for market.

The indigo raised in Beaufort District commanded the top price in market,[12] and it was still grown in large quantities even after the Revolution. In 1791, Mrs. Charles Capers, the wife of a St. Helena planter, stated that the planters of the Island were "wholly attentive to the Cultivation of Indigo."[13]

In some sections of the coastal region, especially in Orangeburgh District, indigo was grown throughout the ante-bellum period, and small quantities even after the Civil War. In 1828 William Elliott, of Beaufort District, wrote to the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, to encourage a more widespread growth of the plant.[14] In defense of his position, he cited the case of Donald B. Jones, of Orangeburgh, a member of the House of Representatives, who, in 1827, employed five hands in the production of cotton and five hands in the production of

[12] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 368.

[13] Mrs. Capers to Mrs. Russell, March 25, 1791. Copy of original in possession of Penn School, St. Helena Island, S. C.

[14] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828, pp. 64-66.

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indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton. In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[18] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions besides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and be otherwise employed in."[18] Thus the production of

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[18] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[18] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

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The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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the Bahamas. The plant was tall; the seed black; and the fiber, long, strong, and silky. Richard Leake, one of those who had first received the seed, at once began production on a large scale. In 1788 he wrote, "I shall raise about 5,000 pounds in the seed from about eighty acres of land and the next year I expect to plant from fifty to one hundred acres."[19]

Seed of the new product was soon obtained in South Carolina, where William Elliott, of Hilton Head Island, near Beaufort and St. Helena, seems in 1790 to have been the first to raise a successful crop.[20] He had bought five and a half bushels of seed at 14 shillings a bushel in Charleston, and he sold his crop at 10½ pence a pound. The following year John Screven, of St. Luke's Parish, planted thirty or forty acres on his plantation on May River and sold the cotton in Georgia at from 1 shilling, 2 pence to 1 shilling, 6 pence sterling a pound. The next year John Rose planted a small field on Oakatee Creek and sold the 600 pounds which he raised at 2 shillings a pound. By this time many other planters on the Sea Islands and the mainland were experimenting with the long staple cotton, and in 1793 such prominent planters as James King, of St. Paul's Parish, Colonel Edward Barnwell and Captain John Joyner, of St. Helena's Parish, and General William Moultrie, of St. John's Parish, Berkeley,

[19] E. J. Donnell, *Chronological and Statistical History of Cotton*, p. 45; Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 152.

[20] The best account of the history of the introduction of sea-island cotton and its culture is to be found in Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*. The account in *DeBow's Review*, I, 304-315, is based upon Seabrook's history. J. A. Turner (ed.), *The Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 280-286, also contains some information concerning the development of the culture of sea-island cotton.

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were growing the cotton. The struggle between indigo and sea-island cotton had already begun. By 1798 the latter had clearly won.

The spread of sea-island coiton planting was largely hastened by the excellent prices which the long-staple brought. The English market welcomed the new staple. In 1799 the cotton sold readily in Liverpool at 5 shillings a pound. In South Carolina, the price ranged from 9 pence to 1 shilling during the early days of the production; then it rose to 2 shillings and upwards and there remained until 1806 when the Franco-English hostilities caused the price to slump. But large fortunes had already been made. Captain James Sinkler received 3 shillings a pound for a crop of 300 acres which produced 216 pounds to the acre. Peter Gaillard, of St. John's, Berkeley, made an average of $340 a hand, and William Brisbane, of St. Paul's, was so wealthy after two years of growing sea-island cotton that he retired and sold his plantation to William Seabrook at an exorbitant price, but Seabrook paid for it in two years.

Not all, however, who planted sea-island cotton realized so great profits as these planters. The longest and silkiest fibers commanded the highest prices. For many years Kinsey Burden, Sr., of St. John's Parish, Colleton, occupied first place in the production of a fine staple, and for many years he carefully guarded the secret of his success. In 1805 he produced cotton worth 25 cents a pound more than that of his neighbors. William Elliott was among the first to guess that the secret of Burden's success lay in the quality of the seed used, and soon sea-island cotton planters everywhere were experimenting

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with seed in the attempt to obtain a silky staple. In 1828 Hugh Wilson sold two bags of extra fine cotton at $2 a pound, probably the highest price ever obtained for sea-island cotton.

The growth of sea-island cotton was limited to a small area along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, for the plant would prosper only in a light, sandy soil, known as the salt-water lands. The sea-island cotton area in the ante-bellum period was a belt of coastal land from twenty to thirty miles wide, extending from Santee River, including St. John's Parish, Berkeley, to the everglades of Florida.[21] Eutaw Springs in St. John's, Berkeley, was the extreme northern point at which the plant was cultivated.

### EARLY METHOD OF CULTIVATION

The planters of the crop quickly systematized the method of cultivation so that, by 1802, the general routine in South Carolina and Georgia was about the same. The seed was planted in early spring as soon as the weather would permit. At first it was planted in separate holes, but soon came to be drilled and the plants grown at intervals of two or three feet on ridges five or six feet apart. Instead of being hoed only four times with the last hoeing about the middle of July, the crop was now hoed at more frequent intervals, all work ceasing when the plant began freely to put out fruit, which was usually early in July. The crop was harvested from September until December. The fiber was quickly damaged by bad weather and the fields, accordingly, had to be picked frequently to save the staple. The bolls opened but slightly and picking was dif-

[21] R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, reprinted in *DeBow's Review*, XVI, 5931 Seabrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.

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ficult so that a hand seldom averaged more than seventy-five or a hundred pounds a day, whereas on the upland cotton fields a hand often picked two hundred pounds or more in a day.

The method of culture in practice in St. Helena's Parish in 1828 has been described by William Elliott, the son of the first planter to raise a successful crop of sea-island cotton in South Carolina:

The judicious Planter, whose plantation affords him the opportunity of choice, will select for his Cotton field, such high lands of a light brown or yellow complexion, as were covered by an original growth of hickory, laurel, red bay, interspersed with the live and white oaks, and the towering palmetto. He lays out his field into squares, of one-fourth of an acre, (105 feet,) and in the winter months, proceeds to list in the sward, with its cover of fennel or grass. On this *list*, the *bed* is subsequently raised; and, if the ground has lain fallow for some years, or if the soil be naturally close, the plough is sometimes run through the intervals, to pulverize it, and facilitate the process of bedding which is always performed by the hoe and usually commences about the middle of March. The beds are commonly five feet apart from centre to centre. The planting begins about the 20th of March, and extends to the 20th of April, and is thus performed:—A number of holes, four inches deep and twelve inches long, are cut by the hoe on the top of the bed, leaving the space of one foot between each hole. The seed which is changed every second year, is . . . carefully cleansed of such as are *coated* or *tufted with green* (that being considered *an indication of degeneracy*,) and then plentifully dropped and carefully covered. When the plant has attained its fourth or sixth leaf, if no grass should threaten it sooner, it is *hoed down*, which is effected by cutting the bed nicely down, and drawing the earth into the centre of the alley, in the shape of a small list. A fortnight before, or sooner, if the plants show the want of it, the earth is drawn to their roots, and they are slightly thinned.

At every subsequent working, which after the first, is invaria-

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bly a hauling or drawing up the earth to the plants, they are gradually thinned until June, when careful hands are selected to give the final thinning. This is a nice point, on which nothing like uniformity of practice prevails. In high lands, whose fertility has been impaired by frequent cropping, as many as one hundred and twenty stalks may be left in a task row, (105 feet). In newer, stronger or lower lands, where the growth of the plants is increased, the number must be proportionably diminished.

The plants are hauled, whenever the growth is checked by drought or threatened by grass, *until the middle of July*, beyond which period, it is unsafe to haul the earth to any fields but such as have been planted late in the season. . . .

We gather it as soon as possible after it has burst the pods, that it may avoid injury as well from dirt, as from too much exposure to the sun. Women and boys prove the most efficient pickers. The greatest care is used by them to separate the Cotton, all dried leaves or other substances may impair or discolour the staple. It is then spread, if wet, on a scaffold and exposed to the sun; but, if gathered in dry weather, *on the floor in the house*, to suffer whatever moisture it has imbided to escape, before it is stowed away in bulk. It is then passed once through a patent whipper, (M'Birnie's,) and sorted in the seed, at the rate of one to two hundred pounds to the hand. It is now ready for the gin. Eave's was formerly in successful use; but that, as well as the barrel gin, has been superseded by the common foot or crank gin, whose extreme simplicity of structure has given it an advantage over others more efficient, but more complicated . . . thirty pounds of clean Cotton as a day's labour, are easily turned out to each gin. It is then moted, often, but not always, on frames of wire or latticed wood, at a rate varying from fifteen to thirty pounds to the hand, and is then packed and ready for market.[22]

The preparation of the staple for market was the most tedious part of the growth of sea-island cotton. Before 1820, however, this was not considered to be the case.

[22] William Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 152-154.

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The pickers made no effort to remove the dead leaves from the lint; the ginners allowed stained and unstained cotton to go alike into the gin; moting was accomplished by women who sat upon the floor and beat the cotton with twigs; many planters ginned, moted, and packed the cotton in the same room; and the spinner frequently on opening a bag of cotton would find, in addition to the staple, crushed seeds, potato skins, and parts of old clothing. 1750 248

Sea-island cotton prepared in this manner was suited only for coarse fabrics. As the demand for the long staple became greater for making fine laces and muslins and as the high prices went to those who carefully handled their cotton, planters were forced to use more painstaking methods. The gin house, although only a simple barn, had separate rooms for the different processes. The cotton on being gathered was never exposed to the sun as formerly, but dried on a scaffold inside. Upon being dried, it was taken to the whipper which extracted the sand and imperfect fibers, and then sent to the assorters each of whom, provided with boxes for clean cotton, worked before a long table covered with wire or wooden slats, sorting the cotton according to color and fineness. From the sorters the staple went to the gins, and from there to the moting tables where women picked out the broken seeds and stained fibres. The lint was then packed into round bags of about three hundred pounds each, 1,500 pounds of seed cotton being required for a bale of this size.

Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, of Edisto Island, estimated in 1844 that fifty-four laborers[22] were required to prepare [464]

[22] This estimate was based upon the use of the foot-gin which was ordinarily employed in 1860 as well as in 1844. When a steam gin was used the number of ginners was reduced to six; when an Eave's improved steam gin, to three.

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the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters, grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector. Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day, Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

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In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger labor supply than the sparsely settled province could afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave market.

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

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CHAPTER III

# THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

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## PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

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[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-809.

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by forty or fifty planters from so great a distance as seventy miles from Charles Town.[4]

The price of slaves depended in general upon the economic conditions of the province, although other factors contributed to the general fluctuation of prices which characterized the pre-revolutionary slave market. In 1756 Laurens wrote: "The price of Slaves here while they are imported in moderate numbers is wholly influenced by the values of our Staples, Rice and Indigo, and these have been depreciated much below the prices of last Year, so have the Planters slacked in the purchase of Slaves, lowered the prices and lengthened out the Credit."[5] The price of slaves was so unstable that it seldom remained the same for many months during the year. For instance, in the spring of 1755, Negro men were bringing £260 to £270; in the fall, as high as £330. From 1751 to 1773 the price of prime men varied from £245 to £350. During a frenzied purchase in 1764, *The South-Carolina Gazette* estimated that planters had spent for new Negroes £177,870 sterling, or £1,250,090 currency.[6]

Many planters bought their slaves with cash or with produce but many more bought on credit. The terms of purchase varied as widely as the purchase price. In 1755 Laurens suggested to a correspondent that he ignore "the measure lately adopted in Charles Town, for the sale of Negroes . . . three Months Credit, to Purchasers with Interest from the Date," but instead to "deal with each

[4] Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 816, citing Laurens Letter Book, July 31, 1755. In possession of South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 819 n, citing Laurens to Capt. Samuel Linnecar, May 8, 1756.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 822, citing *The South-Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1765.

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Man who shall require Credit" separately.[7] Merchants encouraged payment in cash or in produce by offering a discount, sometimes as much as 5 per cent, "on all Sums paid down," although to induce a ready sale they advertised occasionally that they would give as much as twelve months credit without interest.

The favorite Negroes of the South Carolina planters were those from Gambia and the Gold Coast, although Negroes from other parts of the African coast were imported and, to encourage their acceptance, were sold at lower prices than the Gambia Negroes. Into the Charles Town market there came cargoes advertised as being from the "winward Coast of Guiney," "the Masse-Congo country," "Cape Mount on the Grain Coast"; there came Negroes from Bassa on the Winward Coast, from Bance Island, from Angola, and "Calabars from Bight," Coromantines, and "healthy young Fantees."

Although merchants, in selling new Negroes, invariably advertised the tribe or the geographic section from which the Negroes came, it is interesting to note that none of these facts was mentioned in selling seasoned slaves. It would seem that tribal differences tended to disappear as the slave became seasoned.[8]

By 1708 the number of slaves almost equalled the number of the whites in the province of South Carolina;[9]

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 814, citing Laurens to Smith and Clifton, May 26, 1755; to Satterthwaite, Inman, and Company, Nov. 22, 1755; to John Lewis Gervais, Feb. 28, 1772.

[8] In this connection see *ibid.*, p. 817n. The writer has noticed the same tendency in advertisements of seasoned slaves in North Carolina and Virginia as well as in South Carolina.

[9] "Sir Nathaniel Johnson's Report to the Council of Trade and Plantations," *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIV, 739; also in McCrady, *South Carolina under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 477-481, 723. The estimates of

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by the close of the colonial period the proportion of blacks to whites was almost two to one.[10] The closing of the African slave trade[11] in 1808 by provision of the Constitution in 1787 shut off the supply of new Negroes, but before that time most of the sea-island plantations had become well stocked with slaves. In most cases the internal slave trade and the natural increase of the plantation stock were sufficient to take care of the demand for more laborers in instances of expansion on the sea-island plantations.

### THE SLAVE MARKET FOR ST. HELENA ISLAND

The planters on St. Helena Island bought their slaves at the Charleston market in common with other planters in that vicinity, for it was at Charleston that they transacted most of their business. Like other planters, too, they undoubtedly stocked their plantations with slaves from various tribes and various African localities,[12] pre-

Rev. Samuel Thomas, made in 1706 and based on the number of families connected with the Church of England and the Dissenter meetings in each of the six existing parishes outside of Charles Town, show 3,000 whites and 1,000 Negro Slaves. *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, V, 1131-34.

[10] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776*, p. 807.

[11] In 1787 South Carolina, following the example of other states, passed an act to close the African slave trade in her ports, and by similar acts kept her ports closed for sixteen years, although it was hinted that the inhabitants on the coast and the border smuggled in slaves occasionally. In 1803 the State Legislature reopened the African slave trade, but continued to exclude West Indian Negroes and required that slaves brought in from other states have official certificates of good character.

[12] Frank Moore, (ed.), *Rebellion Record*, III, 309. The reporter for the *New York World* who accompanied the Union troops in the capture of Port Royal, November 7, 1861, said of the slaves on Hilton Head, "Every variety of negro and slave was represented. . . . Darkies of genuine congo physiques, and darkies of the genuine Uncle Tom pattern, darkies young and jubilant, darkies middle-aged, and eager, and gray-haired, solemn-looking fellows. Some appeared mystified and some intelligent."

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ferring, perhaps, as did other South Carolina planters, the Gambia and Guiney Negroes. In 1791 a St. Helena planter's wife thought that the consuming interest of the Islanders was to raise more indigo to buy more slaves. The profits of the crop, she said, are "mostly expended in the purchase of Negroes, & nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves.—These singularities are inherited from their Fore-Fathers—& many follow so closely in the path thru which their Ancestors trod as to deny themselves the Comforts & conveniences of life."[13]

There are local traditions that St. Helena planters, as well as those of Edisto and other Sea Islands, received fresh supplies of African slaves at their own private wharves after the closing of the slave trade, but no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate these traditions.

The plantation records which have been preserved for the sea-island districts show that planters tended to retain their slaves, sometimes even at great financial sacrifice, selling one only because of repeated insubordination or because of economic distress. In 1867 William Jervey, of Charleston, in attempting to settle the accounts of a plantation on Ladies Island, wrote to a member of the family that "the old gentleman several times had to sell negroes to pay . . . debts."[14]

When it was necessary to sell several Negroes, the planter usually attempted to dispose of them in family groups.[15] Negroes worked better and were more satisfied

[13] MS letter of Mrs. Gabriel Capers, March 25, 1791.

[14] MS in Sarah W. Ellis Papers, April 20, 1867.

[15] MS, A. F. Gregorie Account Book. A deed of sale dated Jan. 9, 1840, shows that A. F. Gregorie, of Greenwood Plantation, "Delivered to M.r J. E. Moore Mitchell the following Twenty five Negroes viz—

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to make a change of masters when the whole or a part of their families went with them. When Sir Charles Lyell visited Beaufort in 1845, he observed the general unwillingness of planters to sell to Negro traders. If planters are "forced to part with slaves," he wrote, "they usually sell one to another, and are unwilling to dispose of them to a stranger. It is reckoned, indeed, quite a disgrace to a Negro to be discarded. When the former master bids for one of his 'own people,' at a sale of property forced on by debt, the public are unwilling to bid against him."[18] This tendency to retain a slave as long as it was possible to do so often led a planter into inefficiency and oversupply.

### EXTENT OF SLAVEHOLDING

The average number of slaves per owner for Beaufort District in 1790 was twenty-four; in 1860, thirty. The average for the district in 1860 was twice as great as the average for the state as a whole. The following table shows the size of slaveholdings in the district in 1790 and in 1860:

Jan. 13th 1840
Sambo & Jenny his wife and their children
Ned
Tyrah
Rhynah
Pilot
Grace
Penny & her son Isaac & Jack
Island George & Bynah his wife
William & Nancy his Sister and her child Bess
Honor Elizabeths Maid
Charles and his Wife Hagar and their son Allen
Robert & his wife Caty & their children Peter
Dunbee, and Caty's sister Dinah & her child
Bess brought back to stay with her Grand Mother Lucy."

[18] Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 233.

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SIZE OF SLAVEHOLDINGS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[11]

| Number of Slaves | Slaveowners: Number 1790 | Number 1860 | Per Cent 1790 | Per Cent 1860 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 slave | 73 | 78 | 12.5 | 7.3 |
| 2 and under 5 | 88 | 173 | 15.1 | 16.1 |
| 5 and under 10 | 95 | 204 | 16.2 | 19.0 |
| 10 and under 20 | 86 | 188 | 14.7 | 17.6 |
| 20 and under 50 | 150 | 216 | 25.6 | 20.2 |
| 50 and under 100 | 69 | 142 | 11.8 | 13.2 |
| 100 and under 200 | 20 | 51 | 3.4 | 4.8 |
| 200 and under 300 | 3 | 13 | 0.5 | 1.3 |
| 300 and under 500 | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| 500 and under 1,000 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Total | 585 | 1,070 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Although the number of slaveholders in 1860 had increased 83.9 per cent over that of 1790, the distribution in the two periods, according to the size of holdings, did not vary appreciably. In 1790 some 58.5 per cent of the slaveowners had less than twenty slaves and in 1860 only 60 per cent had less than that number, a difference of less than two per cent. In 1790 those owning more than one hundred slaves were 4.1 per cent of the total, while in 1860 they were 6.6 per cent, a difference of 2.5 per cent. The only significant change in the distribution of the size of holdings occurred in the class possessing from twenty to fifty slaves. In 1790 this group was a fourth of the total, but in 1860 it had been reduced to a fifth.

While the general average for the district in 1860 would place every owner in the rank of a planter, it is significant that three-fifths of the slaveholders in the district owned less than twenty slaves. With less than this number a man engaged in the cultivation of sea-island

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[11] *Agricultural Census, 1860*, p. 237; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, 1790: State of South Carolina*, pp. 10-13.

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cotton, the staple crop in 1860, could not hope to engage in large scale production. Only 19.8 per cent owned more than fifty slaves and only one planter owned more than five hundred. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the majority of those engaged in agriculture in this district, one of the most densely populated slave counties in the entire South, belonged to the small planter class.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of slaves owned by St. Helena planters at any given time.[18] The first census of the United States shows that only four men in Beaufort District, none of whom lived on St. Helena Island, owned more than two hundred slaves in 1790. Frederick Witsell had 607; Thomas Heyward, 265; General Stephen Bull, 233; and John Rutledge (who lived in Charleston), 217. Of those living on St. Helena, the plantation of William Fripp with 153 slaves had the largest number; that of John Jenkins with 136 slaves, the next largest. The other holdings were considerably less. Thomas Chaplin had 65 slaves; William Chaplin, 50; John Chaplin, 30; Paul Fripp, 37; Thomas Fripp, 33; John Fripp, 38; Charles Capers, 45; William Capers, 15; John Cowen, 13; Peter Perry, 45; George Pope, 39.

Early in 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Treasury Department, estimated that there was an average of forty slaves to a plantation on St.

[18] The courthouse at Gillisonville, the seat of Beaufort District, was destroyed by Sherman's Army in 1864. Later the county seat was changed to Beaufort, and in 1883 the courthouse there was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the antebellum county records have, therefore, been destroyed. The MS, "Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860" (in possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.), does not contain a list of slaves. This MS is a duplicate of the original which Congressman William Elliott said in a written statement that he deposited in the Court of Claims. A search through some of the files of the Court has failed to reveal the original.

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Helena. With the blockade of the coast and the capture of St. Helena Island on November 7, 1861, the planters on the Island left in great haste, in some cases not having time to take even a house servant along. After the hasty departure of their masters, the slaves on Ladies and St. Helena islands quite generally remained on their respective plantations so that Mr. Pierce's estimate included in his "Report to the Secretary of Treasury" of February 3, 1863,[19] closely approximates the number of slaves on the St. Helena plantations during the latter part of the plantation regime.

Mr. Pierce found 260 slaves at Coffin's Point, the plantation of Thomas Aston Coffin, who was generally conceded to have the best managed and the most prosperous plantation on St. Helena. On Dr. William J. Jenkins' plantation he found 130 slaves; on the Eustis plantation on Ladies Island, 120; on the others from 38 to 80 slaves.[20] On the "best peopled" plantations he found an average of eighty-one slaves but a general average, on all plantations, of about fifty-two. This estimate is much higher than the size of slaveholdings of the majority of planters in Beaufort District, for, as the foregoing table indicates, 60 per cent of the owners in the district possessed less than twenty slaves in 1860.

The price of slaves increased with the advancing years of the ante-bellum period until in 1859 the average price of prime field hands reached about $1,900.[21] In some instances prime men sold for almost three thousand dollars.

[19] *Rebellion Record*, I, 302-315.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[21] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 374. For the advance in prices and an explanation of the causes see *ibid.*, pp. 359-401.

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The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[22]

| Value in dollars | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| None | 15 | 10.4 |
| 1-100 | 1 | 0.7 |
| 100-200 | 9 | 6.3 |
| 200-300 | 6 | 4.2 |
| 300-400 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 400-500 | 16 | 11.1 |
| 500-600 | 4 | 2.8 |
| 600-700 | 10 | 6.9 |
| 700-800 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 800-900 | 26 | 18.0 |
| 900-1,000 | 7 | 4.9 |
| 1,000-2,000 | 25 | 17.4 |
| 2,000 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Total | 144 | 100.0 |

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[23] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and

[22] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[23] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

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were merely a liability to the owner. All slaves listed as worth more than a thousand dollars were men. Besides Solomon whose value was estimated at $2,000, there were Andrew at $1,500; Dublin, Israel, Sampson, Ben, Solomon, and Cato, at $1,200; John Cox, Phil, Toney, Quamina, and Buff, at $1,100; and John, Chester, Joseph, Jupiter, Paris, Frank, Pompey, Daniel, Hector, Richard, Jacob, Sam, and Abraham, at an even $1,000. Prime women who could go to the field and turn out as much work as a man were most often listed at $800, although a few, Beck, Sally, and Nanny, would bring $900. Thus, out of 144 slaves, the Greenwood plantation had about fifty-nine prime hands in 1860.

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### SIZE OF ST. HELENA PLANTATIONS

The exact number of plantations on St. Helena Island at the close of the plantation regime is difficult to determine, because the planters themselves were not always consistent in designating the same tracts as separate plantations. It sometimes happened, as in the cases of Captain John Fripp and Dr. William J. Jenkins, that a planter owned several tracts at various places on the Island which he operated as distinct plantations, but in paying his taxes he grouped all of his tracts as one large holding. The number of separate tracts was about fifty-four[24] as far as can be determined by statements made by the owners themselves, or their heirs, some thirty years after the close of the plantation regime; and the number of landholders,

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[24] Petitions filed in the Court of Claims under the Compensation Act of 1891. Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Government, listed the number of plantations at fifty. *Rebellion Record*, I, 303. This number includes Morgan, Coosaw, Datha, Wassaw, Pine, and Polowana islands, small islands separated from St. Helena Island by creeks.

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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
[412] simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
•175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
248 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
407 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
493 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

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used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

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Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

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These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

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248 407 a small turning lathe, the operator standing at one end of the gin, feeding the cotton very slowly through the rollers, leaving the smooth black seeds behind. . . . Twenty or thirty of these little machines stand in one room; and, strange to say, none of those who have attempted to propel them by other power have succeeded. One very intelligent gentleman told me that he had spent $5,000 in trying experiments in machinery to gin this kind of cotton.[7]

### BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENTAL AGRICULTURE

248 Although sea-island cotton in the early days of its introduction was one of the most profitable crops ever raised in the South, the increase of its production and the varying fineness of the fiber caused a wide fluctuation in the price. Thus while some planters ~~realized considerable~~ profits, ~~others were hard~~ put to make expenses. As early as 1826 the most progressive planters in nearly every parish which grew "sea-islands" began to inquire into the causes of this condition. They organized agricultural societies[8] in the attempt to improve the general methods of culture and to standardize the prices; they subscribed to agricultural magazines; they wrote articles; they sent out questionnaires.

[175] In 1828 William Elliott, of St. Helena's Parish, writing in the *Southern Agriculturist*, expressed the general sentiment of sea-island planters on this important subject. He said:

I shall turn to the consideration of a question, which it is of a paramount importance that a Sea-Island Planter should examine and

[7] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 135.

[8] The St. Helena Agricultural Society was organized prior to February, 1843. *The Southern Agriculturist* of that date contains a letter from Daniel Jenkins, the secretary, on the unsuccessful experiment of some St. Helena planters in packing sea-island cotton in square bales.

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CHAPTER VIII

# "CONTRABAND OF WAR"

## THE CAPTURE OF PORT ROYAL

•175 FOR THREE DAYS the Federal fleet had been collecting in Confederate waters, until by the afternoon of November 6, 1861, Confederate scouts were able to count forty-five steamers and gunboats outside Port Royal Sound. Only the most timorous were fearful of an attack on the two forts guarding the entrance to the Sound, Fort Beauregard at Bay Point on Eddings' Island and Fort Walker upon Hilton Head, and the consequent capture of Beaufort. The planters themselves could not conceive of any military strategy which would make the possession of Beaufort important to the enemy. It was Charleston's scalp which the fleet had come to take and the display outside Port Royal was a subterfuge. So they remained on their plantations with their families quietly waiting for the enemy to sail on.

The Confederate officers were not to be taken by surprise, although they were fervently hoping that Beaufort with its inadequate defense was to be spared. They asked for reinforcements at once and began preparations for an attack. At dawn on the morning of November 7 the "armada," led by the sixty-gun flagship of Captain DuPont, advanced in battle array upon the two forts with their feeble batteries, twenty guns at Fort Walker and nineteen at her sister fort across the Sound. At 9:25 o'clock a nine-inch gun from one of the forts opened fire. Soon firing was general upon land and water, but the advancing fleet came on safely beyond the range of the Con-

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federate barrage. Passing both batteries, they turned and delivered, in their changing rounds, a terrific shower of shot and shell in flank and front. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Confederate forces commenced retreating to Ferry Point, leaving the Sea Islands about Port Royal Sound in the possession of the Federal Army during the remainder of the war.[1]

When word came that Beaufort was actually to be attacked, the confusion on the plantations was overwhelming. Hastily gathering together what clothes they could, wives prepared themselves and their children for the flight to the main, while husbands got ready the flats and boats for the trip. They took with them only the house servants most urgently needed in the care of the family, the nurses and cooks, instructing the field hands to remain at work under the direction of the drivers until their return. In their flight they had little time or space for family heirlooms or valuables. They left their houses and their fields just as they were. By afternoon when the Federal troops took possession of the district, not a white person of Confederate sympathies could be found in Beaufort or on the plantations.[2]

[1] See "The Capture of Port Royal, S. C.," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, pp. 192-197; *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 186-193.

[2] A few weeks later a general outcry arose in Charleston over this unpremeditated flight. Women and politicians alike declared that the planters should at least have taken time to destroy the crops which were evidently going to be of such benefit to the enemy. To this attack, a St. Helena planter replied in the *Charleston Daily Courier*, Dec. 2, 1861:

"Our sacrifices already have exemplified our patriotic devotion, and our failure to have entailed greater, by the destruction of our several crops, resulted in our having been steadily employed in providing ways and means for the retreat of the forces at Bay Point . . . it is . . . true that the successful conduct of that retreat was entirely due to the exertions of the little band of men composing the St. Helena Mounted Riflemen, Captain Fripp [in command]. . . .

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0175 General W. T. Sherman, in command of the "Expeditionary Corps" arriving at Port Royal, as this region was now to be called, on the fleet in command of Captain Du-Pont, described in two official reports conditions as he found them after the battle:

> The effect of this victory is startling. Every white inhabitant has left the island. The wealthy islands of Saint Helena, Ladies, and most of Port Royal are abandoned by the whites, and the beautiful estates of the planters, with all their immense property, left to the pillage of hordes of apparently disaffected blacks.
>
> . . .
>
> The surrounding country evacuated by the whites, as described in my last, has upon it an abundance of valuable property, including ungathered crops and cotton mostly gathered. I have directed all the means of transportation, such as boats, scows, wagons, &c., to be collected for the use of the Army; but in regard to other private property, such as can be made of no injury to us in the operations of the enemy, I have directed not to be interfered with. This, however, is a difficult matter, and there exists too great a propensity to rob and pillage the houses and plantations left in charge only of the blacks.[3]

175 567 Later Hazard Stevens who also witnessed as an officer of the Federal Army the capture of Port Royal attributed much of the looting to the Negroes whom he de-

"The facts are briefly these. So soon as it was understood by the St. Helena Company that a retreat of our forces from Bay Point might become necessary, every hand was employed and every individual busied in gathering together the flats and boats from every quarter of the Island. This duty was rendered doubly arduous by the unwillingness displayed by some of the negroes, who shrunk from executing the order from fear, and in many instances secreted themselves at the appointed time. So excited and disorganized had they become from fear inspired by the terrible cannonading only three miles distant from their point of rendezvous, that it was found necessary to have the flats, as they were manned, each superintended by a member of our little company, who were instructed to make an example of the first rebellious negro who hesitated to row."

[3] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 6, 128.

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scribed as being in "the densest ignorance, some of them the blackest human beings ever seen, and others the most bestial in appearance." "These ignorant and benighted creatures flocked into Beaufort on the hegira of the whites," wrote Stevens, "and held high carnival in the deserted mansions, smashing doors, mirrors, and furniture, and appropriating all that took their fancy. After this loot, a common sight was a black wench dressed in silks, or white lace curtains, or a stalwart black field hand resplendent in a complete suit of gaudy carpeting just torn from the floor. After this sack, they remained at home upon the plantations, and reveled in unwonted idleness and luxury, feasting upon the corn, cattle, and turkeys of their fugitive masters."[4]

The Negroes were inclined to hold aloof from the invading army. They had been told by their masters that the enemy was likely to seize them and carry them off to Cuba. They, who were accustomed to look upon persons even from neighboring islands as "foreigners," were startled by the presence of so many white persons. The officers had expected to put the Negroes to work at once in getting ready the new camps, after the example of General Butler, who had earlier captured Hampton Roads and solved his labor problem and the status of the Negro simultaneously by declaring the slaves contraband of war. But, after the army had been at Port Royal more than a month, the Negroes still were suspicious. A great many would come in to watch the operations of the white soldiers, bringing with them wives and children, but when work was suggested most of them would again take to the

[4] Stevens, *Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, pp. 354, 355.

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woods and the swamps, often leaving their families to be fed by the army.[5] By February, 1862, however, 600 Negroes had collected at the Federal camp at Hilton Head.

The Negroes on the islands more remote from Beaufort and Hilton Head quite generally remained on their respective plantations under the direction of the drivers who still held the keys to the corn-houses. With the same sense of responsibility that they felt before their masters fled, they dealt out rations and directed the work of the field hands. In one instance a Federal agent was called upon to settle a dispute between a driver and a field hand, as being the only white man to whom an appeal might be made. The driver was refusing the hand his peck of corn because he had been absent visiting his wife on a neighboring plantation when the corn was gathered, the work having been done after "gun shoot," as the Negroes termed the battle of Port Royal. The hand protested that he had helped to plant and hoe the corn and had been absent when it was gathered only because of sickness. Upon this evidence the agent advised the driver to deal out the peck, and the driver promptly did so.

The St. Helena Negroes seem to have had little part in the looting of their masters' houses. They were accustomed to the absence of their owners and to seeing the "big house" closed many months during the year. They could not believe, as the soldiers told them, that their masters were gone for good. After a while they did begin to take a few simple articles such as sugar and soap,[6] and

[5] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 202.

[6] Their attitude is in striking contrast to that of the Combahee River Negroes who usually to a man went off with the Federal Army when a raid was made up the River. On one such occasion, seventy-three Negroes on the plantation where

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later, when they saw the soldiers entering the houses, they also took pieces of furniture, but by far the greater portion of valuables was taken by the soldiers and Government agents.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE CONQUERING ARMY

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When the Federal Army captured Port Royal, it found that it had also taken possession of some ten thousand Negroes who might be "contraband of war," but whose status was doubtful, nevertheless. They could not be treated as northern laborers, put to work at the camps, and then ignored. It was even possible that the Army might in the last extremity have to feed and clothe them. But in the meantime there were valuable provisions for the Army on the plantations and valuable crops in the fields which could not be left to the uncertain course of the Negroes.

One of the first orders to the troops was to collect boats and mules for transportation service and corn and cattle for the commissary. Edward L. Pierce later reported that the Army had taken nearly all the corn from Ladies Island, hoping that the surplus on St. Helena would be sufficient to feed the Negroes of both islands, and from all the plantations it had taken the workable mules and horses and many of the oxen, which they slaughtered for beef, sometimes killing as many as "fifty or more head on a plantation."[7]

two Federal boats anchored aided in the destruction of their own and three neighboring plantations. They set fire to the "big house," containing a library of 3,500 volumes, to the steam threshing mill, rice barn, corn house, kitchen, storeroom, mule stable, and three Negro houses. They put on board 6,000 bushels of rice from the plantation barn and then, with their clothing tied in bundles and with their chickens and pigs squealing a protest, climbed on the vessels to the last woman and child. See *Charleston Mercury*, June 19, 1863.

[7] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, p. 319.

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To the Treasury Department, the War Department turned over the task of collecting and selling the cotton. For this purpose, Secretary Chase hastily appointed certain men whom he called cotton agents to direct the work of the Negroes. William H. Reynolds, lieutenant colonel of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Artillery, was appointed resident agent and placed in charge of the cotton agents. His motives appear to have been superior to those of many who worked under him. In making a report on the progress of work to Secretary Chase the first of the year he wrote:

> I find on most of the Plantations corn, and Sweet Potatoes, in sufficient quantities to support the Negroes.
>
> I have made arrangements to furnish them with salt, molasses & other small stores in moderate quantities deducting the cost of these articles from the amt due them for labor.
>
> . . . I find it is impossible to hire the Negroes by the day, on many of the Plantations, & have authorized my clerks to allow them a dollar for every four hundred pounds of stone cotton which they deliver at the steamboat landing, paying them partly in money & the bal in Clothing & Provisions—[8]

Edward L. Pierce, a special agent for the Treasury Department, who arrived at Port Royal a few weeks after the cotton agents, found some of them practicing "a reign of terror over the Negroes." One of them, a carpenter from New York City, had the "profoundest contempt" for his laborers.[9] Others also wrote of the dubious practices of the cotton agents. "Mr. Whiting has not been a Government agent for two months," Miss Towne wrote indignantly in 1862, "and yet he lives in Government

[8] Port Royal Correspondence. Wm. H. Reynolds to S. P. Chase, Jan. 1, 1862.
[9] *Ibid.*, Edward L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, March 30, 1862.

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property, making the negroes work without pay for him and living upon 'the fat of the lamb,'—selling too, the sugar, etc., at rates most wicked, such as brown sugar, twenty-five cents a pound; using Government horses and carriages, furniture, corn, garden vegetables, etc. It is too bad. The cotton agents, many of them, are doing this."[10]

While the cotton agents promised wages to the laborers, they were slow to pay, for the Department expected the fund arising from the sale of cotton to take care of the expense of picking it. The difficulty in getting the Negroes to work, together with the difficulty in getting the cotton ginned and to the New York market, added to the delay. The agents had expected to bale the cotton on the plantations, but the Negroes had quite generally broken up the gins so that most of it had to be sent to New York for this purpose. Consequently, it was April, 1862, before the Negroes received any pay for their labor, and then some of it was in orders on the agents' stores where prices were high. Consequently, the Government was facing general discontent and uneasiness among the Negroes only a few months after having taken them under its protection.

At the time that the Treasury Department was assigned the task of marketing the cotton, it was also given jurisdiction over the operation of the plantations and, consequently, the general welfare of the laborers on them. As early as January 15, 1862, General Sherman had applied to headquarters for authority to put into operation

[10] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 55, 61. See also pp. 16, 17, 66, 67.

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a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department. He wrote to the adjutant-general on this date:

> For the future maintenance of these people some system must be established, and one which will permit them to sustain themselves; but before they can be left entirely to their own government they must be trained and instructed into a knowledge of personal responsibility—which will be a matter of time. I have, therefore, the honor to recommend that suitable instructors be sent to them, to teach them all the necessary rudiments of civilization and secondly, and in the meantime, that agents, properly qualified, be employed and sent here to take charge of plantations and superintend the work of the blacks until they are sufficiently enlightened to think and provide for themselves. They should receive wages, and the profits of the plantations, after all expenses are paid, should go to the Government. I can see no other way to lay a groundwork for future usefulness with this unfortunate class of people.[11]

The next month General Sherman issued an order appealing to the benevolent people of the land "in behalf of the helpless blacks of South Carolina within the limits of his command."[12]

When the Treasury assumed the responsibility of the Negro, Secretary Chase had in mind some such plan as Sherman had already suggested. It occurred to Chase that here was an opportunity to test the ability of the Negro to exercise freedom in case it were eventually given him. Under a fostering benevolence, the Negro was to be given the chance of revealing his capabilities. Out of the battle of Port Royal there gradually arose in the minds of those in the North the scheme for a great social experi-

[11] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 218.
[12] *House Ex. Doc. No. 142*, 41st Cong. 2d Sess.

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ment which would form some basis for a decision concerning the status which the Negro should be given after the war.

To put some such scheme in operation the Department chose Edward L. Pierce, a young abolitionist of Boston who had studied in Chase's law office. He had been at Hampton, Virginia, and after he was mustered out of military service in July, 1861, went to Washington where he had occasion to relate some of his recent experiences with the Negroes to Secretary Chase. This fact together with their personal friendship was perhaps responsible for the Secretary's sending Pierce, then practicing law in Boston, a wire December 21, 1861: "If you incline to visit Beaufort in connection with contrabands and cotton, come to Washington at once."[113] On the twenty-fifth Pierce conferred with Chase and, on January 13, 1862, left New York City for Beaufort to make an investigation of social conditions among the Negroes under the temporary appointment as special agent for the Treasury Department.

Pierce found the "contrabands" discontented with the treatment they had received at the hands of the cotton agents and the Army. They were suspicious and reticent. When asked if they desired to be free, they would often answer, "De vite man do w'at he pleases wit' us. We yumnah niggers now, Massa."[114] But, concluded Pierce, "in spite of their condition, reputed to be worse here than in many other parts of the rebellious region, there are such features in their life and character, that the opportunity is now offered to us to make of them, partially in

[113] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 54.
[114] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 308.

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this generation, and fully in the next, a happy, industrious law-abiding, free and Christian people, if we have but the courage and patience to accept it."[115] Whereupon he outlined a plan to the Secretary by which he thought this ideal might be realized.

He was much opposed to the plan of leasing the plantations with the people upon them to the highest bidder, as the cotton agents had recommended. Instead, he would propose a system of superintendents of plantations whereby certain men, carefully chosen for the position, should be appointed to manage the cultivation of the plantations, their chief object being "to promote the moral and intellectual culture of the wards" and "to prepare them for useful and worthy citizenship." The superintendents, who were to be selected "as carefully as one would choose a guardian for his children," were to have complete authority on their respective plantations subject only to a director-general. The superintendents were to be compensated by a good salary, say $1,000, and the laborers by a standard wage graduated by the wants of the laborers and the ability of the Government to pay, this ability to be determined by the profits arising from the cultivation of the plantations. He thought, however, that the Government should be able to allow rations and 40 cents a day.

As a part of the plan, Pierce advised the Government to send missionaries "to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature" and teachers to instruct the laborers in reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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salaries of these persons, Pierce thought that the Government could rely upon private benevolence.[16]

While Pierce's "Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," of February 3, 1862, which at once received wide publication, was for the most part enthusiastically received in the North, there were some who thought that he went too far in presuming upon the Negro's ultimate citizenship. Even his personal friends in Congress refused to support the plan, and President Lincoln did not wish to be troubled with "such details"; for, so Pierce thought, he approached the great question of the status of the Negro "slowly and reluctantly."[17] Chase seems to have been well pleased with the report and at once put it in operation.[18] In looking about for the proper person to put this difficult and important experiment into effect, it was natural that the Secretary should choose the father of the plan.

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Although the Department had adopted the plan of superintendents, it had no funds with which to pay them. At this critical stage the Educational Commission, organized in Boston February 7, 1862, and the Freedman's Relief Association, organized in New York on the twentieth of the same month, volunteered to pay both superintend-

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

[17] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 65.

[18] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. The authority by which the Treasury Department assumed the responsibilities outlined in the report was based upon the Act of July 13, 1861, by which the President was authorized to permit commercial intercourse with any part of the country in a state of insurrection under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The act authorized the Secretary to appoint the officers needed to carry into effect such permits, rules, and regulations. President Lincoln sanctioned the enterprise in a note to Pierce, February 15, 1862, and the War Department approved the plans in an order to General Sherman which he made a part of General Orders, No. 17.

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ents and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived $200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.[19]

### THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.[20]

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

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[19] Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen.*

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, p. 315.

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lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government.

In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the careless and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward

[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

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175 S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve without remuneration in this social experiment, contributing himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St. Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[28]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[28] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[20]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[21]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[22]

[20] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[21] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[22] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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175 tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for
657 Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 out-
658 lined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of plant-
427 ing under the system arising out of the sale of planta-
tions:

> 175 I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—
> 658 or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this,
> 657 most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one
> 248 of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be
> given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and em-
> ploy some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the
> privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and
> which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our
> salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that
> I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I
> have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and
> before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more.
> The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules,
> carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows
> & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when
> the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a
> formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has
> undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the
> profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no
> more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the
> ensuing year.[35]

175 The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of
657 government-operated plantations and was content until
the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to
exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, per-
mitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

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inquire too closely, to cultivate the plantations, employ the Negroes, and teach them the ways of civilization. For one thing, this system was far more economical than that pursued in 1862 and 1863. The social experiment which had been started so enthusiastically had been an expensive enterprise,[37] and the Government, now more interested in winning the war than in "civilizing" ten thousand coastal Negroes, turned the responsibility over to someone else. Saxton's powers were now very much limited, but he still retained supervision of "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products." With the Port Royal experiment the Government began the policy of protection which later it was to apply to the Negro throughout the South during the period of Reconstruction.

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### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

The men and women led by Edward L. Pierce who reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, took seriously their charge to train the "contrabands" for citizenship. A few failed in this arduous undertaking because of their incapacity to govern men, but none failed from lack of purpose or unwillingness to endure hardships. Some even died at their posts, victims of smallpox and of the fevers from which the former masters had annually fled to the health-resort towns.

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[37] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 118n. "Taking the plantations as a whole, the Government lost in 1862 the whole $200,000 which it had cleared from the planter's big cotton crop of 1861." But see also *House Ex. Doc.* no. 72, 37th Cong. 3d Sess. in which Secretary Chase outlined on Feb. 18, 1863, the expenses of the Port Royal experiment. The receipts were $726,984.10 and the expenditures $225,705.34, giving a balance on hand of $501,278.76. The majority of the receipts arose from the sale of the confiscated cotton.

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175 657 A superintendent's work kept him busy early and late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[38] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In addition to these duties which were essential to the cultivation of the land the superintendent was expected to attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[39]

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195 657 466 One of the most serious problems which the superintendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers. They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

[38] *House Ex. Doc.* no. 142, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[39] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

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the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

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Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

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To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

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But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

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Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

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[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

175 657 658 871

The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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175 657 658 871 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of plantations in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 657 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

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[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

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suspect that most abolitionist views of their character are exaggerated in their favor."[52]

### THE LAND SALES

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Congress by Act of August 5, 1861, levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on all the states and territories for the purpose of conducting the war, of which South Carolina's quota was $363,570.66.[53] To collect the tax in the eleven insurrectionary states, Congress passed an act, June 7, 1862, calling for the appointment of direct tax commissioners. Collections were made in all the southern states during the war and after its close either by voluntary payment or by sale of land. Commissioners sold land for the non-payment of taxes in Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina, but in every state except that of South Carolina the lands were bid in at the tax sales by the commissioners for the United States. The presence of the northern missionaries in the region of the tax sales altered the situation in South Carolina.

The commissioners for South Carolina, W. E. Wording, W. Henry Brisbane, and A. D. Smith, having been appointed, ordered the first sale of land to take place at Beaufort, February 11, 1863. The land to be sold was that in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes in Beaufort District, the area occupied by the Federal Army, and included the whole town of Beaufort. Many friends of the Negro both at Port Royal and at the North objected to a sale under the Act of June 7, for they wanted some special

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[53] By Act of Congress approved July 1, 1862, the operations of the Act of August 5, 1861, were suspended until April 1, 1865, except for the collection of the first annual tax, and by Act of June 30, 1864, it was further suspended until additional legislation.

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provision whereby land might be reserved for the ownership of the Negroes. A. D. Smith, chairman of the commission, was himself eager for some such provision to be made. In his preliminary report to Secretary Chase of January 1, 1863, he wrote meaningfully:

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> The great object to be attained is the proper, permanent, and efficient organization of a system or systems of labor for the freed people. . . . The essential prerequisite . . . to this end is to obtain such a control of and title to the soil as will enable it to give a fixed and permanent character to whatever measures may be inaugurated for the organization of their industrial and social energies. All this, by the operation of the act of June 7, 1862, is placed within the grasp of the government. There can be no doubt that the government will be reimbursed many fold, even in a pecuniary point of view, for any appropriation it shall make, or outlay incur, in inaugurating this system.[54]

Miss Towne claims responsibility for the idea which made possible the establishment of such a scheme. "General Saxton is much opposed to the sale of the land to speculators," wrote Miss Towne, February 1, after a visit from him. "He thinks they ought to be preempted by the people, or else so divided and sold that the people can buy, and not be left a prey to greedy speculators and large landholders." Miss Towne suggested that General Hunter stop the February sale as a military necessity, and "General Saxton caught at the idea."[55] General Hunter immediately issued the order against the sale, and the commissioners, after striking off one lot in Beaufort, adjourned until further notice.

[54] *Senate Ex. Doc.* no. 26, 37th Cong., 3d sess.
[55] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 100, 101.

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The commissioners took the matter to the War Department, and the order came back to proceed with the sales, leaving, however, Hunter, Saxton, and the commissioners to make restrictions as they saw fit. Accordingly, on March 9 plantations and lots in Beaufort were put up for sale and struck off, some to the United States and others to "speculators," for the most part, superintendents and teachers, at about $1 an acre.[56] About two-thirds of the land was bid in by the United States and the other third bought by fourteen "loyal citizens."

Eleven of the plantations sold to private citizens were bought by Philbrick. Like Pierce, Edward L. Philbrick thought that the social experiment of training slaves for future citizenship had not been given a fair trial. When he learned that the conquered territory was to be sold for taxes, he conceived the idea of carrying on the experiment privately. In setting forth his plan to friends at the North he explained, "I . . . don't undertake it for the sake of making money at all, but for the sake of carrying out to a more satisfactory issue the present short-lived and unfairly judged experiment of free labor, and for the sake of keeping the people out of the hands of bad men."[57] Accordingly, he interested fourteen men, all but

[56] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The average price paid per acre for all the lands reserved by the United States was 34 cents. See speech of William Elliott in House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 135. See also pp. 140, 141. The agreement made on April 8, 1863, between Philbrick and his backers provided that the land be bought in his name and that he have complete responsibility for managing the estates. Philbrick, after paying the subscribers 6 per cent interest, should receive one-fourth the net profits, but he was to be liable for losses and did not have the right to call for further contributions. He was protected by the provision that no subscription could be withdrawn unless he ceased to superintend the enterprise. On closing the experiment, the net proceeds were to be divided *pro rata*.

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175 one of Boston, in the project, and on March 9 bought 6,795 acres, valued by the commissioners at $24,120, for about $7,000, eleven plantations including Coffin's Point, Fripp's Point, Cherry Hill, Pine Grove, John Fripp's Big House, Mulberry Hill, Corner Farm, two plantations on Ladies Island, and Morgan Island.[58] For the most part he employed to help him in the experiment the superintendents and teachers who were already on the plantations. After conducting the enterprise for two years with many vexations and losses, he began to sell the land in 1865, some plantations to white men from the North, others in small tracts to Negroes. He got from $5 to $10 an acre for land for which he had paid a little more than a dollar.[59]

The land bid in for the United States had been bought with the idea of providing for military and naval purposes and with the hope eventually of placing land within the reach of the Negro. The President's instructions to the tax commissioners of September 16, 1863, outlined a plan whereby this hope might be realized. After listing
175 the land to be reserved for military and naval purposes,
423 providing for land to be sold to men serving in the army,
651 navy, or marine corps, and setting apart thirty-six school farms of 160 acres each, he directed that all parts of certain tracts not otherwise appropriated be surveyed into twenty-acre plots and sold to "heads of families of the African race, only one to each, preferring such as by their good conduct, meritorious services, or exemplary character, will be examples of moral propriety and industry to

[58] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. But see *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 172.
[59] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 277, 296, 315, 324, 326.

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those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[80] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction.

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On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[81] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[82]

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[80] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc. no. 146*, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[81] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[82] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

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General Sherman, after having finally reached the sea in his famous march thereto, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865, setting aside "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida," for the freedmen, and especially reserved the islands for "the sole and exclusive management" of the Negroes.[83] The order, however, specifically exempted from its operation those whites who had bought land at the tax sales. Saxton, who was authorized to put the terms of the order in operation, at once began to settle Negroes on the land. No Negro, however, acquired the title to the land by virtue of General Sherman's order. Later, Congress, for the relief of those who had been settled on abandoned plantations, ordered, in an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau Act of July 16, 1866, a sale of most of the public land at $1.50 an acre to "such persons and to such only as have acquired and are now occupying lands under and agreeably to the provisions of General Sherman's special field order." This same act called for a sale of the school farms in St. Helena's Parish at $10 an acre.[84]

Before the Government had sold all the land which it had taken over in 1863 for the non-payment of taxes, the possession of it had become an irksome problem, grievous alike to the Government and to the people who were trying to rehabilitate the region after the War. Money was scarce and the buyers few. It was not until 1876 that the Government finally disposed of all the land.

[83] *House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.
[84] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sers. 6-12.

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The injustice of the tax sales[88] finally became apparent. The entire property-owning population of two parishes, except for a few free colored citizens in Beaufort and one loyal citizen on Ladies Island, had been deprived of their homes and all they possessed[89] to meet the tax apportioned to the entire state. In cases where the Government was still in possession of the property, former owners were permitted under the redemption act of 1872 to reclaim their lands upon the payment of the tax, costs, interest, and penalties, and under this provision a few plantations on St. Helena Island were redeemed. Through the ceaseless efforts of Congressman William Elliott, of Beaufort, Congress at last in 1891 passed an act providing a meager compensation of $1 an acre for woodland and $5 an acre for cultivated land, after the United States Supreme Court had declared the Direct Tax Act unconstitutional. The Government also refunded the amount of tax collected from each landholder. Sea-island planters, once the inhabitants of one of the wealthiest areas in the South, were now scattered throughout the United States, and the region which had been their homes for more than a century was left in the possession of their former slaves and the men and women from the North who had helped in the experiment of converting chattel into citizens.

[88] The history of the tax sales might well be a volume in itself, and can only be briefly summarized for the purposes of this study. For excellent summaries see *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws; House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.; Speech of William Elliott in the House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242; and see *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, ch. CC, secs. 6-12; DeTreville v. Smalls, 98 U. S., 513; Court of Claims Reports (1891-1892), XXVII, p. 27.

[89] MS, Record of Sale of Household and Plantation Equipment in South Carolina. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The personal property on the plantations was sold at auction in 1864.

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## THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government 423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[87] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[88]

175 423 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily rou- [434] tine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it [241] had come the responsibility of earning their own living, and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[87] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 372.
[88] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

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CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered 491
in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, 248
led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On 175
either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow 361
porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former 175
overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated 248
the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as 423
far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked 175
off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond (137)
was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four 248
weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. (243)
Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough (244)
for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old

[p. 191]

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248 .175 (657) men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded (492) the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on (493) foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy (292) calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

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[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune:

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2]

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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•175 eral officials, and northern speculators who hoped to make of Beaufort, or if not of Beaufort, of Hilton Head or Bay Point, a great seaport second only to New York. A few [466] planters were able to redeem their land and begin planting under contracts with their former slaves made on terms approved by General Saxton, now assistant commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau.[3] Dr. Clarence Fripp, for instance, began to practice medicine on St. Helena Island shortly after the close of the war and by November, 1865, had obtained a surgeon's contract from General Saxton and was living at St. Helenaville next door to his former residence which was then occupied by Miss Towne.[4] Not more than three or four planters were able to redeem land on St. Helena. The heirs of Captain John Fripp redeemed a part of Corner Farm; Mrs. Eliza H. Chaplin, five acres of her Indian Hill plantation which originally contained 400 acres; and Edgar W. Fripp, 732 acres of

[3] Saxton was succeeded January 15, 1866, by General Robert K. Scott of Ohio. See Webster, "The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 86-91.

[4] Dennett, special correspondent for the *Nation*, in the issue of Nov. 30, 1865, gives a picture of Clarence Fripp on his return to St. Helena. Among the northern soldiers and traders in the hotel at Hilton Head, Dennett discovered a "person who had the easily distinguishable appearance and manners of a South Carolinian." This gentleman, a person of some fifty years old, dressed tolerably well in a suit of grey clothes, with a large display of crumpled linen at the collar and cuffs of his coat, sat before the stove, smoking and talking very freely about his present poverty and his plans for the future. After saying that he had left St. Helena when DuPont captured Port Royal, leaving his plate and furniture behind, he told about the sale of his plantation for federal taxes. "Some Massachusetts man had bought it, and he didn't know when he would get it back. . . . Up in Greenville he soon spent all his money to support his family, but if he'd had money he couldn't have saved his property. How was he to come back inside the Yankee lines and pay the tax? The Commissioners knew very well it couldn't be done; the sale was a very unfair thing." By returning to Beaufort now, "he hoped to be able to pick up a little medical practice; but if his profession failed him, he supposed his son and himself could put up a cabin somewhere in the vicinity, and get fish and oysters enough to live on."

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an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[8] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[8] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

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175 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves
433 better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but
511 they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

### WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superin-
175 tendent under Philbrick for the Government and later re-
569 mained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his
659 scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private
181 funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

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*meum* and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in making claims,—these are the traits which try us continually in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us despair of their improvement—at least, in the present generation. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.'"[8]

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Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Government's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

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175 him, ere he will gain all his rights; but I would rather, for his own
657 sake, see him oppressed for generations, than be spoiled and petted as he has been here. He would come out of the struggle more manly and self-reliant.[7]

Philbrick had been opposed from the first to giving the Negroes anything except in payment for services actually performed. He observed in the autumn of 1862 that they were more economical of food than they had been in the spring when they thought that the Government would ration them as their masters had done. Philbrick would have followed the same rule in regard to tools, paying them wages enough to enable each person to buy his own hoe and spade. The superintendents were likewise op-
175 posed to the Government policy of selling land to the Ne-
657 groes at a special price. After the sales had been effected
423 and the Negroes had been in possession of their holdings for more than a year, Philbrick was of the opinion that "no race of men on God's earth ever acquired the right to the soil" with so little effort as the Negroes on St. Helena. He thought that they would have been better off had they paid the market value of the land, "because they would use the land for which they had paid full price more economically, would be likely to get more out of it, and would be taught a feeling of independence more readily than by being made the recipients of charity."[8]

175 Philbrick himself had acquired his land at a lower
657 price than the Negroes had paid, but he overlooked this fact in evaluating the Government's policy toward the Negro because he was honestly attempting to put into

[7] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers. Feb., 1865.
[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 276, 277.

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 6*, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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175 464 466 [427] [465] a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 248 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The [458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton re-
[434] mained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[16] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[16] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

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•175 423 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

(578) As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 167 735 Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

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towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

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175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

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ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out. 175 731

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23] 731

### THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while 175 837 84

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

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175 837 684 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 178 592 (848) After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to discipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days. (423)

175 346 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little except to make the praise house leaders subject to the Negro preachers of their churches whereas during antebellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

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[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

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the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

175 692

It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits." [26]

175 658 871

In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc. no. 79*, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Werding, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

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175 658 871

ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

175 871 872

(659)

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

175 872

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

[28] The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

[29] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

[30] There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

[31] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

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grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[32]

Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[32] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[38]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[38] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

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•175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over [505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[24]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[24] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.

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121 African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages."

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea islands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well." Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English grammar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

12 •172 [193]

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12 from white folk music." Even "superstitions," so often re-
•177 garded as evidence of the primitive African origins of black southerners, were attributed by Johnson to white sources. "A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent." Other studies in the St. Helena project by Guion Griffis Johnson and T. J. Woofter, Jr. were in the same tradition.[n]

While black scholars such as John Wesley Work, James Weldon Johnson, and N. G. J. Ballanta had claimed African origins for the Afro-American spirituals, the only white scholar who had shared that view was the music critic Edward Krehbiel in 1914. In the 1920s and 1930s a number of white scholars, including Edward M. von Hornbostel, Newman Ivey White, Robert Winslow Gordon, Guy B. Johnson, and George Pullen Jackson, had contended that the Afro-American spirituals represented selective borrowings from white folk hymnody.[n] For the most part folklorists of the period tended to publish large collections of lore without drawing many conclusions about them. Elsie Clews Parsons collected black folklore in the sea islands off South Carolina and in the Caribbean. She refrained from inferences, but her careful annotations showed the similarity of her material to folklore collected in Africa. On the other hand, Newbell Niles Puckett, in his *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (1926), said that, while most whites believed black "superstitions" to be relics of African heathenism, "in four cases out of five it is a European dogma from which only centuries of patient education could wean even his own ancestors." The black folklorist Zora Neale Hurston suggested a more complex relationship between African and European elements underlying Afro-American folklore but was somewhat vague about their proportions.[n]

12 Both Elsie Clews Parsons and Zora Neale Hurston were trained anthropologists who had studied with Franz Boas at Columbia University. Boas—eager to combat the evolution-

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mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accurately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits."

LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

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## FOREWORD

121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial under-
114 standing and the alleviation of friction between the races in
the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
•177 these two, since I believe that there are a few important
178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree
of significance of these African heritages is questionable in
view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the
white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that
their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is
relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the
nature and importance of African heritages in our civiliza-
tion, almost everyone would agree that the question is inter-
esting and worthy of study. Such study may not only sat-
isfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the
scientific problem of the processes which go on when two
different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the
[128] material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no de-
cision as to the African sources of particular traits. She
has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African
culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible
parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia
coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
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[p. xxxvi is blank]

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This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs intensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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# *St. Simons Island*

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to •177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a [351] grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

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* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah;
from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St.
Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port
Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets
curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on
the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and
wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and
surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and vis-
• 177 itors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as
the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They
serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the East-
ern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily
by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea
Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole
language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in
many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
567 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the
rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves
were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to
the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a
refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported
directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from
various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups,
had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when
white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union
troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves.
Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South
Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

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178 [197] Perhaps most important, Gullah—the creole language developed by the slaves on the Sea Islands and in the South Carolina and Georgia low-country—continued to be the language in which their folk culture was passed down to posterity. Proverbs, metaphors of social experience, continued to reflect the African preference for speaking by indirection; and African naming patterns persisted on the Sea Islands. For generations, folktales of the audacious animal trickster Ber Rabbit and of the no less audacious slave trickster John blended elements of African folk narrative with elements of the Sea Islanders' historical experience. For generations talented Sea Island artisans created traditional arts and crafts such as coiled sweetgrass baskets and strip quilts. Out of this tradition one Sea Islander, Philip Simmons of Daniel Island, became Charleston's preeminent artist in wrought-iron gates. For generations folk medicine of both the pharmaceutical and the psychological varieties continued to heal the sick on the Sea Islands, and natural phenomena continued to serve as signs foretelling the future, whether changing weather or impending death. Ghosts or haunts—the spirits of the dead—returned from time to time to trouble the living, although local conjurers (assisted by various substances held to be magical) helped to ward off their unwelcome visits. For generations Sea Islanders entertained their children with play songs after the day's work was done. At night they sang the children to sleep with lullabies. On Saturday nights they held dances and frolics. Their folk version of Christianity retained the earliest "shouting" styles of singing spirituals, in which the African religious phenomenon of spirit possession remained vividly linked with prayer, music, and bodily movement. No one thought this way of life would change. The life of the land and the people seemed fixed in an invisible circle, enclosed by the waters and the passage of time.

• 177 And then something happened. It did not seem revolutionary at the time. In 1950 Georgia timber magnate General Joseph B. Fraser and his associates bought large tracts of land on the southern end of Hilton Head Island. At first they simply cut down the ancient stands of timber. But soon his son Charles, a young Yale law school graduate, launched the development of a series of lavish resort "plantations"—Sea Pines, Hilton Head, and Honey Horn—pioneering the "resort island" concept. In 1956 the first bridge to Hilton Head Island was constructed. Feverish land speculation ensued as other developers scurried onto Hilton Head and other Sea Islands to exploit the boom, buying up land from black islanders and building more resorts.

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177 Hilton Head Island became known as a resort for the affluent. But similar developments have taken place on other Sea Islands. Hilton Head appears in many ways to have forecast what the future would bring. Its recent course is worth closer examination. In 1950 nearly all of the residents of Hilton Head were black; by 1980 they were outnumbered five to one by whites. According to Fraser, development has been a good thing for black natives of the islands. Resort development "caused black-owned land on Hilton Head Island to increase in value from $100 an acre near the beach or near the marshes to $50,000 or $100,000 an acre today. This flows into the pocket of the blacks who elect to sell," he says.

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> I sold lots at $7,000 which today sell for $350,000. Some blacks have done the same. Some of them, smarter than I was, held onto their land, as I and developers developed our land and pushed up the values. Now they are selling. I am jubilant, positively jubilant, when a black farm family that has held the land for five generations on Hilton Head Island, land that was worth $100 when we arrived here, sells it today for $50,000. I think that's wonderful.

177 Fraser contends that

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> it is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. Every black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, and uses a part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment in the future of that family. I wish more of them would do it.

The emergence of Hilton Head Island as a playground for rich white northerners, in the opinion of Charles Fraser, has been beneficial for everyone.

But others are less sanguine. "We have witnessed some changes on Hilton Head over the last twenty-five years," suggests Emory Campbell, a native of the island, "and they have not all been good from the black perspective." Some contend that black landowners were induced to sell their land too cheaply—either through trickery or because they did not know the land's fair market value. Unquestionably some black families made money on the transactions, at least by comparison with the barterlike economy of the predevelopment decades. But even those who

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•177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright. For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant 423 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no 432 longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton 511 Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in 464 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state 177 average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricultural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort 464 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi- 871 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requi- 177 site education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

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177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment, and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the unintentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's 177 where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a 871 classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak [193] funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other [194] forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

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177 178 [458 There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression. "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh.*" The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

*When Roots Die* makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians,

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# Preface

178 (131) The black inhabitants of the Sea Islands, located off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, have provided researchers with a reservoir of distinctively African and African-American cultural roots. Their unique society has been developed, nurtured, and maintained by the geographical isolation of the islands, the social and economic independence of the islanders, and the marginal contact with residents outside the Sea Island area. These factors have created and fostered an environment within which the inhabitants—West African slaves, ex-slaves, and their free ancestors—have been able to reinforce vigorous traditions characteristic of their culture, and to perpetuate communities with concentrations of African influences paralleled by no other black areas in the United States. Remnants of these African traditions were passed on to the islanders through narrative tales, religious practices, burial ceremonies, language patterns, and other practices, only some of which have been recorded by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists.

• 177 Today changes are being brought to the islands, and the Sea Island culture is declining under the resulting social pressures. On the one hand, outsiders, particularly white Americans, Arabs, and other foreigners, are moving to the area and in some instances commercializing entire islands. On the other hand, the building of bridges has brought about easier access to many of the islands and better educational facilities and job opportunities for their inhabitants. As would be expected, such forces are motivating a break in cultural traditions, an upheaval of social patterns, and a general disruption of the old norms, all of which are now in some danger of becoming lost.

128 This book is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the Sea Island culture and literature and of the Gullah (or, as it is called in Georgia, Geechee) language. Chapter I is devoted primarily to a survey of the area and its people. I judge it important to provide a full

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491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before 342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are [177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that [827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and or- [592] derly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is 171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

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162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
[175] munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
[161] 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

161 While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial composition, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically dis-
[464] tressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth, as is shown in Table 2.

161 The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to ma-
177 jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
179 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Islands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4). James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
162 lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

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161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 241 [178] [464] In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

464 177

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

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464 .177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 178 463 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

[531] [177]

285 171 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

[178]

285 868 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

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439 437 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 156 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 596 621 596 423 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family communities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 602 (423) Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island communities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

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538 (20) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

## The Setting

538 • 177 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (170) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the
• 177 age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
851 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience
171 and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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159 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though
539 Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the [197] words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs,* one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings [592] in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by [171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Is-
539 landers', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

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## Conclusion

538 Folktales, like languages, are not immutable. They are constantly changing: the plots vary, the characters change, new names are substituted for old ones, and the language of the tales generally takes on the flavor and style characteristic of the era; any given speaker may rearrange, improvise, or improve a plot, episode, or character to his own specifications. On the Sea Islands the teller may add such things as telephones, highways, automobiles, and even televisions in contemporary tales, yet these innovations are set within the framework of traditional themes. In the minds of some island youngsters, for example, Ber Rabbit may now live in a house instead of his traditional hollow in the briar patch. But plots remain essentially the same: Ber Rabbit still tricks Ber Wolf, but instead of returning to his den in the hollow, he returns to his house in or near a briar patch.

538 538 •177

While the speakers may vary in their individual styles of delivery, there remain very distinct features characteristic of Sea Island folk telling:

The teller

1. will usually tease his audience when he has them thoroughly involved in his tale by pretending to forget or pretending that he will finish his tale at a later time;
2. will usually ask rhetorical questions of given members, and will expect one member or all members of his audience to respond;
3. will usually try to make his delivery as dynamic and emotional as possible through modulations in the pitch or tone of voice;
4. will usually speak louder and more rapidly when he begins to close his narration;
5. will usually make his closing as dramatic as possible;
6. will usually give a tale a moral if one is not already inherent;
7. will usually use a range of kinesic movements or gestures to help describe the events of a tale.

The audience

1. will usually respond or reply to questions or cues given by a speaker;

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197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation
178 of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost
•179 free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo-
829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian
823 informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
Francis: I know it's different.
Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

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## Present-Day Gullah

197 Since the early 1920s Gullah has been known to vary regionally; recent studies by Irma Cunningham, Patricia Nichols, Charles Joyner, Salikoko Mufwene, Ian Hancock, and me, conducted in different areas of the Sea Islands and the adjacent coast indicate that there are still distinct varieties.[8] Minor details such as consistent use of the pronoun *e*, which is applied to both sexes, and a distinctive fricative "fizzing" sound on words beginning with *w* would go unnoticed by casual observers. However, they permit the islanders to detect when one is from a different island, when one is a total outsider, and when one is trying to talk "proper," in the negative sense of the word. In fact, during my first few years on the islands, I learned that I should not (123) try to pass myself off as an islander by an attempt to imitate the Sea Island language. While I may have had the syntax right, I was never able to perfect the accent, and it is the stress and intonation that give one away. When I asked the islanders how they were able to detect such small differences, I was often told, "I ain't know how I de know, but I de know." And they did know.

197 The outside pressures now exerted on the Gullah-speaking communities in the coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina have cre-
• 197 ated the general conditions that David DeCamp describes for post-creole speech communities (i.e., communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with a standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and new educational programs and other infusions from the outside have broken down the formerly rigid social structure enough to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of Gullah speakers to modify their speech in the direction of standard English.[9] Given this sociolinguistic situation, the Sea Islands offer an ideal opportunity to investigate linguistic convergence and change.

197 Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify several facts about Gullah in order to distinguish it from the speech of other black Americans. First, whereas Gullah is a creole, inland black speech is defined as a dialect of English, that is, as a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. A dialect of any given language is similar to that language in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax; such differences as may exist often result from regional or social variations, and most dialectal variations present few

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197 major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

197 Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers
177 of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter
178 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

197 The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah
192 and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

*gula*, "pig": Kongo
*goober*, "peanut": Kimbundu
*gumbo*, "okra": Tshiluba
*gumbi*, "medicinal weed": Bambara
*heh*, "yes": Vai
*hoodoo*, "bad luck": Hausa
*yambi*, "yam": Vai
*chigger*, "small flea": Wolof
*juk, juky*, "disorderly": Wolof
*cush*, "bread," "cake": Hausa
*nana*, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
*nansi*, "spider": Twi
*tote*, "to carry": Kikongo
*chicabod*, "seesaw": Mandingo
*unu*, "you": Igbo
*yent*, "to lie": Umbundu
*pinto, bento*, "coffin": Temne
*biddy*, "small chicken": Kongo
*buckra*, "white man": Ibebio
*de*, "to be": Igbo
*eh*, "yes": Igbo
*ashantie*, "house": Ga[10]

551 Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 139

# Conclusion

539

[di lɔd ẽ bɪnə muβ mi mɔŋtɪn
bət i bɪn gɪβ mi siçɹɪt ɸə klɒɪəm]

*God didn't move my mountain,*
*but he gave me strength to climb it.*

177 178 During my search for Africanisms in the Sea Island culture over the past ten years. I have seen that some of the old traditions are dying out while others remain intact. Each year I see something different, hear more old tales, and learn another old word. It is hard to measure the precise impact of new pressures on the islands. But the islanders are beginning to lose their geographical isolation, and they are thus being forced to alter a culture which has existed and served them well since the first importation of African slaves to the island shores.

177 178 596 Some elements are resistant to change. The extended family is remaining intact because the islanders are still in a majority. Though their communities are being diluted by outsiders, their family norms are less open to invasion. The islands are still sectioned off into family communities where all persons remotely related to the family have the right to live. This housing tradition will be difficult to disrupt, though it may be easier to displace. The pressure of nearby resort areas has encouraged land take-overs at some spots, and taxation and other legal means have been used to force homeowners to leave (see Appendix 4). A However, when the islanders are obliged to move, most often they relocate at a place where relatives offer them a piece of land on which to build. Thus the cohesiveness of the family structure continues to prevail.

A. [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

[p. 147]

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# Appendix 4

# The Land Question

423
[178] As the islanders often put it, "Everything change up now." One of the major areas of change in recent years has been in the use and ownership of land in the islands. "Primarily," comments Ed Brown, an attorney practicing in Charleston County who grew up on Wadmalaw,

> the land is changing hands because history has created a division between those people who own the land and those people who want to buy land. And if a developer comes in here with forty thousand dollars for ten acres of land, which might appear at first blush to be a lot of money, the landowner is perhaps inclined to take the forty thousand dollars and part with title to the land. That happens. I don't know that that is a bad thing. I think that what it does do is it creates a problem for the person who has sold the land, because if you are not sophisticated in terms of handling the forty thousand dollars, then you lose it rather quickly, whereas the land would be there forever.[1]

The relationship of black people to land in general has considerable significance. Various studies and reports trace the origins of many of the current domestic ills of the United States to the surge of southern blacks into urban areas as the rural southern economy found that under existing social arrangements, it could no longer employ large numbers of small farmers, sharecroppers, tenants, and unskilled farm laborers. In the 1960s alone, more than 1.3 million blacks left the South, and during the previous decade the number was even greater.[2]

423
• 179 The population that remains behind on the islands is having to adjust to the incoming population of resort residents, as well as resort development for tourism. Developers have not been responsive to local needs. Seabrook was the first of the islands to be opened up as a resort.

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423 The original owner of the island, one of the major church denomina-
•177 tions, sold it to a group of developers, who in turn sold it to a second group, from New York. No input from the community was requested, and a great deal of hostility resulted. When developers came to Kiawah to create a much larger resort area, they expressed readiness to meet community needs and asked for a list. The time available to come up with this list was brief, but island leaders working with Bill Jenkins, a long-time activist in land issues, did manage to set out six or seven mostly minor suggestions. "We did it in good faith," notes Jenkins. "I think we were more in good faith than they were, because some of those things we are still trying to get."

"I remember as a little boy," says Ed Brown, "that you could purchase perhaps an acre of land for two hundred dollars. Today that's just unheard of. So the very basic thing that gives the islands their wealth, namely, the property, is increasing in value, but we need to develop a methodology by which that can be properly managed and the profits therefrom, if there are to be profits, channeled back into the islands for their development." He adds, "I see good things. I'm an eternal optimist. I think that the future will prove to be very fruitful . . . if we can learn from the mistakes." Yet he does not deny that there have been mistakes, for instance, the absence of "a working rapport between the people who operate these resorts and the people who in fact live on these islands, and who have lived there for quite some time."

423 Land is being taken out of production. Acreage once used to grow
311 food is now restricted and controlled by high taxes and county regula-
177 tions implemented in response to development. Small livestock farmers located next to tracts under new ownership may be pressured to sell out if their activities seem incompatible with the projects of the developers. Lands are lost, too, when people unused to record keeping lose tax receipts and forget to pay yearly bills, or when land descends to heirs who have moved away and have no interest in it.

423 Bill Jenkins has provided an illustration of what can happen when
177 developers are more interested in a piece of property than its legal owners:

> There's seventy-nine acres of land down at Johns Island airport. . . . Developers . . . did some research and found out who were some of the people who were involved in that property. [One of

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423 •177 them] found a wino in New York City and just walked up to him and said, "I heard you own some property on Johns Island." The guy thought he was kidding because he had never been to Johns Island. So he just started laughing. [The developer] said, "I'm serious. You get a witness and come with me and I will give you five hundred dollars for what you own." So this guy, you know, he thought Santa Claus. So he got one of his friends and they went downtown, and he had everything probated, signed it off, and the people came down here and created all kinds of problems for the rest of the family. Eventually, they had to end up selling that land . . . because with this property, when the families are so large, most of the time you can't even get all of the family together, so they could agree who's going to get the swampland, who's going to get the house, who's going to get the waterfront. . . . But the court could sell all of the land and divide the money equally. And so, when this land developer bought this land . . . , he came down here and he wanted his portion. . . . He is now one of the heirs. But [he and the family] cannot agree on which piece. . . . Then he goes back to the court and says, "We can't reach an agreement." And if you can't reach an agreement, then the court will come in and put it up for sale.

423 871 Obviously, the question of land retention is directly tied to the education of the landowners about the legal responsibilities involved. For more than twenty years, groups have been operating in that interest throughout the Sea Islands and the rural South. In 1970 Professor Robert Browne, who was then studying the loss of black land in the South for the Black Economic Research Center in New York (he is now at Howard University), was able to obtain a million dollars from a private donor to organize the National Emergency Land Fund. The fund has focused on educating black landowners about their responsibilities, helping them express themselves, putting land into production, and resisting aggressive development.

871 [873] The fund has worked in conjunction with the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, one of the oldest institutions established for the education of blacks in the United States. Penn School began by teaching newly freed slaves and continued as the only high school for black children on the island. In 1948 the bulk of its programs were transferred to the county public school system, but most of

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its community outreach activities were continued. The Penn Center, currently directed by Emory Campbell, acts as an information and referral source, provides such social services as visiting families to help them select food crops, and educates in matters including use of land and landownership.

Bill Jenkins was working for Penn Community Services in the early 1970s when he helped put together a program called Black Land Services, in response to a number of requests for help in retaining ownership of land. He is now active in the South Carolina Land Owners' Association, an offshoot of the National Association of Land Owners, which presently operates only in Mississippi and Alabama. Faced with serious cutbacks in funding and manpower, the South Carolina Land Owners' Association is not able to be as active as it once was, but Jenkins and co-worker Joe McDermott continue their educational activities in the islands on a reduced scale.

The desire of the dominant society to reclaim the Sea Islands, though shortsighted, nonetheless seems likely to prevail. As Ed Brown puts it, "The industry is there." The displacement that has already occurred will have long-term repercussions. "The social consequences of the pressures from development on the Sea Islands will be seen another five to ten to fifteen years," notes Emory Campbell. "It's subtle now but we at Penn Center see it as a very serious problem—serious today as it is going to be serious in another ten to fifteen years."

The islanders' ineffectiveness in resisting the often reckless advances of developers must be laid at the door of the very insularity that for so long protected their culture. Adherence to traditional ways has by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force. The price they are paying now is one more legacy of slavery.

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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128 gest ways in which Gullahs interpreted Christianity, and how Africanity was integrated into Christianity, into attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I do not argue for direct, fixed, or unchanging transmission of African religion and culture. Yet persistence of traditional beliefs, embedded in a recently created society, is not remarkable. Nor [177] should we assume that traditional African customs and beliefs necessarily disintegrated before Christian and white cultural icons.[12] Still my aim is to demonstrate African-Gullah adaptability in their interaction with another major cultural form, and their capacity for change and meaningful continuity given the realities of new situations.

I rely heavily upon primary sources in this book, although my discus-
127 sion on African culture and cosmology is an exception. Here the empha-
128 sis is on secondary material. This was necessary since I aim to fuse history and anthropology into ethnohistory. It was not always possible to obtain sources directly from the Gullahs. Yet I have tried to articulate their social history by using sources at least derived from the Gullahs. Thus, missionary reports and sketches, spirituals, folk practices and customs, diaries, church minutes, and similar types of records are used extensively. Sources which support interpretations and historical depictions of white attitudes toward religious instruction are also mainly primary. And whenever applicable and possible, I attempted to incorporate current historiographical trends into this study.

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# Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long 248 staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who 249 also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African- 567 American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of sig- 177 nificant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, 178 and intergroup socialization.

101 The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peo- 175 ples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial 567 history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39] 175 567

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. [162] The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that:

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41] 175 [567]

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries 175 567 794 [177]

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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
797 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
152 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural"
786 means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black
impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be
silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly
described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British work-
ers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity
of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in
the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah
preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in
more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black
converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
797 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a
total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not im-
mediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices.
The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped
for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs
in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as
175 well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural simili-
177 tude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
178 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating
humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state.
In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural
diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs
were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African
religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and prac-
tices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-
Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah
spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to tradi-
175 tions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
797 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African
customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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175 brethren they must be just like birds when the gunner is about, expecting a crack
177 every minute. "Dey ain't neber know what gwine to befal dey, pore black folks
171 must wait and hab faith, . . . Massa laff one day. Ask me if I tink Christ want black nigger in heben. One ting I sure. We'uns gwine to be where de crucify Lord am. And if dat place be Hell, He gwine make it heben for we."[9]

175 Gullah religion was not quiescent, nor an enslavement of the mind,
171 despite the "Christian" and long-suffering attitude seemingly responsible for their sensitiveness and lofty, visionary approach toward oppression. Many observers were appalled at what they interpreted as resignation among Sea Island African-Americans. Arthur Sumner wrote from St. Helena Island in 1863, "I am astonished that they should be fit to live after such generations of mere animal life. A higher race would have lost all moral sense." Even one of the Gullahs' staunchest advocates, Elizabeth Botume, believed that "the patience of the freedpeople in sickness was so general and remarkable, it seemed like apathy." If what Botume observed was only resignation, it probably was a function of Gullah affiliation with Christianity. Yet their coping capacity was also possible because of the sense of protection that spiritual association offered, with religious and community membership forging ties that strengthened the Gullahs' resolve. Thomas Wentworth Higginson was surprised to find Gullahs so little demoralized and he accurately attributed this to religion:

> I learned to think that we abolitionists had underrated the suffering produced by slavery among the negroes, but had overrated the demoralization. Or rather, we did not know how the religious temperament of the negroes had checked the demoralization. Yet . . . it must be admitted that this temperament, born of sorrow and oppression, is far more marked in the slave than in the native African.[10]

171 Higginson perceptively realized the lack of "demoralization" wrought by slavery. But the personality and "religious temperament" of Gullahs owed much to a non-Christian tradition, and was not "born of sorrow and oppression" or as foreign to the "native African" as Higginson imagined. As previously suggested, African religion and philosophy emphasized the celebration and affirmation of human life, and within this scheme, while God was the apex of the theory of being, humankind was the center, or pivotal point, of earthly existence. Gullahs were very much a part of this world view. Even though on the conscious level the pillar of their faith rested on their association with Christ, this may have primarily provided Old World ideology with an organized, plausible New

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175 the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation
177 of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]
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Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the bottom of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

17 In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory,
701 mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
176 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a
567 corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60
years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[186] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

177 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
567 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs at-
• 177 tempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spiritual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Chris-
[178] tianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

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Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power; and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

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When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

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This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the Ba-Kongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[11]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches."[14]

761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
• 177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could
not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
871 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and
178 Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves. 567 771 177 178

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism. 567 177 178 567 795 177 178 771

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage. 793 771 782 771 567 177

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Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new religion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

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APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

## *Folk Beliefs*

Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[8]

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175 113 [197] [177]

17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass. 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

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20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

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21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

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22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

175 113

23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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# PREFACE

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> The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. . . . Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker, and the dreamer. This is the firing line.
>
> *W. E. B. DuBois, speech at Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, October 20, 1946*

• 177

THE TRAFFIC on River Road is heavy. When I first came to this part of Johns Island in 1964, it was a quiet rural black community. Now expensive cars cruise past on their way to Kiawah and Seabrook islands. These resort islands can only be reached by driving across Johns Island and meeting the approval of a guard at a security gate. Beyond the guarded gates are plush hotels and upscale shopping facilities, beachfront houses and condominiums. Those who are waved through the checkpoint are mainly affluent visitors from afar.

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533

The traditional and the modern coexist eerily on Johns Island now. I notice the incongruity at once in Wesley United Methodist Church. I sit in its elegant pews and listen to the organist and the robed choir perform staid hymns from the Methodist hymnal. But the congregation sings out in the old African polyrhythmic style of the sea islands, almost as though the hymns were ancient spirituals. The present organist accompanies the hymns in a jazz-influenced modern gospel style that dominates the singers and sometimes drowns them out. The result is exciting, but I miss the special kind of excitement of the old *a capella* shouting style for which Johns Island is famous.

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114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

•179 SKIN AND HAIR. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

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•177 native state to separate South Carolinians from one another on the basis of skin and hair. Blacks and whites could not legally associate except in the sanctioned roles of subordinate and superior. Not only were most black citizens disfranchised at the polls, blacks were systematically separated from whites in schools, in jobs, and in public accommodations. The policy was called segregation, or Jim Crow, and it was very thoroughgoing. Behind the mask of civility, our harsh racial caste system branded all black South Carolinians as inferior.

Segregation was characterized by two sets of almost everything: there was one set of churches, stores, funeral homes, and drinking fountains for black Carolinians and another for white Carolinians. Black students were relegated to Jim Crow schools, black travelers to the back of the Jim Crow bus, and black moviegoers to the Jim Crow balcony. And there were separate neighborhoods for blacks and whites. It was not difficult to tell which were which: the pavement ended where the black neighborhoods began. But not everything came in pairs. Some things, such as parks, libraries, and swimming pools, were rarely available to black Carolinians at all.

Anyone could tell that the segregation laws were unconstitutional on their face: they violated the constitutional requirement that states not deny the equal protection of the laws to any citizen. But the system of segregation was even more subtly entrenched in South Carolina law and practice than that. It was also characterized by discriminatory enforcement of other laws that were not in themselves discriminatory. And social services were administered on a discriminatory basis. As a result, black Carolinians had less than half the chance of finishing high school as white Carolinians and less than a third the chance of finishing college or entering a profession. Moreover, black Carolinians had the prospect of earning less than half as much as white Carolinians, were twice as likely to be unemployed or imprisoned, and could expect a shorter life span.

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668 Until the mid-twentieth century the only organization in South Carolina explicitly dedicated to racial advancement was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP). At the time Septima Clark began teach-

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177 668 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs* v. *Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs* v. *Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the 177 668 875 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Carolina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding any city or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

871 875 641 666 In 1957, with training and assistance from Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins began the first citizenship education school on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher. The classes did not merely stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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177 178 MANY CHANGES have come to Johns Island since Guy and Candie first lived and worked there. Some of the changes—low-cost housing, a health care facility, and a home for the elderly—have been initiated by the islanders themselves. But rapid resort development on Kiawah and Seabrook islands have contributed in their own way to the transformation of Johns Island, bringing new pressures and new challenges to the islanders.

178 One part of Esau Jenkins's legacy is a dedication to progress, to building institutions that enable the people of Johns Island to control their own lives. But another part of his legacy is a dedication to preserving the cultural heritage from which the people of Johns Island draw their strength and their distinctiveness. Not all islanders share both parts of Esau Jenkins's legacy equally. There are some who believe that the cultural heritage created by the ancestors in the bitter days of slavery and segregation is best forgotten. They feel the past as a burden of shame rather than as a source of strength. But without a sense of where they came from, how can the younger generation understand their achievement or comprehend how far they have come?

Whether the next generation will recognize and value the power and beauty of the past is by no means certain. At least some members of the younger generation are drawing strength from the old traditions. They are at home in the present because they are oriented in time as well as in space. Without a sense of where they came from, how else can people know whether they are going forward or backward?

114 If Esau Jenkins were still alive, I believe he would like this new edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* In it Guy and Candie Carawan have preserved the magnificent heritage of the past in such a way that it can serve as a source of strength for the present. Johns Islanders—and all of us—can use that strength as Esau Jenkins did: to look to the future, to see what contribution we can make, to summon our friends to work together to do what still needs to be done.

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*Charles Joyner*
December 1988

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# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] IT HAS BEEN more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 212 114 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived [101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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796 533 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

•177 178 796 [344] In the intervening years, this evolution toward more modern forms has continued. Moving Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home [794] [795] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 474 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern institution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island. [443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym on the island and served as a center for adult edu- [529] [873] [666] (p. xii-B) cation and voter registration.

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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(668) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea
islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston
County Democratic party. He ran for state senate
and received support in both the black and white
communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital
radio station in Charleston that consistently ad-
dresses social issues as well as responds to the mu-
sical tastes of the community. He was the principal
mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the
Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in
the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has im-
proved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who
finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible
for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
[241] island. The resort developments and the new small
[178] businesses offer some employment, but farming,
long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live
in their traditional community, and many of their
hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
• 177 along the coastal islands south of Washington,
D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on
Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible
only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged
resort communities with condominiums, hotels
and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private
homes. Both are entered by passing through a se-
curity checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some
economic and social benefits to island residents,
both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy
visitors from outside the region and offering only
menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Is-
land, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge
from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for de-
velopment. An island committee made up of black
and white landowners has been meeting regularly
to design their own development plan that may

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179 counter those of outside interests. The County Commission accepted this new plan for limited and
177 controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community or-
758 ganization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
(743) part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
(423) Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a
(563) black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
(P. 3iV-A)

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN PEACE DIDN'T DECLARE

567 My grandmother was Hannah Seabrook. She raised me up and told me a lot about Rebel Times. Old Hannah Seabrook was a cooker and a washer. Her first husband got sold. Yes sir! They sell my father's daddy. Sell him for money.

When my father was coming up he used to have to go see what old Master wanted him to do. He was just a boy and couldn't do none of that heavy work. So the old Master would have him shine he shoes. One day he found some finger marks on 'em and knock my father down the stairs. Good thing I wasn't living in those days—you would of had to kill me first. But that was in the time when peace didn't declare.

567 When the war came through, my daddy, Cyrus Jenkins, was just a
•197 young boy. That time he was in the creek—had to dig the mud and mud the field for what they gonna plant that year. My daddy just up and ran off with the Yankees. He followed the Yankee until peace declared. My grandma didn't see him for four years. When he come back Grandma went to the depot. When she see her one son she drop her little bit of clothes and bind the son. That's right, had only one raggedy soldier coat and nothing else but that.

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

567 - 159

## SHE TAKE THE SCRAP AND MAKE A LITTLE DRESS FOR ME

I born in 1878, the twentieth day of November. I was my ma's seventh child. Everybody run for give me name. I grow up in the white people house. I do the small things—I could thread needle for grandma, man. And they make me a little dress, you know. I even wash the Missus' feet. That's right, sir! That's right! Wash her feet in the basin. And when she was the only dressmaker 'round the village, she take the scrap and make a little dress for me.

My grandma had a scarf handkerchief—a white handkerchief she brought from Rebel Time, and when she died I tie he head with that. That's right. Yes ma'am!

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722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[177] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

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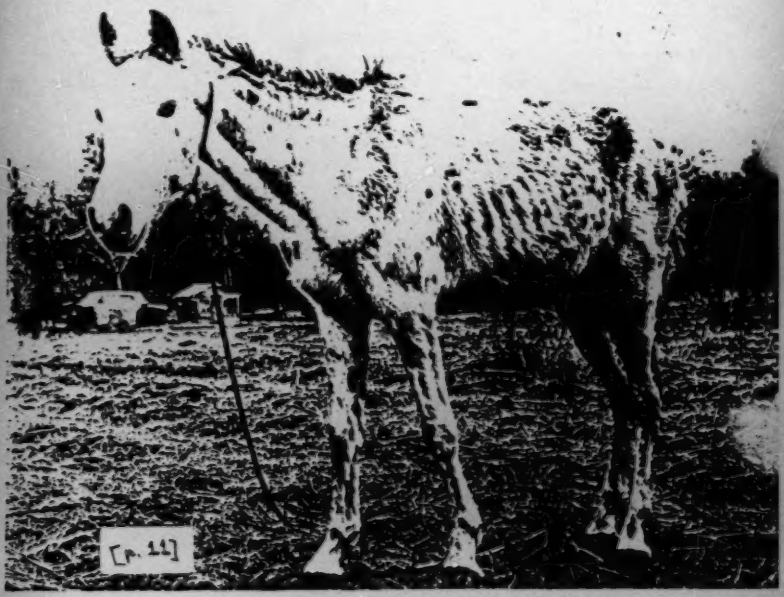

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU CAN BE BLACK OR SCARLET

829 Now some people after slavery times think to themselves, "If I see a white and he needs help, but they didn't tell me to do it, I wouldn't do it anymore." But me, I go there and they ain't call me neither. He need help and his family need it, and that's the reason God help some people to get along so good.

I treat everybody right; my heart open for all. And that's why people treat me well for it. That's right! Sometime I pick the bean and I say, "I ought to give 'em a quart of bean." Well, when I send that bean, how they glad.

I don't care what kind of people, I going there and help 'em. I do it, sir. I got proof! You can be black or scarlet but it don't make no difference. The pure in heart shall see God. [M1]

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## NOW THE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT WHITE PEOPLE

829 When I were growing up, I must have seen one white man in my life. 199 And I was so scared of that white man I never see his face. You might see but two white man in the whole Johns Island then. But now the island is full of white people. There so many white people it seem like there always one now. Before then you wouldn't see no white people there in six or seven months. But now, the world is nothing but white people. White people!

829 The Bible says you must love your fellow mans, 'gardless of what color 199 you are, you must love 'em. Ain't no need for I love my color, hate you. 'Cause God don't please with it. 'Cause we all is God's children. We must love one another.

829 The church doesn't do a thing for you no more than preach a sermon. 77 That's all the preacher do for you. But you got to live a life living right here. The way you walk and the way you talk, the way your action—there's your sermon right there. You preaching your sermon before you die.

The way you treat people, that's your heaven right there. Now if you born dumb, you just dumb. If you're a mean person all your life, you're just a mean person; people can't say good for you. If you're a good person all your life, that's all people will say is he's a good person. Got to first have heaven here before you have Heaven. If you have speck in your heart, you cannot get in God's kingdom. I never been up there yet, but I feel about it.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT

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You find people 'ssociate with Negro 'round here, Charleston is not their home. That is one thing I can't understand, because we have to do everything for them. I was working for my lady for three years. I raise her baby. Mostly all these people have a maid or baby-sitter. You can't 'ssociate with 'em and then people want you to cook their food and take care their children. I can't figure it out.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY DON'T WANT TO GET OUT ON A LIMB

829 177 I believe, in my honest opinion, that there's a whole lot of white people on this island that's not bad at all. And I think they would like to see everybody happy, but they don't want to get out on a limb from their own people, be called "nigger-lovers" or any other stories that the people can dream up for them.

I knew a white guy and we sat around and was drinking beer and talking and he was saying that he was with the Negroes in most of the things that they wanted and he believed that most of the things they wanted was right. He said he has never done nothing to hurt the Negroes. I told him that I felt like he hadn't done anything to help the Negroes either because he just sat back and was sort of looking out for his personal self, instead of saying to his friends, when they have gatherings and the question comes up, "I don't believe that we are right in what we are doing. I believe that everybody should have a chance."

829 177 357 I think seriously that we got a whole lot of Negroes that are hurting us more than the whites, by acting content—like the maids in the house. Any time the madam would say something to them, they would smile even though within themselves they were unhappy. But this is what was expected of them and so this is what they're doing. They have been conditioned to this. They are not frank and not honest with themselves or the people they deal with. I believe this is one of the things that's hurting us because then the white man feel that he could always push you back, because you're just that way; you're not going to stand up to nothing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## 829 177 ALL WOULD BE GETTING EQUAL EDUCATION

As far as Johns Island is concerned, we got a long way to go. I believe sincerely that there will have to be something that happens real bad to change the situation here. We've coexisted all these years. We have accepted this, and the white man have accepted it. Very seldom do we have to come together on any major thing. So in this respect we could make it if we could keep on going like that, but we can't. Because we have gotten to the place now that my kids are not wanting what I wanted, or *thought* I wanted.

[871] Nobody has applied yet to go to the white high school. But I think

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829 when it come right down to it, it's gonna be accepted. Actually Johns Island
871 is real poor and I don't think nobody could afford for money to be cut off
177 from the schools. The superintendent of the schools told me that if the
schools were closed, the Negroes would suffer more than the whites. I don't
believe this, and I don't believe that he believes it, because actually to me
then we all would be getting equal education—nobody gets none.

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*Miss Carol Bligen*

**I KNOW BE TROUBLE**

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If they integrated Haut Gap School, be trouble. I know be trouble, 'cause I don't like nobody to tease me. If one of them come and tease me, first thing I do, I going fight.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## INTIMIDATION HAS BEEN BAD

177 829 The whites and the Negroes on this island haven't gotten involved in violence. But the intimidation, I think, has been bad as far as the white is concerned. Like making a person feel like he might not have a job tomorrow. This is something that bothers the Negroes a whole lot. Although it never bothered me because I feel like anybody that works me, he's working me because he's making some money off me, he's not working me because he likes me. He's working me because I'm a good worker and he needs me. And I believe that we all need each other—without the whites the Negro couldn't make it; and I believe without the Negroes the whites couldn't make it.

177 829 464 They've used the migrant workers in this intimidation. When I first knew about the migrant workers, they were really, really treated bad. They had no place to stay when they came here, and they were always treated bad. But since the integration movement has started here on the island, I think the white farmers have really gone for the migrant workers because they know that the migrant laborers really don't stand for nothing. They're just somebody to work.

Most of them, I've found out, have been in trouble before. They had trouble somewhere, or they couldn't make it at home, or something like that, and that's how come they become migrant laborers. So the white farmers figure, "Here's a chance for us to use the Negroes without the Negroes really being able to do anything about it. We don't have to worry about them getting an education. All they want to do is get our crops out, and then we can sort of hurt the Negroes here on the island by doing it this way."

The biggest farmer here, during the last season, he was working the migrant laborers three days and the regular Negroes on the island two days a week. So this is something where the Negroes used to look forward to (465) making during the summertime eighty or ninety dollars a week, it be cut down to thirty-five or forty dollars a week.

177 829 This is to try to keep the Negroes from participating in things. It doesn't matter whether he or she has been participating or not, he's automatically placed in this category. Two farmers came by the Progressive Club last year during the workshops there and acted like they were taking down license numbers. Nobody knows if they were actually taking down the numbers or not; they never published them, but this really scared a lot of Negroes and they wouldn't even want to bring their cars around.

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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

**WE GOT ALONG**

•177 829

The Negroes have been afraid to trust the white. They feel he isn't wanting them to begin with, and the white men feel that they are superior. That's what we have on this island.

There has never been any race problem since I've been here. By race problem I mean there hasn't been any violence. We got along. The Negroes just used to take things as accepted course. They been resigned to their fate, most of them, and satisfied with that.

You can tell the difference in the whites' attitude since 1954. They weren't quite as friendly, some of 'em, as they had been, because they thought there was going to be a rushing into the white schools,' and they didn't want that. But I don't think they have to fear about that. Nobody's ever tried to go there.

It's just a matter of time until they are going to accept integration. (811) Well, I don't know about Johns Island. I won't say that here because, you see, people accept according to their education, I believe. The more a man knows, the more intelligent he becomes of worldly affairs. But now this island here is going to be a long time, I think.

The newspaper see a relation between the two races, they make that white man a Communist. Infiltration! Any time relationship between Negroes and whites, always be somebody tag 'em as a Communist. That's one of the policies of this Southland you'll find. They don't have anything else to say, they just say that. Just like Martin Luther King. They say he's a Communist and that's not true. Just a man trying to get what belongs to him.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE NEED TO MAKE FRIENDS

●177 829 I have a white friend and we usually be frank with each other. He ask me, "Don't you think that the Negro want integration because they want to marry white women?"

I laughed. I said, "Are you kidding? You ever know any garden that's pretty without having a variety of flowers?" I said, "If you have all black flowers or all white flowers you don't have much of a garden, but if you have all kinds of flowers it looks pretty. Now Negroes can choose from almost white to the very black and different shades between, and then he's just wanting to have integration to marry a white woman?"

Years ago the Negroes on this island were skeptical of a white person if he show as if he want a friendship with them or help them, because only thing they know about the white folks is go out and work for them and they treat them as animal, and that's all. That's the kind of relationship they call good—to go out and do what they want done and then go home. Years ago, Negroes have never seen a white person come around, no more than if they come out to the house to ask them to work. They wouldn't even much come in, and the Negroes couldn't even go in the white folks house regardless of how much they work. But now things are changing a little bit.

Some time ago I went to a white home here, and I ring the bell, and to my surprise, the man invited me into the kitchen. We began to talk together, and the white girl came and peeped through the door to see who the daddy was talking to. And she went back to the mother and I heard the mother say, "Who is that?" and the girl say, "Mr. Jenkins." I was surprised she had said that. I just want to know what the mother thought when a white girl calling a Negro *Mister* Jenkins. That was a surprise to me. But we talk in a friendly manner 'til I ready to leave.

And I think it is becsuse of these white persons who have come here, who have stayed with me lots of times, we have gone around together, we have sung together, we have prayed together, we have eaten together. And I think some of the white folks here are being ashamed of themselves just now. They can see the handwriting on the wall. We need to make friends.

You can see a change in the most of them. Not too many have come out openly and invited me in their home and sit with them as these one or two. The white magistrate has invited me in his home. We sat to the table together and discussed things on the island and the betterment of Negroes, and some white farmers have call me and we begin to talk. Not in the masses, but you can see the feeling, and they respect you much better. It's not the kind of relationship they were calling good relations some years ago, that you go out and do what I tell you to do and then go home.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

**FREEDOM IS WORSE**

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Really to me, freedom is worse in New York than it is on Johns Island. Because on Johns Island the white people are honest in letting you know that they don't want you to associate with them. In New York, if we go to a hotel and want a room, there's no segregation, they just ain't got no rooms.

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159 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his
578 own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 There's been a great awakening through television and through the
177 news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

159 **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**
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Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[189] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

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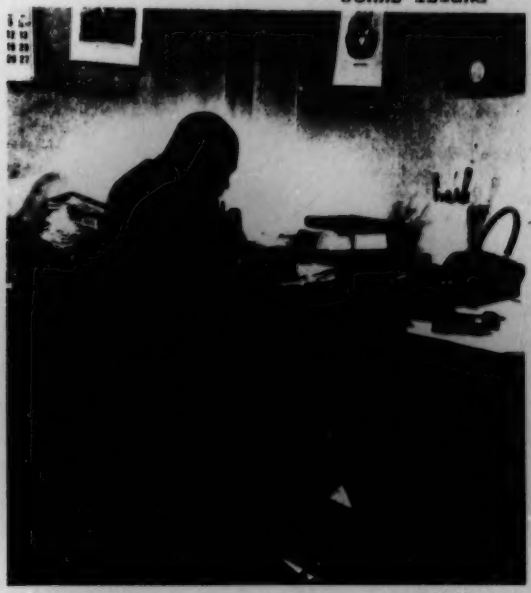

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(199) And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

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159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
• 177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together.
(241) It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought
432 the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

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159 or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday
177 speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that
[432] helped me to educate most of my children.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

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Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood,

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159 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any
179 money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should
682 not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1949 a pro-
185 gressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

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159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
87 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
[661] The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
159 when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
87 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
● 177 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
185 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
[875] outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to
make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing,
those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being
so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

177 So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
185 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
[661] know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
—to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

872 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
873 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
494 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
66 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
[474] Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
[392] somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
● 177 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
66 "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
664 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better,
185 make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
474 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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159 185 873 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in some of these lawyers' offices.

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 185 179 873 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island—I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race—because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

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159 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the
185 teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against
873 any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand
•177 in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $800 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of the kids get to be addicts. Some of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

873 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 829 464 882 IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages—fact, they have to do that. There's

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 177 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

[855] [603] *Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a certain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 177 I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents cannot understand. And this was my problem. [593]

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 177 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York. they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## GOD AIN'T MAKING NO MORE LAND

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Land on these islands got to be so valuable because of the development projects on Kiawah and Seabrook. At one time you could get an acre of land for less than fifty dollars. Now land costs a lot more. It's almost impossible to buy land now. We got people out here now that come to buy with cash money. This is a way of enticing and influencing people because people have spent all their lives trying to make some money and here this guy walks up to you with rolls of thousand dollar bills circled by hundreds and five hundreds and starts talking. Many of these people just want to take the money and I can understand it. But you have to let them know that God ain't making no more land, and if you got any, you better hold onto it and try to work some other type of arrangement like long-term leasing. Sometimes you can be land-rich, but you can lose it all.

Black land is a threat to further development. It's slowing things down. I'll give you an example of how these developers operate. There is a black family that used to own about seventy-nine acres of land on Johns Island. The land developers were out there like buzzards trying to find an heir to that property that would not have any interest in the property. In this particular case the heir was somebody in New York and the developer said, "I will give

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you X amount of dollars for what you own on Johns Island." He said, "Man, what are you talking about? I have never been to Johns Island." The developer said, "Yes, but you own something down there." The developer looked like Santa Claus to him and he just went on and took the money.

The developer took the signed agreement into probate court and started suing for partition. They couldn't agree on how to divide the seventy-nine acres. The court said since the relatives could not agree who was going to get the swamp, who was going to get the waterfront, who was going to get whatever, then the whole property should be sold and the money divided.

The developer wanted the whole thing anyway. When he signed the piece of paper for whatever he owned, he became a member of the family. He would not agree to any settlement. When they had the partition sale, he had someone come and outbid the rest of the family.

We're planning quarterly land workshops now so that people can learn more about how to protect their land.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHAT I TALK TO PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND ABOUT IS POOLING OUR RESOURCES

177 There's no way that the island can stay unchanged. It's already changed. There was a time when I knew everybody on the island. I can't say that anymore. There's been such an influx of new people in the last ten years. There's a real new sense of direction there. The new people can always take advantage of the older people. Hopefully, we can control some of the change.

For the first time in my lifetime, the white and black communities have come together. Some of the whites who hated my guts back when you guys were there now are using me sometimes as spokesman to the county government. Some of them who would never have spoken to me, I've been in meetings with them and they'll say, "Let Mr. Saunders explain that." There's a Johns Island planning committee to look at what needs to be changed. I think we might be able to maintain our roads—if we could get some cutoffs on the roads, where those big farm vehicles or the school bus can pull over for the traffic—and if we can do it *and* save the big trees.

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000 I wish I was in a position to get a group of people together to buy up a good bit of the land that is for sale on Johns Island. Some of it I would like to just sit. Some of it you could build the things that need to be done. I would like to see a nice Holiday Inn-type motel over there. There are so many people from the island that are living away from here that come home and their family don't have a house large enough for them to stay in. And they don't want to stay in the city, so they just crowd in together. But if you had a real nice hotel and just a nice restaurant, you could make money on it. There are so many things that could be done.

What I talk to people on the island about is pooling our resources to build the things that will be built on Johns Island. It can be done, but we would have to trust each other.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

179 464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

177 491 Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah (198) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

758 743 177 [741] Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open and close.

758 185 My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in 1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and saw the intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I know I said to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island twenty." Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 74 628 185 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charleston—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands. Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 74 177 185 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant workers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Washington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks, the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 554 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 554 871 (177) I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior. (177) Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experi-
• 177 ence that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in
159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the
186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth
178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191] The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having,
-197 such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of
[536] Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing
[883] her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

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Johns Island

*Mrs. June Hunter*

# I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

177 484

When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

142 302 291 524 352 353

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties-with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that.

For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P-236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
•177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
[464] Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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000 tions introduced by to in earlier English for similar reasons. Jespersen (1940) notes that for preceding to + Verb originally expressed the notion of 'purpose,' though in time this construction came to be merely the equivalent of the to-infinitive. He cites parallel developments in certain Scandinavian dialects; in Skåne, för till att marks infinitives of purpose. Visser (1966) speculates that the use of for to with adverbial infinitives may have arisen in Middle English either because by that time the directive force of to was too much toned down, or from a trend to reinforce the directive force of this complementizer. He cites other pre-infinitival phrases used, as evidence for such a re-inforcing trend: for þat entent to, in purpose to, in order to. In a computational study of the infinitive used from Old to Modern English (including certain forms not marked by a complementizer), Appleby (1967) discerns no pattern in the variation between to and for to during the Middle English period. She does find that, by Early Modern English, for to was used primarily with nouns and adverbs. The 'adverb' classification used by Appleby is the one closest to the 'purposive' classification used here for Gullah infinitival clauses.

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•177 From the discussion of the speech community (Chapter 2), it should be clear that the type of English most likely to be heard by early Gullah speakers was not the standard Early Modern English of London. If many West African immigrants had already learned Gullah in African ports before

19 being transported to the Carolina colony, as Hancock (1975)
177 suggests, the English which contributed to the development of the African-based creole was not that of the standard variety, either. Traugott's history of English syntax (1972) notes the importance of certain similarities between the English spoken by some Americans of West African ancestry today and that of seventeenth-century northern England and Scotland. So far as the complementizer is concerned, it is conceivable that the nonstandard for to or even for was the variant used in the kind of English heard by the early immigrants from Africa. Or that these were among the variants heard.

193 The heavy retention of fE for purposive clauses in Gullah, even as the change to standard forms for the complementizer in other environments is almost complete, argues for another explanation for the original choice of fE as complementizer than simply a dialectal one. Evidence from standard English and from other creoleb points to the close relationship between particles used as prepositions or case markers to indicate notions of purpose and possession, and between homonymous particles having a complementizing function. In an influential discussion of factive and nonfactive predicates, Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) noted the close association between certain types of infinitival con-
000 structions and non-factive predicates. In a subsequent examination of psychological predicates in English, Aijmer

000 overlapped throughout the major historical stages of English, so did the uses of to and at as locative prepositions. The Oxford English Dictionary has citations for to expressing simple position from as early as 925 and extending as late as 1901; this use of to for indicating static location is labeled as 'dial. and U. S. colloq' for Modern English. The use of at for expressing notions of 'motion toward' is labeled 'obsolete.' A citation for such use is given from as late as 1528, however. The use of at for pre-infinitival complementizer in dialects of northern England was mentioned in Section 4.1. Within the larger Germanic family of languages, the two lexical items to and at have long overlapped. In Modern German and Dutch, at is lost and its place largely taken by a form of to. In Scandinavian, to is lost, with at taking over the function of complementizer before the infinitive. Because of the variation between to and at in earlier English, particularly for nonstandard dialects, it is reasonably certain that early Gullah speakers would have been exposed to some variation in the use of these locative prepositions. Such variation has persisted even into the twentieth century; as late as 1960 the use of static-to was recorded in the speech of residents of a remote North Carolina island settled by English pilots and their families in the early 1700's (Morgan, 1960). I myself heard older white speakers of coastal South Carolina use it in informal conversation during 1974. Kurath (1949), however, reports

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193 that the use of static-to is not frequent in this area for
•177 an idiomatic expression like sick at my stomach, and Bryant (1962) reports studies of the expression to home which indicate heavy usage of static-to in rural New England but relatively infrequent use in the Southern states. From these sketchy reports, it seems reasonable to assume that static-to could be heard in early Carolina English, but that at was at least equally frequent. Despite this variation for English speakers, Turner's 1949 texts indicate that to was used almost exclusively by Gullah speakers for the expression of both static and dynamic locative relationships. The question arises as to why to, rather than at, was chosen for the expression of such relationships.

000 There exists no clear preference for static-to in other English creoles. The Caribbean creoles which derive from contact between English and African languages have a division of the semantic space 'locative' which is roughly similar to that of Gullah (see Traugott, 1974 on Barbadian and Trinidadian English Creoles). One lexical item is used to indicate both static location and movement toward ego. The Caribbean creole for which the greatest amount of data exist, Jamaican, apparently uses at for both static and dynamic notions (Cassidy, 1961; Bailey, 1966; Cassidy and LePage, 1967). There is much variation in all these creoles, but at is the preposition most favored for the indication of both static and motional notions; to is used to express

193 spatial ones and which are never expressed by static-to.

193 As lexical items, the creole variants seem to have
•177 their own individual histories, even though all seem clearly to be English in origin. The complementizer fE is likely to derive from English for, used as complementizer in earlier stages and in some modern dialects of English. The widespread use of a similar particle as both case marker and complementizer in other English-related pidgins and creoles suggests that a more universal process underlies the choice of this particle as complementizer, however (see Washabaugh's 1975 discussion of fo in a variety of West African Pidgin English, fi in Providence Island Creole and in the creole of San Andres Island in Colombia, fi in Jamaican Creole, fi and fu in Guyanese Creole, and fo in Hawaiian Creole). The pronouns ee and Em probably come from English he and him, but their use for all genders has no parallel in any dialect of English. The underlying categories marked by these creole forms, which differ from those categories marked by similar forms in Jamaican and Guyanese creoles, may reflect the structure of West African languages different from those languages serving as source languages for the Caribbean creoles. Finally, the to used as static locative preposition is undoubtedly English in origin and has the strongest claim for direct lineage from those English dialects which use to in a similar fashion. Older white speakers in rural South Carolina can still be found

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193 using to with the meaning of 'static location.' The use of
179 at and by with the meaning of both 'static location' and 'dynamic movement toward' by creole speakers in the Caribbean may indicate the early presence there of speakers of different English dialects, perhaps originating in northern England and Ireland. Although the variants used for static locative preposition in South Carolina and the Caribbean may derive ultimately from dialectal varieties of English common to those two parts of the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the reduced inventory of locative prepositions common to both Gullah and the Caribbean English creoles seems related more to the typology of creoles than to dialectal variation in English.

464 562 197 463 no use of standard English and which entail little interaction with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by black men in the region are blue collar and require few language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some [177] had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

159 telling why there are not more of his generation around now to keep company he says "en d last years I ca'n waak lik I en d past. Dey'll be many mo ob ma time round here da dae, butbiln d white man's bridges and railroad kill musa us out. Wen dem come from d railroad waak dey body wae dead. I tri ta tel dem ta lern to make lik waak, but dey mules n at age fifty dey wax tiad ole men. Oderwize dey'll be many mo ob ma people wete me tadae."

159 461 Reverend Gripe.--The right Reverend Gripe differentiated between human and inhuman labor. Born in 1893, this man refused to work for the large white farmers. He worked and maintained his own land, but when there was an extra penny in "fightin d white man field" he refused. Once he went to lime house store (Captain Limehouse, the head of a powerful family in the area) to buy steak meat. Captain Limehouse a noted nigger whipper asked "where a nigger git steak money?" The six foot three inch two hundred plus pound Reverend Gripe replied "by not waakin ya fields," at which Limehouse laughed and dismissed the Reverend as crazy. Taking insult the Reverend jumped in his new Nash automobile and went then and thereafter to the city for his steak meat.

•177 RACE RELATIONS ON THE ISLANDS

Now with bridges and interconnecting paved roadways

177 the Sea Islands have been recognized as ideal for suburban living. Consequently in the past five years there has been an onslaught of Whites moving onto the Islands. Whites as a result of this migration are the majority population on Johns in addition to James Island. The coming of Whites to the Sea Island has not, as in earlier migration, been limited to the two islands close to Charleston City. The number of Whites on the three most distant islands has also steadily increased during the past decade. The areas surrounding central Charleston report a growth of 33.9% during this period. In 1960, 65% of Charlestons county's population lived outside the central city; by 1970 this percentage increased to 72.1.

Whites, the Islands new population, have generally concentrated their living to the waterfront acreage of the islands. As this acreage is diminished and the number of Whites increased, suburban developments are emerging on the inland acreage. So far this trend is particularly the case for James and Johns Islands.

The illustration of an incident in the life of Reverend Gripe is by no means isolated. There are Black families who have never conformed to the colonial status to which they have been assigned. Then there are islanders who follow and swallow wholeheartedly the deficatous trails and tales of the "bossman system."

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•177 579 Only twice since the turn of the century has there been a large scale threat of open conflict between the races. The earliest threat was in 1922 and was caused by the beating of a Black woman on the island by a White man. The island's men set out to retaliate. Whites were attacked and beaten in Charleston and atmosphere was tense throughout the county. Then in 1970 the city sanitation and hospital workers went on strike. As the months past without much movement toward settling the disagreements the Black now jobless community became increasingly tensed and similar repeats of attacks on Whites by Blacks were reported.

177 The relationship between the races has never been "peaches and cream." Because Whites maintain a tight hold on the economic patterns on the islands, islanders are to some degree reluctant to physically express their feelings. [579] Shooting incidents between the races, while not common, can be anticipated from time to time. The older islanders who [466] have slaved in the fields of the large farmers have not [465] forgotten the degrading condition under which they were economically obligated to function for some thirty-five cents per day. Younger islanders, also well aware of this history, simply refuse to repeat the pattern. The extent to which they are successful in breaking down the colonial economic patterns on the island will determine the future of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

362 There are also those units which are adequately furnished, and contain inside plumbing facilities. These homes tend to be new or recently improved. Built during the 1950's, more of the middle age islanders live in houses of this type.

Some sections contain new or recently built homes; these are more rarely seen and tend to be occupied by islanders in their late twenties and thirties who have been employed at an adequate wage over a period of years.

A SUMMATION STATEMENT

177 178 The roots of exploitation are deep on the Sea Islands. That information and those program services which would help ease the yokes of oppression are but slowly being metered into the community. In the mist of this oppression, the islanders continue to show spirited strength in maintaining traditional family patterns and the unique customs. They are not diving foolishly into imitation of the suburban elements to which they are gaining greater exposure. Certainly features of the suburban life style are and will continue to be adopted into native family patterns. But these elements will be added with modification. It is too early to speculate on the forms these modifications will take. However, it is rather certain that those elements of suburbanization which would drastically effect the traditional functioning and design of island families if, ventured into

177 at all, will, in coming, have to be made consistent with
178 and have minimal impact on the family as it now exists.

178 No doubt, the continued existence of the Sea Islands as an exclusively Black community will be difficult to retain. The extent to which the Sea Islands retain their unique Black character will hinge on the economic resourcefulness of the younger islanders and on whether those who have left are willing to return and reclaim their Sea Island heritage.

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121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121 197 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the [576] [177] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gulliah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

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121 become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of
197 early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The
[576] conflicting feature of these two notions is evident.
[177] Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.
121 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable
197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent
174 with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela-
174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands
178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

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121 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
178 have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
177 Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
178 open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated the American ethos to the extent evident among northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland (U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes increasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

12 The related and important question of the present in-
178 vestigation is whether in addition to the retention of linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," African Language Society (1966), pp. 171-179.

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect.
In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the
discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[577] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obe-
dient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated.
In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child
who has been socialized properly.

The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
861 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
•177 on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in
the environment which act to make for proper rearing of
children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it
and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands
the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles
makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the
proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the
situation this way: "d paren should be shami while d roun
en de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no
choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind
ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible fer d chil, dey
must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no wat
goina happen ta d chilln ta dae. Ef d paren dan't see ta

861 it quik, dey is head fer d fira on brim stan. But it ain't
177 dey falt."

The relationship being described here explains the
861 higher tolerance of today's parents and is explicable in
184 part by generational differences and in part by the exposure
177 element-distance from mainland. In the case of exposure,
the more distant Gullah families are more isolated from the
mainland socializing influences. An effect of this more
limited exposure is more adherence to "the discipline habits
of ole." This adherence was reflected in the lower toler-
ance (reaction ratio) of parents on the distant islands.
In further explanation, the work habits of women on the
near islands contribute to their being the most tolerant
parents. The occupational habits of these women frequently
take them into the households of White families of higher
economic status. When this Gullah parent is exposed to an
alternate discipline pattern, this exposure may then
underly the differences in tolerance found between sexes
and islands.

The tolerance of differences may only be a function of
593 exposure time. The case here is that parents who are en-
861 gaged in the work force spend less time with their children
184 than do elder parents. Hence the working parent would not
be as quick to react to disobedience on the part of children
than would grandparents who are actively engaged in child

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
[177] ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

592 However this is not the total explanation. It is also
184 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
857 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
861 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
[867] These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disci-
plined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which significant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are
86 quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perspective of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohesiveness of the island community. Notions of the broad
[177] scale influence of the mainland elements on island

184 discipline habits is not the case. While the generational
86 factor was upheld, the dominant pattern was the absence of
[177] significant differences across islands and particularly
across sex lines.

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## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 178 179 464 179 861 861 178 561 593

The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the tested generational relationships were significant. These differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston. While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. The more demanding work requirements which accompanies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed. It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder islanders base their discipline references was unknown to

562 86 [178] The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining. (578) Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a common behavior of males. The reason for fighting as a [177] more frequent behavior of males on James Island was explained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders to mainland patterns.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

128 a speaker. The difference in that number and the figures
193 in the preverbal and postverbal columns would reveal the frequency with which the verb appears in the absence of a marker. Cases where the stem count does not exceed the cumulative categorical count are cases where one or more English or Creole forms appear in the absence of a stem verb.

Table 2.1 shows a significant number of verb stems used by all consultants. Plausible reasons for the use of verb stems in such great frequency are that they express both tense and aspect, occur with all pre-verbal markers, and occur independently in nominal constructions. For
193 example, the following constructions were obtained by asking the consultant to produce semantic equivalents of: *I shell peas daily, I am shelling them now, I shelled them yesterday, I have been shelling them all day, I have finished shelling them, I had finished shelling them a long time ago.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɒi ʃɛlɒm | 'I shell them' (tonsless) | (1) |
| ɒi do ʃɛlɒm | 'I am shelling them' | |
| ɒi bin ʃɛlɒm | 'I shelled them' | |
| ɒi bino ʃɛlɒm | 'I have been shelling them' | |
| ɒi don ʃɛlɒm | 'I have shelled them' | |
| ɒi bindɒn ʃɛlɒm | 'I had shelled them some time ago' | |

193 The fact that Creole verb stems have not been replaced
177 by standard English inflections indicates that it is more natural to retain an invariant verb stem than to acquire a new rule for a different system of marking. Consequently,

193 the uninflected stem is not a stigmatized form as evidenced
177 by its ubiquitous appearance in the pre-mesolectal table (2.3). It seems under little if any social pressure within the Wadmalaw community to further conform to the English system of marking. But the more a speaker acquires Standard English verbs, the greater is the decline of the Creole pre-verbs /bɪn/, /bɪnə/, /dɔŋ/ and /də/. They have neither semantic cognates, syntactic functions nor graphemic shapes with parallels in the superstrate, which are reasons some of the preverbs become rare or non-existent as a speaker moves toward English.

193 Some Creole markers undergo replacement processes while others are exchanged or deleted in light of more prestigious English markings. Still others like the unmarked verb stem manage to survive.

Those verb stems that do survive well into the mesolect are usually synonymous semantically with English verb stems. But the range of function in creole languages is greater than in English, as exemplified in the following example. (The preverb /di/ is the semantic equivalent of /də/ in Gullah.)

| | |
|---|---|
| i di waka | 'he is walking' |
| sɔm waka man | 'a wanderer' |
| i di laf | 'he is laughing' |
| sɔm laf man | 'a joker' |
| i di krai | 'he is crying' |
| sɔm krai man | 'a complainer' (Todd 1973:4) |

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193 English does utilize verbs as nominal modifiers such as *cry baby*, *go car* and *dance man*. However the creole does not have the treasury of synonyms that its parent languages possess. While *cry baby* is generally used in English to [195] refer to one who cries easily or constantly, *cry man* is often the only reference that the creole language has for a complainer, one who whines and one who cries easily or constantly.

The unmarked verb has a high frequency of occurrence in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. But, its appearance alone or in conjunction with certain preverbs is restricted. Non-stative verb stems do occur with /də/, /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /dɔŋ/. However, /bɪn/ seems to occur most often with stative verbs indicating simple past. The preverb /də/ does not appear in this corpus with stative verbs to produce a construction such as */i də no/ *'he is knowing'; or */i də ɓan/ *'he is wanting'. The seeming selectivity of the preverbal markers helps to account for the fewer tokens of /də/ and /bɪn/ as compared with the higher count of unmarked verbs.

Table 2.4 shows stem verb useage for basilectal speakers exceeding that of pre-mesolectal ones by a factor of approximately two. An explanation for this pattern is 193 that the pre-mesolectal speakers show a rise in the use of • 177 verbs ending in *-ing* and in the use of English 'be' verbs while at the same time they show a considerable decline in

193 the use of the Creole continuative markers /bɪn/ and /de/.
177 This movement indicates fluctuation in the direction of English.[3]

19 2.2. The *-ed* morpheme

The *-ed* morpheme does not occur as a past tense indicator in the corpus for this study. Simple past is marked by a verb immediately preceded by /bɪn/: /i bɪn liθ/ 'He left.' Many English inflectional morphemes are ac-
19 177 quired grammatical devices that are non-existent[3] in the basilect and extremely rare in the mesolect as exemplified by the data in this study.

The English marker *-ed* occurred only once in the data, and this one occurrence was considered a hyper-correction. Hyper-correction as defined by Fasold (1972:195) comes about when speakers are in the process of learning forms from a different linguistic system, and have not mastered all the constraints on their use. Consequently, they often extend usage to contexts which are never used by native speakers of the language or dialect from which the forms originated. The hyper-correction appearing in the data is /ɒi god oθe dɛ/ 'I went over there' (6). The speaker's knowledge of the English system of marking verbs may be incomplete. He may not have internalized *went* as the past tense marker of *go*, an irregular verb. As charac-

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teristic behavior one would have expected a speaker to say /ɔɪ bɪn go/ indicating an action which occurred some time in the past. This speaker replaces the preverbal marker /bɪn/ with the post-verbal *-ed*, which suggests vertical movement toward English.

S 19

Other occurrences of *-ed* are in words in which *-ed* does not mark tense:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔɪ tɔɪd | 'I am tired' | (1) |
| də nekɪd man | 'The naked man' | (1) |

Bickerton (1975:107) shows that some past participle forms occur with polysyllabic verbs or learned words like *populated, accommodated, admitted,* and others with unaffixed forms (i.e. *populate* and *accommodate*). These words are seldom used by basilectal speakers unless used as formal vocabulary items. He concludes that when used, they are acquired as formal independent lexical items with no question of any productive process being involved.

It is not surprising that past tense *-ed* is essentially nonexistent in the data for the basilect, or the mesolect. The form has been discussed in descriptions of inland Black dialect for some time now, and the question of a creole origin for Black dialect is still an issue. Did it, or did it not derive from a creole ancestor like Gullah? Rickford (1974:94) charges the failure of creolists to solve the mystery of Black dialect's ancestry to 'the traditional tendency to view a "creole" as a fixed invariant system, maximally different from its lexically

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A 193 194 (A) A few days ago, *they walk(ed)*.
(B) Every day now, *they walk*.

The results were inconclusive. The consultants gave the 'correct' answer fifty percent of the time, which means that the *-ed* was NOT pronounced as often as it WAS pronounced. Consequently, any variable deletion associated with *-ed* forms that the consultants had, failed to furnish meaningful signals for the consultants' system of tense marking. Dillard concluded that there are justifications for eliminating inflections from the grammar of Black English, at least in the sense of tense as it is used in standard English (Dillard 1972:52).

A 193

A S 193 Both Stewart and Rickford have drawn parallels with some mesolectal varieties of Gullah and Black dialect. These creolists believe that inland Black dialect is descended from Gullah and possibly other creoles. While it is possible for 'dialect mixture' rather than convergence to have occurred, Rickford (1974) argues this claim is easily refuted by evidence of forms found in mesolectal varieties of Gullah today:

Stressed *bin* as remote-phrase marker:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah | - | *I bin had that.* |
| Black English | - | *I bin had that plant.* (Rickford 1974: 95) |

If the creolists are right, the absence of *-ed* in the grammar of Gullah would account for the infrequent occurrence of the *-ed* past tense form in Black English.

S (177) The fact that present-day Gullah speakers, basilectal and mesolectal, have not acquired the English grammatical past

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A S 193 [177] tense marker adds more support to the hypothesis that the sporadic occurrence of *-ed* in Black dialect is a stage in language acquisition. The occurrence of the lone mesolectal speaker who said /ɔɪ god oβə dɛ/ 'I went over there' is not dissimilar from the constructions occurring in the speech of some Black dialect speakers who say *I knowed that already*. Furthermore, many of the same social and geographical factors which nurtured the growth and development of Gullah on the islands also nurtured Black dialect on the mainland. But historically the islands were closed communities with little in migration. The speech patterns were therefore much more stable than those of other inland Black people who had more interaction with English-speaking Europeans. Today, linguists continue

A S 193 197 177 to classify the people who speak Gullah as different from those who speak Black dialect. While it is possible to separate Gullah from Black dialect linguistically, it is no longer as easily done socially. With improved transportation to and from the islands, many Gullah speakers interact daily with inland Black speakers through economic and social activities. It is through this interaction that some language changes are occurring in Gullah. It is very likely that certain features associated with Gullah are being reinforced in inland Black dialect speakers through this same process.

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193 mesolectal speakers. Turner (1949) observed /dɔ/ in Gullah functioning primarily as a verb of incomplete predication. Cunningham (1970:66) provides a syntactic description of /dɔ/ + VERB and /dɔ/ + VERB + *ing* performing as the present continuative aspect markers. They appear with both transitive and intransitive verbs in which case /dɔ/ always precedes and *-ing* always follows. The two aspect markers /dɔ/ and *-ing* do not co-occur.

Table 2.2 shows /dɔ/ exceedingly more frequent than all quantitative counts for the English verbs 'to be'. The category includes any form of the verb 'to be', but an important fact obscured by the tables is that the English cognate selected most often to replace a creole preverb is *was*. Other present tense forms such as *is*, *am*, and *are* make few, if any appearances. Those numbers which are starred indicate that at least one half, in some cases more, of the appearances of the 'be' verb chosen, occurred in conjunction with either the Creole preverbal markers /dɔg/, /dɔ/, /bɪn/ or /bɪnɔ/ as a form of self-correction (i.e. /ɔɪ wɔɪ oβɔ dɛh - ɔɪ bɪn oβɔ dɛ βɪd dɛm/ 'I was over there - I bin over there with them' (6)), or the form appeared in a construction other than standard English or 'basilectal Creole' (i.e. /ɔɪ wɔɪ kɔm ɔut dɔ hɔɪ/ 'I had come out of the house.') It appears (177) that *was* is acquired from English, not only to mark simple past for *be* verbs, but as past marker in general, as in: /dɪɔ βɔɪ pɔnɪʃ ju dɪ βɪɔ dɪɔ fɪlɪk/ 'They punished you

193 in the manner they saw fit' (2). Considering that
199 the category is composed of English *be* verbs which were used in lieu of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/ the number is quite low, especially when compared to the total number of occurrences of /də/, /bɪn/ and /bɪnə/ in Table 2.2. As expected, Table 2.3 shows a higher occurrence of *be* forms beyond the basilect than occurrences of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/. Likewise, all the consultants in Table
(115) 2.3 showed some familiarity with English *be* verbs. As evidenced by their performance, five of the fourteen speakers in Table 2.2 show no familiarity with English *be* verbs at all.

193 The preverb /də/ performs a number of functions in addition to marking present continuative. The high frequency of /də/ in Table 2.2 is related to this as well as other functions:

/də/ *as present continuative aspect marker:*

/ɔɔᵊm ɹɛit ɡɔndə dɛdɪ də stæn ɔp/ (3)
'See it right there daddy. Standing up.'

/i də ʃek totə/ 'She is shaking potatoes.' (23)

/də mɔŋki də hol/ 'The monkey is holding on.' (5)

/də/ *as past continuative aspect marker:*

Cunningham notes that the past continuative is marked by /bɪn/ + ɛ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing:*

*When you call me, I been ɛ cook my dinner.*
'When you called me, I was cooking my dinner.'

*I been driving one day* 'I was driving one day'
(Cunningham 1970:67-8)

193 It precedes the verb or predicate adjective that it marks or it may perform alone as the main verb constituent. It can co-occur with the equating verb /ɪz/, or the locating verb /dɔ/, but the forms do not generally occur together (Cunningham 1970:64). Creole /bɪn/ may be borrowed from [177] English, but it should not be confused with the English past participle *been*. Other than vowel lengthening as in English /bɪːn/, it is difficult to claim any phonological disparity between them, but semantic and syntactic differences between *been* and /bɪn/ are more clearly defined. English *been* has an invariant grammatical function, to perform primarily as a perfective and past participle of 'be' verbs. Other features associated with its use are (+ PERFECT), (± PASSIVE), (± STATIVE). In some cases it can act as the main verb in constructions such as *He has been here*. But *been* does not occur in standard English without the aid of an auxiliary verb.

193 Unstressed /bɪn/. When unstressed /bɪn/ signals a
194 completed action in Gullah, the data in this study show this use of /bɪn/ is replaced by *was*. Several constructions show them both occurring in combination:

/ɔɪ wɔz oβɔ dɛʰ(correction) ɔɪ bɪn oβɔ dɛʰ/ (6)
'I was over there with them.'

/ɔɪ wɔz bɪn ɹɔŋ dɛʰ/ 'I was around there.' (8)

/dio wɔz pönɪʃ ju (correction) bɪn pönɪʃ ju di βio dio fi·l lɛɪk/
'They punished you in the manner they saw fit.' (2)

193 The foregoing sentences show one operation of language
177

193 change as the Creole and the English replacement occur in
•177 conjunction. The self-correction may indicate that the Creole is the more natural choice. Seemingly insecure about which form to use, each of the three speakers corrected his speech in favor of the language that he knew best. The last sentence shows the English replacement *was* occurring in pre-verbal position with a stem verb, where the preverb /bɪn/ would normally occur. The past tense indicator *-ed* is omitted and tense is marked by *was* as it would have been marked with /bɪn/. The joint appearance of the English past tense form with a Creole form owes its existence to a convergence of Creole and English grammar which produced a sentence which is neither Creole nor English. Even more important, the examples offer linguists an opportunity to observe abstract conceptualization processes that a speaker undergoes to reconcile the conflict between competing rules involved in linguistic change.

19 Stressed /bɪn/. Neither Turner nor Cunningham acknowledge stressed /bɪn/ as a remote past marker in Gullah. Consultants 1, 2 and 3 produced examples of a stressed /bɪn/ which could not have been a variant form of the unstressed form because the sentences were uttered in a context which does not allow substitution by a simple past tense marker without alterning the meaning:

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193 Of the twenty-one speakers consulted, 67% used /bɪnə/. As shown in Table 2.4, the form can be expected to occur five times more frequently among basilectal than among pre-mesolectal speakers. The decline in usage by the pre-mesolectal speakers may be caused by /bɪn/ being replaced by more English-like progressive markers (e.g. *been going* as opposed to /bɪn go/ or /bɪnə goin/. English replacements would account for /bɪn/ becoming rare as one moves beyond the basilect. Only two of the seven speakers considered to be pre-mesolectal in Table 2.3 use the form. These same speakers show a decline in frequency of useage of the Creole progressive aspect markers /bɪn/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The ratio of *-ing* useage among pre-mesolectal to basilectal speakers is about 2:1. The higher frequency of the pre-mesolectal speakers may be attributed to their having acquired from English many *-ing* morphemes as whole words in the form of participials and nominals.

/də stə ə lɪl dɪdlɪn ɹeɪn/ (2)
'It started to drizzle rain a little.'

/də 'ɹɛɹə də 'kloʊzɪn ɪn/ (2)
'The weather was closing in.'

/də 'hɛʃɪə də wɔz gɪtn/ (2)
'the heavier it was getting'

Participial and nominal *-ing* are 'special' items, acquired through grammatical rules. They are probably first added as simple vocabulary items which do not impose on the Creole verbal structuring. Through continual use

193 its absence can not be accounted for by any appeals to grammatical or phonological deletion processes because there is no evidence that Gullah speakers, mesolectal or basilectal, ever had any production rule for its use, nor do they have any now.

(2) An investigation of the *-ed* morpheme shows it to be absent also. There is a category of past tense in the grammar of Gullah, but it is clearly not marked with *-ed* as it is in English. Again, only one *-ed* occurred in the data, and that one was assigned to performance error. It is clear from the data that when tense is indicated, it is marked in Gullah most frequently with preverbal /bɪn/.

(3) Cunningham (1970) makes no attempt to 'weed out' those constructions which are exclusively Creole. She observes *is* as the equating verb or the verb joining two nominals, or a nominal with a *for* phrase functioning as a possessive. The data for this study show /dɔ/ as the primary equating verb, though consultant number 3 shows a fairly consistent frequency of /ɪz/ joining two nominals (e.g. /dɪ̈s truɸ/ 'That is the truth'). However, there are interferences from English in the *be* category. The main English *be* verb used in Gullah is /wɔz/. Other verbs like *is*, *am*, *are*, and *were*, rarely occur. Their positions are filled by /dɔ/, marking present tense, and /bɪn/ and

(177)

193 /bɪnə/ marking past and progressive. This class of features is hard to analyze because the English verbs often occur along with the Creole preverbs.

(4) A quantitative decline is apparent in the absence of /də/ and /bɪnə/ as revealed by Table 2.3 (pre-mesolectal speakers). These variants are less resistant to change than /dəŋ/ and /bɪn/ which have phonological cognates in English but have quite different semantic and syntactic functions. The consultants in this sampling are not familiar with the English restrictions, as evidenced by their performance.

193 Finally, attention may be drawn to the fact that
•177 though all speakers selected used some Creole verbs:
(1) there are no speakers in the sample whose total count of English *be* verbs exceed the count of Creole preverbs;
(2) some speakers used no English *be* verbs at all;
(3) no speaker in the sample could be classified, according to his features of speech, as a Black dialect speaker.

19 The conclusion made explicit by these generalizations is that all speakers in the sampling, basilectal and pre-mesolectal, are speakers of Creole in their choice of verbs. They differ only in the level of Creole spoken.

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| PRONOUNS | PERCENT USAGE OF FORMS | | | | | | | | Total No. of Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Person Gender Case | BASILECT | | PREMESOLECT | | MESOLECT | | ACROLECT | | |
| | form | % | form | % | form | % | form | % | |
| 3 ♀ N | ɪm | 0 | i | 55.2 | hi | 16.4 | ʃi | 28.4 | 67 |
| 3 ♂ O | ɔm | 71.5 | i | 4.5 | ɪm | 21.0 | hɪm | 3.0 | 61 |
| 3 ♀ O | ɔm | 74.2 | i | 3.2 | ʃi | 12.9 | hɔɪ | 9.7 | 31 |
| 3 ♂ P | ɪm | 13.8 | i | 62.1 | iz | 20.7 | hɪz | 3.4 | 29 |
| 3 ♀ P | ɪm | 0 | i | 83.8 | ʃi | 16.2 | hɔɪ | 0 | 6. |

TABLE 3.2. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH FOUR VARIANTS

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 ♂ N | ɪm | 3.6 | | | i | 77.6 | hi | 18.8 | 165 |
| 3 ϕ N | ɪm | 13.2 | | | i | 84.2 | ɪt | 2.6 | 38 |
| 3 ϕ O | ɔm | 96.0 | | | i | 2.0 | ɪt | 2.0 | 51 |

TABLE 3.3. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH THREE VARIANTS

♀ = Feminine
♂ = Masculine
ϕ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Two tables are required to show a systematic distribution of third person singular pronouns in Gullah. One table contains pronouns with four variants while a second table contains pronouns with three variants. On the surface, the system seems more elaborate and complicated than that of its English superstrate. But the variants represent levels of Creole speakers and possibly stages in the acquisition of standard English. For example, to produce
193 a semantic equivalent of *her* in the sentence *I know her*,
196 a speaker will select a pronoun from his repertoire of
177 rules governing third person objective forms. The one that

193 is selected will depend on the speaker's knowledge of
196 Gullah and standard English, as well as social factors such
[177] as audience, age and education. According to the data, there are four forms from which a speaker may select:

1) If the speaker is basilectal or wishes to appear as such, he will select /ɔm/ and produce /ɔɪ nuo ɔm/ 'I know her';

2) If the speaker has acquired a rule for the use of /i/, then he will say /ɔɪ nuo i/ 'I know her';

3) If the speaker has a grammatical rule for the use of a form distinguishing male from female, then he will probably say /ɔɪ nuo ʃi/ 'I know her';

4) Finally, if a speaker has acquired the acrolectal feminine, he will say /ɔɪ nuo hɔɪ/ 'I know her'.

193 Few speakers use all four variants, offering some credibility to DeCamp's theory that each creole speaker masters a span of a language acquisition continuum, and that no speaker masters both extremes unless he masters the intermediate varieties as well (DeCamp 1971).

But data in this study support the hypothesis that it is possible for a child growing up in a Creole-speaking community to learn to use the pronouns /ɔm/ and /hɔɪ/ (both polar forms) to mark third person feminine objective case without having acquired a rule for the use of /hi/ to mark feminine object.

The third person singular pronouns in Gullah are discussed according to case and frequency of occurrence. It will be shown that the status of a form may vary

193 sample indicates that /əm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /əm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position.

[194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /əm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /əm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also.

[197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers.[11]

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /əm/ is slight, and thus would make /əm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated

[114] allomorph /hɪm/. The evidence indicates that /əm/ is still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.
197

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance
[177] of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
[177] the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

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181 learned in woodcraft and the ways of animals and birds and fish, and in quaint similes and shrewd sayings use this knowledge to illustrate their dealings with their own kind, and their relations with the outside world.

•177 In increasing measure, however, good roads, bridges, and free rural schools are bringing in outside influences and the processes of civilization. The numerous hunting clubs in winter and coast resorts in summer are likewise increasing their points of contact with the rest of the State. They are being slowly transformed and conformed, becom-

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181 present, the third looking toward the past: (1) William Pickens, himself a Negro, says: "Till this day the Negro is seldom frank to the white man in America. He says what he does not mean; he means what he does not say. . . . This is one reason for the great misconception in the white race respecting the desires, ambitions and sentiments of the black." *The New Negro, His Political and Civil Status and Related Essays*, p. 37.

(2) Mr. Gonzales says: "Of all the inscrutable peoples of the Eastern world, none is more secretive than the Negro, nor any so puzzling to the psychologist, for while it is easy to know that deceit lurks behind the mask of engaging frankness with which he seeks to disarm those who doubt him, the exact nature of the deceit can seldom be discerned." Review of Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.

(3) Dr. Stanhope Sams, literary editor of "The State", looks to the Negro's past: "There is a dark region beyond the mind and soul of the Negro of the slave plantations that may never be explored. No trained and well equipped psychologist, so far as I know, has ever attempted this magnificent research. Certainly none of the Negro students of the race has seemed to get even so near as white students have approached. So far as I have ever seen in their writings or heard in their speech, Dubois and Booker Washington did not enter that primeval jungle. And it is not possible now, perhaps, to 'restore' this primitive jungle race and lore. It would be a far more difficult task than the restoration of Kish or Ur, or to bring back to earth some semblance of the mysterious Sumerians. There we have at least a tablet or stele or monument to help; but we must decipher the Negro of the days of the Pharaohs and of Carthage and of the impenetrable backward and abysm of time that stretches like an uncharted sea behind the African Negro from the modern Negro in America or Africa.

"At all events, as it seems, the contact he must have had with cultured Egyptians and Carthaginians left no enduring record. It is possible—despite some vague beginnings of civilization in certain parts of Black Africa—that the only lasting betterment in conditions the Negro has yet known or held has been received during and since he became a slave in the Southern States.

"It remains an alluring, but a chimerical adventure—this attempt to learn what the Negro was before his contact with us.

"On their own part, the Negroes seem to have formed a conspiracy of silence. Possibly they suffered too profoundly, were hurt too bitterly, to tell us their own story. They preferred, doubtless, to leave it behind them in the engulfing and obliterating jungle. They must have known, must have remembered, those first slaves, and they have always had the genius for story-telling and singing. Yet they tell no stories that reveal their previous march, sing no songs—except with borrowed music, and fill their mythologies with the animals and beings of the world that bound and enslaved them."

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•177 ing less like their forbears and more like their contemporaries. Under this slow but sure leveling process their local characteristics and regional traits are gradually fading into uniformity with the common average of their kind and color.

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## SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism,[1] and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs,[2] shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition[3] and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made,[4] either by

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[152] [113] [1] "For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

[2] "Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1926.

[113] [3] "At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 424, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

[4] "Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

[179]

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533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.[162] In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals.[163]

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[177] [161] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled spernit*."

[162] "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

[163] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[*]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much [567] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. [114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[*]

They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Christianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 567 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 114 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery 178 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native 177 racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas." But back

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[*]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[*]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 22-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[*]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[*]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. [527] This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being.[11] This combination created them; Christianity
179 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
152 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
178 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[12] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[13] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness,[14] which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
[522] it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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[521] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[11] With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
[113] Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Simmyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[12] Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[13] See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
[113] Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*. A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jacksonville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

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533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by religious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)

> Narrow road is Heaven road
> Believer I know
> With here and there a traveller
> Believer I know
> The broad road is Hell road
> Believer I know
> Thousand walk together there
> Believer I know.

• [177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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533 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 114 178 ●177 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

[12] A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.

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533 114 177 178 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

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000 the entire human race and the nations thereof, but a burning up of the rubbish of an ideology based upon the conception of racial ascendency. That dark and medieval doctrine is not as new as it may seem, or as old as to have faded from the subconscious of the most advanced peoples today. In a large degree, at least, it is going to go. It is going by the board, as these lines are written, in February of 1942, after Pearl Harbor, and after the fall, so perilously near extinction of white supremacy in the Far East, of Singapore. Other peoples than the English-speaking nations, with that hitherto immovable conviction of superiority—which they shared with western Europe—are going to take a hand, and a powerful one, following the debacle of totalitarianism, in the liberated expressions of peoples. That is going to affect art, greatly to its advantage. The deep, but narrow, chauvinistic, and exhausted cultures of a few small nations have come to the end, at least temporarily, of their creative resources. New blood, new spirit is needed, and history is seeing to it that, under the most tragic circumstances, it is being supplied. These processes will also apply to America, and to the very essential broadening of our perspectives, and our half-conscious, extremely costly emergence from slavery of many kinds—and perhaps to confinements of mind, which have made so difficult and so rare American creative achievement in music. Let emancipation, of a real and not an affected or sentimental kind—but a real emancipation of ideas and of culture—begin at home.

533 • 177 It is, however, not to be assumed from the foregoing, any more than from Mrs. Parrish's pages, that in acknowledging the unique and unparalleled contribution of the Negro, we can overlook or minimize the white influences which have contributed to the quality of his song. Clearly and incontrovertibly, the "spiritual"—as other types of Afro-American folk music—is of Negro origin. No white composer or hymnal has produced anything like it. At the same time, such a music would never have come into existence if the Negro had not been brought here in bondage, with all the concomitant emotional, religious, and artistic consequences of that tragic experience. Here is a fusion of spiritual and musical forces not to be duplicated in the 533 music of any other land—and this though all folk music, as it evolves through the centuries, is to be found to consist of the interweaving of various racial and melodic elements. But in no other folk music than America's is there to be discovered such a collision of dissimilar forces as in this American blend. Nor has there materialized such a product in any other country where whites and blacks assembled. Special types of folk song predominate in the most isolated communities, just as the folk songs of the British Isles have existed, uncontaminated, and for centuries, in isolated

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533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

533 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with
128 a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is
126 materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more
(177) than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or ex cathedra musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

*Olin Downes*

*New York City*
*February 16, 1942*

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CHAPTER ONE

## Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

533 177 178 The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration provided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

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[1] In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.

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never have come into existence. Like those that accompany the primitive African dance called the "ring-shout," they might have continued to be primarily concerned with rhythm, which represents Africa's idea of music, just as melody represents ours. Rhythm, in fact, may well be called the heart-beat of true Negro music, for it is based upon the natural beat of the pulse and its even division of tempo.

533

The question as to the identity of the composers of these songs lends itself to a more definite answer, from the accepted fact that folksongs everywhere represent the voice of a people rather than the creation of any one person. Those of the Negro are no exception.

Many Negro preachers and evangelists claim the composition of certain modernized "ballets" [2] and spirituals, but, on investigation, their assertions prove to be based upon the composition of new verses rather than new tunes—all of which fits the idea that folk melodies are traditional, and are looked upon as common property. The African technique may also account for the inability of the white man to sing like the Negro. The latter clearly possesses an intuitive knowledge of the song-form of Africa which enables him to weave polyphonic effects into familiar songs, and to follow acceptably a leader in those he has never heard before. In the old days his gift was such that he could sing extemporaneously—like a bird—on any and every occasion. Without a system of notation, however, we have no means of knowing how much credit was due the creative ability of the individual singer, and how much belonged to communal tradition. The word of white musicians who have recognized in Africa the ancestors of such songs as "I Ain' Got No Fr'en' in This Worl' but the Lord" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" also obliges us to be skeptical of claims of any kind—oral or printed, individual or sectional—as to their composition.

A few years ago a Northern Negro composer made the assertion that "new spirituals are born every day." The news was widely publicized, but he was unfortunate in his choice of an example: the words he gave in illustration belonged to a song that was popular on the coast of Georgia long before he was born. Recently I saw in print that "Ride on, Conquering King" was first sung on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Perhaps it was, yet the fact would be difficult to prove for the song is known throughout the southeastern states and in the Bahamas. Until we are more familiar with the distribution of these songs, and until we know more about the great store of folk music said to exist in Africa, it behooves us to be wary of making positive statements, unless we deliberately choose this method of getting at the truth

[2] Ballads. *In the seventeenth century, the two words were often confused.*

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tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

[8] *In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 19.*
[9] *Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.*

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123 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
533 so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13.A) to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.B) Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
177 tude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
178 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" European ized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
177 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes
178 him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]
B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

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177 178 many authorities encourage him to believe in its value, it is evident that such a system stands in need of drastic revision.

In an address delivered in Philadelphia some years ago, Carter Woodson, the Negro historian, frankly said that the average American Negro is the victim of traditional teaching in Northern white schools; that his people are becoming a race of imitators; that not until they study their African background, react to it, and interpret it, can they hope to come into their own. A lifetime of contact with ex-slaves and their descendants, and of observation of the deleterious effects of the present-day system of education upon the younger Negroes, has convinced me that Woodson's arraignment is entirely merited. America has splendid material—and see what we do with it! Slavery of the body is bad, but I am positive that mental slavery does more harm to the race than physical bondage ever did.[11]

If ignorance of the history, dialects, art, music and literature of Africa—due probably to the ignorance of the educators themselves—can be remedied, and these educators can be made to appreciate the value of African art and music, then undoubtedly the race can once more contribute its quota to the art of the world. But such a right-about-face cannot take place until the Negro gets rid of the idea that all culture is vested in the white man's viewpoint. From the fact that Broadway features Negro actors, dancers, and musicians as never before, and that the producers of a Negro opera attempted to teach the Harlem blacks to speak and sing like their primitive Southern cousins, it is clear that this is no time for the race to be disdainful of its African heritage. In 1934, the most exacting New York critics applauded *Kykunkor*, the West African dance-drama, and made it the talk of the town—although some of us deplored its Europeanized singing. At about the same time, exhibitions of primitive African art were accorded such recognition as to fill the classicists with definite alarm.

Such is the precarious position in which the slave music finds itself today. While it is not hopeless, it is none too encouraging. Jaunts up and down the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, to the out islands of the Bahamas, and to Haiti, in search of African art survivals of all kinds give proof that they still exist, but the white man's drive against illiteracy is enabling the Negro school-teachers to make a drive, at the same time, against all things African.

000 According to Reuben Tolakele Caluza, the same situation exists in Africa,

[11] *J. A. Tillinghast says, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *that American slavery, in effect, was a vast school, in which all the pecuniary profits went to the teachers.*

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000 where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

533 But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural
• 177 Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they
178 favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

535 If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

[12] *The late Howard E. Coffin.*
[13] *Mrs. W. E. Clifton*

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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for [243] beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa [412] (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require [171] the aid of rhythmic songs.

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the 535 533 action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to [177] an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue 533 to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-535 religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies— 533 is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the sim- 534 plest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged *You*, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations border- 535 ing on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) 171 which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

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000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that
171 what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of
177 Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio pro-
178 grams. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

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181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring
829 up trouble for yourself. In Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad-
567 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch
[535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the
181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*,
• 177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of
567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[3] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
• 177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
181 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing some-
177 thing that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
[123] indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
181 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
177 by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

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181 need of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the
• 19 words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vul-
159 gar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of
their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the
186 Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contempt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

181 Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9)[A] that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

[7] As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.

[8] From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantations.

A. [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 64--Analyn]

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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
569 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(354) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
775 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in* West African Travels, *that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

[25] *A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used*
(177) *to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.*

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461 517 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that *Art for Art's sake* never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this [177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 17 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be 533 114 17 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

533 171

### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[177] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

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from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

## 2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she ■ shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha bangs
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha bangs
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

■ One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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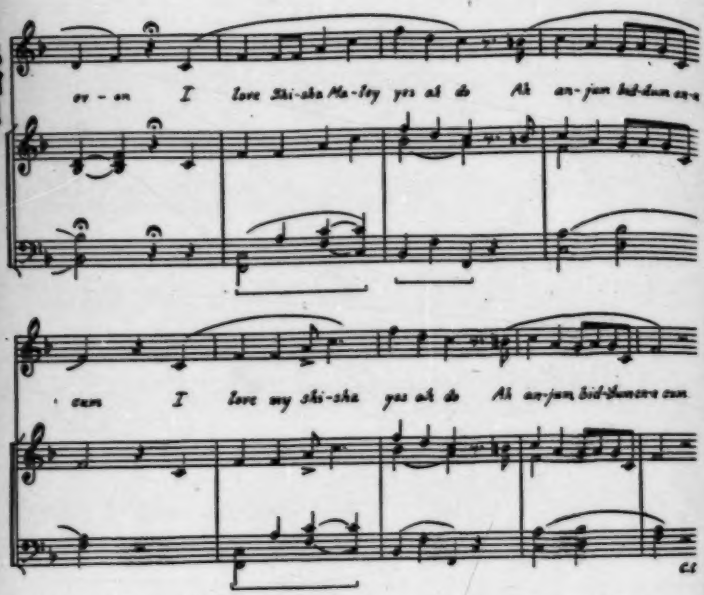
533
539
171




[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[33] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalon gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shishal
Miss sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'l Miss-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'l Miss-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[33] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 197 198 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A, [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 120--Analyst]

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178
[178]

During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

535
[123]

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

[175]
[529]

[2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

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533
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"Dear brother, Plumb de line," continues the song; and the next verse follows the same construction and thought in: "You got t' live right," following which Old Quarterman always put in an effective "Yes Sir!" The above version, used by Katherine, appears to be more modern than that used by Josephine, who gets a far-off look when she sings:

Deacon deacon,[7]
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
If you pray fo' me
Plumb de line.
I pray fo' you
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.

[7] The deacon "deacons" a song when he reads it two lines at a time for the benefit of any in the congregation who have not a hymn book or who cannot read. The custom of "lining out" and then singing a hymn was copied from the whites, who sang in this manner a century ago—perhaps later in sections where illiteracy prevailed. When done to short metre it is dreary beyond measure, but long metre sometimes has a barbaric charm.

(177)

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## KNEE-BONE

533 [461] [501] Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842. [177] [796]

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam"
534 is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[177] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its
[178] form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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533 [177] them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it, either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping, which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to 1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

175 569 Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820 to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was "sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

175 569 533 [177]

175 533

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## JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

159 567

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

177 567

159 533

Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

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## O DE ROBE

533 •177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

[464 569] [17] In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.

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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
569 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
569 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
114

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of water-melons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[26] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[26] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense
[171] tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 177 567 191

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
•177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
567 who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
197 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.* Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

*The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177•
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [506]
water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484]
towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood. 539 19 194

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects. 128 193 194 (177).

## PHONOLOGY[15] 194

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data. (113)

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

### GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177]. [128]

#### *Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox, t'ree*

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 802
'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc.

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be 193
mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92]

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of 177
Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the 19
case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch.

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

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## THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

### *Pronunciation and Syntax*

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 32. [105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . .
•177 and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to
178 the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [bite][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [m*ee*t] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

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tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

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In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.

[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
178 would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

### *Speed and Pitch Inflection*

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

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174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

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•177 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[132]

[132] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[122]

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It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

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[122] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

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the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals. 533

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression. [214]

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later. [177].

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

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The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

I. Words of Songs
   A. General subject matter
   B. Specific lines
   C. Forms or patterns
II. Tunes
   A. Modes and scales
   B. Modulations
   C. Intervals
   D. Endings on other than keynote
   E. Melodic patterns
III. Rhythm
   A. Metre
   B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

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121 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying
• 177 the relation of African music to American Negro music
533 would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

### *The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual*

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

. . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

533 •177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

[113] [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

[113] [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

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taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

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[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

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To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

### *The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs*

#### Words

*General Subject Matter.* The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the

[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.
[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

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song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

*Specific Lines.* A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

---

O, there will be mourning.

---

O, Lord, remember me.

---

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

---

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

---

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

---

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

---

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

---

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

---

Come to Jesus just now.

---

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

---

I want to wear the crown.

[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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King Jesus is my captain.

Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

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Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

———

And Sabbaths never end.

———

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

———

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

———

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

———

Angels, roll the rock away.

———

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

———

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion,* and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

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533 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of
•177 lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes.
000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the
533 end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon
177 memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that
171 the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

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533 171 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how* the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 171 177 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least, a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

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## Tunes

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[37] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[38] is as follows:

| | Negro Songs per cent | White Songs per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Major | 83.8 | 78.9 |
| Minor | 11.7 | 18.6 |
| Mixed or vague | 4.4 | 2.4 |

533 171 [illegible]ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[37] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[38] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

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fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

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Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

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for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 40 per cent of the total white population.[42]

But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xiv.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

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which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

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the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[50] 000

This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[51]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[52] 533 171 With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa. [177]

[50] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.
[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.
[52] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

*Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus*, *Climb Jacob's Ladder*, and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning*, which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

*The Old Ship of Zion* is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

[72] *Slave Songs*, p. vi.
[73] *Millennial Harp*, Supplement, p. 4.

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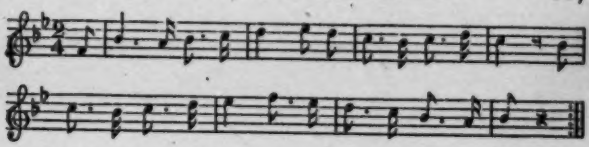
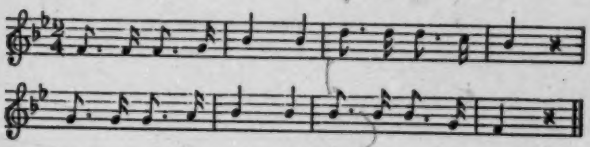
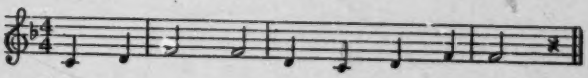


and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah*,[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,

is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island*,[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come*,[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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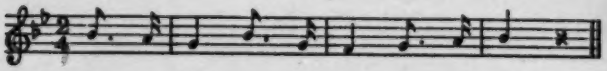
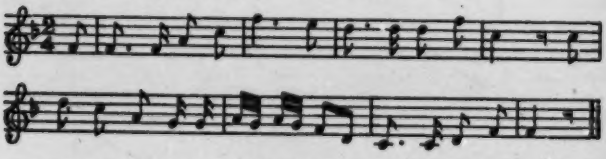
spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion, Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness, I Want to be Ready (Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John)*, and *Safe in the Promised Land (Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel)*.

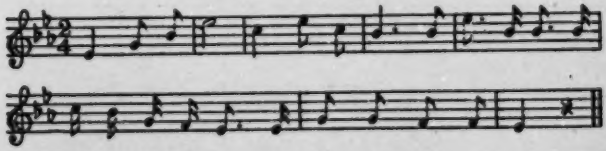
*Lord, Remember Me*,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is



The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*,[80]



[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.
[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.
[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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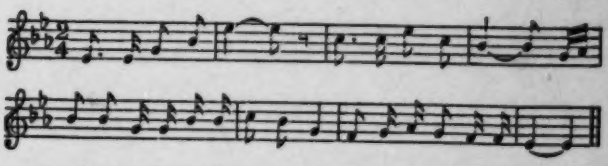
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81] 177 533



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72. [113)

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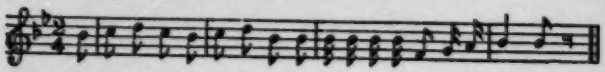
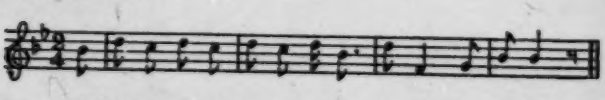
*Who'll Jine de Union*[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,



and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:



The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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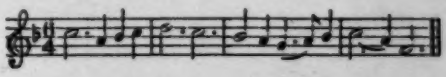
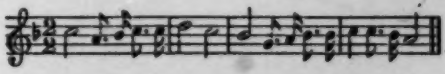
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

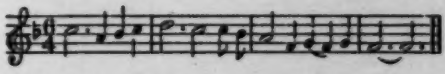
Hymn:



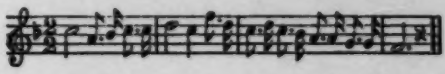
Spiritual:



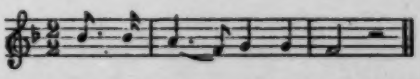
Hymn:



Spiritual:

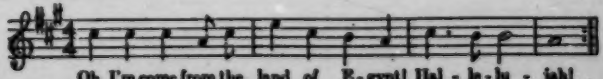


The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment*, although the final phrase,



is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn*,[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:




[539]

[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp*, II, 39.

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•177 533 Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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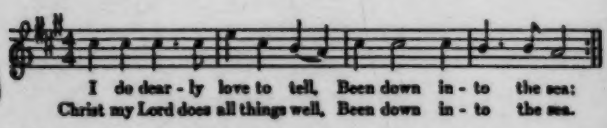


which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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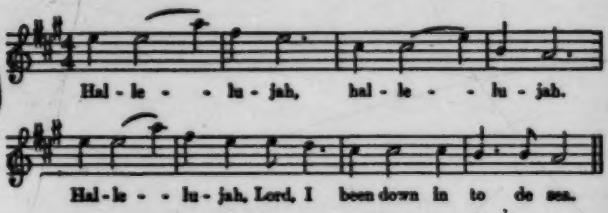


may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 62; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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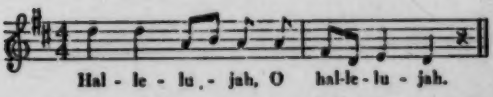
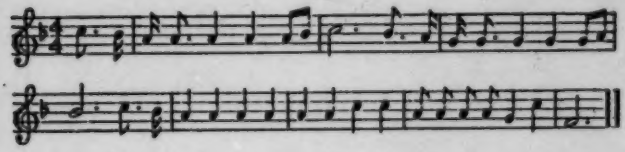
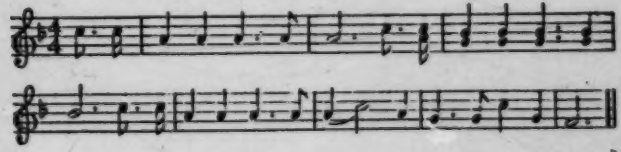



The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now*,[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus*,[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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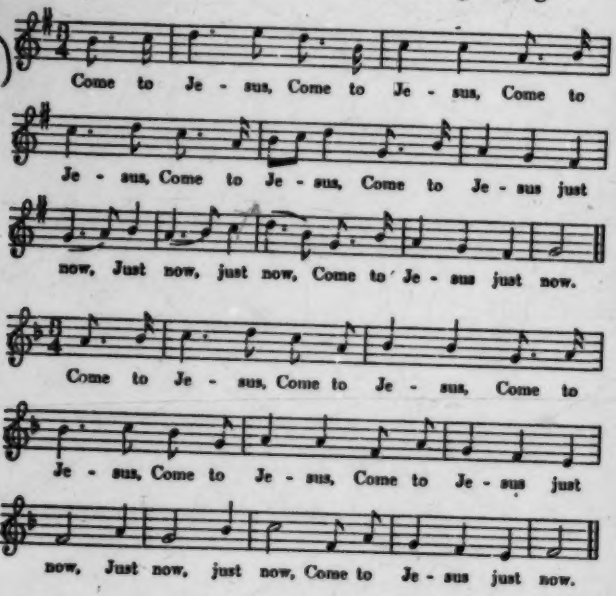
ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[97]




The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

[97] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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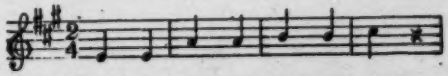
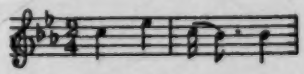
words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away*.[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is



The spiritual begins in a very similar way:

and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]

The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]



[98] P. 117.
[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.
[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.
[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.
[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

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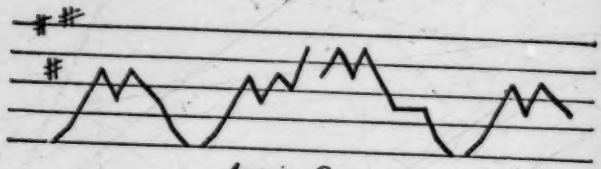
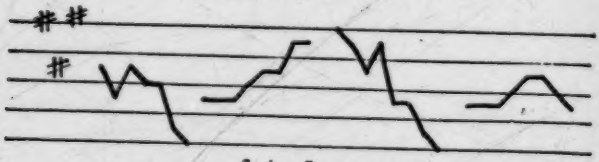
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*. The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



*Amazing Grace*



*Swing Low*

## Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low*. This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

[114]

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with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll, I'm a-Rolling, I've Been Down Into de Sea*, etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp*, ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green*; and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell*.

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songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

[178]

[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

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based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two. 177 178 533

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it 533

[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

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XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him. 539

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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XXI

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say •177 whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

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is also a figurative type of riddle which is scarcely a riddle from the white child's point of view but which is very much like the African figurative questions. For example, the riddle, 524 177.

A rose in de gyaa'den an' a rose outside, what one you take? *Ans.* Rose in de gyaa'den is married gal, rose outside single gal,

is the same sort of thing as the following African riddle:

The tree in our yard gives shade only to our neighbors. *Ans.* A virgin. She is not of use to men of her own family.

Many of the riddles are of rather recent origin and have been brought in by visitors and immigrants, by joke books, advertising booklets, and the like.

All of the riddles collected on St. Helena cannot be reproduced here, but enough may be given to show the range and variety of this type of folklore. 524

1. Horse in de stable an' mange (mane) outside, or Horse in de stable an' reingé (reins) outside. *Ans.* 'Tatuh in de bed an' de wine (vine) outside.

2. Chip cherry up, chip cherry down; no man can climb chip cherry tree. *Ans.* Smoke.

3. Black hen set on de red hen's nes'. *Ans.* Pot on de fiah.

4. White man on a red horse back. *Ans.* Teet' on de gums.

5. Somet'in' holler all day an' holler all night. *Ans.* Tree holler.

6. Grumble all day an' grumble all night. *Ans.* Grummle (i.e., groundmole).

7. Go t'rough a tree an' leave e' guts behin'. *Ans.* Needle an' t'read t'rough de cloth.

8. One hun'ed windows an' no do'. *Ans.* Fish net.

9. If deh a hun'ed room, 'e go t'rough 'em all. *Ans.* Broom

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. [539]

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. [177].

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9]

When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

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On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island

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[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

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of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

[12] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

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to Beaufort, Charleston, and the North. Some of the St. Helena people were as alert and ambitious as the whites themselves. Charles Ware, of Massachusetts, in 1862 described Charles, the carpenter on Hope plantation, as "a man after my own heart." "He attracted me first by his dignified and respectful demeanor, and by his superior culture. He has a little touch of self-consideration. He, more than any other negro I know, seems to me like a white person."[18]

### SOCIAL CLASSES

The Negroes themselves perhaps unconsciously set a premium on a knowledge of "buckra" ways, for they placed in the upper classes of their social scale those who had superior advantages of learning the customs of the dominant race. The "swonga" people were the drivers who took their orders directly from the overseer, the house servants who were intimately associated with the master's and the overseer's families, the mechanics who were permitted to hire their own time from their masters and work in Beaufort or Charleston. To this group also belonged any among them who from superior rank or intelligence acted as their official or self-appointed leaders. The religious leaders and the plantation watchmen were usually "swonga" Negroes, as were also the witch doctors and those who could boast of physical prowess. It is obviously difficult to point out definitely the various gradations in the social classes among the slaves, but in general the drivers and mechanics stood at the head, followed by the house servants, and at the bottom of the scale stood the field hands.

[18] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 82.

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567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give [177] up their African customs of polygamy and accept the [595] Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 St. Helena planters quite generally required their 177 slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to im- 584 press the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might 585 request that the ceremony be performed at once, where- 177 upon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

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early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance

567 796 535 533

silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*] at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

567 796 535 567 797 535 177

Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the remains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer attended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and missionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 278; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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•178

[For additional information on linguistic change, see Category 197.]

178

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121 among the Georgia Coastal Negroes are not peculiar to
171 them. Indeed, many of these traits, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and conjure, are either known or practiced by thousands of white and Negro people in other parts of the United States; while the dogmas and methods of Father Divine and Bishop Grace seem to flourish best among the proletariat of Harlem, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, Richmond, and other urban centers. Nevertheless, one finds
121 much in these pages which is new, and one senses the great virility of old heritages in the daily lives of the coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* makes no pretense of offering a complete picture of the life and culture of these people, but limits its scope of inquiry to certain definite types. In undertaking the work, Miss Granger, the supervisor, also wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis. The visits, interviews, and observations were made by the workers on the Georgia Writers' Project. The investigators were enthusiastic and persistent, and, in spite of the fact that they had had no formal training in ethnological methods, they have made a real contribution to knowledge. They have recorded what is probably the most thorough search for African heritages among Negroes in a small area that has ever been attempted in this country up to the present time.

121 This question of the nature and importance of African
114 heritage in America bids fair to develop into something of a controversy. At one extreme are scholars like Robert E.
177 Park and E. B. Reuter who would not even consider the matter debatable since they virtually deny the existence of
178 *any* significant Africanisms in the United States. Toward the other extreme is Melville J. Herskovits, who believes that African heritages are very significant, that they have contributed much to the culture of white America, and that the

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## FOREWORD

121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial under-
114 standing and the alleviation of friction between the races in
177 the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
these two, since I believe that there are a few important
• 178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree
of significance of these African heritages is questionable in
view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the
white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that
their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is
relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the
nature and importance of African heritages in our civiliza-
tion, almost everyone would agree that the question is inter-
esting and worthy of study. Such study may not only sat-
isfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the
scientific problem of the processes which go on when two
different cultures come into contact. In dealing with the
[128] material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no de-
cision as to the African sources of particular traits. She
has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African
culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible
parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia
coastal Negroes.

*Drums and Shadows* will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

GUY B. JOHNSON
University of North Carolina
1940



[p. xxxvi is blank]

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## INTRODUCTION

175 Although in 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited slave importation directly from Africa and in 1808 the Federal Constitution made the African slave trade unlawful, the favorable topography of the Georgia coast encouraged smuggling. The tidewater coastline and large navigable rivers penetrating for miles into the interior facilitated the landing of cargo. Consequently illegal slave traffic flourished in this region until 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* landed its cargo on Georgia soil.

Newspaper advertisements indicate that a large proportion of these early cargoes came from the Gambia River and Niger River sections; later the coast from the Congo River to the southern end of Portuguese West Africa was the base of operation. Accounts of various explorers' travels through Africa at that time, however, indicate that native traders frequently collected their slave cargoes from interior sections and shipped them from the west coast of Africa. Although to the white man, Negroes of an average cargo might have seemed similar in type, it is possible that in many instances they were brought from widely separated regions.

101 The coastal Negroes of Georgia are sometimes called Gullahs, although in general parlance the term is applied only to the Negroes of coastal South Carolina. Because of the similarity in type and speech, however, it is sometimes loosely extended to include the Georgia coastal Negroes as well. The place name, Geechee, derived from Ogeechee River, near Savannah, is also used locally to designate the Negroes of this district.

175 The coastal plantations that absorbed the slave traffic were remote from one another. The jungle swamps of the low country and the wide expanses of water separating the coastal islands made communication difficult among the plantation laborers of this section. With the continued ar-
•[178] rival of Africans to these isolated plantation communities, native ceremonies and customs were renewed or exchanged.

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175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs in-
178 tensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
177 delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remem-
ber parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of
the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more
primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons
and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose
interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has
been made to base the studies on source material provided by
the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels
have been used. Though an African parallel does not con-
fine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interest-
ing comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is (124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform 754 mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many (759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the (777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as 121 his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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789 mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next
(115) visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahkĕt sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[59a]

(845) "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz
775 bawn wid a caul [4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[59a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

• 178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us
(593) a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.

"Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a
(115) root doctuh [48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh
754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell
755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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754 ride im.[49] Dis went on till he staht pinin away. He git disagreeable roun duh home an denne went away. He ain nebuh come back. I tink somebody git uh tuh fix im.[15] Dat sho convince me uh duh powuh uh cunjuh."

775 The spirits of the dead are believed to return and visit their former neighbors, sometimes as frequently as in life.[56] Their presence is not always regarded with dread but is often looked upon as a natural incident. One woman made the following statement: "I know deah's ghos, fuh I kin see um. Ef any uh muh friens die, I kin see um mos anytime. Dey peah jis as natchul as wen dey wuz libe."

771 .178 On the fringe of the community was a small store at which we stopped for a few minutes. The proprietress, a robust, good-natured Negro woman of middle age, talked with us amiably and verified the numerous reports regarding superstitions that her neighbors had already confided in us. In parting we inquired if she thought the people's faith in the supernatural was weakening. The woman regarded us with a wide smile. Shaking her head she declared emphatically, "No, ma'am, dey sho ain losin no faith in magic an sech tings. All deah libes dey heah bout um frum duh ole folks. Seem lak tuh me dey beliebin in um mo an mo all duh time."

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[50d.] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," in-
789 terposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[38]

535 "We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big
• [178] suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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DARIEN

115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35c] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[58] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

•178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),[B]* whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[23]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look like
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[3] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[38] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

"One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a
535 long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib until he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man, slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69a] He

*A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
567 the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
[23] gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
[825] a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
• 178 pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, over-
342 grown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
569 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

182 For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun, surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that
433 isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men lookeu for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

182 It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

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178 (197) Perhaps most important, Gullah—the creole language developed by the slaves on the Sea Islands and in the South Carolina and Georgia low-country—continued to be the language in which their folk culture was passed down to posterity. Proverbs, metaphors of social experience, continued to reflect the African preference for speaking by indirection; and African naming patterns persisted on the Sea Islands. For generations, folktales of the audacious animal trickster Ber Rabbit and of the no less audacious slave trickster John blended elements of African folk narrative with elements of the Sea Islanders' historical experience. For generations talented Sea Island artisans created traditional arts and crafts such as coiled sweetgrass baskets and strip quilts. Out of this tradition one Sea Islander, Philip Simmons of Daniel Island, became Charleston's preeminent artist in wrought-iron gates. For generations folk medicine of both the pharmaceutical and the psychological varieties continued to heal the sick on the Sea Islands, and natural phenomena continued to serve as signs foretelling the future, whether changing weather or impending death. Ghosts or haunts—the spirits of the dead—returned from time to time to trouble the living, although local conjurers (assisted by various substances held to be magical) helped to ward off their unwelcome visits. For generations Sea Islanders entertained their children with play songs after the day's work was done. At night they sang the children to sleep with lullabies. On Saturday nights they held dances and frolics. Their folk version of Christianity retained the earliest "shouting" styles of singing spirituals, in which the African religious phenomenon of spirit possession remained vividly linked with prayer, music, and bodily movement. No one thought this way of life would change. The life of the land and the people seemed fixed in an invisible circle, enclosed by the waters and the passage of time.

177 And then something happened. It did not seem revolutionary at the time. In 1950 Georgia timber magnate General Joseph B. Fraser and his associates bought large tracts of land on the southern end of Hilton Head Island. At first they simply cut down the ancient stands of timber. But soon his son Charles, a young Yale law school graduate, launched the development of a series of lavish resort "plantations"—Sea Pines, Hilton Head, and Honey Horn—pioneering the "resort island" concept. In 1956 the first bridge to Hilton Head Island was constructed. Feverish land speculation ensued as other developers scurried onto Hilton Head and other Sea Islands to exploit the boom, buying up land from black islanders and building more resorts.

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177 There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of
178 the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression.
458 "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh.*" The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

*When Roots Die* makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians,

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# Preface

178 (131) The black inhabitants of the Sea Islands, located off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, have provided researchers with a reservoir of distinctively African and African-American cultural roots. Their unique society has been developed, nurtured, and maintained by the geographical isolation of the islands, the social and economic independence of the islanders, and the marginal contact with residents outside the Sea Island area. These factors have created and fostered an environment within which the inhabitants—West African slaves, ex-slaves, and their free ancestors—have been able to reinforce vigorous traditions characteristic of their culture, and to perpetuate communities with concentrations of African influences paralleled by no other black areas in the United States. Remnants of these African traditions were passed on to the islanders through narrative tales, religious practices, burial ceremonies, language patterns, and other practices, only some of which have been recorded by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists.

177 Today changes are being brought to the islands, and the Sea Island culture is declining under the resulting social pressures. On the one hand, outsiders, particularly white Americans, Arabs, and other foreigners, are moving to the area and in some instances commercializing entire islands. On the other hand, the building of bridges has brought about easier access to many of the islands and better educational facilities and job opportunities for their inhabitants. As would be expected, such forces are motivating a break in cultural traditions, an upheaval of social patterns, and a general disruption of the old norms, all of which are now in some danger of becoming lost.

128 This book is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the Sea Island culture and literature and of the Gullah (or, as it is called in Georgia, Geechee) language. Chapter 1 is devoted primarily to a survey of the area and its people. I judge it important to provide a full

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121 changes of information and ideas among scholars in related fields, are
114 becoming increasingly more apparent.[1]

Accordingly, during the first two years of my research on the Sea
114 Islands, I worked with Faith Mitchell, an anthropologist who had spent several years in the area. Faith's assistance in helping me to understand the similarities and differences between Sea Island practices and those of certain peoples of Africa was invaluable. She introduced me to sev-
[118] eral families in the Wadmalaw community and pointed out such African survivals in the culture as iron casting, fishing techniques, and family practices that she, as an anthropologist, recognized quickly but I, as a linguist, did not.

The interdisciplinary approach also provided reciprocal rewards for her. Since "root medicine" always generated lively conversation, I often used it as a topic for gathering linguistic data. Faith accompanied me on what she called my "collecting trips," became interested in the topic, and later wrote a book on the subject called *Hoodoo Medicine*.

127 Any attempt to study a culture without adequate knowledge of its language, social structure, and history will be abortive, producing disappointing results. To avoid this danger, I decided to familiarize myself with as much of the literature of the Sea Island area as possible by preparing a bibliography of readings in linguistics, literature, anthropology, folklore, history, and sociology. In assembling a working bibliography, I included such sources as travel guides, local newspapers, magazines, dialect dictionaries, government reports, and miscellaneous publications of local societies. Information from sources of this nature will often, I learned, give detail to geography, climatic conditions, food sources, drug use, towns, cities, ocean and bridge conditions, and the like, in addition to suggesting social contacts.[2]

121 One usually arrives at a research design or an objective through intense reading and inquiry into one's target area. Without such theoretical preparation, one will have little, if any, idea what problems need solving. It took an immersion in the historical circumstances that have produced the language and culture of the Sea Islands to make me satisfied that I would recognize an Africanism when I heard one. In any research study, of course, defining and analyzing the research design before field exploration begins will both expose facts relevant to solving the problem and determine the methods and approaches which are likely to be most effective for the study. One has to decide where the work will be done, the probable time necessary for effective inves-

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## Demography

175 [103] The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Europeans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves and their free descendants.[10] Not many whites or Europeans inhabited the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 162 567

175 567 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importation from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African population. The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14]

[178]

175 162 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-

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161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 241 In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will [178] affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. [464] By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah 464 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that 177 "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

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000 side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large
252 sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse.
The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels,
224 skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

> 224 136 Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

825 The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

463 In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family
•[178] members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often re-
178 flect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the re-
463 gion, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show bas-
[531] kets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigan-
[177] tic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

285 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina
171 coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans
[178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with
868 the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

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763 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the impor-
456 tance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible
764 effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives
and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common
[171] among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe
[175] without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in
764 rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing
175 of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to
[178] the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same
[171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

764 On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced
[178] for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 28]

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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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# 4

# The Language

The old-time talk we still de talkem here!

*We still speak Gullah here!*

## History

197 The factors which nurtured the Sea Island culture also nurtured the development and perpetuation of the unusual Sea Island language called Gullah or Geechee. The geographical isolation, the marginal contact with speakers outside the Sea Island communities, and the social and economic independence contributed to creating an environment where a mixed language could thrive. Gullah is defined as a creole, the language that results when a pidgin, which has no native speakers but comes into existence as the product of communication among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, takes over as the only language of the community.

197 The Sea Island language, like the culture, is undergoing transformations. Several varieties of contemporary Gullah can be heard in day-
• 178 to-day conversation on topics ranging from who is running for president to the best bogging place in the creek. With the exception of the unusual accent, some speakers show little deviation from standard English at all. The degree of standard English acquisition is a reflection of such factors as the level of education, the accessibility or inaccessibility of a given island to outside forces, and the extent of inside social mobility. Just as one hears a form of standard English, one also hears the "real Gullah" spoken by children and adults in all aspects of community life.

197 The history of Gullah is complicated. It is called a creole language

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197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with 178 achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost 177 free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo- 829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make 823 attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way the does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

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major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

*gula*, "pig": Kongo
*goober*, "peanut": Kimbundu
*gumbo*, "okra": Tshiluba
*gumbi*, "medicinal weed": Bambara
*heh*, "yes": Vai
*hoodoo*, "bad luck": Hausa
*yambi*, "yam": Vai
*chigger*, "small flea": Wolof
*juk, juky*, "disorderly": Wolof
*cush*, "bread," "cake": Hausa
*nana*, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
*nansi*, "spider": Twi
*tote*, "to carry": Kikongo
*chicabod*, "seesaw": Mandingo
*unu*, "you": Igbo
*yent*, "to lie": Umbundu
*pinto, bento*, "coffin": Temne
*biddy*, "small chicken": Kongo
*buckra*, "white man": Ibebio
*de*, "to be": Igbo
*eh*, "yes": Igbo
*ashantie*, "house": Ga[10]

Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

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# Conclusion

539

[di lɔd ẽ bɪnə muβ mi mɔŋtɪn
bət i bɪn gɪβ mi siçɹɛt ɸə klɒɪəm]

*God didn't move my mountain,*
*but he gave me strength to climb it.*

177 During my search for Africanisms in the Sea Island culture
178 over the past ten years, I have seen that some of the old traditions are dying out while others remain intact. Each year I see something different, hear more old tales, and learn another old word. It is hard to measure the precise impact of new pressures on the islands. But the islanders are beginning to lose their geographical isolation, and they are thus being forced to alter a culture which has existed and served them well since the first importation of African slaves to the island shores.

177 Some elements are resistant to change. The extended family is
178 remaining intact because the islanders are still in a majority. Though
596 their communities are being diluted by outsiders, their family norms are less open to invasion. The islands are still sectioned off into family communities where all persons remotely related to the family have the right to live. This housing tradition will be difficult to disrupt, though it may be easier to displace. The pressure of nearby resort areas has encouraged land take-overs at some spots, and taxation and other legal means have been used to force homeowners to leave (see Appendix 4). However, when the islanders are obliged to move, most often they relocate at a place where relatives offer them a piece of land on which to build. Thus the cohesiveness of the family structure continues to prevail.

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
285 have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the patterns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
226 though they are endangered by development and pollution of the waters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
[823] banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[861] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
[207] tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television because the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants, ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an audience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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178 tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The
197 children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they
[192] return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

181 Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as
609 they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

000 In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

[p. 150 is blank]

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# Appendix 2

## Buh Rabbit en' de Lawd

539 197 [178] What follows is the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" from Chapter 3, reconstructed in the Gullah of a century ago. A comparison of the two versions will show how the language has changed in the interim.

128 I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Mixon Geraty, who suggested and prepared the transcription, for her time, willingness, and patience.

539 One time Buh Rabbit gone tuh de Lawd fuh git mo' ecknowledge, mo' wisdum. En' de Lawd tell Buh Rabbit, "Awright! Uh wan' you fuh fetch me ennyt'ing wuh w'ite. Ennyt'ing w'ite."

Rabbit gone een de fiel', en' 'e gone en' meet Buh Paa'tridge dey dey, 'e hab uh bag, en' 'e tell Buh Paa'tridge: "Uh betchuh all ub you, all ub you ent able fuh full'up dishyuh bag."

Paa'tridge say, "How you mean?"

Run een de bag en' see kin you full'um up."

De paa'tridge 'pread 'e wing, run een de bag en' full'um up. Buh Rabbit pit'um 'cross 'e shoulduh en' cya'um tuh de Lawd. "Awright!" 'E gone sen'um back. Buh Rabbit sen' Buh Paa'tridge back.

"Well, now, Buh Rabbit, Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—uh rattlesnake!" Dainjus!!! 'E pit Buh Rabbit weh 'e dainjus, fuh true!

Buh Rabbit tell'um, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit gone een de fiel' en' fin' uh rattlesnake, en' 'e hab uh cane en' 'e tell Buh Rattlesnake: "Buh Snake, oonuh ent—oonuh ent long ez dis cane." Buh Rattlesnake run 'long 'side de cane.

Buh Rabbit say, "No! Uh yent mean fuh do'um so. Uh wan' oonuh fuh run een'um."

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# Appendix 4

# The Land Question

423
[178] As the islanders often put it, "Everything change up now." One of the major areas of change in recent years has been in the use and ownership of land in the islands. "Primarily," comments Ed Brown, an attorney practicing in Charleston County who grew up on Wadmalaw,

> the land is changing hands because history has created a division between those people who own the land and those people who want to buy land. And if a developer comes in here with forty thousand dollars for ten acres of land, which might appear at first blush to be a lot of money, the landowner is perhaps inclined to take the forty thousand dollars and part with title to the land. That happens. I don't know that that is a bad thing. I think that what it does do is it creates a problem for the person who has sold the land, because if you are not sophisticated in terms of handling the forty thousand dollars, then you lose it rather quickly, whereas the land would be there forever.[1]

The relationship of black people to land in general has considerable significance. Various studies and reports trace the origins of many of the current domestic ills of the United States to the surge of southern blacks into urban areas as the rural southern economy found that under existing social arrangements, it could no longer employ large numbers of small farmers, sharecroppers, tenants, and unskilled farm laborers. In the 1960s alone, more than 1.3 million blacks left the South, and during the previous decade the number was even greater.[2]

423
179 The population that remains behind on the islands is having to adjust to the incoming population of resort residents, as well as resort development for tourism. Developers have not been responsive to local needs. Seabrook was the first of the islands to be opened up as a resort.

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825 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a
538 high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which
[805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the
[554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages
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on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thought for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

## Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

538

3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

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4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

000

10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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# Prologue

The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African-American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of significant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peoples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of
[754] nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
[759] conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
791 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
175 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

• 178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
791 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
791 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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ships as well. The ontological[27] category of traditional African societies, and which also formed the basis of the Gullah world view, was the fusion of spirituality with human activity and the impact of a sacred presence in all areas of life. Spirituality was a main element of culture, integrating and coordinating other aspects of communal behavior. Such a pattern, so deterministic to group attitudes in West African society, was difficult to obliterate especially among a people so completely defined out of the new social and cultural structure into which they were thrust.

West African world view was consonant with the idea that in a cohesive and integrated community each member had a place. In colonial Kongo whites tended to assume that individualism was absent from black behavior, and attributed to Africans a "Bantu mentality," completely different from "European mentality." As one author noted, this was a rationalization for despotism over Africans. Wyatt MacGaffey maintains that a "purely dogmatic" assumption of some scholars led to insistence that the individual is not differentiated from the collective or clan. One solution, writes MacGaffey, is to distinguish between "true individualism," a commendable trait among the BaKongo, and "egocentrism" which was deplorable. Additionally, MacGaffey sees a difference between progressive "civilized collectivism" and primitive forms of collectivity, the latter stagnating a society. These insights explain much about traditional African society. Certainly Africans had civil, structured communities in which individual activity was forged with collective necessity. Traditional African spiritualism was an individual as well as collective experience. It encompassed the total well-being of the community, but each person had a role in society, guided by spiritual forces. In this sense, religion for Africans and Gullahs, whether essentially traditional or Christian, was a total immersion phenomenon. The sacred was not set apart from temporal, individual, communal, material, or even political concerns, and religion assumed a meaning outside of a "holy" building, a "sacred" day of the week, or a set of dogmas and creeds to be accepted at face value. In traditional African philosophy, spiritual elan affected one's whole system of being, embracing feelings, social interactions, values, fears, and the disposition of the community at large. John Mbiti succinctly expresses this consciousness:

> . . . in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, to do so is to be severed from his

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175 797 152 786 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to instruct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural" means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black converts.

175 797 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices. The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components. 175 177 178 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christianity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless, Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state. In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect [198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to traditions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists arrived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African 175 797 customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[2]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
796 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
567 was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[786] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spir-
[178] itual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power, and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
•178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
771 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their
• 178 application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

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APPENDIX E

# *Gullah Folkways*

177 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept
178 outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA
127 workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and
128 supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless
178 otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

### *Folk Beliefs*

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[856] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When
[828] babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This
[789] will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have
791 strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.*
787

[p. 344]

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177 MANY CHANGES have come to Johns Island since Guy and Candie first lived and worked there.
178 Some of the changes—low-cost housing, a health care facility, and a home for the elderly—have been initiated by the islanders themselves. But rapid resort development on Kiawah and Seabrook islands have contributed in their own way to the transformation of Johns Island, bringing new pressures and new challenges to the islanders.

178 One part of Esau Jenkins's legacy is a dedication to progress, to building institutions that enable the people of Johns Island to control their own lives. But another part of his legacy is a dedication to preserving the cultural heritage from which the people of Johns Island draw their strength and their distinctiveness. Not all islanders share both parts of Esau Jenkins's legacy equally. There are some who believe that the cultural heritage created by the ancestors in the bitter days of slavery and segregation is best forgotten. They feel the past as a burden of shame rather than as a source of strength. But without a sense of where they came from, how can the younger generation understand their achievement or comprehend how far they have come?

Whether the next generation will recognize and value the power and beauty of the past is by no means certain. At least some members of the younger generation are drawing strength from the old traditions. They are at home in the present because they are oriented in time as well as in space. Without a sense of where they came from, how else can people know whether they are going forward or backward?

114 If Esau Jenkins were still alive, I believe he would like this new edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* In it Guy and Candie Carawan have preserved the magnificent heritage of the past in such a way that it can serve as a source of strength for the present. Johns Islanders—and all of us—can use that strength as Esau Jenkins did: to look to the future, to see what contribution we can make, to summon our friends to work together to do what still needs to be done.

*Charles Joyner*
December 1988

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# INTRODUCTION

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It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

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In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

179 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
346 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
533 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place
[794] in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[795] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
494 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
[443] a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[529] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[812] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[366] (p.xii-B) cation and voter registration.

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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(668) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
[241] island. The resort developments and the new small businesses offer some employment, but farming,
[178] long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
311 declining. Farmland is now the prime target of developers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

179 Development on Johns Island has taken two forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
179 along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

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871 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, pre-
563 viously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for
{691} six years. Brought by the Justice Department with
{668} the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

• 178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

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159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

159 533 Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island. [545]

The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.

159 Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston lowcountry, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

• 178 889 The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

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178 fewer and fewer places to collectively express their wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial 887 meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

Even more important, what these elders 887 know must be readily accessible to the children 86 and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

217 One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain—climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things—automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) (493) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 735 178 262 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 178 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

735 252 Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley—in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

735 272 In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

735 178 Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## 735 WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

159 262 [241] My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

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178 I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn, it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

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829 The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is very different now.

(791) There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story."
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And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

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829 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 113 523 (869) There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (178) We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 791 178 869 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 443 474 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

178 In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

179 464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have 177 491 any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah (178) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Essu Jenkins.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 185 94 [734] [737] [665] I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston. The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 941 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of the nursing home and the housing. [734] [362]

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] [464] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Corporation was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

941 758 943 [427] We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmental money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [757] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 793 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] [794] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

871 875 [464] The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on. [171]

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids. [554]

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYTHING IS CHANGED NOW

I still vote. I want to vote for right, but I don't get it. My mother always told me, "You see somebody that jump, you jump too. Cause you, one, can't do nothing. Among the majority, your word just go for nothing." But the people gave us our right, seems like they take our right from us. But it don't stop me from vote. I still vote for the President.

And everything is changed now. The world so tough today.

The older people sang "I Will Overcome" because they had a hard time. They had to row boat to go to the city and carry their peas and corn and potatoes, rice and things. They had a hard time, living and raising their children. Them people had to work with their children on their back. Rebeltime people were mean. But God changed those people. That's a just God. He don't walk knock-kneed. Those oldtime foreparents was something else, I tell you. And one of these days they were able to overcome. They were able to buy the land. Money was scarce, but they had a chance to pay a dollar or two dollars for a piece of ground.

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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the 186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth 178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191] 197 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of [536] Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing [883] her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

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The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

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My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

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When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

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186 533 [534]

The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

[178] [186]

It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong religion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

771 869

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 794 (796) (888)

In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

771 794

I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

794 533 796

It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through, when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 794 178

It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying. That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
694 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
178 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## I LIKE THE HISTORY OF IT, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT

178 829 You might take the position that people who live in the culture recognize it as something real great. Most of the time people from outside recognize it a whole lot more than the people that live it everyday. You're talking about people who have done a lot of hard work and been through a lot of hell. But if you can come in and see it, it's so nice and quaint. "I just love to see the quaint little way that they talk," and so on. Folk don't see themselves in that way. Many folk have tried to get rid of that culture that you're talking about.

I don't miss being in Moving Star Hall at all. The way that I like to miss Moving Star Hall and some of the things of the past is to reminisce. But I would not like to be back in it. I like the history of it, and to know that I have been a part of it. I do miss that tradition when Moving Star and all the lodges used to come together on Labor Day. That was a festive time with food and a parade. They used to play flute and drums. That was really exciting. [527]

At certain ages we used to go to Moving Star Hall, and the young people would stand outside and burn tires until almost time for them to have whatever they're going to eat and then you're going to go inside. That's the part that really used to be nice because guys would be talking so much jokes, those stories about the monkey and the baboon; people doing the dozens.

People probably do miss things like the Hall, but there is a lot of community concern and coming together still going on. I still have certain places on the island where I will go on a Thursday or a Friday night, and I'll just slip in and catch up on everything that has gone on. You just sit and all the information passes on. There's a kind of camaraderie that comes out of that. [571]

I always believe that things just move to other levels. Another generation takes it to another level.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE HAVE TO KEEP IT ALIVE

829 I want to see my children go on, as long as people want to hear them and
198 they've got the voice. It means a lot to me and it means a lot to them. If they
186 stop, it's going down. We have to keep it alive.

You've got to talk and give people an understanding about what you're talking about—the background and where it came from. That's very important. The young people don't know many of the things that happened. It takes somebody who came out of this experience to teach them and tell them the meaning of it and what it can do for them. I have the experience 'cause that's all I was doing my whole life. My parents and grandparents talked all about how they came up, and I took it in.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat-
[197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

## 5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
121 the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
193 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
178 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
184 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as previous studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted, we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process of language change. One group of women is strongly resistant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

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121 perspective as a participant in community life, however, the
19 life experiences of these groups of women have been different
178 from each other and from those of men in their groups. Re-
562 cent anthropological analyses have pointed out that men and
121 women universally occupy different positions within their
562 cultural and social groups (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974;
Keenan, 1974). In these analyses, women are seen as outside
the male-oriented norms of their social groups. Linguists
have long understood that the interaction of language and
social life has important consequences for linguistic be-
havior (see especially Ferguson, 1959 and Hymes, 1967, 1973).
121 If the two sexes have differentiated social roles within all
562 societies, we must expect certain linguistic consequences
19 to follow from the different life experiences of the two
sexes. Men and women will speak differently from each other
in every social group, but the ways and extent to which they
differ can be expected to vary from social group to social
group. Hymes (1973) has observed that inequality among
speakers arises because some speakers participate in social
situations not available to other speakers. To resolve the
paradox of linguistically conservative and innovative women,
the social situations open to women in their respective
groups must be carefully examined. Focusing on women as-
members of social groups, we should not be surprised to find
them represented at the extremes of linguistic conservatism
or innovation, depending on the speech situations open to
them as active participants in communal life.

000 them as active participants in communal life.

5.5 Conclusion

121 Language does not change in a vacuum. It changes as
178 part of the life experiences of people who use it. Because
193 language is inherently a shared process, those who use it share in determining the direction of change. The analysis of the linguistic variables presented here has shown that the direction of change in Gullah is all in the direction of the standard variety of English. Within each category, speakers show systematic variation which indicates that the meanings or uses most basic to the original creole variables are last to change toward the standard. The variant fE as pre-infinitival complementizer is retained longest for the introduction of purposive clauses. The pronoun ee is retained longest to distinguish neuter subject from neuter object Ea, a distinction not made by standard it. The static-locative preposition to is retained for indications of spatial notions, while standard at is introduced for expression of temporal and figurative notions never expressed by the creole to. Although individual speakers show shared patterns of variation in their movement toward the standard, they make separate choices about the speed with which they move toward it.
(562) Young and middle aged women in one community find it advantageous, probably for job-related reasons, to move faster toward the standard than any other segment of their speech

121 community. Older women in another community choose to resist
178 change toward the standard longest of any speakers in the
193 study. The social factors of sex, age, community membership,
562 and geographic mobility have been shown to influence the activation of change. Sex is indicated as the most influential of these social factors, but its effect is different in the two social groups examined here.

121 The pattern of change exhibited in Gullah does not
178 parallel that reflected in the history of English. For
193 standard English, to is the original pre-infinitival complementizing particle and retains this function today. Originally introducing infinitival forms in variation with infinitival verb endings, to later shared this function with other particles such as at, til, and for. Although some of these forms are retained today in certain dialects of English, to has never lost its original complementizing function in the standard dialect. The status of for in this grammatical category for standard English is presently the subject of debate by synchronic and historical linguists; in some analyses it has become a complementizer in the base structure, while in other analyses it has retained its prepositional status throughout the history of English. By way of contrast, the particle fE in Gullah was the original complementizing particle, now being replaced by standard to. In the English pronominal system, the singular personal pronouns were marked for gender throughout the history of

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121 English; the animate pronouns were marked for case as well.
178 The original Gullah personal pronouns, ee and Em, are marked
193 for case but not for gender. As Gullah changes toward the standard, these pronouns are acquiring distinctions for gender, but the genderless form ee is retained longest where it marks an original case distinction for inanimates which English does not make. The preposition to was used to mark static location in some earlier dialects of English, as well as dynamic movement, and is still found in some nonstandard dialects today. In its use as a static-locative preposition in Gullah, to holds the strongest claim for origin as a dialectal variant of English. The pattern of expansion for this grammatical category in Gullah, however, is similar to that for English-related creoles in the Caribbean and argues for a development characteristic of an expanding creole rather than of a dialect of English.

The basic Gullah variants used for the pronominal
121 and prepositional categories discussed here suggest that the
193 Caribbean creoles and Gullah may have had different histories in important respects. For Gullah, the basic distinction in the personal pronoun system is between the syntactic functions of object and non-object. For the English-related creoles of Jamaican and Guyanese, the basic distinction seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. In the Gullah prepositional category, to is the variant used for basic locative relationships, while at and by are used

121 193 in the Caribbean for the same semantic domain. These differences in forms used for fundamental grammatical categories suggest that further inquiry into the origins, as well as comparative studies, of all these English-related creoles might lead to further insights about the common patterns of development for expanding languages.

121 178 193 For the analysis of change in Gullah, aspects of both the dynamic model and the quantitative paradigm have been used and both have led to insights about underlying processes. For a complicated grammatical category like the personal pronoun system, the implicational scale utilized in the dynamic model has shown relationships and directions of change not readily perceived through simple frequency counts of variants used by each speaker. For greater faithfulness to the data, however, and for a clearer picture of the patterns of change than simple 'presence or absence' of creole variants would give, some indication of 'more or less' relationships between variants has been included. For showing important relationships between social factors and the activation of linguistic change, quantitative data on individual speakers, whose social characteristics were well established and readily compared with those of other speakers, have been essential. Both models are inadequate at those points where they insist upon categorical divisions rather than allowing for descriptions of continuous, systematic processes. To accurately and fully reflect the findings of the present

121 study, the dynamic paradigm must allow for systematic indi-
178 vidual variation in parts of the grammar undergoing change.
193 The quantitative paradigm must allow for more communal variation than is usually considered to exist within the boundaries of a single speech community. Both these models have moved us closer to a conceptualization of language as a process experienced by those who speak it.

759 usually a work accomplished over a seventy-year span.
753 Discarding dsyfunctional potions and retaining those which
757 work, these practitioners claim their greatest skill is that of memory. An oral people, who rely heavily on the remembered word, practitioners claim that they are simply extraordinarily adept in this process. This ability enables them to recall those remedies which were of proven effectiveness in similar cases.

757 It is difficult to accurately gage how effective this practice has been. Nevertheless one measure comes through examining the health habits of islanders. First the is-
[759] lander would try the family remedy for an illness, if this does not work medical doctors are consulted, if the illness persists then the hands practitioners are sought. The
• [178] continued existence of these practices on the islands suggests that these latter practices are effective.

759 Hand Practitioners - What They Can Do

Practitioners are regarded as having the ability to perform effectively in the following areas:

1. Heal the physically sick.
2. Bring and change the luck element.
3. Change the habits or doings of wayward people.
4. Unite man and woman in pleasant relationships.
5. Protect the body from harm.

362 There are also those units which are adequately furnished, and contain inside plumbing facilities. These homes tend to be new or recently improved. Built during the 1950's, more of the middle age islanders live in houses of this type.

Some sections contain new or recently built homes; these are more rarely seen and tend to be occupied by islanders in their late twenties and thirties who have been employed at an adequate wage over a period of years.

A SUMMATION STATEMENT

177 178 The roots of exploitation are deep on the Sea Islands. That information and those program services which would help ease the yokes of oppression are but slowly being metered into the community. In the mist of this oppression, the islanders continue to show spirited strength in maintaining traditional family patterns and the unique customs. They are not diving foolishly into imitation of the suburban elements to which they are gaining greater exposure. Certainly features of the suburban life style are and will continue to be adopted into native family patterns. But those elements will be added with modification. It is too early to speculate on the forms those modifications will take. However, it is rather certain that those elements of suburbanization which would drastically effect the traditional functioning and design of island families if, ventured into

177 at all, will, in coming, have to be made consistent with
178 and have minimal impact on the family as it now exists.

178 No doubt, the continued existence of the Sea Islands as an exclusively Black community will be difficult to retain. The extent to which the Sea Islands retain their unique Black character will hinge on the economic resourcefulness of the younger islanders and on whether those who have left are willing to return and reclaim their Sea Island heritage.

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121 197 [576] [177] become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The conflicting feature of these two notions is evident. Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks. That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

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Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 174 178 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the relatively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

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121 are more distinctly West African patterns encountered as
174 are found among Sea Island communities. It has also been
178 suggested in the dialect research and folklore collections, that as distance from the mainland increases, more distinctly West African cultural traits are encountered. Similarly, older Sea Islanders tend to mirror West African cultural patterns to larger extents and in purer forms than younger islanders. These reports support the notion that the factors of isolation and of recent arrival have operated to enhance the protection and subsequent retention of Africanism among Gullah Blacks to an extent unique in the United States.

THE PROBLEM

121 The significance of Sea Islanders as a people who be-
114 cause of their unique situation have retained overt mani-
178 festations of their West African heritage is clearly noted in the literature. While he argues against the retention position in general, Frazier could not deny the exception of Sea Islanders. He writes:

> During the process of adjusting themselves to American civilization, the majority of the Negroes have sloughed off completely the African heritage.[13]

In view of Turner's work (1939) among Sea Islanders, Frazier modifies his position, "African patterns of thought and

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[13]Frazier, op. cit., pp. 3-21.

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121 behavior could survive only where the Negroes were isolated
114 and where there was sufficient common understanding among
178 them to give significance to African survivals."[14]

In contrast to Frazier's assertion of the complete destruction of the African family organization among American blacks. Dubois[15] believed that careful research would reveal traces. While many aspects of the Sea Island experience have been studied, systematic investigations of the African family organization as proposed by Dubois has not been attempted among Sea Islanders. In this regard, Turner warns that Sea Islanders often exhibit African behavioral features only among the intimate circles of the family. However, if the essential role of the family in cultural transmission is understood, then systematic information on Sea Island child rearing may provide clues on the extent of the survival of African elements among Island families. Furthermore, such an investigation may provide a retrospective glimpse at the processes of de-Africanization of the American black family.

121 Parson's collection of Sea Island folklore identifies
178 attitudinal patterns and beliefs which are clearly of West

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[14] Ibid.

[15] W. E. B. Dubois, The Negro Family (Atlanta: University Press, 1908), p. 21.

121 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
178 have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
177 Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
178 open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated the American ethos to the extent evident among northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland (U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes inceasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

12 The related and important question of the present in-
178 vestigation is whether in addition to the retention of linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," African Language Society (1966), pp. 171-179.

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) (789) A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) (751) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
niti's adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would
621 have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These
861 factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of child rearing within a West African heritage. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

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121 African and the child rearing practices of Black American parents a clear conception of Sea Island child rearing beliefs and practices may be an essential prerequisite. Until this prerequisite research is completed, projected relationships between Sea Island and West African child rearing must be viewed as merely conjecture. The intent of this investigation is to outline the child rearing discipline habits of Sea Islanders.

THE SEA ISLAND FAMILY

121 861 Because of their lower socio-economic status the use of physical punishment manifested in parental discipline may be commonly reported by Sea Island parents. However the factors of isolation and clearly defined social patterns may negate that of socio-economic status, and have the effect of diminishing the use of physical punishment. Or these factors may have the opposite influence of increasing the use of physical punishment.

121 592 861 The relatively small living space of Sea Island households coupled with a high proportion of extended family situations could produce a high use of physical punishment in discipline. Similarly the low educational attainment levels and occupational status would suggest high use of physical punishment among Sea Island parents. That whipping as a form of discipline commonly found among West African peoples would be also common to Sea Island parents is

121 178 861

121 consistent with the postulation that Gullahs have main-
128 tained West African cultural traits.
86

At present the extent to which these relationships
121 will hold for Sea Island parents can only be postulated.
86 There exists in the literature few clear statements describing the rearing practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks. Neither is it clear how these rearing practices and attitudes have been formed or modified as a consequence of time, isolation, and/or as a result of the American experience. Likewise the extents to which the discipline practices and beliefs of Sea Islanders is commonly held across generations can only be postulated. It is not clear whether younger islanders hold attitudes toward discipline which mirror the views of older islanders, or if there is a trend toward more attunement to the rearing practices and discipline methods commonly found among urbanized youths. Neither is the literature clear on the discipline attitudes and practices of island parents in comparison to their elders. The intent of the present investigation is to provide some indication of the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks, and to provide a historical perspective of those practices and beliefs and to thereby tentatively assess the extent and direction of change.

121 PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

This research investigation has four primary aims:

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
(593) In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "en ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

561 of not completing tasks were harsh because chores were
593 meaningful to the household. It is reference to this
178 agrarian life and the demands for the obedience of children
861 upon which grandparents draw. That the generation of par-
592 ents now share significantly different childhood references than their parents merely illustrates the component of change in the agricultural habits on the islands. In agreement with this, parents reared in more distant households, where the farm habit is comparatively more active tend to mirror the views of the preceding generation. A similar positive relationship between exposure to the farming habit and the cohesiveness of discipline behavior across the two generations exist on the near islands. The generational differences found in this study can certainly be attributed to the farming versus non-farming pattern. This rationale was expressed vividly by Grand Flower, who at 78 years sees big differences in the rearing habits of her day and those of today. "Billie, let ma tell ya son, we haad no timb fer fooln. Wen d cock taak en bernean we up wete de fas cro. I go ta git d waata en me sista she giz d wod. Wey be fa d life ob dae comin we haad d bakfaz redi. Abta we done wete d poz en plata wen goin ta d fiel. Dey we waak puen sed en d grun or piken en pulen dat wat don redi, we dey til d timb com n fer fix d supa den bak ta dat huse we goin. We giz d mel fer d men fak, den we carie it ta d fiel we

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561 sta en d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb for d chilln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long to exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma dae" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

Still another point to be considered in looking at
861 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
562 differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of
[578] the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disciplined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which significant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are
86 quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perseptive of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohesiveness of the island community. Notions of the broad
[177] scale influence of the mainland elements on island

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the
178 tested generational relationships were significant. These
177 differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now
464 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes
177 this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston.
861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. The more demanding work requirements which accom-
861 panies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed.
178 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder is-
561 landers base their discipline references was unknown to
593

861 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
561 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not bei. ; transferred to this genera-
tion of young islanders. In this light, the childhood
histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen
how the harsh work habits required in farming families
demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the bur-
den of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobe-
dience than parents are today. The reason given was again
differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
861 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because
they spend time with their children. For the farming par-
ents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tol-
erance level, and that isolated households operate in an
<u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
861 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived
to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
861 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This rela-
tionship was explained along two lines. The first was the
status that the male child has on the islands. Here a
dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

562 86 [178] The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining. [578] Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a common behavior of males. The reason for fighting as a [177] more frequent behavior of males on James Island was explained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders to mainland patterns.

197 ment for a creole language to survive.
177

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, [191] many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of 178 speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure 592 of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder 855 member is usually the established household spokesman, 887 and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As 197 expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language [177] of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

121
197 The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

193 according to each category and stage of acquisition.

### 3.1. The Nominative Case Pronouns

The data revealed three variants marking the third person masculine nominative case: /ɪm/, /i/, and /hi/. 193 The appearance of three forms is one indication that the •178 Creole is alive but in a state of flux and development. While neither of these charts represents any one speaker's acquisition of English pronouns, Table 3.4, showing individual variation, indicates that there are stages of language acquisition during which a speaker will produce some forms from the basilect, some from the mesolect, and others from the acrolect until the Creole form is eliminated from the lexicon.

193 The data in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 display the variability of current usage. They indicate that from a total quantitative count of 165 /i/ the unaspirated form of the third person masculine nominative pronoun is chosen 77.6% of the time. While /i/ co-varies with /ɪm/ and /hi/, both polar forms with fewer occurrences than /i/, the English form /hi/ occurs more frequently than /ɪm/. The English form has a frequency of occurrence of 18.8% while /ɪm/ has a frequency value of only 3.6%. This finding suggests that there is variation in the masculine nominative category. But /i/, the form making

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the
(197) negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
191 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
• 178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.
(197)
(178)

[9]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I oftin yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small kettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.
(569)

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533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

533 539 Here are some of the most characteristic:

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 178 814 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been fortunate in having two distinctly preservative influences exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

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533 .178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.* In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[171] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, can sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung wideout a *full heart and a troubled spertit*."

[162] *St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

*St. *Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[9]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much [567] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. [114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery."

They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris- 567 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 178 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery 177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas." But back

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[9]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[10]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[11]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[12]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. [527] This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
178 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[11] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[12] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
[522] it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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[527] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[11]With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
[113] Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[12]Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[12]See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
[113] Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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## CONCLUSION

•178 538 (533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*,[11] besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.'"[12]

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] (83) [171] [11]Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toas'' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

[12]One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

[13]Bennett, II, 52.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jacksonville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee
115 River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among
533 those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by religious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these
•178 strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred
177 hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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533 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[13] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 114 178 177 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

[13] A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.

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533 114 177 178 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and hotation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

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CHAPTER ONE

## *Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation*

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

533 177 178 The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration provided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

533 177 [175]

[1] In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.

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123 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
533 so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,[A] to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.[B]) Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
127 tude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
178 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be sung to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" European ized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race
127 since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
178 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analysis]
B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analysis]

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many authorities encourage him to believe in its value, it is evident that such a system stands in need of drastic revision.

In an address delivered in Philadelphia some years ago, Carter Woodson, the Negro historian, frankly said that the average American Negro is the victim of traditional teaching in Northern white schools; that his people are becoming a race of imitators; that not until they study their African background, react to it, and interpret it, can they hope to come into their own. A lifetime of contact with ex-slaves and their descendants, and of observation of the deleterious effects of the present-day system of education upon the younger Negroes, has convinced me that Woodson's arraignment is entirely merited. America has splendid material—and see what we do with it! Slavery of the body is bad, but I am positive that mental slavery does more harm to the race than physical bondage ever did.[11]

If ignorance of the history, dialects, art, music and literature of Africa—due probably to the ignorance of the educators themselves—can be remedied, and these educators can be made to appreciate the value of African art and music, then undoubtedly the race can once more contribute its quota to the art of the world. But such a right-about-face cannot take place until the Negro gets rid of the idea that all culture is vested in the white man's viewpoint. From the fact that Broadway features Negro actors, dancers, and musicians as never before, and that the producers of a Negro opera attempted to teach the Harlem blacks to speak and sing like their primitive Southern cousins, it is clear that this is no time for the race to be disdainful of its African heritage. In 1934, the most exacting New York critics applauded Kykunkor, the West African dance-drama, and made it the talk of the town—although some of us deplored its Europeanized singing. At about the same time, exhibitions of primitive African art were accorded such recognition as to fill the classicists with definite alarm.

Such is the precarious position in which the slave music finds itself today. While it is not hopeless, it is none too encouraging. Jaunts up and down the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, to the out islands of the Bahamas, and to Haiti, in search of African art survivals of all kinds give proof that they still exist, but the white man's drive against illiteracy is enabling the Negro school-teachers to make a drive, at the same time, against all things African.

According to Reuben Tolakele Caluza, the same situation exists in Africa,

[11] *J. A. Tillinghast says, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *that American slavery, in effect, was a vast school, in which all the pecuniary profits went to the teachers.*

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where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

[12] The late Howard E. Coffin.
[13] Mrs. W. E. Clifton

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000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 171 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 177 178 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio programs. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

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764 [175] [176] [178] [175] been on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

481 562 178 The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In [164] the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[711] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14),[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A. [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B. [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

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175 567 [159] gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober pateh" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

567 754 159 175 We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her [683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in* [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

•178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?

[50] Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."

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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to discover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

[171] [533] 326 171

George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

567 322 567 335 347 567 326

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet-makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21) Both made a number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the

322 [335] [461] [171] 461 517

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.[A]) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 171 178 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A. [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analyst]

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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

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(123)

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

(175)
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[2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam"
534 is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading
[177] lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[178] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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795 794 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is [788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 178 [783] In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tidewater section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide* [114] [171] *lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

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"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [324] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[191] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
569 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [28]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
569 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
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[28] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (567) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field- (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 175 567 191

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of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505] water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484] towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178.
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

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## THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

### *Pronunciation and Syntax*

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 32. [105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . .
177 and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to
178 the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [b*i*te][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [m*ee*t] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

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tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

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In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.

[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But
•178 it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

### *Speed and Pitch Inflection*

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

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174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

19 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and
177 the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
• 178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[122]

[122] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[123]

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

[123] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, heat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

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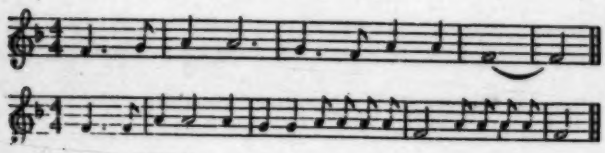
South Carolina
St. Helena Island





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The relationship does not end here, for many readers will at once see the same *motif* in an old white mountain song, *Careless Love*, and some may be able to trace it in still other songs. Anyone familiar with spiritual tunes can trace another striking sameness of *motif* in the choruses of the following spirituals: *Roll, Jordan, Roll; Ride on, Jesus; Lord, Remember Me;* and *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray.*

A certain St. Helena song leader, at the writer's request, sang a spiritual which the leader had composed. The tune was identical with another St. Helena tune, yet the composer was unaware of the similarity until it had been pointed out to him. Thus musical imagination works and thus new songs arise in old clothes.

7. There is a constant process of change going on among the spirituals. No song has a permanent lease on life, even in isolation. It may be passed on as a "new" song elsewhere, but in its old home it is an "old" song and must compete with newcomers. The collection made by Allen and others and published as *Slave Songs* just after the Civil War contained fifty-five songs from St. Helena. Of these, less than a dozen are commonly heard on the island today. The present writer returned to St. Helena a year after making his first collection of spirituals there and found several songs in vogue which he never heard once during his first visit. One of these was an old song

533
178.

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533 revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. [178] Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

## SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

### *The Problem Stated*

121 533 The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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533 171 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how* the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 171 177 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least, a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new

533 178 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

## Tunes

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[37] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[38] is as follows:

| | Negro Songs per cent | White Songs per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Major | 83.8 | 78.9 |
| Minor | 11.7 | 18.6 |
| Mixed or vague | 4.4 | 2.4 |

533 171 ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[37] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[38] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[84] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178. [177)

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

[84] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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533 tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spir-
(178) ituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

[55] Including the Allen collection.

(114) [56] *Too* high, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs origi- 533
nated further north than St. Helena, probably in the pied- 174
mont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors will look into the matter they will find in other communities on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number of these St. Helena spirituals.[88] Thus the percentage of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration of songs from the area which had felt strongly the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These con- [114]
siderations are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African traits.

*Modulations.* Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

[88] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184]

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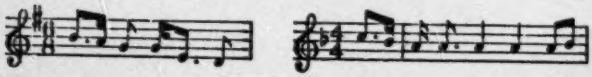

But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

*Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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177 533 songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning [178] the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

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based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two. 177 178 533

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it 533

[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to discipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
592 desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
[848] the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[33]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[33] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and developmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult
[491] in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

| Category | Acres | % of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
[175] munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
[161] 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

161 While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial composition, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically dis-
[464] tressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth, as is shown in Table 2.

161 The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to ma-
177 jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
179 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Islands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4). A James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
162 lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A. [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
(668) Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue community organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
[241] island. The resort developments and the new small
[178] businesses offer some employment, but farming, long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
311 declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
433 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

• 179 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

(P xiii, 8)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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179 counter those of outside interests. The County Commission accepted this new plan for limited and 177 controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community or- 158 ganization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as (N3) part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health (423) Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a (563) black high school on the island. In the late 1960s

(P. XIV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHAT I TALK TO PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND ABOUT IS POOLING OUR RESOURCES

177 There's no way that the island can stay unchanged. It's already changed. There was a time when I knew everybody on the island. I can't say that anymore. There's been such an influx of new people in the last ten years. There's a real new sense of direction there. The new people can always take advantage of the older people. Hopefully, we can control some of the change.

For the first time in my lifetime, the white and black communities have come together. Some of the whites who hated my guts back when you guys were there now are using me sometimes as spokesman to the county government. Some of them who would never have spoken to me, I've been in meetings with them and they'll say, "Let Mr. Saunders explain that." There's a [179] [491] Johns Island planning committee to look at what needs to be changed. I think we might be able to maintain our roads—if we could get some cutoffs on the roads, where those big farm vehicles or the school bus can pull over for the traffic—and if we can do it *and* save the big trees.

000 I wish I was in a position to get a group of people together to buy up a good bit of the land that is for sale on Johns Island. Some of it I would like to just sit. Some of it you could build the things that need to be done. I would like to see a nice Holiday Inn–type motel over there. There are so many people from the island that are living away from here that come home and their family don't have a house large enough for them to stay in. And they don't want to stay in the city, so they just crowd in together. But if you had a real nice hotel and just a nice restaurant, you could make money on it. There are so many things that could be done.

What I talk to people on the island about is pooling our resources to build the things that will be built on Johns Island. It can be done, but we would have to trust each other.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advanta- 351 geous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant pri- 363 vacy. The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. The informal and haphazard [361] scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, 366 and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

•181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



•18 skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

142 165 178 [771]

754 761 [115] A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

754 "Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[5cd.]* An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

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123 [262] At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



from Baptist and Episcopalian masters, and limited contact with black preachers.

The Methodists' systematic religious instruction provided Gullahs with the first opportunity for a uniform type of religious culture. This socio-religious nexus did not vary from plantation to plantation or from island to island. It was based on a moral philosophy, not precluding the preservation to some extent of a continued faith in the customs of African-born forebears. The emerging religious association resembled and gave expression to a world view brought from Africa, common to the Gullahs, and suited to their circumstances. More than any other features of the Christian religion, the Gullahs embraced its moral virtues—humanity, humility, fairness, a sense of the dignity of the sufferer, and belief in the merit of all people. No matter how one regards these values, they are celebrated in Christianity, and it was this spirit in Methodist teachings that the Gullahs accepted. The letter of the law, in a strict Mosaic form, and the Pauline sanction of servitude were rejected. There was little room for internalization of the dogma present in Christianity as taught by whites. That would have negated Gullahs' previous belief patterns and their hatred of bondage. Gullah folk Christianity was an ardently felt religion. It was a religion which elevated them above their masters' efforts to make them contented slaves. Far more than Methodism perhaps, Gullah folk religion was a religion of the heart. Their spirituality helped them channel what was expected to be hopelessness, helplessness, and prostration into the forging and further enrichment of a culture. Through individual stamina, collective faith, and cultural development they merged as a people. Their collective faith kept them spiritually free in spite of physical bondage. Their collective faith, together with spiritual freedom, and matched with natural gifts and talents, provided Gullahs with a will to create, the courage to persevere, and power, as a "prepolitical" people, to use religion as a progressive force and shield against white psychological and cultural domination. This collective faith allowed them to believe in themselves and in their dream of ultimate freedom.[71]

The year 1845 was momentous for the history of slave conversion in South Carolina and for the nation as a whole. At that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention were organized. Both denominations pledged to make a more zealous thrust in Christian instruction of the black population. Also, in May of that year,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
745 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[11]

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
• 181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a
•181 clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations. Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also
17 a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong
567 related by Sam Polite:
533 I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we
[539] wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:

> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[58]

17 Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt.
567 John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never "licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman, Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging. Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for kindness.[59]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

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When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the

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song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and

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usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists.

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Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus

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affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of

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expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that

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their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we"

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for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had developed over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

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fervent zest for life. As slaves, the cornerstone of their faith rested on confidence that freedom on earth would not be denied them and their progeny. One missionary wrote of how the Gullahs expressed this: 181 771 567

> As they spoke of their trust in the Savior, his assurances, by the application of the promises to their hearts, that "a good time was coming" when their own vines and fig trees would cast their shadows around them in quietness and safety, and no more parting of families be known, our hearts dissolved in sympathy and gratitude in their behalf.[25]

Christianity can be interpreted in fatalistic terms. But to believe Gullahs totally accepted a submissive Christian posture suggests that they did not struggle against the cultural domination that masters attempted to impose through religion. To say, on the other hand, that an element of patience was not present in their form of Christianity would be a denial of historical reality. Resolution of the contradiction may come through understanding the limited role of doctrinal Christianity in Gullah life and thought, and taking a fuller cognizance of the influence of previous traditions. Practically and theologically speaking, Gullahs were not resigned to their condition, and not uncritical of religious teachings. Nor were they beguiled by insipid attempts to "make them better slaves." From their African heritage Gullahs retained optimism—a proclivity to make the best of their near-tragic situation for the sake of communal spirit and future generations. This was more meaningful than blindly striking out and committing racial suicide. The simple issue of the practicality of insurrection must also be considered. They had learned from Vesey and others, perhaps implanting the Charleston insurrection attempt in their memory. They believed armed rebellion was impossible as long as they were enslaved. Higginson stated that he often pondered over why the Gullahs' "daring and endurance" in combat had not manifested itself in armed insurrection against the slavocracy. Predictably, Higginson attributed the lack of large-scale rebellions to "the peculiar temperament of the races, in their religious faith, and in the habit of patience that centuries had fortified." But Higginson added that to have kept "the land in a perpetual flame of insurrection" would have been impossible for a number of reasons: 181 567

> The shrewder men all said substantially the same thing. What was the use of insurrection, where everything was against them? They had no knowledge, no money, no arms, no drill, no organization. . . . They had no mountain passes

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to defend like the Maroons of Jamaica,—no impenetrable swamps, like the Maroons of Suriname. Where they had these, even on a small scale, they had used them,—as in certain swamps round Savannah and in the everglades of Florida, where they united with the Indians, and would stand fire—so I was told by General Saxton, who had fought them there—when the Indians would retreat.[26]

Priceless energy and humanity would have been the fruits of rebellion as far as the slaves were concerned. Such physical confrontations would have left little enthusiasm for cultural creativity. Thus does the quest for examples of physical courage often overshadow a valiant spiritual temper. Gullahs maximized their creative talents, developing a socioreligious collective derived perhaps from the most edifying features of two traditions. In this way they maintained their dignity and provided a legacy of the truest examples of valor and vitality. They maintained a passionate love of humanity so that they could confront their former masters with an absence of revenge. But as Higginson noted, they also possessed a deep sense of progressive rationalism in their calm realization that masters and slaves are natural enemies. In observing the Gullahs' capacity to endure pain and tendency to look beyond their own individiual situation, the surgeon in Higginson's black regiment referred to the men as "natural trasncendentalists."[27] This was true to some extent. Yet a more accurate characterization could be that these African-Americans were natural humanists. For them, integration of the human personality on a collective level was central, so that cultural considerations received primary attention sometimes at the expense of practical ones.

While the African tradition from which Gullahs descended emphasized preservation, protection, and enrichment of life, the phenomenon which unified this anthropocentric philosophy was religion. Hence it is not difficult to understand why Gullah life was expressed from an essentially spiritual perspective. Christianity and traditional African religion combined to provide them with an ideology of freedom, and a noble, mystical explanation for their existence as a people. They internalized the optimism in both religions and both orientations were necessary ingredients in the creation of Gullah culture. Slavery did not erode the African sense of pride, of community, love of home, and of family. Yet who knows how long these attributes could sustain cultural life among slaves, no matter how much their spirits struggled against degradation? Christianity offered the additional cohesion needed to develop a homogeneous people and a society based upon a progressive religious nation-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis.

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Litwack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?"

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE

464 The people on Johns Island, those that are not working in the city or as domestics, most of them make their living off truck farms on the island. Especially the women. They work on the farms of plantation owners. They pick snap beans, they dig white potatoes, they pick tomatoes, pack cabbages, spinach and whatnot. Those are the things that they depend on for a living.

During the winter months they go into a hardship because most of the farms don't have anything to do. That's the hardest time that they have to face.

•18 Sometimes we underestimate these people and forget they have something we really need. These are people who haven't gotten a college education, or even a high school education. But anyone able to raise twelve children—and raise 'em healthy too—must know something good. They were smart enough to plant and to raise the kind of thing the children need. They raised their own hogs, they raised their cows, they had the milk with vitamin D what they need.

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Some of these older people thought very deeply. Mother-wit and faith in God helped them to do a lot, and some achieved more than some of the young people who have been able to go to college.

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
621 nities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would
861 have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of child rearing within a West African heritage. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

• 181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.' Living close to nature they are

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[567] case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognizing him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

'This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

[113] For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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•181 learned in woodcraft and the ways of animals and birds and fish, and in quaint similes and shrewd sayings use this knowledge to illustrate their dealings with their own kind, and their relations with the outside world.

177 In increasing measure, however, good roads, bridges, and free rural schools are bringing in outside influences and the processes of civilization. The numerous hunting clubs in winter and coast resorts in summer are likewise increasing their points of contact with the rest of the State. They are being slowly transformed and conformed, becom-

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181 present, the third looking toward the past: (1) William Pickens, himself a Negro, says: "Till this day the Negro is seldom frank to the white man in America. He says what he does not mean; he means what he does not say. . . . This is one reason for the great misconception in the white race respecting the desires, ambitions and sentiments of the black." *The New Negro, His Political and Civil Status and Related Essays*, p. 37.

(2) Mr. Gonzales says: "Of all the inscrutable peoples of the Eastern world, none is more secretive than the Negro, nor any so puzzling to the psychologist, for while it is easy to know that deceit lurks behind the mask of engaging frankness with which he seeks to disarm those who doubt him, the exact nature of the deceit can seldom be discerned." Review of Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.

(3) Dr. Stanhope Sams, literary editor of "The State", looks to the Negro's past: "There is a dark region beyond the mind and soul of the Negro of the slave plantations that may never be explored. No trained and well equipped psychologist, so far as I know, has ever attempted this magnificent research. Certainly none of the Negro students of the race has seemed to get even so near as white students have approached. So far as I have ever seen in their writings or heard in their speech, Dubois and Booker Washington did not enter that primeval jungle. And it is not possible now, perhaps, to 'restore' this primitive jungle race and lore. It would be a far more difficult task than the restoration of Kish or Ur, or to bring back to earth some semblance of the mysterious Sumerians. There we have at least a tablet or stele or monument to help; but we must decipher the Negro of the days of the Pharaohs and of Carthage and of the impenetrable backward and abysm of time that stretches like an uncharted sea behind the African Negro from the modern Negro in America or Africa.

"At all events, as it seems, the contact he must have had with cultured Egyptians and Carthaginians left no enduring record. It is possible—despite some vague beginnings of civilization in certain parts of Black Africa—that the only lasting betterment in conditions the Negro has yet known or held has been received during and since he became a slave in the Southern States.

"It remains an alluring, but a chimerical adventure—this attempt to learn what the Negro was before his contact with us.

"On their own part, the Negroes seem to have formed a conspiracy of silence. Possibly they suffered too profoundly, were hurt too bitterly, to tell us their own story. They preferred, doubtless, to leave it behind them in the engulfing and obliterating jungle. They must have known, must have remembered, those first slaves, and they have always had the genius for story-telling and singing. Yet they tell no stories that reveal their previous march, sing no songs—except with borrowed music, and fill their mythologies with the animals and beings of the world that bound and enslaved them."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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Nor must it be forgotten that the Negro is both a splendid actor and a born dramatist: he dramatizes a situation concretely and vividly, and dramatizes himself and his own feelings with equal facility.

All of these factors are to be taken into consideration when dealing with the origin of the spirituals.

But however originated and compounded, spirituals constitute one of the most distinctive additions of the Negro to the culture of America. A leading Negro publicist[14] sums up his race's contributions somewhat as follows: the cake-walk, jazz music, the animal folk-tale, the Blues, and the spirituals. In the minds of many the greatest of all are the spirituals.

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[14]James Weldon Johnson.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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CHAPTER TWO

## *African Survivals on the Coast of Georgia*

123 There are survivals of African songs on the coast of Georgia. But let no outsider imagine they can be heard for the asking. From experience I know this to be true. It took me three winters on St. Simon's to hear a single slave song, three times as many winters to see the religious dance called the ring-shout, still more winters to unearth the Buzzard Lope and similar solo dances, and the game songs known as ring-play. It may be only a coincidence, but the "funny songs" with African words, translated by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, have been the last to be found. They were discovered about the time Negro educators began to teach their pupils that the term African was not synonymous with barbarism, and that Africa had a culture of its own.

• 181 The secretiveness of the Negro is, I believe, the fundamental reason for our ignorance of the race and its background, and this trait is in itself probably an African survival. Melville J. Herskovits bears out such a conclusion when he quotes a Dutch Guiana Bush Negro as saying: "Long ago our ancestors taught us that it is unwise for a man to tell anyone more than half of what he knows about anything." [1] It is amusing to question Southerners as to the number of times they remember hearing Negroes volunteer information. Not one so far has recalled an instance in which something has been told that was not common knowledge.

181 829 This inborn reticence, coupled with the fact that natives of Africa remember little about their forebears farther back than their grandparents,[2] is undoubtedly responsible for the race's lack of a past in either the Old World or the New. It is possible, however, that there may be a cause for their apparent forgetfulness of which the white man is unaware. On Sapelo I got the distinct impression from two descendants of Old Bilali, the famous Mohammedan slave, that the dead were dead,

[1] *Handbook of Social Psychology.*
[2] Mentioned by Clement Egerton in African Majesty.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring
829 up trouble for yourself. In Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad-
567 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch
[535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation[5] and the
181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*,
177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of
567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[3] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

181 However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
177 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing something that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
(123) indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

181 Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
177 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.* It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

* *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

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181 need of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the
197 words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vul-
159 gar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of
186 their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contémpt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

181 Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9)[A] that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

[7] As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.

[8] From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantations.

A, [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 64--Analyn]

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aloof, and never lose a chance to mislead and to poke fun at the white man behind his back. But I have noticed that they often reflect the treatment meted out to them in slave days. Geoffrey Gorer, in *Africa Dances*, calls attention to this fact: "If you can watch a man dealing with negroes you have no need to ask his opinion about them; and if you can watch a man's negroes you will know the chief points of his character. They mirror their masters faithfully and terribly." This approach has always interested me, and I have traced the ancestry and former ownership of many of our Glynn County Negroes. Cusie [9] Sullivan provided me with a striking exemplification of Gorer's statement. His good manners excited my curiosity, and when I encountered his father, Ben, at a Negro funeral, they were explained. Mrs. Shadman, who had known Cusie's grandfather, Bilali, gave me his history. He was the butler at the Couper plantations, at Cannon's Point on St. Simon's, and at Hopeton on the Altamaha River. The courtesy of the three generations of Sullivans known to Mrs. Shadman is a tribute to the genuine distinction of the Couper family.[10]

However, the self-respecting dignity [11] of this group of Negroes undoubtedly had its roots in Africa. Sir Charles Lyell devotes considerable space to a description of life on Hopeton plantation and to "African Tom." [12] Lyell tells us: "Under the white overseer, the principal charge . . . is given to 'Old Tom,' the head driver, a man of superior intelligence and higher cast of feature. He was the son of a prince of the Foulah tribe [West Soudan], and was taken prisoner, at the age of fourteen, near Timbuctoo. The accounts he gave of what he remembered of the plants and geography of Africa have been taken down in writing by Mr. Couper, and confirm many of the narratives of modern travelers. He has remained a strict Mahometan, but his numerous progeny of jet-black children and grandchildren, all of them

[9] In West African Studies, Miss Kingsley says that among the Fanti Negroes a boy born on Sunday is called Quisi.

[10] By the same token, one of my most helpful singers—Ben Davis—who was trained from early childhood by Mrs. Shadman, mirrors the thoughtful dependability of her character.

[11] Egerton, in African Majesty, makes it very clear that he was impressed with the great dignity and presence of the uncle of the King of Bangangté in the French Cameroons. The many wives of the King also excited his admiration: "They were dignified, self-possessed and definitely regal."

[12] Professor James A. Grant of Darien, tells me that his great-grandfather, Thomas (called Carcastone among his own people), was a driver on the Couper plantations. In his youth he had heard his grandfather, Thomas (brother of the Couper's Bilali), say that he was named for his father who was an African prince and a Mohammedan. Apparently "African Tom" and Bilali's father, Thomas, were one and the same.

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181 marked by countenances of a more European cast than those of ordinary negroes,
569 have exchanged the Koran for the Bible. . . . During the last war [1812] when Ad-
175 miral Cockburn was off this coast with his fleet, he made an offer of freedom to all the slaves belonging to the father [John Couper] of my present host, and a safe convoy to Canada.[13] Nearly all would have gone, had not African Tom, to whom they looked up with great respect, declined the proposal. He told them he had first known what slavery was in the West Indies, and had made up his mind that the English were worse masters than the Americans. About half of them, therefore, determined to stay on St. Simon's Island, and not a few of the others who accepted the offer and emigrated had their lives shortened by the severity of the climate in Canada."

Z. Kingsley, in his *Treatise on the Patriarchal Form of Society*, published some time before 1829, cites "two instances to the southward [of Charleston], where gangs of negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers . . . and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Africans, and professors of the Mohammedan religion." It is clear that Kingsley had
(212) John Couper's "Old Tom" in mind, and that the other Mohammedan was Spalding's Bilali,[14] whose so-called *Diary*, written in Arabic, on Sapelo Island, is now in the possession of the Georgia State Library in Atlanta. Pages from the *Diary* have been incorporated in the end-paper designs of this book.

212 This manuscript has aroused keen interest among anthropologists, and the
569 photostatic copy I sent to Melville J. Herskovits has been translated by Joseph Greenberg.[15] During the summer of 1939 Mr. Greenberg visited Northern Nigeria, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, and through his fluent knowledge of Arabic won the confidence of educated Malams in the city of Kano. They assisted him in deciphering certain parts of the "diary" and in locating the places in an important Mohammedan legal work [16] from which most of the manuscript derives. It is amusing that the first result of Mr. Greenberg's study was to

[13] Admiral Cockburn harried our coast during the War of 1812, and as late as January, 1815, destroyed the orange orchards on Cumberland Island.

[14] Charles S. Wylly, in Seed Sown in Georgia, tells us how, in 1813, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding, relied upon Bilali to aid in the protection of his property on Sapelo with its "five hundred slaves, many fresh from . . . Africa."

[15] A résumé of the results of his work has been published in the Journal of Negro History, July, 1940.

[16] The Risala of 'abu Muhammad 'abdullah b. 'abi Zaid 'alquairawani.

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763 spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents,
764 mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a
171 [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

793 Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of
796 spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the
537 subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the
771 religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh
•18 rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

175 When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me
567 the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves
191 of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few
175 words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[33] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the
567 story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[33] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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567 lieve. Whipping made a rebellious and sullen slave who shirked his work and stirred up trouble. This was the reason that a driver was permitted to inflict stripes only in the presence of the overseer and that some planters forbade whipping altogether. No driver on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island was permitted when R. King was overseer to inflict punishment until after a regular trial. "When I pass sentence myself," said King, "various modes of punishment are adopted; the lash least of all,—Digging stumps, or clearing away trash about the settlements, in their own time; but the most severe is, confinement at home six months to twelve months, or longer."[8] All planters admitted that punishment was necessary in order to carry on the plantation routine; it was inherent in the system of slave labor; but the lash was the least effective mode.

### CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

567 .181 Before 1860 it had frequently been pointed out by travelers in the South and by masters themselves that the coastal Negroes, especially the sea-island Negroes, were less advanced culturally than the "Up-Country," or Piedmont Negroes, because they had less association with civilizing forces. It was evident to even a casual observer that on the sea-island cotton plantations, where the slaves had contact with few whites except the overseer and his family and but little intercourse with the slaves of other islands or even of other plantations on the same island, they must remain more stationary than where they equaled in number the whites or even formed a minority, as was true in a large part of Piedmont South Carolina.

[8] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828, p. 524.

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Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9]

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When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island

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[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

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after the Federal occupation in 1861. Arthur Sumner, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, tried to describe to his cousin their way of speaking. "These negroes speak with an inarticulate jabber. The sounds roll around in their great chops, and come pouring out through their huge mouths, so that I find it easier to understand a foreign language than confused utterance. Their idioms, too, are funny. I told Byron, a boy who waits upon me, that I was going to distribute clothing on his place. 'Talk *we* house?' said he:—meaning, 'Are you speaking of our house?' . . . Byron came to me with a message from his mother—'Ma says if you give her some trade'—Imagine such a sentence uttered as if it were a word of many syllables. Can you make it out? . . . 'Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread?' "[11]

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These missionaries from the North, who, of course, knew nothing first-hand of slavery, thought that the St. Helena Negroes were the most degraded and backward of all the coastal slaves in the South.[12] After the northern whites had become acquainted with other sea-island Negroes from such places as St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and Edisto Island, South Carolina, who were quartered temporarily on St. Helena Island by the Federal Army, they were still of the opinion that the St. Helena slaves were the most retarded in the South except those on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Arthur Sumner wrote late in 1862, "The Georgia and Florida negroes are vastly superior in appearance, character, and intelligence, to the natives of these Islands. It is the testimony

[11] Arthur Sumner Papers. Port Royal, May 18, 1862. The last word was pronounced as if spelled tred, not trade.

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

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of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[113] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[114]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

[113] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[114] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

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175 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of
657 training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of planta-
658 tions in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them
891 to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of
657 the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of
175 morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less
657 of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general
181 manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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suspect that most abolitionist views of their character are exaggerated in their favor."[52]

THE LAND SALES

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Congress by Act of August 5, 1861, levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on all the states and territories for the purpose of conducting the war, of which South Carolina's quota was $363,570.66.[53] To collect the tax in the eleven insurrectionary states, Congress passed an act, June 7, 1862, calling for the appointment of direct tax commissioners. Collections were made in all the southern states during the war and after its close either by voluntary payment or by sale of land. Commissioners sold land for the non-payment of taxes in Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina, but in every state except that of South Carolina the lands were bid in at the tax sales by the commissioners for the United States. The presence of the northern missionaries in the region of the tax sales altered the situation in South Carolina.

The commissioners for South Carolina, W. E. Wording, W. Henry Brisbane, and A. D. Smith, having been appointed, ordered the first sale of land to take place at Beaufort, February 11, 1863. The land to be sold was that in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes in Beaufort District, the area occupied by the Federal Army, and included the whole town of Beaufort. Many friends of the Negro both at Port Royal and at the North objected to a sale under the Act of June 7, for they wanted some special

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[53] By Act of Congress approved July 1, 1862, the operations of the Act of August 5, 1861, were suspended until April 1, 1865, except for the collection of the first annual tax, and by Act of June 30, 1864, it was further suspended until additional legislation.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves
433 better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but
511 they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superin-
175 tendent under Philbrick for the Government and later re-
567 mained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his
657 scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private
•181 funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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*meum* and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in making claims,—these are the traits which try us continually in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us despair of their improvement—at least, in the present generation. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.'"[8]

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Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Government's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over [505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[204]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, • 181 ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[204] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

•182 For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun, surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that
433 isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

182 It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[2]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

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(114)

Crum[22] claimed that the Gullah people have no interest in the future. This researcher found the case to be the opposite. The Gullahs, the elders in particular, are constantly looking ahead to the day on which their life patterns will be judged fitting to "keep eternal company in the Great Kingdom." Their life paths and worldly efforts are aimed at nothing else than at the day when their deeds will be reviewed. It is with the religious context, that the discipline behaviors of the Gullah people must be understood. Malicious acts of child abuse, and the heavy handed parent are frowned upon. Discipline acts for the Gullah, are aimed primarily at keeping the child "on d steppn of d Lord," meaning that the purpose of much of the discipline behavior is to prepare the child for demands of living the religious existence. Dr. Spock's notions of child rearing have no relevance in the Gullah household. Here the teachings contained in the Bible are the guide posts the parent follows. Discipline manifested as physical punishment appear to be no more frequent than the verbal

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[22]Crum, op. cit.

771 means of socialization. The sternness of the religious
861 behaviors of the Gullah people are metered down into their
•182 discipline behavior. Among these people the 99.9% effort toward adherence to religious commandments as in child rearing just is not good enough. The only acceptable effort is all the way. This often reached quest for total committment in religious activities is the basis upon which the obedience of children are judged. This must be constantly in mind when interpreting the discipline behaviors of Gullah parents.

861 Gullah parents are constant observers of the behavior
[867] of children. The boundaries around what constitutes asocial behavior are clearly understood and learned early. The child in turn knows full well what behaviors will elicit which response by the parent. In accord with the religious teachings, the parent will not hesitate to punish disobedient behavior. Punishment though is not always or most frequently manifested in its physical form, but rather the form of discipline used will depend on any number of factors in the environment. The prime determinant being the overall behavior of the child. Gullah parents emphasized to this researcher that discipline must be tendened with mercy. "Billie ya ca'n trash dem all d timb, ya gotta scol some an best some." They felt total reliance on physical discipline in disregard to the overall behaviors and

764 duh spirit an keep it frum followin yuh back tuh duh
775 house. I knowd a uhmun at Burroughs wut use tuh carry food tuh uh daughtuh grabe ebry day.[58] She would take a basket uh cooked food, cake, pies, an wine. Den she would carry dishes too an set out a regluh dinnuh fuh duh daughtuh an uhsef. She say duh daughtuh's spirit meet uh deah an dey dine tuhgedduh."

(115) Another woman * told us that on holidays she carried food to her husband's grave and left it there for the spirit to come and get.[58] "I carry duh kine uh food we use tuh hab tuh eat on duh days he wuz off frum wuk," she said. "I take cooked chicken an cake an pie an cigahs—he like tuh smoke attuh eatin.[58a, b] I do dis cuz I know he will be lookin fuh me tuh bring it.

775 "Ebuh since I kin membuh I hab heahd bout spirits wanduhin roun at night,"[59] she continued. "Muh mothuh nebuh would let us go tuh bed at night widout leabin plenty uh watuh in duh pails fuh duh spirits tuh drink wile yuh sleep. Ef yuh dohn leab no watuh dey wohn leh yuh res good. I tink das wy hags ride some folks,[60] cuz dey dohn leab no
[754] watuh. I blieb witches is people dat's sole deah soul tuh duh debil. Dey hab duh powuh tuh change frum deah own shape tuh anyting dey wants tuh be,[61] so dey kin tawment udduh folks. Wen a ghos is roun I kin feel duh hot eah."

775 We found that belief in supernatural beings such as
754 witches and ghosts was widespread throughout the com-
•184 munity.

"Witches is lak folks," one woman said.** "Dey done
754 sell demsefs tuh duh debil an he make em do anyting he
(115) wants tuh. Some git a grudge gense yuh an stahts tuh ride yuh.[62] No mattuh wut yuh do, dey kin git in yuh house. Sometime dey come lak a mouse, sometime a rabbit, an sometime eben a roach.[63] I membuh heahin bout a witch wut

* *Bessie Reese, 2407 Harden Street.*
** *Emma English, 628 West 36th Street.*

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than the elite group. The social and economic differences between
184 members of the closed community on the river island and the
197 two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

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TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND NONSTANDARD VARIANTS USED BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS

| | | Speaker | PREPOSITION % | PREPOSITION N | PRONOUNS % | PRONOUNS N | COMPLEMENTIZER % | COMPLEMENTIZER N | Overall c/ns % | Sex Groups c/ns % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 100 | ( 7) | 39 | ( 87) | 66 | (12) | 68 | f 73 |
| | | 2f | 90 | (20) | 79 | (101) | 65 | (26) | 78 | |
| | | 3m | 70 | (10) | 15 | (103) | 20 | ( 5) | 35 | m 34 |
| | | 4m | 50 | ( 4) | 47 | ( 15) | 0 | ( 3) | 32 | |
| | | old adults | | | | | | | 53% | |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 57 | ( 7) | 14 | (50) | 43 | ( 7) | 38 | f 31 |
| | | 6f | 67 | ( 6) | 3 | (68) | 0 | ( 7) | 23 | |
| | | 7m | 70 | (10) | 23 | (96) | 11 | (28) | 35 | m 37 |
| | | 8m | 70 | (10) | 39 | (66) | 6 | (30) | 39 | |
| | | old adults | | | | | | | 34% | |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | ( 1) | 0 | ( 19) | 0 | ( 7) | 0 | f 4 |
| | | 10f | 25 | ( 4) | 0 | ( 48) | 0 | ( 7) | 8 | |
| | | 11m | 30 | (10) | 14 | (125) | 0 | (24) | 15 | m 23 |
| | | 12m | 86 | ( 7) | 6 | ( 49) | 0 | (11) | 31 | |
| | | middle adults | | | | | | | 8% | |
| | young | 13f | 100 | ( 2) | 0 | ( 5) | 0 | ( 3) | 33 | f 17 |
| | | 14f | 0 | (15) | 0 | (114) | 0 | (36) | 0 | |
| | | 15m | 100 | ( 4) | 40 | ( 5) | 17 | (12) | 52 | m 47 |
| | | 16m | 100 | ( 1) | 8 | ( 66) | 17 | (12) | 42 | |
| | | young adults | | | | | | | 32% | |

N = number of possible occurrences
f = female speaker
m = male speaker

121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close family relationships which obtain between several of the speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show striking differences in language use.

In the mainland community, older men use more
121 standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
562 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
193 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington,
184 D. C. For the island community, women generally use more standard forms than men in all three age groups, although speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145 possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in the island community.

I suggest that sex differences in language used by
121 the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
562 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
463 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
193 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only
184 indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adrlts of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
56 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
56 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social
184

121 factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker.
561 In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are mar-
193 ried to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while
[184] the husband uses some for two grammatical categories.
Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

There is some indication that sex differences in the
562 use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight
193 years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island
561 children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older generation were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[212] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided
[423] a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167 MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND
166 NONSTANDARD VARIANTS
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•184

| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

562 484 464 184 Mobility patterns are different for men and women in the two communities. In the mainland community, men have been considerably more mobile than women. As previously mentioned, one older woman had spent her entire life working as a domestic servant for the owners of a single plantation. The other woman had a more varied employment record as a field laborer, as a cannery worker for a local seafood factory, and as a cook for a middle-class white family. She had never moved far from the sphere of a single plantation, however. Of the men, Speaker 3 in his early thirties had moved onto a plantation with the help of an uncle, and had remained there as a laborer for fifty years. Speaker 4 was the most widely traveled of this group, having received more formal education in his youth than either of the others. He had worked outside the region during a portion of his middle years, acquiring some skills and obtaining better jobs than the other man. Women in this group use more creole and non-standard forms than men, a pattern which reflects both their lack of mobility and their limited occupational choices. [193]

562 484 184 On the island, older men have been slightly more mobile than older women. Of the women, Speaker 5 has been less mobile than Speaker 6, who lived for a portion of her middle years off the island. Speaker 8 was the only island resident encountered who had never attended school and has been less mobile than Speaker 7. These two men do not differ appreciably in their use of creole forms, however. For [193]

562 484 184 193 older island residents, mobility does not seem to influence language use to any great extent, when comparing island residents with each other. When comparing island women and mainland women, however, the greater mobility of island women may well be related to their greater use of standard forms. Among middle aged men from the island, mobility seems to be a factor in the greater use of creole forms by Speaker 12, who refused to commute to a job which prohibits his return to the island nightly. His use of creole features is twice that of Speaker 11, who spent some years working in Washington, D. C. In the younger group, the woman who has been least mobile uses more creole features than Speaker 14, who clerks regularly in a mainland store. Similarly, the young man (Speaker 15) with least mobility reflects this in his speech, when compared with Speaker 16, who works as a waiter in a resort motel during the tourist season. Sex of speaker appears to outweigh degree of mobility as an influence on language use, but within sex, mobility seems to be a contributing factor.

167 Over and above language use, mobility is an important factor in the population patterns of rural Georgetown County. In a report on Population and Economy in the region encompassing the county, concern is expressed about the migration patterns of younger black residents to northern cities. During a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970, 76.8 percent of black males and 72.6 percent of black females between

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as previous studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted, we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process of language change. One group of women is strongly resistant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

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562

861 177 it quik, dey is head fer d fira on brim stan. But it ain't dey falt."

861 184 177 The relationship being described here explains the higher tolerance of today's parents and is explicable in part by generational differences and in part by the exposure element-distance from mainland. In the case of exposure, the more distant Gullah families are more isolated from the mainland socializing influences. An effect of this more limited exposure is more adherence to "the discipline habits of ole." This adherence was reflected in the lower tolerance (reaction ratio) of parents on the distant islands. In further explanation, the work habits of women on the near islands contribute to their being the most tolerant parents. The occupational habits of these women frequently take them into the households of White families of higher economic status. When this Gullah parent is exposed to an alternate discipline pattern, this exposure may then underly the differences in tolerance found between sexes and islands.

593 861 184 The tolerance of differences may only be a function of exposure time. The case here is that parents who are engaged in the work force spend less time with their children than do older parents. Hence the working parent would not be as quick to react to disobedience on the part of children than would grandparents who are actively engaged in child

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

However this is not the total explanation. It is also
592 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
184 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
857 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
861 These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
[867] with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
593 In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "en ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disciplined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

•184 In summation, there were few areas in which significant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are
86 quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perseptive of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea-Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
[177] siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad scale influence of the mainland elements on island

184 86 [177] discipline habits is not the case. While the generational factor was upheld, the dominant pattern was the absence of significant differences across islands and particularly across sex lines.

86 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
56 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not being transferred to this generation of young islanders. In this light, the childhood histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen how the harsh work habits required in farming families demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the burden of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobedience than parents are today. The reason given was again differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
86 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because they spend time with their children. For the farming parents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tolerance level, and that isolated households operate in an <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
86 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
86 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This relationship was explained along two lines. The first was the status that the male child has on the islands. Here a dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



000 excitement that may lead to such exaltation as few white people ever see. It is an unforgettable experience, rare in these days of practical religion when all miracles are scientifically explained.

633 I notice that men are particularly partial to the work songs, of which the shanties [16] of the black stevedores are the most amusing. When a plantation is near a navigable river or salt water, songs like "Stevedore's in trouble, Carry 'im to the Aly-mo," and "Sandyanna" may possibly be heard. Both carry in their titles the date of their inception, and obviously hark back to the period of the Mexican War. Others bring in Australia and Rio along with "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla Gal—Go 'round the Horn" and suggest the period of the windjammer.

At The Mills on the west side of St. Simon's—in the eighteen-eighties—the Inland Waterway was filled with sailing vessels from all parts of the world.[17] These were loaded with lumber that had been floated down the Altamaha; but, as Cap'n Joe, the crew leader, says, so little lumber moves these days that the songs that helped the stevedores to handle the great "sticks" are well-nigh forgotten. A pity to let one of them be lost.

• [184] Then there are the "rags," the "fiddle" or "sinful" songs. These may be plentiful in the interior; but on the coast, where the Negroes are apparently more religious, they have been the most difficult to locate.

533 198 Where there are wide fields, musical half-yodeled calls often bring "'sponses" from laborers a mile away. When a field needs to be burned over, a sail is flapping idly, or rice is to be fanned, you may hear a Negro "calling the wind": "Co' win'! Co' win'! Co'! Co'!" A prolonged whistle follows:

—in the African manner of calling the rain.[18]

533 534 If a plantation is sufficiently remote, and the owner is ultra-modern in his taste, such a jazz band may be organized as has not been heard in many a year. It is only necessary to call for the services of those who can still "rap the bones" (real bones, of a thickness and length suitable for manipulation between the middle fingers,

[16] Or chanteys—as some prefer to call them.
[17] Julia Armstrong tells me they were lined up "like sardines in a box."
[18] A gramophone record of a Togoland rain invocation is astonishingly similar.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
114

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[20] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
199 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[20] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense
[171] tree—that carried a ton and a half.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash
a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun-
from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an
area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed
more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indi-
cated in the following observations on the St. Helena
spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly dif-
ferent from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are
sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and
minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one
with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part.
There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn
School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which
have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the
singing in praise house or church often gives the impres-
sion of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less
of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the
pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto
here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird
or new harmonic element contributed to American music
by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for
such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different
from conventional white harmonies.

533 3. There is apparently very little invention or im-
171 provisation going on among the island singers. Prac-
tically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to
have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-
island region. Because of the continued survival there of
many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The 533
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs origi- 174
nated further north than St. Helena, probably in the piedmont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors will look into the matter they will find in other communities on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number of these St. Helena spirituals.[58] Thus the percentage of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration of songs from the area which had felt strongly the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These con- [114]
siderations are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African traits.

*Modulations.* Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

[58] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184].

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 191 after the Federal occupation in 1861. Arthur Sumner, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, tried to describe to his cousin their way of speaking. "These negroes speak with an inarticulate jabber. The sounds roll around in their great chops, and come pouring out through their huge mouths, so that I find it easier to understand a foreign language than confused utterance. Their idioms, too, are funny. I told Byron, a boy who waits upon me, that I was going to distribute clothing on his place. 'Talk *we* house?' said he:—meaning, 'Are you speaking of our house?' . . . Byron came to me with a message from his mother—'Ma says if you give her some trade'—Imagine such a sentence uttered as if it were a word of many syllables. Can you make it out? . . . 'Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread?'"[11]

567 181 184 These missionaries from the North, who, of course, knew nothing first-hand of slavery, thought that the St. Helena Negroes were the most degraded and backward of all the coastal slaves in the South.[12] After the northern whites had become acquainted with other sea-island Negroes from such places as St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and Edisto Island, South Carolina, who were quartered temporarily on St. Helena Island by the Federal Army, they were still of the opinion that the St. Helena slaves were the most retarded in the South except those on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Arthur Sumner wrote late in 1862, "The Georgia and Florida negroes are vastly superior in appearance, character, and intelligence, to the natives of these Islands. It is the testimony

[11] Arthur Sumner Papers. Port Royal, May 18, 1862. The last word was pronounced as if spelled tred, not trade.

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

[12] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
177 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
569 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 873 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army, one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 159 185 873 ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING

465 241 I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

159 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any
179 money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should
682 not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1949 a pro-
● 185 gressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

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On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em--dum-de-dum-dum-dum--right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 893 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 893 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

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We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 (666)

Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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[p. 157]

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**"MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"**

159 666 891 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**WE'RE NOT FOR SALE**

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 891 661 •185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

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159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
871 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
[661] The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
159 when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
871 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
177 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
185 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
[875] outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
(474) Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
(692) somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
666 "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
474 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the
185 Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President.
So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't
578 had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will
divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out.
We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was
twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was
some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting some-
thing back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be
345 serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
347 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas
what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested
to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work
heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like
that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we
wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated
that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up.
When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I
guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years
to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive
Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This
person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place.
The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together. 159 185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands. 159 345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive (526) (893)

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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
527 something to twenty.
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Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
893 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

159 I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
185 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT

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We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

159 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in
•185 some of these lawyers' offices.
873

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island
185 had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the
179 cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending
873 your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island—I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race—because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

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159 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the
185 teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against
873 any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand
177 in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $800 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

443 474 You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

178 In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

177 464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

•185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

177 491 Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah (178) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

758 Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care
743 Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to
177 go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly
[141] by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open and close.

758 My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in
185 1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and saw the intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I know I said to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island twenty." Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charles-
74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
628 people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands.
185 Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant work-
74 ers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Wash-
177 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
74 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[737] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party
needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community,
[665] so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already
there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was
done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put
together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice
land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where
Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[734] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people
were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their
own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made
758 the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using
[427] it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it
could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 554 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 554 871 [177] I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior. [177] Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

871 The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County 875 School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school sys- [464] tem. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and admin- [171] istrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student- teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role [554] models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Myles Horton**

## THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185 The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(895) Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

(533) Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns. Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide leadership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

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Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teachers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

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The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recognition. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people, I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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[p.200]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the constitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.

666 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women
153 ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read and write.

666 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that
185 I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
(212) students was on that first night.

871 The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
872 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
185 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 641 185 (664) We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

871 668 In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

871 641 666 185 (875) We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

871 668 One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

641 666 185 It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ON JOHNS ISLAND KNOW WHAT AN IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAD

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There were tens of thousands of teachers and students who went through that program. It lasted until 1970, and I think that what happened is that foundations thought that we had achieved what we were working for. We had the Voting Rights Bill and we had accomplished desegregation and we had gotten blacks elected to office in all these different states, so the money started drying up for the program.

The curriculum we developed on Johns Island became the curriculum that went all across the South. It was all the things the people had said they wanted to know and learn. I don't think the people on Johns Island know what an impact the program they were involved in had—how it went so far and so wide.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

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But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on top of, or driven by, this multirhythmic activity.

114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. On the island it was sung in their traditional (533) song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." While working on the Bicentennial (529) Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1975.

• 185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

[P-236-A]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Darien*

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

175 533 771 When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the 175 song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder 701 we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that 533 it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. 175 181 Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus 701 affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of 533 expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that 175 their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" 533 for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had devel- •186 oped over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem": (186) [539]

> De Talles' tree in Paradise
> De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
> an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my new Jerusalem!
>
> Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem!
>
> Paul and Silas jail-bound
> Sing God's praise both night and day,
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 539 533

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not 186 many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth 178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191] The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African 197 and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of [536] Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

[883] We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
291

*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

888

I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

533
186

The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

(178)

216
186

My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

*186 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after
538 church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some
193 of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and
867 folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.
869 And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and
six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as
186 the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for
198 them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the
867 future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older
869 than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to
explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would [538] teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs.
186 Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang
533 and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there
[534] wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old [178] folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through [186] and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

771 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to 869 get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong religion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE HAVE TO KEEP IT ALIVE

829 I want to see my children go on, as long as people want to hear them and
198 they've got the voice. It means a lot to me and it means a lot to them. If they
stop, it's going down. We have to keep it alive.
186 You've got to talk and give people an understanding about what you're talking about—the background and where it came from. That's very important. The young people don't know many of the things that happened. It takes somebody who came out of this experience to teach them and tell them the meaning of it and what it can do for them. I have the experience 'cause that's all I was doing my whole life. My parents and grandparents talked all about how they came up, and I took it in.

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
•186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
[464] there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owner[illegible] corporations [illegible] absentee owners.
Lon[illegible] ceased [illegible]

464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
•186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
[121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



829 there so that he could teach them the things he had learned,
186 and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved
562 away would return in later years. A daughter in her late teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she would not ask her future husband to live there. Another brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on the island. One young mother in another family spoke with feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the island with three pre-school children, when most other adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities than did the women. To the outside observer, island life seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was some indication that identification with island life increased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another older man and his wife had spent some years living and working in New York City, returning to the island when his aged parents needed them. They were both leaders in community and church life on the island; their speech reflected their
(197) wide range of experience. In formal church speech events, both spoke and read language very close to standard; in their conversations with each other at home many creole features were used. At the close of the field work for the

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
561 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
561 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social
184

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
181 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing some-
177 thing that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
[123] indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
181 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
177 by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



181 nced of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the
170 words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vul-
152 gar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of
their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the
● 186 Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contempt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

181 Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9) A that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

[7] As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.

[8] From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantations.

A, [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 84--Analysis]

● 19

[For additional information on the grammatical analysis of the Gullah language, see Category 193.]

19

[For additional information on Gullah grammar and phonology, see Categories 193 and 194.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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# Appendix 3

# Phonetic Text: The Soul and the Spirit

539 128 •19 The following text is included in this study primarily to show the language in context. It manifests many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of creole languages.[1] The English version following the transcription obscures many of the creole patterns; consequently, a word-for-word translation accompanies each line of phonetic script to illustrate underlying creole constituents such as the complementizer [fə], the introductory verb [sie], the future marker [go], and many other constructions.

This passage reveals specific segmental phonological phenomena, for example, vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for, such English phones as /β/ for /w/; /ɸ/ for /f/; /ɪ/ for initial /ð/ and /ə/; and /ç/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, deviant words, or stuttering. It is extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of interference of birds and other outdoor noises on the tape. In such cases ellipsis dots indicate that a short passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a slash (/).

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline ( ∿∿∿ ).

Hyphens join two or more words run together in the transcription.

193 539 128 English translations of the preverbal markers and the third-person pronominal forms often misrepresent the creole utterance. The following notations are accordingly used to symbolize these forms:

(3 ♂ n) third-person masculine nominative
(3 ♀ n) third-person feminine nominative

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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193 (3 ∅ n) third-person neuter nominative
539 (3 ♂ o) third-person masculine objective
128 (3 ♀ o) third-person feminine objective
(3 ∅ o) third-person neuter objective

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | present continuative | /də/ |
| (PaC) | past | /bɪnə/ |
| (T) | tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (L) | locative | /də/ |

539 di soəl ɛn di speɪt

775 1. lɪsn mi gʊd nɔu / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wöl / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
*Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see,*
•19 *the, the, the soul*

2. əβə män go fiom dʊ di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔʔt / ɛn ɪφ ju βədɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɒl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days,*

4. juə speit /ätə ju died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing, your spirit.*

5. juə soəl öp dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛʔ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɒɾi / ɛn däs də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də φɛk tu jʊ / jʊ si nɔ nɔ
*the body. And that's the one gone, gone do the effect to you. You see now now*

7. das das βɒɪ ɒɪ sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɒs ä pipü
*that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

8. dõn biliφ / sie sie sieiz no guos / iz guos deə /bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

9. di ʔärəmobil n tiŋ kɔm / n gɪt dɪ hɒɪβie nɔ / jʊsidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now, you-see-these, these thing*

10. käinə tɛk tu wʊd / äɪ mɛmbə wɔnäɪt / βi βi bɪn ɔʊt
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we, we (T) out*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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.19

11. n di ɹəβə / wɔʰɒnˀ wɔ wɔtʃɛkɪn ʃiβɪms / ɛnəβɛn ɒɪ luk / wɔ ɔ̃
*in the river, was-hunt, was, was-catching shrimps. And-ah-when I look, was a*

12. mɪn mi φös kɔ̃zn ɹɛɾɔpdil / βi bɪn ɪn kɹɪk / ɛn βɛn ɒɪ luk bɛk
*me-and me first cousin, right-up-the-hill, we (T) in crick. And when I look back*

13. bəˀɒɪn βi / i wɔ̃z ə kɔφɔm bɪn bəhɒɪn βi / dɛ nätʃəl
*behind we, (3 ø n) was a coffin (T) behind we. The natural-*

14. bɔn kɔφɔm gɛl ʃɑin dɔŋ dɪ kɹɪk /
*born coffin, gal, shine down the crick.*

15. ɛn βɛn βɛn i gɛt ɔpə kloə tu βi φä ju tu da kä jõna / i tek'
*And when, whn, (3 ɔ̃ n) get up-a close to we far you to the car-yonder, (3 ɔ̃ n) take*

16. daˀma·ʃ / ɛn daˀ maʃ bɪnə lie dɔŋ dis / lie dɔŋ dʒɪs lɛk dät /
*that-marsh. And that marsh (PaC) lay down just, lay down just like that.*

17. ɛ́n ɒɪ bɪnə sɪɾɔŋ ɛn ɒɪ ẽ nõ ɒɪ bɪnə ɪnəsí / sì . . . /
*And I (PaC) sit-down and I ain't know I (PaC) in-a-seat. See . . .*

18. jie / də nɛ·tʃal kɔφɪn / də nɛ·tʃəl kɔφɪn kɔmɪn dɔŋdiɹɪβə / siβɪm
*yeah, the natural coffin, the natural coffin coming down-the-river, swim.*

19. dasəspeɪt nɔu / jie / kɔmɪn dɔŋ də ɹɪβə / ɛn βɛn / ˀɒˀə βi / dɪsbɔi
*That's-a-spirit now. Yeah. Coming down the river. And when—after we, this-boy*

20. tɔk βiɾəm / hidis / çɪφ wɔn sɐid oβəndə mäʃ jusi / ɛn hi sitɛt
*talk with-(3 ø o), (3 ø n)-just shave one side over-in-the marsh, you-see. And (3 ø n) start*

21. tu lie da maʃ dɔŋ / ɛn lɛφ da maʃɛn gönɔpnɪiedʒ ədawʊd /
*to lay that marsh down, and left that marsh-and gone-up-in-the-edge of-that-wood,*

22. ɛn laˀ da wʊd bɪn bɐut φɔ φɔm βi·z də kɹɪk /
*and Lord, that wood (T) about far from we-as the crick.*

23. ɛn ju kədə jɛɾi ɔu i kieɔntɔpida ɪn da wʊd /
*And you could-have heard how (3 ø n) carry-on-top-of-that, in that wood.*

529 775 •19

24. βiel nɔdiztinɪzdɛ nɔ / nɔ ɛβibodi ɖɛ̃ çɔ̃əm /
*Well now-these-thing-is-there now. No, everybody can't see-them.*

25. bɔt ju gɔt ɸiłɪn ju ˀkŋ çɔ̃əm / βiel ɒɪ äd wɔn dɔrə . . . no ɒɪ ɦäd wɔn dɔrə /
*But you got feeling, you can see-them. Well, I had one daughter, . . . no, I had one daughter*

26. ɪnnu jɔk ɹäit nɔu / n hi kuɾə stɛnɛni iβinɪn / ɛn ʃuə ju /
*in-New York right now, and (3 ♀ n) could stand-any evening and show you,*

27. n ʃuə ju dɪ dɪ də pəsn / ŋgə ʃö ju tuɔʊi pəsn / çɔᵊm ɹɛit çjɔndə
*and show you the, the, the person, and-could show you two-three person./ "See-(3 ♂ o) right yonder,*

28. dëdɪ də stɛnɔp / ɛn ɒɪ kudn ʃɔəm ɸə çieβ ɱɒɪ dɒiŋ lɒiɸ
*Daddy, (PrC) stand-up," and I couldn't see-(3 ♂ o) for save my dying life,*

29. ɛndä gjɛl bɪn dä βie bɪn dä βie til / dëm tɪŋ justə ɸɹɒɪdem /
*and-that gal (T) that way, (T) that way til them thing use-to frightened-(3 ♀ o),*

30. ɛn dɛn ɒɪ kiɛm tʊ dɪ / ɒɪ kiɛm
*and then I carry-(3 ♀ o) to the, I carry-(3 ♀ o)*

31. tə de fiɒsipɪrɪ / ɛn βɒ nëm pipl du βiɾəm nɛ / ɒɪ dö no /
*to the hospital. And what them people do with-(3 ♀ o) there, I don't know.*

32. bɔ ɸöm ɔpdä tɒɪm ɪn ɔpnɔ / ʃi neβə dɪ si nɔn nɔmo / . . .
*But from up-that time and up-now, (3 ♀ n) never did see none no-more. . . .*

33. hi mɔs bi bön βɪd sɔmp ɸə ʃɔəm /
*(3 ♀ n) must be born with something for see(3 ø o).*

34. ɸə si ʃi kuɾə ʃɔəm ple·en / juno / iˀ i ʃɔəm nɛ·tʃəl juno /
*For see, (3 ♀ n) could see-(3 ø o) (it) plain, you-know, (3 ♀ n), (3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o) (it) natural, you-know.*

35. ·didɪs də sitanɔpdʰɛi ʃöm / jie ɛndɛnɒm / βiel ə o əlɒtsa pʰipl ə
*Just-just (PrC) stan-up-there-(3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o). Yeah. And-then-ah, well, a, oh, a-lot-of people, a,*

36. əholo·tsa·pʰipl jugoβɪdnɔ kɛ̃ ʃöm / kɛ ˈʃöɱɛn tʰɛ / ju ˈtʰuə /
*a-whole-lot-of people you-go-with now can see-(3 ø o), can see-(3 ø o)-and tell you too!*

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37. si si da pɔsn jɒna / jieə / jieə /das ɹëit / jiə ju kʊ
*"See, see that person yonder." Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, you could*

38. ɸɪləm / jiə . . . mũʔ / das di ol dɛβəl / βiel nɔnɔ / ju no
*feel-(3 ð o) Yeah . . . muh, that's the old devil. Well now-now, you know*

39. βɒɪ ɒɪ tɔk bɔʔ sɔ̈mtɒɪm ju go bəjəsɛɸ / ɪɸ ju dis wɒk /
*why I talk but sometime you go by-yourself. If you just walk.*

40. n sɔ̈mtɒɪm ju ɸɪl 'timəɹɪdʒ / sɔ̈mtɒɪ jʊ ɸil lɒka jʊ fiiə /
*and sometime you feel timeridge, sometime you feel like your hair*

41. lʊklɒi / ju ɸil / ju gɪt 'timə,ɹɪdʒ . . . / das ɹɒit /
*look-like you feel you get timeridge . . . that's right.*

42. βiel ju si ə / juəspeɪt hɪt da iβəl ɸela / ɛn juə speɪt kɔm bɛk tʊjʊ /
*Well, you see, ah, your-spirit hit that evil fellow. And your spirit come back to-you.*

43. dʒɪs läk ə βɛn ju go ɪn bɛd dɪ nɒit ɸə silip
*Just like a, when you go in bed the night to sleep,*

44. βɛnjugoɪnbedinɒit / ɸə tiek ə ɹɛs / βel də speit
*when-you-go-in-bed-the-night for take a rest, well, the spirit*

45. lɛɸ dɪ bɒɹɪ / si βɛn juə speit lɛɸ dɪ bɒɹl / juə
*left the body. See, when your spirit left the body your*

46. speit go ɪn dlɸön pät ə dɪs kɔntʎi / ɔloβə / ɛn dɛn sɔmtäɪm
*spirit go in different part of this country. All-over. And then sometime*

47. βen də fiɪt dä iβəl speit / βen ju çiəm ɹɔn / kɔm bɛk də ju
*when (PrC) hit that evil spirit, when you see-(3 ø o) run, come back to you*

48. ɛn mɛk̚ ju skie njoə bed / sɔmtɒɪm ju mäʔ fiɒlə sɒirəsɔ̈mlɛkdɛt
*and make you scare in-your bed. Sometime you may holler beside-some-like-that.*

49. si juo speit kɔm bɛk nju ɸɹäin /
*See, your spirit come back an-you frighten.*

50. no ju kẽ silip si / ɛn dɛn ju k̚ẽ βiekɔ̃p / dispeit dõ
*No, you can't sleep, see, and then you can't wake-up. The-spirit don't*

51. kɔ̈m bɛk tʊ jʊ / nɔ ɪɸ də speit dõ kɔm bɛk tʊ jʊ / jʊ nuo ju

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*come back to you. Now if the spirit don't come back to you, you know you*

52. dɛ / ɪn ɔrə wʊd / ju ẽ die oβə ɦɪə / nɔdä tʃuɸ / nɔ /
*there. In other word, you ain't there over here. Now-that truth, now.*

53. nɔ däs tʃuɸ / ju gɪt dɪ bʊɪbl ɛn ju ɹirəm / däs tʃuɸ /
*Now that's truth. You get the Bible and you read-(3 ɸ o). That's truth.*

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Listen well now: when you die, you see, the soul of a man goes home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit remains here on earth. And if you were an evildoer all of your life, then after you die, your spirit can continue doing the same kind of evil. Your soul is in heaven, but your spirit remains here on earth with the body, and that's the one that will harm you.

You see, I speak of this now because a great many people don't believe. They say that ghosts do not exist. But they do exist. But now, since the automobile and other transportation has overrun the highways, these spirits have sought refuge in the woods.

I remember one night we, my first cousin who lives up on the hill and I, were out in the river catching shrimps. And when we looked behind us, we saw a coffin, a natural coffin, Miss, shining down the crick. And when it came as close to us as the distance between you and that car, it disappeared into the marsh. The marsh separated from the burden and lay open. And I found myself sitting down without knowing when I became seated. . . . Yes, it was a natural coffin swimming down the river. Now that was a spirit coming down the river. Well, after [my cousin] spoke with it, it turned sharply to one side, flattened the marsh, and went up in the wood's edge only a distance as far as from us to the crick, and Lord, you could hear the confusion as it carried on in those woods.

Well, these things do exist. No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. "See it standing right there, Daddy!" But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital, and I don't know what the hospital

•19

Creole and Nonstandard Complementizer Variants

fɛ
ø
fɛ to
fɛ NP fɛ
fɛ NP ø

Omitted from the analysis are occurrences of used to, have/had to (obligation), and got(s) to (obligation). The reason for this omission involves the aspectual and modal nature of these items in Gullah. Used to indicates a habitual past action, and is a single lexical item for the speakers observed. No speaker shows any variation between to and fɛ with this aspectual marker. Have to in its phonetic realization as [hɐɛ fə] is also a single lexical item for those speakers who use it, and may represent a transition stage between the older Gullah conditional modal of obligation fɛ and the Standard English modals of obligation such as have to, had to (which includes tense marking), ought to, got to, gots to (which includes hypercorrect tense marking), and should. The stages of change for these lexical items have not been analyzed, but such a direction seems at least plausible. At any rate, the lexical items used to and obligatory have/had to, got(s) to currently function as modals for speakers, rather than as verbs and complementizers. For this reason, they are not included in the comparison of complementizer variants in Table 1 below.

The pre-infinitival complementizer in Gullah can be classified in terms of three syntactic functions: the

•19 introduction of purposive clauses, the introduction of adjunctive or relative clauses, and the introduction of verb objects. Of these three clausal types, the purposive clauses show heaviest use of creole variants. Over half the complementizers used with purposive clauses in the data analysed here (see Table 1) are creole and nonstandard variants listed above. Faraci (forthcoming) distinguishes three subgroups for the purposive infinitive clause in standard English (purpose, rationale, and objective clauses), but the data for Gullah do not warrant making such distinctions. Those clauses which indicate either purpose or intention and either reason or result for action in the matrix clauses are grouped together here for Gullah under the broad classification of 'purposive.' Examples of complementizer variants 193 which introduce purposive clauses in the data presented in Table 1 are as follows:

PURPOSIVE

fE: (10) she just gone fr take a rest (S2)

'she just went to take a rest'

(11) I don't get up fE dance-- (S1)

'if I don't get up to dance--'

ø: (12) they don't take over fifteen, twenty minutes ø cut up some wood (S16)

'they don't take over fifteen, twenty minutes to cut up some wood'

fE NP ø: (13) they had to push down the house fE my daughter ø come here from New York (S2)

000 tions introduced by to in earlier English for similar reasons. Jespersen (1940) notes that for preceding to + Verb originally expressed the notion of 'purpose,' though in time this construction came to be merely the equivalent of the to-infinitive. He cites parallel developments in certain Scandinavian dialects; in Skåne, för till att marks infinitives of purpose. Visser (1966) speculates that the use of for to with adverbial infinitives may have arisen in Middle English either because by that time the directive force of to was too much toned down, or from a trend to reinforce the directive force of this complementizer. He cites other pre-infinitival phrases used, as evidence for such a re-inforcing trend: for bat entent to, in purpose to, in order to. In a computational study of the infinitive used from Old to Modern English (including certain forms not marked by a complementizer), Appleby (1967) discerns no pattern in the variation between to and for to during the Middle English period. She does find that, by Early Modern English, for to was used primarily with nouns and adverbs. The 'adverb' classification used by Appleby is the one closest to the 'purposive' classification used here for Gullah infinitival clauses.

• 19 177 From the discussion of the speech community (Chapter 2), it should be clear that the type of English most likely to be heard by early Gullah speakers was not the standard Early Modern English of London. If many West African immigrants had already learned Gullah in African ports before

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019 being transported to the Carolina colony, as Hancock (1975)
177 suggests, the English which contributed to the development of the African-based creole was not that of the standard variety, either. Traugott's history of English syntax (1972) notes the importance of certain similarities between the English spoken by some Americans of West African ancestry today and that of seventeenth-century northern England and Scotland. So far as the complementizer is concerned, it is conceivable that the nonstandard for to or even for was the variant used in the kind of English heard by the early immigrants from Africa. Or that these were among the variants heard.

193 The heavy retention of fE for purposive clauses in Gullah, even as the change to standard forms for the complementizer in other environments is almost complete, argues for another explanation for the original choice of fE as complementizer than simply a dialectal one. Evidence from standard English and from other creoles points to the close relationship between particles used as prepositions or case markers to indicate notions of purpose and possession, and between homonymous particles having a complementizing function. In an influential discussion of factive and non-factive predicates, Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) noted the close association between certain types of infinitival con-
000 structions and non-factive predicates. In a subsequent examination of psychological predicates in English, Aijmer

•19 provide orientation with respect to a 'deictic center.' Ego is seen as the deictic center or zero point at which the local and temporal orientations of the speaker intersect, in a model of communication based on a speaker and a hearer at a certain place and time. For standard English, at would be neutral to ego in terms of orientation, while to would be positive in the sense of movement oriented toward ego. From would be negatively oriented away from ego. For Gullah, as indicated in Figure 2, the preposition to is used for both neutral and positive deictic orientations. From is used for negative orientations, as in the standard variety of English. In Gullah from can be said to be more highly marked than to for three reasons: it occurs with relatively less frequency than to; it governs a smaller semantic space than to; and it is used for a negative orientation which contrasts with the positive orientation of to in both uses of to. It is helpful to view the basic set of Gullah locative prepositions in terms of marked and unmarked relationships, following Traugott (1974) (see Figure 3 on p. 72).

In Figure 3, the prepositions to, on, and in are shown as unmarked in relation to from, off, and out along the directional axis.[4] We would expect future expansion in the number of surface markers used for locative relationships

[4]In Traugott's analysis, the prepositions to and on, from and off are unmarked with relation to in and out along the dimensional axis. Only the directional axis concerns us here, however.

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| Direction | Dimension: Non-inclusion UNMARKED 0-1 | Non-inclusion UNMARKED 1-2 | Inclusion MARKED 2-3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positive UNMARKED (static / dynamic) | to | on | in |
| Negative MARKED | from | off | out |

Figure 3. Gullah Locative Prepositions (based on Traugott, 1974)

to take place within the unmarked portion of this set, with a portion of the set becoming marked in relation to the remainder of the set. In fact, that is what is happening currently in Gullah as at comes to be used to indicate static relationships in the speech of many speakers, while to is retained to indicate only the more marked positive function of 'movement toward.'

000 4.2.2 History of Locative to and at in English and in Caribbean Creoles

Just as the uses of for and to before an infinitive

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TABLE 2

STATIC-LOCATIVE PREPOSITION DISTRIBUTION FOR SEVENTEEN SPEAKERS

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| Speaker | + | | | - | | | TOTALS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TO | Ø | AT-1 | AT-2 | AT-3 | AT-4 | + | - |
| 1 | 7 | | | | | | 7 | 0 |
| 15 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | 4 | 0 |
| 16 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 0 |
| 13 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 0 |
| 2 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 18 | 2 |
| 20 | 7 | | | | 1 | | 7 | 1 |
| 12 | 6 | | | 1 | | | 6 | 1 |
| 8 | 6 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| 7 | 7 | | | 3 | | | 7 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | | 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 3 | 1 | | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| 4 | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 11 | 3 | | | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| 10 | | 1 | | | 3 | | 1 | 3 |
| 14 | | | | 10 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| 9 | | | | | 1 | | 0 | 1 |
| TOTALS | 66 | 13 | 3 | 20 | 19 | 7 | 82 | 46 |

+ = creole or nonstandard variants
- = standard variant

AT-1 = adverbial particle
AT-2 = temporal
AT-3 = spatial
AT-4 = emphatic

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193 the object forms in masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. The last to change are those for subject. This distribution contrasts with that found for the third person singular pronouns in Guyanese Creole by Bickerton (1973). For Guyanese, Bickerton found masculine possessive forms to change last, while feminine subject forms changed first. Figure 10 shows the ranking of pronominal categories in the two creoles, from most creolized to least creolized:

| | GUYANESE | GULLAH |
|---|---|---|
| Most creolized | MPos | NSub |
| . | NSub | MSub |
| . | FPos | FSub |
| . | NObj | NObj |
| . | FObj | FObj |
| . | MObj | MObj |
| . | FSub | MPos |
| Least creolized | | FPos |

Figure 10. Creolization of Third Person Singular Pronouns in Gullah and Guyanese Creole

•19 The lists are ordered, from most creolized to least creolized categories. The top category in each column is the last to show standard forms for each creole. Bickerton did not include masculine subject forms in his analysis, reporting that (h)i occurred in its pre-aspirated form even in the most

•19 creolized speech. Even though it is a difficult form to distinguish phonetically and the unaspirated form occurs in other modern dialects of English, ee as used for masculine subject was included in the Gullah analysis because I believed from the beginning that this was the basic subject form in all genders, and I wanted to see how long it persisted relative to other forms. As a masculine subject form, ee is counted in positions where it receives some sentence stress and would not be unaspirated in standard English.[8] The distribution given in Table 3 A indicates that this form persists very late for all subject forms, regardless of gender. For the speaker whose speech is most creolized (Speaker 2), some uses of standard it occur in object position while none occur for subject. Seven speakers who use predominately standard it in object position retain uses of ee for neuter subject. English, like other Indo-European languages, makes no distinction in the nominative and accusative cases for neuter pronouns. It is significant that Gullah has such a distinction early and keeps the distinction between ee for neuter subject and Em for neuter object until relatively late. This difference between Gullah and English is additional evidence for the creole origin of Gullah. The different order in which the pronouns of Gullah and those of Guyanese change toward the standard lends sup-

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[128] [8] I am indebted to Richard Janda and to Shirley Hicks for checking my phonetic analysis of these forms.

A. [For Table 3, see Category 193, p. 100--Analyst]

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19 porting evidence for Hancock's claim (1975) for different origins for these creoles, and should be expected in light of the previous discussion about different patterns for marking participant roles in different creoles. That such differences persist today for Gullah and Guyanese Creole may reflect different developmental patterns in the change from creole to standard forms, stemming from original differences in classification for this grammatical category. Different source languages for Gullah and Guyanese Creole are suggested as the ultimate origin of this difference in pronominal marking.

193 It seems clear that, while there is great variation in the forms used for this grammatical category in Gullah by speakers in rural Georgetown County, it is not possible to write a variable rule which would cover all speakers in the manner of Labov (1969). For neuter third person pronouns in the subject environment, to take just one example, Speaker 2 has ee categorically, Speaker 7 has variation between ee and it (with ee predominating), Speaker 16 has variation with it predominating, and Speaker 14 has it categorically. This particular grammatical category, with its large number of divisions by case and gender, lends itself to the kind of implicational scaling proposed by DeCamp (1971) and Bailey (1973) and used by Bickerton (1973) for pronouns in Guyanese Creole. Even for the small number of speakers in the Gullah study, the outline of an implicational

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

---

III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

---

Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as previous studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted, we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process of language change. One group of women is strongly resistant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

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121 perspective as a participant in community life, however, the
19 life experiences of these groups of women have been different
178 from each other and from those of men in their groups. Re-
562 cent anthropological analyses have pointed out that men and
121 women universally occupy different positions within their
562 cultural and social groups (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974;
Keenan, 1974). In these analyses, women are seen as outside
the male-oriented norms of their social groups. Linguists
have long understood that the interaction of language and
social life has important consequences for linguistic be-
havior (see especially Ferguson, 1959 and Hymes, 1967, 1973).
121 If the two sexes have differentiated social roles within all
562 societies, we must expect certain linguistic consequences
19 to follow from the different life experiences of the two
sexes. Men and women will speak differently from each other
in every social group, but the ways and extent to which they
differ can be expected to vary from social group to social
group. Hymes (1973) has observed that inequality among
speakers arises because some speakers participate in social
situations not available to other speakers. To resolve the
paradox of linguistically conservative and innovative women,
the social situations open to women in their respective
groups must be carefully examined. Focusing on women as
members of social groups, we should not be surprised to find
them represented at the extremes of linguistic conservatism
or innovation, depending on the speech situations open to
them as active participants in communal life.

193 the use of the Creole continuative markers /bɪn/ and /de/.
177 This movement indicates fluctuation in the direction of English.[3]

## 2.2. The *-ed* morpheme

•19

The *-ed* morpheme does not occur as a past tense indicator in the corpus for this study. Simple past is marked by a verb immediately preceded by /bɪn/: /i bɪn liβ/ 'He left.' Many English inflectional morphemes are ac-
19 quired grammatical devices that are non-existent[3] in the
177 basilect and extremely rare in the mesolect as exemplified by the data in this study.

The English marker *-ed* occurred only once in the data, and this one occurrence was considered a hyper-correction. Hyper-correction as defined by Fasold (1972:195) comes about when speakers are in the process of learning forms from a different linguistic system, and have not mastered all the constraints on their use. Consequently, they often extend usage to contexts which are never used by native speakers of the language or dialect from which the forms originated. The hyper-correction appearing in the data is /ɔɪ god oβe dɛ/ 'I went over there' (6). The speaker's knowledge of the English system of marking verbs may be incomplete. He may not have internalized *went* as the past tense marker of *go*, an irregular verb. As charac-

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teristic behavior one would have expected a speaker to say /ɔɪ bɪn go/ indicating an action which occurred some time in the past. This speaker replaces the preverbal marker /bɪn/ with the post-verbal *-ed*, which suggests vertical movement toward English.

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Other occurrences of *-ed* are in words in which *-ed* does not mark tense:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔɪ tɔɪd | 'I am tired' | (1) |
| de nekɪd man | 'The naked man' | (1) |

Bickerton (1975:107) shows that some past participle forms occur with polysyllabic verbs or learned words like *populated, accommodated, admitted,* and others with unaffixed forms (i.e. *populate* and *accommodate*). These words are seldom used by basilectal speakers unless used as formal vocabulary items. He concludes that when used, they are acquired as formal independent lexical items with no question of any productive process being involved.

It is not surprising that past tense *-ed* is essentially nonexistent in the data for the basilect, or the mesolect. The form has been discussed in descriptions of inland Black dialect for some time now, and the question of a creole origin for Black dialect is still an issue. Did it, or did it not derive from a creole ancestor like Gullah? Rickford (1974:94) charges the failure of creolists to solve the mystery of Black dialect's ancestry to 'the traditional tendency to view a "creole" as a fixed invariant system, maximally different from its lexically

A 121 193

193 change as the Creole and the English replacement occur in
177 conjunction. The self-correction may indicate that the Creole is the more natural choice. Seemingly insecure about which form to use, each of the three speakers corrected his speech in favor of the language that he knew best. The last sentence shows the English replacement *was* occurring in pre-verbal position with a stem verb, where the preverb /bɪn/ would normally occur. The past tense indicator *-ed* is omitted and tense is marked by *was* as it would have been marked with /bɪn/. The joint appearance of the English past tense form with a Creole form owes its existence to a convergence of Creole and English grammar which produced a sentence which is neither Creole nor English: Even more important, the examples offer linguists an opportunity to observe abstract conceptualization processes that a speaker undergoes to reconcile the conflict between competing rules involved in linguistic change.

•19 Stressed /bɪn/. Neither Turner nor Cunningham acknowledge stressed /bɪn/ as a remote past marker in Gullah. Consultants 1, 2 and 3 produced examples of a stressed /bɪn/ which could not have been a variant form of the unstressed form because the sentences were uttered in a context which does not allow substitution by a simple past tense marker without alterning the meaning:

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/i "bɪn dɛɪ/ (2)
'He has been dead a long time.'

/i bɪn dɛɪ/ (2)
'He died.'

/ɛɪ "bɪn no dat/ (2)
'I knew that.'

/ɛɪ bɪn ɛrɔ̃ŋ ɪlɛ̃m ɛɛr ol/ (2)
'I was around eleven years old' but not
*'I have been around eleven years old for a long time.'

Unstressed /bɪn/ does not usually require the use of the auxiliary *have* to translate into English. Stressed /bɪn/ usually does require some form of the auxiliary *have* to translate into English surface structure. It is doubtful, however, that *have* is deleted by some phonological process because it made no appearances in the sampling. The past tense form *had* did appear sporadically in Table 2.3 (pre-mesolectal speakers) in constructions similar to /ɛɪ dɪn ɛd ɛm hɛd/ 'I didn't had it hard' (7). Bickerton observed that most of the consultants in his Guyanese study did not use *have* either as auxiliary or main verb, but they, like Gullah speakers, did use *had*.

A
193 Labov reports stressed /bɪn/ occurring in Black
194 dialect as a remote past-perfect marker. He writes that /bɪn/ appears in a specific grammatical category of Black dialect not recognized, evaluated, or understood by speakers of other dialects. For example, speakers of other dialects interpret the construction *She been married* as 'She has been married, but is not married any longer.' Black dialect speakers interpret the construction to mean

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193 /bɪnə/ marking past and progressive. This class of features is hard to analyze because the English verbs often occur along with the Creole preverbs.

(4) A quantitative decline is apparent in the absence of /də/ and /bɪnə/ as revealed by Table 2.3 (pre-mesolectal speakers). These variants are less resistant to change than /dɔŋ/ and /bɪn/ which have phonological cognates in English but have quite different semantic and syntactic functions. The consultants in this sampling are not familiar with the English restrictions, as evidenced by their performance.

193 Finally, attention may be drawn to the fact that
177 though all speakers selected used some Creole verbs:
(1) there are no speakers in the sample whose total count of English *be* verbs exceed the count of Creole preverbs;
(2) some speakers used no English *be* verbs at all;
(3) no speaker in the sample could be classified, according to his features of speech, as a Black dialect speaker.

•19 The conclusion made explicit by these generalizations is that all speakers in the sampling, basilectal and pre-mesolectal, are speakers of Creole in their choice of verbs. They differ only in the level of Creole spoken.

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•19 Their performance indicates a slant toward isolect A, the level of Creole considered to be basilectal. The tense aspect markers /dɔ/, /bɪn/, /bɪnɔ/ and /dɔŋ/ occur more frequently than the English markers, and these forms are characteristic of pre-verbs in other English based creole languages:

| *Gullah* | *Cameroon* (Todd 1974) | *Guyanese* (Bickerton 1975) | *Jamaican* (Bailey 1966) |
|---|---|---|---|
| dɔ | di | a | dɔ, a |
| bɪn | bin | bin | bɛn |
| bɪnɔ } bɪn + dɔ | bin + dɔ | binɔ | ɛn, a |
| dɔŋ | dɔŋ | don | don |

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# CHAPTER 3

# THE PRONOMINAL SYSTEM

## 3.0. Creole Pronominal Systems

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The grammatical systems of Atlantic Creoles are complex, but they are not complicated by the elaborate systems of marking found in their European superstrates. Speakers of Indo-European languages must learn to use synthetic processes and devices which are not necessarily required for communicative interaction. Examples of such complications include the presence of obligatorily marked surface categories such as tense, case, gender, number, noun classifiers, voice, mood, and others. None of these is universal, and all may be missing in pidgin and creole languages without effective communication being lost.

It is argued that languages need a certain amount of redundancy for effective communication 'because linguistic exchanges take place almost invariably in conditions which are far from ideal' (Martinet 1960). Several theories have been proposed to explain the function of redundant devices. Included among them is Osgood's, which says that the redundancy quotient of a language will be around 50%, and that:

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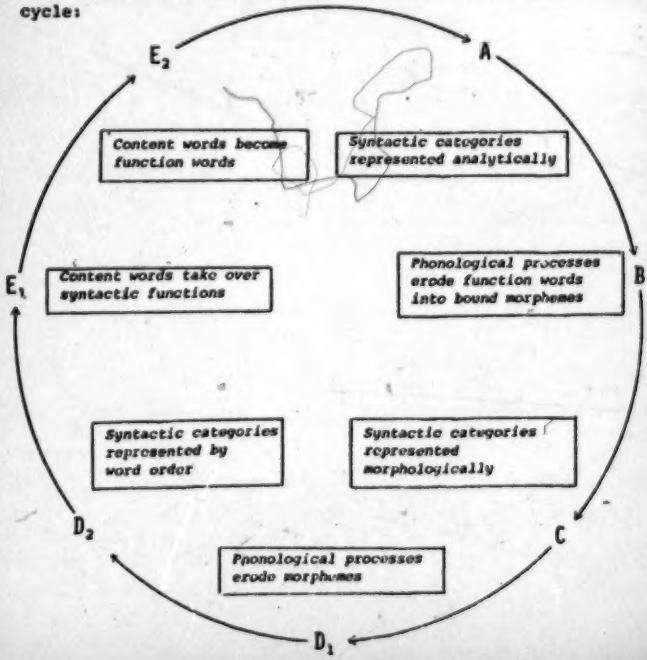
•19

if a code becomes too tightly efficient, speakers will begin to add in redundant features in order to be understood, but as this process inevitably overshoots it mark, and the code becomes too redundant, speakers will begin to drop out certain features and 'get away with it'—and the cycle begins again (Osgood 1963:305).

Various theories have been proposed to express the need for redundancies in languages: Labov (1971), Givón (1973), and Traugott (1973). Dreyfuss (1975) summarizes the cyclic processes proposed by Traugott, Givón and others to explain the loss and acquisition of morphological elaboration with the following analytic-to-syntactic cycle:



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121 The cycle suggests that syntactic and morphological
019 elaboration can serve at least three functions in a language: (1) maintaining an adequate level of redundancy to allow for communication under inadequate conditions (the theory of redundancy formulated by Martinet and others); (2) providing material for stylistic variations (hypothesized by Labov 1971); and (3) expressing the categories of natural syntax (the theory hypothesized by Traugott 1973) (Dreyfuss 1975).

The pronominal system of creole languages has been studied by a number of creolists. Their findings indicate that creoles are not complicated by redundancies and elaborate systems of gender and case marking often found in Indo-European languages. For example, Jamaican Creole has little or no case marking but maintains gender marking for animate and inanimate. Cameroons Creole and Melanesian Pidgin mark neither case nor gender. Sierra Leone Krio
121 marks case but not gender. Historically Gullah has been
193 marked for case but not gender (Nichols 1976:86-7). If present-day Gullah maintains a similar pronominal structure, one expects the categories of case and gender to be unspecified, and the nominative, objective, and possessive forms of third person singular pronouns to be essentially the same.

As a first test of this hypothesis, a survey was conducted of the use of third person singular pronouns throughout the Wadmalaw community. Third person singular

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193 /da/ as existential'

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| do ɹion i do kɔm | 'It is raining'<br>'It was raining'<br>'It will rain'<br>'It rained' | (1) |
| do ste ono sɔndi mɔgin | 'It started on Sunday morning' | (2) |
| do liere do gɪrn gitl | 'The later it was getting, gal.' | (2) |

/i/ as neuter it

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i βeze saiklon | 'It was a cyclone' | (2) |
| dɔs βt i ɪz | 'That's what it is' | (8) |
| iΣ had no heɪd | 'It didn't have any head.' | (8) |

The frequency count of pronouns marking third person masculine, feminine and neuter nominative case revealed that /i/ marks all three genders, most of the time. In view of this, one can conclude that most of the time these consultants do not formally distinguish between masculine, feminine and neuter gender, which gives these forms for the nominative case, respectively: /i i i/.

### 3.2. The Possessive Pronouns

•19

There are four variants from which Gullah speakers may select to mark third person masculine possessive pronouns: /ɪm/, /i/, /iz/, /hiz/. It is necessary to provide a separate category for /iz/ and /hiz/ because most consultants delete initial [h] when pronouncing English words like *heart, hear, his, her, hone* and *hunt*. The unaspirated form /iz/ occurred six times more frequently than the

•19 aspirated, /hiz/, to mark the possessive. The pronoun /ɪm/ occurred more frequently than its aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. /hɔz/ and /ɔz/ occurred too infrequently for comparison.

Similar to its performance in the subjective cases, /i/ has a frequency of occurrence of 62.1% which is higher than any other form marking the masculine possessive case:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i blɛŋk i ɚ: | 'He blinked his eye.' | (17) |
| i du i tɛ: lɛk dɛt | 'He did his tail like that.' | (23) |
| bɚɹɛ̃ɚ: dʒɛs tɛk ɪm taɪm | 'The butterfly just took his time.' | (23) |

Though there are four variants marking the third person feminine possessive case, the forms appeared less often in the data than any of the other pronoun forms. This limitation may be due in part to the unwillingness of the consultants to discuss matters relating to female persons. All of the consultants used for the pronoun survey were male, with the exception of two. Consequently, the subject matter may not have been conducive to the appearance of the feminine possessive, or for some linguistic reason the form was avoided.

When a feminine possessive pronoun was selected, no extreme polar variety of basilectal /ɪm/ or acrolectal /hɔz/ was chosen. When the environment was conducive to the selection of a third person feminine possessive pronoun, /i/ had an 83.8% occurrence contrasted with /ʃi/ which occurred only 16.2% of the time.[19] The consultants interviewed appeared to avoid the use of the possessive form

[115]

•19 in general by supplying extra linguistic data such as the
[115] demonstrative pronoun *that one* and the article *a*.
193 Cunningham (1970:22) writes that the definite article *the* may also mark possession, and it is not restricted to marking inalienable possession. Nichols (1976) excluded the possessive pronouns from her analysis because of the infrequency with which they occurred in her data. The following sentences exemplify one way that the consultants appear to avoid these forms:

so i kɪk ən wʌn, da ɸʊt ɸɛsɪn... (8)
i tak' i ied, n bem, dĩ ɸʊn ɸɛsɪn
so i dɣɛs are tiel no

'So he kicked him one (and) his foot fastened.
He took his head and "bam"! His head fastened.
So he just had his tail (free) now.'

As with the nominative case pronouns, the same pattern emerges in the possessive case with /i/ as the general marker for both masculine and feminine pronouns: i i i / i i.

### 3.3. The Objective Forms

The third person singular objective pronouns show the least amount of change. The /ʊm/ form is dominant for masculine, feminine and neuter objects. It can be
[194] argued that /ʊm/ is an unaspirated, etymological allomorph of /hɪm/, just as /i/, /ʊɔ/, and /ɪɛ/ are unaspirated allomorphs of /hi/, /hoɔ/ and /hɪɛ/. However, the data

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193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar frica-
197 tive /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is
[194] still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / im im / om om om

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

*Stage IV:* i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

Stage VI: i ʃi i / im im / om ʃi om

19 Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /om/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

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19 ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM. Differentiation is completed in the possessive by further transference of the same form:

Stage VII: i ʃi i / ɪm ʃi / ɔm ʃi ɔm

After or somewhere during the categorical distribution of *she*, one gets recognition of gender in the neuter SUBJECT. I suggest neuter subject because my data (as well as Turner's, Cunningham's and Nichols') show few occurrences of *it* as neuter object.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i ʃi ɔm | 'He saw it.' | (2) |
| iː dɔː dɛː | 'It is there.' | (1) |

Stage VIII: i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɔm ʃi ɔm

Anything after Stage VIII, I would refer to as an advanced stage. The system reaches a midway state and changes continue to proceed in the direction of the standard. *It*, as a lexical choice is transferred from nominative to object position, and other standard forms are substituted. The only forms which have not undergone change are the masculine OBJECT and POSSESSIVE. The object form occurs in Guyanese Creole as /am/, Jamaican Creole as /ɪm/, and in Gullah as /ɔm/.[12] Because this form has no preaspirated allomorph like /hi/, /hɪm/, /hiz/, or /hɔz/, it is doubtful that /ɔm/ has any kind of etymological connection with *him*. Any connection with English *them* is also remote because the Creole /dɛm/ does not contract as *them* often does in certain English dialects. However, /ɔm/ shares related syntactic and semantic functions with *him* and *them*, and slight phonetic differences would allow easy relexification.

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194 The rising diphthong [ɔu] is heard most frequently in words ending in *ow*, e.g. [nɔu] 'now', [plɔu] 'plow'.

The slightly falling diphthong [uɔ] is heard most frequently in Gullah and Jamaican Creole as an allophone of /o/, e.g. [nuɔ] 'no', [guɔs] 'ghost'.

•19 4.2. The Consonants

/p/ [p] is a voiceless bilabial stop which occurs initially without aspiration for speakers 3, 6, 8 and 13. Other speakers aspirate [pʰ] initially. An unusual kind of stop called an EJECTIVE is heard in the speech of consultants 6 and 8, in the words [pʔɒt] 'pot' and [tʔɛk] 'take'. The sound is produced when air is released from the glottis and the mouth almost simultaneously. As air flows from the mouth, it is followed immediately by the sharp popping sound of the glottis opening. A palatalized variant of /p/ is always heard before the diphthong [ie] as in [pien] 'pain'.

/b/ The voiced bilabial stop is often unvoiced when it appears in final syllables, e.g. [biebi] 'baby', but it is undetermined if devoicing occurs in /d/ and /g/ as well. Consultants 3, 12 and 23 sometimes use an implosive [ɓ] initially, e.g. [ɓɜn] 'born'.

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/t/ [t] is a voiceless alveolar stop which has three
•19 allophones in Gullah:

1. a glottalized variant: [tˀek] 'take'

2. a palatalized variant occurring before high front vowels: [ʈiel] 'tail'

3. a variant heard as a lingual flap intervocalically and medially before /l/: [ɒɾom] 'autumn', [lɪɾl] 'little'.

Speaker 1 uses a strongly aspirated [tʰ] in the words [tʰue] 'two' and [tʰɛ] 'tell'.

There is no evidence that Gullah speakers have underlying word-final *st* consonant clusters. /t/ is deleted from final /st/ consonant clusters regardless of environmental specifications such as word boundaries, inflections, or the sequencing of a vowel or consonant. In Black dialect, final /t/ is not deleted when followed by a vowel. Examples in Gullah are:

1. *st* preceding a vowel

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i bos out krɔɪ | 'He burst out crying.' | (23) |
| ɸɔs ɒɪ ɪ ʃoum | 'At first, I didn't see it.' | (23) |

2. *st* preceding a consonant

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| dɪ gos trɪ fɒ sko mi | 'The ghost tried to scare me.' | (23) |
| i orisɔn | 'His oldest son' | (2) |

3. single morphemes

| | |
|---|---|
| egos | 'August' |
| mis | 'missed' |
| mɒsɒ | 'master' |

In Gullah, word-final /nt/ clusters are also context-

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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•19 sensitive. The entire cluster is eliminated when the following morpheme begins with a stop, sibilant, or a glide. When the following morpheme begins with a vowel, one but not both members may be retained. Most often the nasal is assimilated by a preceding vowel and the /t/ is eliminated:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| du ɔ̃nəm ɸo mi | 'Do hunt it for me.' | (23) |
| ɐɪ ɔ̃ no | 'I don't know.' | (1) |

When consonant clusters have the same point of articulation in Black dialect, only the final member is deleted (Labov et al.; Lueldorff 1970).

| | |
|---|---|
| *meant* | *men* |
| *sent* | *sen* |
| *ain't* | *ain* |

In stressed position, /nt/ is articulated in Gullah, e.g. [ɛ̃nti] 'isn't it', where its appearance is also favored by a following vowel.

194

/d/ The voiced alveolar stop has several allophones in Gullah. It is heard:

1. as a lingual flap intervocalically: [ɔɾɪs] 'oldest'
2. as a retroflex before /l/: [bäɖl] 'battle'
3. as an implosive initially: [ɗɔg] 'dog'
4. as a palatal before front vowels: [ɖie] 'day'.

The data for this analysis show that in Gullah and other Atlantic creoles /d/ is generally the reflex of initial and intervocalic *th*: [dɪ̃] 'the', [mäɾə]

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

•19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiɔɛɸ] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ʊ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house— a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[20]

To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[21] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[22] Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[20] Bennett I, 340.

[21] In this connection two important prediminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahamian parallels such as *daw-clean, man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainter* (South Carolina *enty*), *nyor* (eye), *tilly*, (sister), and *oonuh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lanenshire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[22] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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•19 fied form of English," both in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, with elision of difficult sounds, shortening of words, modification of every difficult enunciation, and a minimum of forms for person, number, case, and tense.

Thus, simple to begin with and uniformly responsive to all possible leveling influences, Gullah is as nearly an uninflected tongue as it is possible to conceive.

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19 175 567 "George Philip Krapp in "The English of the Negro" (*American Mercury*, June, 1925) gives the following conjectural picture of its origins: "The assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once. Though the historical evidence is not as full as might be wished, the stages can be followed with some certainty. When the Negroes were first brought to America they could have known no English. Their usefulness as servants, however, required that some means of communication between master and slave should be developed. There is little likelihood that any masters exerted themselves to understand or to acquire the native language of the Negroes in order to communicate with them. On the contrary, from the very beginning the white overlords addressed themselves in English to their black vassals. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of English this would be. It would be a very much simplified English—the kind of English some people employ when they talk to babies. It would probably have no tenses of the verb, no distinctions of case in nouns or pronouns, no marks of singular or plural. Difficult sounds would be eliminated, as they are in baby talk. Its vocabulary would be reduced to the lowest possible elements. In short, it would be a language of very much the same kind as those which have developed elsewhere under similar circumstances. It would have resemblances to the Beach-la-Mar of the Western Pacific, the Pidgin English of China, and the Chinook jargon of western America. As the Negroes imported into America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another, they themselves were driven to the use of this infantile English in speaking to one another."

See also a similar account by James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1925, pp. 42, 43.

The actual historical picture is thus sketched by Mr. Bennett: "At the time of the arrival of the negroes in the American provinces a considerable proportion of the population was composed of white bond-men, indentured mechanics and 'redemptioners', the laborers of the colony, among whom the newly-arrived negroes learned their English. Their vocabularies were small and very markedly dialectal, in the majority of instances a dialect which had been handed down from father to son for several generations, preserving closely the peculiarities of earlier times, in many cases Elizabethan and Jacobean.

"The Africans, plastic as they are by nature, quickly lost their own language, and acquired imperfectly the dialects of the British peasantry among whom they worked, and by whom very generally they were directed. The main reason was, perhaps, that, at the height of the trade, owing to the danger of conspiracy, large groups of negroes upon great plantations and in any considerable establishments, were generally made up, by preference, of negroes of different tribes, speaking languages and dialects unknown to one another. They were mostly young, for youth retains no lasting memories and acquires a new language with greater ease.

"The new negroes were parceled out among the early bond-servants, and, later, among the trained servants, preventing their congregating in a body, hastening their familiarity with their new duties, and more quickly learning the language of their monitors and wardens. This plan was operative from very early days in obliterating the many African dialects and tongues native to the Negro slaves." Personal letter to Professor Yates Snowden, of the University of South Carolina, Jan. 22, 1918.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

1[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [1] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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539 pon 'tell I git'tuh Willtown road—*twenty mile mo'*—ennuh halt fuh'uh seazun. I ain' bindeh[1] long fo' day bruk en wun fass riduh obuhtek'mih, gih'mih metsidge seh fuh tun bac'. 'E seh ain'duh no Yankee *'tall;* seh binnuh stingry[2] duh tun'obuh een Haulobuh' Cut, en dih pickit binnuh *sway*[3] duh *Yankee* duh paddle boat *cummin'* 'cross."

[1] other. [2] grits. [3] thick. [4] on, on top of. [5] like, like a. [6] who, what. [7] duty. [8] here. [9] hear. [10] fife. [11] make haste. [12] noise. [13] afraid. [14] don't care. [15] thousand. [16] things. [17] been there. [18] stingray (a fish).

V[14]

Ber Wolf had a pease-patch. An' every night somebody go in de pease-patch an' eat de pease. So Ber Wolf made a tar baby an' set him up in de yard. So Ber Rabbit went in de patch, an' he meet de tar baby standin' up. So Ber Rabbit said, "Good-mornin', gal!" Tar Baby ain't go no manners, say nothin'. Say, "Man, I slap you." His hand fasten. Ber Rabbit say, "I got anoder han'." So he hit him wid dat han! Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a head." Said he butt him wid de head. De head fasten. "Gal, you don't see I got a foot?" So he kick him wid de foot. De foot fasten. "I kick him wid de oder foot." Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a mout'.' De mout' fasten. Den Rabbit say, "Tu'n me loose!"

Next t'ing come along Wolf. Wolf say, "I ketch yer, t'ief! you eat all my pease. I putshyer head down on de choppin'-block an' chop em off."—"Oh, don't duh dat! Dat will kill me." Say, "I want ter kill you." Say, "I'll t'row you in de creek, drown you." "Ah, don't duh dat!" he say. "Yes, Ber Wolf, t'row me in de briar-patch! Den you'll kill me." When Ber Wolf t'row him in de briar-patch, Rabbit say, "Ping! Ping! Dat's de place my mammy done born me!" So dat ol' rabbit git away.

539 .19 From these brief passages one can see that the outstanding characteristics of the dialect may be expressed as follows: (1) economy in vocalization, as evidenced by the short cuts in tenses, pronouns, number, gender, etc.; (2)

[14] From Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, pp. 26-7.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[15]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 802
'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc.

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be 193
mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92]

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of 177
Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the 19.
case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch.

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

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174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

•19 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and
177 the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[132]

[132] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[133] 190 177 178

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days [872]

[133] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation
178 of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with
177 achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

•191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo-
829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make
823 attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
Francis: I know it's different.
Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 135]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did.
758 He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Commit-
74 tee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the
(452) Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if
(734) he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior
(739) citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the Island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt
554 his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten mar-
554 ried. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he
•191 changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very
554 disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter
871 about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the 186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth 178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

191 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, 197 such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of 536 Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing 888 her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926

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695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account" of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

695 "That is not so," the *plaintiff* declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

539 The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

197 "You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; too long buffo' me shum, me yerre um."[]

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh."[]

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah."[]

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?' "

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

•191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

[] Bennett I, 340, 341.

[] "I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); too long before I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

[] "I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear us; were hear yonder same as hear here."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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•191 on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[a]

197 To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of
212 its most interesting features,[b] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

197 Both on this account and also because it has had to mud-
dle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to
19 language have had free sway.[c] Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[a] Bennett I, 340.

[b] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Crouse and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean*, *man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplementary exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainte* (South Carolina *ainty*), *wee* (eye), *titty*, (sister), and *oonah* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in [illegible] that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gul[illegible] [illegible], as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant pla[illegible] absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[c] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
655 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
174 This fact raises still another interesting question.
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Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika," [20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

175 Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
567 came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
782 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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(55) She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy
070 born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kaffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[35] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[35] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 177 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 177 567 191. 175

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
•191 who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
567 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified
197 tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

### GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177] [128]

#### *Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox*, *t'ree*

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alect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations. 194

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea*, with the *u* pitched high means *bone*.[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech 000 194 194 194 191.

[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée." [113]

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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194 [191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

*African Words*

174 192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9]

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When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island

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[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

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after the Federal occupation in 1861. Arthur Sumner, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, tried to describe to his cousin their way of speaking. "These negroes speak with an inarticulate jabber. The sounds roll around in their great chops, and come pouring out through their huge mouths, so that I find it easier to understand a foreign language than confused utterance. Their idioms, too, are funny. I told Byron, a boy who waits upon me, that I was going to distribute clothing on his place. 'Talk *we* house?' said he:—meaning, 'Are you speaking of our house?' . . . Byron came to me with a message from his mother—'Ma says if you give her some trade'—Imagine such a sentence uttered as if it were a word of many syllables. Can you make it out? . . . 'Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread?'"[11]

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These missionaries from the North, who, of course, knew nothing first-hand of slavery, thought that the St. Helena Negroes were the most degraded and backward of all the coastal slaves in the South.[12] After the northern whites had become acquainted with other sea-island Negroes from such places as St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and Edisto Island, South Carolina, who were quartered temporarily on St. Helena Island by the Federal Army, they were still of the opinion that the St. Helena slaves were the most retarded in the South except those on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Arthur Sumner wrote late in 1862, "The Georgia and Florida negroes are vastly superior in appearance, character, and intelligence, to the natives of these Islands. It is the testimony

[11] Arthur Sumner Papers. Port Royal, May 18, 1862. The last word was pronounced as if spelled tred, not trade.

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

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121 packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly
115 stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around
his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-
[157] born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big
boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big
dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke"
[567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house,
chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk
speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names
and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu-
[192] merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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128 (192) (water), *juba haltuh* (water bucket), *sisure* (chicken), *gombay* (cow), *nyana* (fish), *flim* (pancakes), *mosojo* (pot), *diffy* (fire), *nyam* (eat), *mulafo* (whiskey), and *musongo* (tobacco). Here are *ma-foo-bey* (an expression of surprise) and the expletive *skinskon*. Here are folk narratives of Buh Rabbit, mysterious spiders, magic hoes, landing Ibos, flying Africans, and various supernatural spirits. Here are African songs—*a-shou-tu-goula*, the lullaby *nikki-yimi*, *nikki-yimi*, and the refrain *yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by*. Here is the ballad of Bo-cat, the wife murderer. Here is instrumental music on banjos, bones, drums, and gourds. And here are such dances as the Buzzard Lope, the Camel Walk, Come Down to the Mire, the Fish Bone, the Fish Tail, and the Snake Hip. Here are examples of folk religion in descriptions of Moslem ancestors and African prayer rituals. Here are the chanted *Belambi, Hackabera, Ameela, Mahamadu*, and *Ameen, Ameen, Ameen* during prayers, followed by *Meena, mino, mo* at the end of prayers, and *Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, kum kunka yali, kum kunka tembe*, said before flying back to Africa. Here are river baptisms, and sermons, and guest appearances by Father Divine and Daddy Grace. Other folk beliefs are exemplified in conjure bags and conjure doctors, graveyard dirt, mojoes, such charms as Adam and Eve Root, Black Cat Bone, Lucky Heart, and High John the Conqueror. Here are examples of customary folklore in birth customs and death customs as well as festival celebrations. And here are descriptions of material culture, including folk architecture and such foodways as the use of benne seeds, palm cabbage and palm wine, palmetto cabbage and palmetto wine, peanuts, ash-cakes, and African rice cakes. Among the folk crafts produced by black coastal Georgians are baskets, beads, bowls and utensils, musical instruments, walking sticks, and carved wooden spoons.

In its concentration on local folklore *Drums and Shadows* was pursuing a policy encouraged by the national office of the Federal Writers' Project. An agency of the New Deal's Work

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
785 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
(551) 'Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
(101) "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
(192) edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25g] and a hog *gulluh*.

(322) To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

*Tonie Houston, Tatemville.

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829 Hestuh she Shad's gran. Yuh knows Shad? Bentoo she duh younges. Magret she my gran."

We asked if Belali Mohomet had been related to Belali Sullivan on St. Simons.

"I ain know bout St. Simon but Cotto use tuh talk bout cousin Belali Sullivan.

"Yes'm, I membuh muh gran too. Belali he frum Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds
829 we didn know. She say 'mosojo' an sometime 'sojo' wen she mean pot. Fuh watuh she say 'deloe' an fuh fyuh she say
• 192 'diffy.' She tell us, 'Tak sojo off diffy.'

"Wen sumpm done she say, 'Bim-boga-rum.' Yuh tell uh sumpm wut is a suhprise lak somebody die, den she say, 'Ma-foo-bey, ma-foo-bey.'

829 "She ain tie uh head up lak I does, but she weah a loose wite clawt da she trow obuh uh head lak veil an it hang loose on uh shoulduh. I ain know wy she weah it dataway, but I tink she ain lak a tight ting roun uh head.

829 "She make funny flat cake she call 'saraka.' She make
um same day ebry yeah, an it big day. Wen dey finish, she
252 call us in, all duh chillun, an put in hans lill flat cake an we eats it. Yes'm, I membuh how she make it. She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tak dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. 'Saraka' she call um."

412 Before the cabin stood a crudely constructed wooden mortar made many years before by Katie's husband and used originally for the pounding of rice. A deep basin-like aperture had been hewn out of the center of a log which was about three feet long and from eighteen to twenty inches wide.[43]

115 Across the dusty road from Katie Brown's another nar-

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 567 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he

•(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 534 533 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 789 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah pleuty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front

(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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534 sho it wuz maple. He stretch em obuh it good. It wuz bout eighteen inches wide an fifteen inches deep wen he finish it. He beat it wid a stick. Ole man Okra he sho kin chase a drum. Ole man Jesse he frum Africa, too, an he make he own drum."

829 When we asked Ben if he remembered any African words, he replied, "I know dat deah wuz a ole man, it bin so long I 567 caahn relate his name, at duh plantation wut wehn roun wid •[192] ole man Okra an I membuh well he call all duh fish an ting uh duh ribbuh by duh name uh 'nyana' an den I heah pancake call 'flim.' Muh granmothuh Hettie, duh mothuh uh muh mothuh Bella, he come from Africa too an he huzbun come frum Africa. He name wuz Alex Boyd. Alex wuz bery small felluh but heaby an he hab dahk skin an shahp-feechuch. Yes, ma'am, he talk African but he stuttuh so he dohn talk much roun us chillun, cuz we make fun at im, an as I say befo, I wuz small lad den. Alex wuz knock-kneed an he tie he head up in a clawt."

829 Had his grandmother, Hettie, ever talked to him about Africa, we wanted to know.

Ben told us, "Many time. He tell some tings I membuh. He say he mus be bout tutteen aw foeteen wen dey bring im frum Africa. He say deah wuz great talk bout comin tuh dis country an some men tell em it would take only two aw tree days tuh git deah. Dey wuz all happy tuh come. Him an lot uh friens come tuhgedduh.

"Wen Hettie fus come, he say he feel worried cuz he couldn unnuhstan duh talk yuh an many udduh tings bein so diffunt frum he own country. He hab two sistuhs an tree brothuhs but dey couldn git a chance tuh come. He hab mo refrence tuh he mothuh dan tuh he fathuh. An he say dat in Africa he lib in a 'groun house.' It wuz a squeah house, an he say dat he didn lib close tuh a salt ribbuh but weah deah wuz a lot uh wile swamp. Wen he fus come tuh dis country, he didn unnuhstan bout fish. But he tell a lot bout monkey

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

*gula*, "pig": Kongo
*goober*, "peanut": Kimbundu
*gumbo*, "okra": Tshiluba
*gumbi*, "medicinal weed": Bambara
*heh*, "yes": Vai
*hoodoo*, "bad luck": Hausa
*yambi*, "yam": Vai
*chigger*, "small flea": Wolof
*juk, juky*, "disorderly": Wolof
*cush*, "bread," "cake": Hausa
*nana*, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
*nanji*, "spider": Twi
*tote*, "to carry": Kikongo
*chicabod*, "seesaw": Mandingo
*unu*, "you": Igbo
*yent*, "to lie": Umbundu
*pinto, bento*, "coffin": Temne
*biddy*, "small chicken": Kongo
*buckra*, "white man": Ibebio
*de*, "to be": Igbo
*eh*, "yes": Igbo
*ashantie*, "house": Ga[10]

Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Cuineque

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195 rest you mouth!: shut up!
long eye: envy

•192 Most linguists agree that lexicon is perhaps one of the most arbitrary features that languages borrow from one another, and it is in this area that they tend to borrow most extensively. As Talmy Givón has explained, when different linguistic groups come in contact, it is natural that the area of most acute linguistic conflict will be the lexicon; by borrowing words from each other, speakers resolve the communication conflict. But languages seldom borrow grammar.[13] Thus, in areas [193] where Gullah is spoken, it is well to understand that while the lexicon is primarily English, much of the underlying grammar is rooted in West African languages.

121 In detailed analysis of Gullah I have used Walt Wolfram's "matrix of cruciality," selecting for discussion those features still persistent in Gullah speech.[14] Every effort has been made to present very technical material as nontechnically as possible, in order to assist readers in understanding peculiarities of Gullah speech, not only to help them appreciate the language but to suggest something of the rhythm and flow of the narratives and tales, a quality which, as I have noted, cannot be captured on paper.

## Features of Grammar

193 Many characteristic features of grammar and syntax set Gullah apart from other varieties of African-American speech.[15] Unlike standard English, which relies heavily on subordination to convey relationships between ideas, contemporary Gullah relies on coordination, or the combination of sentences that are short, abrupt, and loosely strung together. Gullah thus dispenses with many of the prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, and participles that tie together complex standard English sentences. In addition, the relationships between sentences are not necessarily specified through grammatical operations but may be left to be inferred from the usage or context.

The verb and pronoun systems are particularly distinctive in Gullah. Some distinguishing features of the verb structure include the uninflected verb, verb serialization, the introductory verb *say* [se], the complementizer *for* [fə], and verb reduplication.

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[193] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.
[868]

The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
199 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

[p. 150 is blank]

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192 10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

114
551 11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

197
192 13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

121 14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

193 15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

[113] 17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

(113) 20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

194
113 1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

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126 1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

000 2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

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193 Preceded by a vowel an initial *y* sound is added to *i*
194 and *e*. Thus *iz* and *ent* become *yiz* and *yent*. *Him is*, but *'e yiz; him ent*, but *'e yent; 'e yeye red.*.

Initial *s* is dropped in the hard consonant combinations *sc, sp, sk, st*.

'Cratch, 'crape, 'kin, 'corch, 'tan, 'tink, 'take, 'tir, 'top, 'ting, 'tep, 'ticky, 'traight, 'tring, 'tretch-out, 'tir, 'pin, 'pat, 'pit, 'plash, 'pend, 'tore.

*Prefixes*

193 Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped, as *at-, o-, ap-, e-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-*, etc.

'Ten, 'tenshun (for attend or intend, attention, intention), 'pinion (opinion), 'pint, 'pintment (appoint, appointment), 'pistle (epistle), 'jeck' (reject, object), 'tack, 'taguhnize (antagonize), 'mirashun (admiration), 'scusshun (excursion), 'spishun, 'spize, 'splain, 'spon', 'spose (suppose, expose), 'sputo, 'stonish, 'stead'ub (instead of), 'stracted, 'struckshun (construction, destruction).

The prefix *re-* is the favorite, being sometimes retained when the others are dropped, and frequently being substituted for other less euphonious prefixes:

Recishun (for decision); refen' (defend), remonia (pneumonia), renite (unite), repeah (appear), repose (oppose), resplain (explain), refen ('fen', defend). "Anoint" becomes *'nint*, but the pastor is the *Lord's renointed*.

*Survivals (Archaisms)*

• 192 *Fo'punce* and *seb'npunce chickens*, to indicate the size of a chicken sold for those amounts before the Revolutionary War.

*Coz, cuz*, or *cuzn* as a form of address, like the Elizabethan "coz".

*Jook* in the sense of jab or jabbed.

*Tittie* or *tittuh* for sister.

*Toad* for a young female dog.

*Tosty*, as a diminutive of "toad," as a humorous nickname for man or woman.

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*Tetch*, for remnant. "T'engk Gawd, 'e lef' uh leetle tetch een de bottle."

*Tas'* (*task*), one hundred and five feet square, one quarter of an acre, the daily task on sea-island cotton plantations.[a] Used now as either a measure of area or of distance. "My gun kin shoot two tas'," i.e. 210 feet or 70 yards.

*Use* in the sense of "frequent certain feeding grounds, be accustomed to go, linger habitually about."[b]

*Yowe* for ewe.

*Frail*, to strike, to beat.

*Ax* for ask.[c]

*Piggin*, a small cedar pail with one panel extended for a handle.

*Pyo'* for "pure," in the sense of "fully, absolutely"; modern slang, "nothing else but": *de pyo' nutt'n*.

*Staa't-naked*, instead of "stark-naked."[d]

*Quile* for coil.

*Find*, in the sense of "to supply with victuals." "Buh Sun promise Buh Fowl-hawk fuh fine um een bittle effn 'e ketch 'im een 'im baid."

*Quills*, still used for pipes of reed or cane.

*Shote*, for young hog.

*Killick*, for "killock," an anchor of stone.

*Gaul* for swamp.

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[a] Mr. Bennett explains a "task" as one-half an acre for a hoe hand; three-quarters of an acre for a cotton-field hand; one-quarter of an acre for a rice-field hand. Thus a man and his family can *cut a tass; tie a tass, an' carry a tass intuh de flat*. From this comes the phrase, a *done-tass niggah*, for a worn out laborer, too weak or too old to work; or lightly, for the laughing darkey, his day's work done and his hoe canted over his shoulder. I, 343.

[b] Widely employed throughout the South by both white and black, usually as a hunting term in connection with doves, partridges, and turkeys. Dignified Elizabethan. Compare Spenser's "Where never foot did use", and Milton's Lycidas,

"Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks."

Listed along with *quile* (coil) and *pawn* as colloquial white usage by Charles Foster Smith in "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," *The Southern Bivouac*, Nov., 1885.

[c] Good Chaucerian and Caxtonian; standard English till 1600; still used in the Midland and Southern Dialects in England; and in general much easier and pleasanter to say than "ask".

[d] It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *staa't* goes back to the older "start" (steort), tail.

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•192 *Hippo* for ipecac, probably from the dialect of the cockney English sailors who fetched it home from the Brazils. [278] The British pharmacopoeia of 1725 calls it "hippocachuana, hippechachuana, hippo for short."

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to daub or smear with spilled victuals and grease; similarly *gaumandize* (*gormandize*) not to eat greedily, but to daub or to spatter oneself with food.

*Proper Names* (*Onomatopeia*)

192 *Bloody noun*, the big swamp bull-frog.

825 *Fry-bakin' frog*, the small pond-frog, supposed to say "fry bacon," "tea-table."

*Higguhri-hee* and *Cuckatoo*, both being terms for the great horned owl.

192 *Nickuhdemus*, *Buhrabbus*, and *Polydo'*, all favorite, mouth-filling names, common in sermons and religious arguments: "Ent de Scriptuh say een de fo'teen chaptuh een Nickuhdemus, dat de lab'ruth wut' 'e hire?"

*Rebus* is of unknown origin, being coupled only with Revelation, meaning from Alpha to Omega: "Uh bin t'ru da' t'ing frum Rebus spang to Rebelashun."

(825) *Po'Jo*, the long-legged, long-necked Blue Heron.

*Popular Etymologies*

*Consecrate lye* (*concentrated*);[a] *middle-night*, *middle-day*, *middle-blouse*, for mid-night, mid-day, middy-blouse; *inflummashun*, for information; *sparruhgrass* for asparagus;[a] *Sawlketchum* for Salkahatchie, a tide-water river of South Carolina, for which the commoner corruption among the whites is "Saltcatcher"; *preecher on de sukkus* (circuit); *locus preechuh* (local preacher); *petty-* or *patty-auguh* for piragua, pirogue; *Saa'bint Day* (Servant's day) confused with Sabbath Day; *muffle-dice* for hermaphrodite; *grin' salt*, said of a hawk or vulture circling aloft; *carryin'* for carrion; *peach omelet* for peach marmalade; *curly flower* for cauliflower;[a] *Florida lime* for chloride of lime; *sweet religion* for sweet alyssum;[a] *nutten-aigs* for nut-megs.

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[a]Not exclusively Gullah; commonly found elsewhere.

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192 538 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

*Words*

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.[a] The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam*, *oona*, *swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du*, *goober*, *pinder*, *cooter*, *okra*, *geechy*, *cymbi*, *bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*. *Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.[c] Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.[d] Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye*. *Stepney* is

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[a]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.
Bennett, I, 338.
George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.
In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *voodoo*, *hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."
[197] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."
[c]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.
[539] "Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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•192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'."
[175] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";* also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance† of the primitive Negro Christians

[539] Whoga, whoga, whogalor, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Cuo me sormber norty sundondilly indelarun.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Oiwin! Oiwin!
Odatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

*"Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry hat-o home."
Pennett, II, 6.

[533] †For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.

Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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marked by ecstatic motion and hysterical physical rhythms.

*Too* in the sense of "very."

*Sometime*, inconstant, unsure: "Dem nyoung gal is a sometime t'ing."

*Nyam*, in the sense of eat."

*Lahgin'*, and *swongger*, to assume self importance, to put on airs. Both of these seem pure Negro, unless the first is from 'largin', enlarging (?); and the second from swagger, compare swank.

*Mongkey-nut* for cocoa-nut, probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head.

*Soon* for early, as a *soon brukwuss*, a *soon staa't*, a *soon man*. Thence, as noted by Mr. Bennett,[31] arises the first division of the Negro's day; *soon er mo'nin'*; after which follows *fus' fowl-crowin'*, *day-clean*, *sun-up*, *fus' an' las' ho'n blowin'*, *fo'noon res'*, *attanoon*, *de sun duh lean*, *de sun duh lean fuh down*, *sun-down*, *deep-dus'*, *ebenin'*, *can'le-lightin'*, *night-time*, *platt-eye prowl*, and *hag-hollerin'*."[32]

### *Phrases*

*Crack 'e bret'* (or *crack 'e teet'*), crack his breath or teeth, i.e., say something.

*Long-mout'*, surly or contemptuous pushing out of lips.

*Shut-mout'* (adj.) or *tie up 'e mout'* (verb), secretive, ill-natured, not saying anything.

*Onrabble 'e mout'*, unravel his mouth, i.e., loosen up in conversation.

*W'ich en' w'y talk*, which and why talk, i.e., contradictory, inconsistent talk.

*She-she talk*, used of feminine loquacity. This phrase looks, by the way, like a correct use of the feminine gender,

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[31] Mr. Williams' suggestion is that *nyam* comes from *yam tetter* (yam potato) with intrusive *n* before *y* sound. Williams, *De Ole Plantation, VI*. An improbable derivation. Professor W. A. Craigie derives it from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food, and compares Portuguese African *igname*—the yam.

[32] I, 342.

[154]
[175]

[33] Midnight. Hags are witches, and platt-eyes diabolical spirits of the mist. *Loc cit.*, 342.

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•192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time, three-time,* etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chuesday, two T'ursday, two place,* the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

*Proverbs*

538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care is better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Littie axe cut down big tree."

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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[554] "Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh my own."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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539 Miss Beckwith is evidently right in assuming that this form of amusement represents "the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts."

•192 Discovering an unsuspected connection with Africa in words which sound as though they might be English, but really aren't,[43] provides almost as much satisfaction as finding new songs or dances. Conservative Negroes still retain many of these words—particularly in the old songs—and such are passed on to Dr. Turner in the hope that he may know their meaning. From his *West-African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah* I have learned much that has been an enigma to me in the past, but even Dr. Turner is puzzled by "giffy," which on Sapelo means damp. Years ago I heard the great blue heron in the marshes called "Poor Joe," and judged his lean body had given him his name. Not at all. *Podzo* is the name of a similar heron in Africa. We call a certain type of southern tortoise a "cooter." In the neighborhood of Timbuctoo its near relative is called a *kuta*. When I first visited the Georgia coast I heard the name "tackies" applied to the small wild horses found on the salt marshes of the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.[44] Now I find that *taki* is the West African name of a horse. The same with the "tabby" houses built for the slaves out of old oyster shells, sand, and cement (made from burning live oyster shells in pine cribs built for the purpose). In Africa the name for a house of similar construction is *tabax*. When a Southerner hears the word "tote" he knows that it means to carry; a very similar word, *tota*, from the Congo, means to pick up. Southern children know the "joggle board," or see-saw, but they do not know that the name comes from the West African word, *dzogal*, meaning to rise. In the old days you asked a colored woman where to find her husband. If she said at the "jook," it meant that he was in the rather ungodly place where drink was sold and good women were not supposed to go. According to the Vocabulary, *dzug* means "to misconduct oneself" and it is easy to see how "jook house," in the Gullah dialect, derived its name. In *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth tell us that Africa possessed an instrument known as the *banjar* made of a large gourd

[43] *By this time I should be wary of laughing up my sleeve when the Negro uses such words—but white people are like this. My last nugget was found through Mrs. Cate's keen sight. I had told her of the amusing application of the horse breeder's term "in foal" to the condition of one of my singers. With a fresh eye, she spotted in Dr. Turner's* Gullah Vocabulary *the word "en(in)fo le" meaning "pregnant."*

[44] *These hardy little horses are said to be descendants of those left by the Spaniards in the* [136] *thirteenth century.*

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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), *benne*[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
567 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
(192) whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

(824) [46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
(761) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word *Saut* (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.)A Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 117 178 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Demi-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A. [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analysis]

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc. 802

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92] 193

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch. 177 19

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

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•192 may be obtained by a statistical analysis of the largest published glossary available. Gonzales[93] has listed nearly 2,000 of the words most commonly used in the dialect in the Edisto Island region. If these words be divided arbitrarily into appropriate classes, the following distribution results:[94]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Standard English words pronounced in standard way or as in English dialect of 18th century . . . | 92 per cent |
| II. | Corruptions and mutilations of standard English words (some of these corruptions are no doubt of English dialect origin) . . . . . | 6 per cent |
| III. | Archaic and obsolescent English words . . . . . | 2 per cent |
| IV. | African words . . . . . | Less than 0.5 per cent |

### *A Partial List of Archaic and Provincial English Usages Surviving in the Dialect*[95]

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192 The following list includes the most common archaic and provincial English words found in the dialect. A prolonged study would reveal several others, perhaps, but these are the most common. Few, if any, of these, however, occur exclusively in the Gullah, for in various other parts of this country many of these words survive either among Negroes or white people or both. Some are not used on St. Helena, as far as I can ascertain. The list is composed of words not now in general use, and words in general use but having an archaic meaning in the Gullah.

[93] *The Black Border*, Glossary, pp. 287-340.

[94] This distribution also holds good for Whaley's glossary of 1,500 words. Jones' glossary is relatively short, and most of his words are found in Gonzales' list.

[113] [95] For tracing the paternity of various Gullah words, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Wright's *Provincial Dictionary*, Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, and the *N. E. D. (New English Dictionary)* are invaluable.

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*All two*, both. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

*Arey*, either (*Nary*, neither). Also used extensively by illiterate Negroes and whites elsewhere.

*Aunt*, a term of respect for old people, as in English dialect. Usually pronounced *ant*. See *Uncle*.

*Aw*, used as a sort of exclamation meaning "for true," similar to the meaning "yes," which it had in English dialect.

*Ax*, ask. Not a Negroism, but used elsewhere, especially by the Southern white mountain people. Chaucer used *ax*, and it is still used in some of the English dialects. *Cf.* Old English, *acsian*, *axian*, etc.

*Balmoral skirt*, a kind of petticoat worn during Queen Victoria's reign.

*Blan*, a corruption of *belong*. *Belong*, in the sense of *ought*, is quite common among white people in the South Atlantic States. "I belong to be there by this time," "That costs more than it belongs to," etc. In the Gullah *belong* has this meaning but it also retains another meaning from English dialect, namely, to be accustomed to. In the past tense this is like "used to": "Him an' me blan go huntin' togedder."

*Brawtus* (sometimes spelled *broadus* or *brotus*), something extra, thrown in for good measure. "Take dat fuh brawtus," says a Negro mother as she applies a final and extra lick of the switch to her child's legs. It is strange that there should still be doubt as to the English paternity of *brawtus*, but there are still some who consider it African. The archaic English *brotts*, fragments, leavings, etc., seems to offer an explanation, although some are not satisfied with this.[96] If this is insufficient, there is the related word, *brotta*, a Lancashire word which many students have overlooked in *The English Dialect Dictionary*, meaning "a few drops, a small quantity, a little in addition." Add the dialect tendency to pluralize words of this kind and we have *brottas*, having the same meaning as *brawtus* used by the Gullah and other American Negroes.

[96] Professor Robert A. Law, of the University of Texas, wrote in *Texas and Southwestern Folklore*, 1927, p. 120: "I . . . consider it much more likely . . . that here we have another African word."

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•192 *Chance*, a quantity, a considerable amount. "I raised a right good chance o' potatoes," "I had a plenty to eat fuh suppuh, a good chance," etc.

*Coz, cuz, cuz'n*, etc., cousin, used as a form of address, as in Shakespeare's day.

*Find*, to supply with provisions, to keep one in victuals, etc.

*Fo'punce chicken* (also *seb'npunce chicken*), used to describe chickens of certain sizes.

*Foreigner*, anyone born outside St. Helena Island or whatever community the speaker lives in. Exactly the old Kent and Sussex usage: "In some parts of Kent all born in another parish are still called foreigners." *Prov. Dict.*, also *N. E. D.*

*Frail*, to beat, strike, whip. Also used elsewhere in the South by whites and Negroes. It originated in England from *flail* by the process of dissimilation.[96a]

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to smear one's face with grease, victuals, etc.

*Gall* (*gaul* in some glossaries), swamp. The *E. D. D.* lists as one meaning of *gall*, "wet, spongy land." It also lists *gault*, "wet, boggy land."

*Gunjuh*, ginger or molasses cookie.

*Graff*, to grab, grasp, grapple, seize.

*Hippo*, ipecac. Until rather recently this was in common use for ipecac, the full name of which is hippocachuana or hippechachuana. In a medical book published in this country as late as 1848, *hippo* appeared as the ordinary term for ipecac.[97]

*Killick*, an anchor of stone.

*Larging*, swaggering, putting on airs, etc. This may be from *enlarging*, or from the same *larging* used in England to mean "spending the money given in largess." The Cumberland, "He's gone a-larging," is pretty close to the Gullah usage. See *E. D. D.*

*Limous* (in the expression *limous cooter*), mud, muddy.

*Make your manners*, used by the Negroes as it was in England:

[96a] See *E. D. G.*, §252.

[97] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*, Charleston, S. C., 1848.

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"A command to a child to touch his hat or curtsey in the presence of superiors." Wright, *Prov. Dict.*

*Meet*, to find, to experience, to observe the existence of, etc. "Did oona meet a good time?" "I ain't meet dem t'ings w'en I been a boy." Also used by some of the white people of the low country.

*Mought*, may, might. Still heard also in the South among white people.

*Nor*, than. "Bettuh nuh" means "better than."

*Nyam*, to eat. Possibly an African word, but it has long been known in England. See below under *African Words*.

*One*, in the sense of alone, singly: "Me one, Lawd," means "I alone, Lord." Also used in place of the indefinite article. "Once deh been one mahn what had one fine cow."

*Peruse*, to saunter, walk leisurely; also to examine. The *E. D. D.* records a Herefordshire usage, meaning "to explore the fields or woods."

*Piggin*, a small wooden pail with one stave extended to serve as a handle.

*Pit*, put, all tenses.

*Poke*, sack, bag.

*Pure*, in the sense of fully, exceedingly, absolutely. "De pyo' nuttin'" is "absolutely nothing." "He pyo' love de gal."

*Quills*, pipes or stalks of reed, cane, etc.

*Quizzett* (sometimes *squizzet*), to quiz, to question closely. From the English dialectic *quiset* or *quisit*, "to ask prying questions," which is derived from the old verb *inquisite*, to inquire into.

*Remoan*, to remove. A good English dialect usage.

*Shote*, or *shoat*, a pig. Widely used in the South.

*Soon*, early, quick, etc. "A soon boat" is an early boat, "a soon man" is an alert, quick, man.

*Sparrowgrass*, asparagus. Sometimes thought to be a Negro corruption, but it is a well-known instance of popular etymology which came from England and is still to be found among illiterate Americans.

*Start-naked*, stark-naked. Professor Smith listed this with the

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•192 comment, "It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *stna't* goes back to the older 'start' (steort), tail." But the *N. E. D.* states that *stark-naked* is an alteration of the older *start-naked*, i. e., *tail-naked*, and lists various usages from the 13th century down to recent times. *Start-naked* would then seem to be a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon *steort* after all.

*Stepney*, poverty, privation. "To keep ol' stepney from de do'," is to keep the wolf from the door. Not heard on St. Helena. Smith lists this word as possibly African, which is doubtful. *Stepney* is used in a restricted area,[97*] and it might represent an English usage which has never been noted in any dialect collection. The following is ventured as a possible explanation of the origin of the usage. *Stepney* is the name of an east London parish in which squalor and poverty prevail. *(Ency. Brit.)* *Stepney* or *stipone*, "a kind of sweet compound liquor drunk in some ill places in London in the summer time," (See Grose, *Classical Dict.*, and Wright, *Prov. Dict.*) probably took its name from the parish (See *N. E. D.*). It appears from this that *stepney* was associated with a low condition. Add to this the fact that it is used synonymously with *wolf* in "keep the wolf from de do'," and its English derivation seems fairly certain.

*Swinge*, to singe. Widely used by Negroes and by the white mountain people. Still in use in various parts of England.

*Swanga* (or *swonga)*, noun: swagger, a dashing air; adj.: swaggering, boastful, etc. This word has been considered African by certain writers, but it is quite possibly a dialect pronunciation of English *swank* or *swanky*, the latter being used as both noun and adjective with meanings that correspond to those of *swanga*, namely, "a strapping fellow" and "swaggering." (*Prov. Dict.* or *E. D. D.*). A parallel is found in the Gullah *teng* or *tang* for *thank*.

[804] *Task*, a survival of the plantation daily task of a quarter of an acre for each hand. It is also used as a linear measure (105 feet).

[97*] Since this was written Arthur Palmer Hudson has informed me that *stepney* is known in Mississippi.

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The Negro speaks of planting two *tas'* of potatoes, or judges that the river is about a *tas'* wide.

*Titty* (or tittuh), sister.

*Toad*, a young female dog.

*Too*, very. "I *too* sorry you gwine." "Lawd, dat gatuh *too* beeg!" exclaimed a Negro who was rowing me across the Edisto when he saw a large alligator near the boat. Also used in this sense by white people in the low country.

*Tote*, to carry.[98] This word, which is still widely used in the United States, has been the cause of much controversy. Some have attributed it to the Negro, others to the Indian. The English derivation seems so simple that it is not necessary to look elsewhere. In the South, where this word seems to have been used first in this country, *tote* means not merely to carry, but it implies "hefting," supporting or carrying something heavy. When *tote* began to get spread about by newspapers and periodicals, it was taken up by many people who did not appreciate its correct usage, and soon we were *toting* such light objects as books, papers, pistols, etc. This extension of the meaning of *tote* explains the reluctance of some scholars to accept an English derivation.

*Totian*, an Anglo-Saxon verb, has survived in England in various shades of meaning, the most common of which is to peep, to look out. Hence *tot hill*, a lookout place. *Tolt*, from Latin *tolle*,[99] to lift or remove, is probably the immediate precursor of our *tote* if not identical with it. The *E. D. D.* lists as one of the meanings of *tolt*, "to tilt, to raise up," cites a Warwickshire example, "Tolt it up a bit," and states that *tolt* is also

[98] The earliest written use of *tote* found in the U. S. is in a Virginia manuscript, 1677: "They were by Beverly comanded to go to work, fall trees and mawl and toat railes." Quoted in B. W. Green's *Virginia Word-Book*, also in *New English Dictionary*.

It is interesting to observe that in a grammar written by Rev. Brantley York (3rd ed., 1862) and used locally in North Carolina, "tote the wood" was listed as an Irish inaccuracy for "carry the wood" in a list of New England, Dutch, Irish, and general colloquial inaccuracies.

[99] *Tolt* is the name of a writ by which proceedings were removed or "lifted" from the Court Baron to County Court. See any good law dictionary.

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pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

*Touch*, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

*To that*, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

*Uncle*, a term of respect for old men.

*Use*, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

*Yowe*, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

[194]

[113]

[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canos ou Pirogues*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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194 [191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

*African Words*

174 192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-

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sible (1) the borrowing of European words by the Africans and (2) the adoption of African words by the sailors and traders, the former process naturally being the more active of the two.

The history of a specific word will illustrate the difficulties involved. On St. Helena Island the word *malafee*,[117] meaning whiskey, is known to a few persons. It is supposedly of African origin. In fact, one dictionary[118] lists *malafu*, banana wine, and states that the word is African. Now, in medieval times there was a famous wine, malvesie, so named from Napoli di Malvasia, a town on the south coast of the Morea in Greece. It was sold in many ports, and its name was known in dozens of languages. In Dutch it was called *malvezy*, and this form came into English as *malvesie*. Chaucer mentioned "A Iubbe of Malveyse" in the *Canterbury Tales*.

The close relation between *f* and *v* made it easy for *malvesie* to become *malfesie*, and this form is very close to the St. Helena *malafee*. The name of the wine, however, was later changed in English from *malvesie* to *malmsey*, so that the old form was perpetuated only in oral language. It is certain that the old name was known to some of the English who colonized America. The word had also probably penetrated various African languages. The form *malafu*, attributed to Africa, has already been cited. In the Swahili (Zanzibar region) *m'lava* for drunk or intoxicated was reported in Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, 1846, p. 578.

[117] Noted by Mrs. Parsons in her *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands*, p. xxi. For a possible West Indian parallel, see her *Folk Tales of Andros Island, Bahamas*, p. 20: *Malantee*.

[118] Funk and Wagnalls. No specific African language is mentioned, however, and nothing said as to the extent of the use of the word in America.

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Here, then, is a word known in England in Chaucer's day cropping out in various places centuries later. Its appearance among the Negroes of the Sea Islands has given rise to the supposition that it is of African origin, which was certainly not the case. The question then arises, might it not at least be of African provenience? Perhaps so, since the African forms are different from the English form: *m'la'va, mal'afee, malafu'* (sometimes *mala'fu*) as compared to *mal'vesie*. Still *mal'afee* could be an English dialectal pronunciation of *malvesie* and might have entered this country with the English. At any rate, this word affords an excellent illustration of the need for caution in the study of strange words found in American Negro speech.[119]

No better evidence of the almost complete assimilation of English language habits by the Negro can be found than the scarcity of English words of African origin. Various words have been thought to be of African extraction, but many of them have turned out to be archaic English[120] or to be derived from Spanish or Portuguese.[121] There have been, of course, numerous individual survivals, that is, instances in which one person would continue to use a word or two of his native African language, but these have not obtained any diffusion and have about disappeared.

[119] The dictionaries and grammars of various African languages have nearly all been compiled since 1800, and there had been plenty of time for the assimilation of European words by African tongues. I sometimes wonder if *buckra*, white man, said to be derived from the Efik of Old Calabar, where it meant a spirit or powerful being, might not have come from English *booger*, or a related word from English or some other European language.

[120] E.g., *brawtus*, meaning something extra, something in addition, thought by some to be African, is from English *brotts* or *brotta*. *Tote*, to carry, is also English. See list of archaisms above.

[121] E.g., *pickaniny* is from Portuguese, *pequenião*.

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For an African word to gain a regional diffusion in this country, it either had to designate some object which was familiar to a large proportion of the slaves but was new to the English settlers, or it had to be an expressive substitute for the name of some object already known to the white people. Words for certain plants like *okra*, *gumbo*, *yam*, *goober*, are examples of the first type. *Buckra*, for white man, and *cooter*, for terrapin, are examples of the second type.

Several words now generally conceded to be of African origin were introduced to the white people in this country during slavery. The vegetable name, *okra*, is familiar to most people, its synonym, *gumbo*, a little less widely known; *yam* (potato) is in general use; *goober* (peanut) is common throughout the South, but its synonym, *pinda* or *pindar*, is less popular; *cooter* is known to the whites in most of the Southern states. All of these words are in use in the Gullah area today. In addition there are several which are practically confined to this area although occasionally found elsewhere in the lower South. *Buckra* is used in the low country, but the works of Gonzales and others have increased its literary diffusion of late. *Ki* as an exclamation is heard among the Negroes in most parts of the Gullah area. *Oona*[122] (*thou* or *you*) thought to be African, is common in the Gullah region.[123]

[122] Sometimes *yunnah*, *hunnah*, *wunnah*.

[123] Possible sources exist in several West African languages. In the Kuka or Yaw language, *thou* is *yini*. In the Somray *thou* is *yunger*. See Benton, *Notes on Some Languages of the Western Sudan*, p. 122. *Thou* is *yi*, *ye*, *yu*, *we*, *wo*, *wu*, etc., in several languages of Guinea and the Sudan. In Kol and in Gbaragba the second person plural is *wun*, in Kparabon it is *wuna*, in Bo it is *wu*, in Troughon it is *wuna*. See Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*, section on "Langues de Soudan et de la Guinée." In Browne's *Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, a vocabulary of Sowheli (or Swahili), the language of Zanzibar, is printed.

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•192 *Malafee* (whiskey) is used by a few people on St. Helena Island. As shown above, it is not of African origin, but may be of African provenience. In the Georgetown section *plat-eye* is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area. It is not known on St. Helena Island; in fact it seems to be limited to a section around Georgetown.[124] *Yam* or *nyam* (to eat) is common in the Gullah. It is thought by some to be of African origin. It has been suggested that it comes from the noun *yam* (potato),[125] but this etymology is hardly satisfactory. James Platt, an English writer, derived it from the Fulah (or Ful) *nyami*, to eat.[126] It is interesting to note here that *yam*, meaning to eat heartily, has long been used in England. It is found in several English dialect glossaries,[127] as well as among the obsolete words in several unabridged English dictionaries, and nothing is said of its African origin. In the form *yam*, or *yum-yum*,[128] it is not at all rare among American white people today. Whether *yam*, or *nyam*, was passed from the Eng-

*Oona* means *you have; boona* means *are you?* or *have not you?* It is doubtful however, if many of our slaves came from the Zanzibar section. It is strange, I think, that no one has claimed that *me*, as used by the Negroes for the nominative of the first person singular, is of African descent. As a matter of fact, *me*, *mi*, etc., are much more common in the nominative of the first person singular in West African languages than are *oona*, *yunnah*, etc., in the second person. See *Les Langues du Monde*, various lists of pronouns in African languages.

[124] Since this was written, *plat-eye* has made its appearance in Roark Bradford's *This Side of Jordan*, a novel of Negro life on the lower Mississippi.

[125] Williams, *De Ole Plantation*, p. vi.

[126] "The Negro Element in English," *Athenaeum*, Sept. 1, 1900, p. 283.

[127] For example, in Grose, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, London, 3rd ed., 1796, also in the *E. D. D.* (under *yam*, *nyam*, *nyum*, *nyum-nyum*).

[128] In the Gullah, it is sometimes *nyam-nyam* for emphasis. Did the Negro get this usage from English, or did we get ours from him? In this connection, there is a group of tribes in Central Africa noted for their cannibalism, known as the Niam-Niam.

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lish to the Negro or from the Negro to the English is not known at present, but there is evidence that its ultimate derivation will prove to be African.[129] 192.

These words include all which are used throughout or in large sections of the Gullah area which have been shown to be of African derivation. The word *Gullah* itself might be added. In the Savannah section the word *Geechy* is similarly used to designate the Negroes of that region, and it seems likely that it came from the name of a river near Savannah, the Ogeechee.[130] Negroes in the vicinity of this river were called 'Geechy River Negroes, which was finally shortened to Geechy.[131]

It is probable that in this country the white man has been the medium of conservation and diffusion of these African words more than the Negro has. Some of the words were adopted by planters in the West Indies and were brought to South Carolina by those who migrated 174 192

[129] Smith states that Professor W. A. Craigie derives it "from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food." This is not specific enough. I have examined vocabularies of about thirty West African languages, and only one has any word for eat which resembles *nyam*, viz., the Somray, *yanum*.

[130] Pronounced *Ogeechy*. Of Indian origin.

[131] Professor Smith lists *geechy* as *African*, but he refers to a different usage, namely, as an adjective in the sense of "goosey." I have never encountered *geechy* used in this sense. Smith lists several other words as possibly African (*Gullah*, pp. 32-3). These are *cymbi*, *kahalingo*, *swanga*, *gufer*, *geechy*, *panapus*, *da*, *da-da*, *du-du*, and *Stepney*. I have seen no specific African derivations for any of these. None of these is used on St. Helena, as far as our research staff can ascertain, except *swanga*, meaning swaggering, boastful, etc. I think this is too close to our *swank*, *swankum*, *swagger*, etc., to need any other explanation. Words like *think* and *thank* are often pronounced in Gullah with more of a *g* sound than a *k* sound. This tendency would change the English dialectic swanky to *swangy* or *swanga*. Swanky has the same meaning as Gullah *swanga*, namely "swaggering" (adj.) and "a strapping fellow" (noun). See Wright, *Provincial Dictionary*, also *English Dialect Dictionary*. *Da* and *da-da* are possibly dialect pronunciations of *there*, *that there*. Smith's list was compiled from various sources, and it was not always possible for him to get definite information as to meanings, pronunciations, etc.

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174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
•192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter*, *goober*, *pindar*, but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu*, *gingooba*, and *mpinda*.

### THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

19 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and
177 the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[132]

[132] *Gullah*, p. 8.

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[For additional information on the grammatical analysis of the Gullah language, see Category 19.]

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[For text illustrating various manifestations of Gullah phonological and grammatical constructions, see Categories 538 and 539.]

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121 African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages."

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea islands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well." Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English grammar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

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177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment, and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the unintentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

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159 were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back
538 and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page
[201] these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale.

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was con-
[193] temporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community.

*Mr. James Oree* is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

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159 538 ingly in order to permit the listeners to reflect on the content of his narrative; whatever his reason, it was a highly effective technique. During his long pauses, older members often offered a word of encouragement, such as "Tell em, Henry." Mr. Henry would reply, "Shore [sure]! I remember that good as yesterday!"

Like most good Sea Island narrators, Mr. Henry used a highly emotional oratorical method that tended to stimulate and excite his listeners. He frequently used repetition and parallel constructions, with mesmerizing effects. For example, he often spoke of the days of his youth, a time when he lived and worked on a plantation. The simple words "We ben living over there . . . on the white people place . . . the white people place" alone on the page can never capture the emotion of his phrasing or show his grave expression as he paused to reflect. The words had apparently brought to mind untold memories, so many that he felt compelled to repeat the phrase again softly and more deliberately, as if each word had history in itself.

In addition to his various uses of repetition, Mr. Henry would often actually shout out with passionate anger, joy, or excitement. To his exclamations, older members would respond with equal fervor. He would call out the name of a responding member and ask, for example:

> "Myma, you ain't know what I bina talk about, do you?"

The respondent (Myma in this case) would reply:

> "Yeah man! Shore I bina know!"
> "Huh?"
> "Yeah! Yeah!"
> "But this one here [pointing to a younger member] ain't de know. E [he] ain't even ben born yet."

Appropriately to his topics, Mr. Henry's language had formal overtones even in casual utterances. Thus he retained the elements characteristic of a creolized Gullah speech: one pronoun for both masculine and feminine subjects, a range of preverbal markers, few if any morphological inflections, the introductory or formulaic verb *say*, and other features of the creole tradition (see Chapter 4). [193]

159 *Miss Deeley* would not reveal her age, nor would she consent to being recorded or permit me to use her last name, but she is one of the most prolific women storytellers that I encountered. She is fifty or

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782 IV. Appeals

A. Father, we down here this evening
Heavenly Father
Asking for your mercy

B. We want you to come in this building
One more time

C. We ask you to please strengthen us
Where we are weak
And build us where we are tearing down

D. We ask you to look at the leaders
From one to another, Jesus
Make them ushers of sound judgment
Then truly devoted to God

E. I want you to bless each and every usher
Jesus
Help them to please hold out and hold on

F. Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time

G. Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus

H. Want you to look at Jerusalem one more time

I. [Look at] me too

V. Peroration

Somewhere, Lord, Job declare
The wicked must cease in trouble
And my soul have rest
'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

782 195 [193] [537] The social setting in which a prayer of this sort is delivered contributes to the development of bilingual skills for many Gullah speakers. This prayer, like most others, contains few features characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech, such as the use of the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don* and the omission of inflectional markers. There is a good reason for the absence of these and other features in this text. A prayer of this type is composed in a tradition of rhetorical

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197 guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah
193 still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pro-
197 nouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ɔ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [də], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

171 In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

538 As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have par-
171 allels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

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538 171 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering, false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix 1 for a transcription of one story into

538 128 [193]

A, [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

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195 rest you mouth!: shut up!
long eye: envy

192 Most linguists agree that lexicon is perhaps one of the most arbitrary features that languages borrow from one another, and it is in this area that they tend to borrow most extensively. As Talmy Givón has explained, when different linguistic groups come in contact, it is natural that the area of most acute linguistic conflict will be the lexicon; by borrowing words from each other, speakers resolve the communication conflict. But languages seldom borrow grammar.[13] Thus, in areas where Gullah is spoken, it is well to understand that while the lexicon is primarily English, much of the underlying grammar is rooted in West African languages.

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121 In detailed analysis of Gullah I have used Walt Wolfram's "matrix of cruciality," selecting for discussion those features still persistent in Gullah speech.[14] Every effort has been made to present very technical material as nontechnically as possible, in order to assist readers in understanding peculiarities of Gullah speech, not only to help them appreciate the language but to suggest something of the rhythm and flow of the narratives and tales, a quality which, as I have noted, cannot be captured on paper.

## Features of Grammar

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Many characteristic features of grammar and syntax set Gullah apart from other varieties of African-American speech.[15] Unlike standard English, which relies heavily on subordination to convey relationships between ideas, contemporary Gullah relies on coordination, or the combination of sentences that are short, abrupt, and loosely strung together. Gullah thus dispenses with many of the prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, and participles that tie together complex standard English sentences. In addition, the relationships between sentences are not necessarily specified through grammatical operations but may be left to be inferred from the usage or context.

The verb and pronoun systems are particularly distinctive in Gullah. Some distinguishing features of the verb structure include the uninflected verb, verb serialization, the introductory verb *say* [se], the complementizer *for* [fə], and verb reduplication.

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## The Uninflected Verb

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Gullah speakers have maintained an aspectual system with few formal markings to indicate tense. Accordingly, a single verb stem may be used to refer to a past, present, or future action. In fact, little importance is attached to the actual time when an action took place; rather, it is the mood and aspect of the action which impressed the speaker at the moment that are important. This is a pattern also common in the West African languages that contributed to Gullah—Ewe, Mandinka, Igbo, Yoruba, and others.[16]

Instead of using a system of postverbal marking, with *-ed*, *-s*, and *-ing*, for example, Gullah speakers use preverbal marking: the particles *de* [də], *ben* [bɛn], *bina* [bɛnə] and *don* [dɔŋ], the principal tense and aspect indicators, appear before the main verb to signal when an event occurred. Observe their appearances in the following constructions, which were obtained by asking Gullah speakers to produce semantic equivalents of English sentences that referred to shelling peas:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| English: | I shell them. | Gullah: | I shell em (tenseless). |
| | She shells them. | | She (e, he) de shell em. |
| | I am shelling them. | | I de shell em. |
| | I shelled them. | | I ben shell em. |
| | I have been shelling them. | | I bina shell em. |
| | I have shelled them. | | I don shell em. |
| | I shelled them some time ago. | | I ben don shell em. |

The preverb *de*, in *I de shell em*, can often be heard and understood as *I shelled them*, as well as *I will shell them*. *De* appears most frequently in contemporary Gullah speech as a replacement for present-tense forms of English *be* verbs: *am*, *is*, *are*.

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## •193 Verb Serialization

A construction common to most creole languages and still very much inherent in contemporary varieties of Gullah is verb serialization. This process involves systematically joining one, two, or even three verbs to express an idea where standard English would use one main verb and one or more additional clauses or phrases, as in the following sentences:

Gullah: I hear tell say he know some old-time story.

English: I heard it said that he knows some old-time stories. Verbs are used in Gullah to perform functions discharged by other parts of speech in standard English. While all three (*hear, say,* and *tell*) are communicative verbs, *hear* is the only main verb; *tell* performs as a participle and *say* as a connective introducing an objective clause. In this practice Gullah follows the pattern of African serializing languages of the Kwa group, such as Yoruba, Igbo, Ibebio, and Ewe. It is not uncommon in these languages to find strings of verbs, one after the other, all having the same tense or mood and all having a common subject.[17] Observe the following construction from Igbo:

Igbo: Obi kpọrọ nkụ mmadụ.
Literal translation: Obi drying wooding his person.
English. Obi is getting as hard as wood.

### The Verb *Say* [se]

Whenever possible, the Sea Island speakers tend to interrupt a narrative with reports of direct address, as opposed to the indirect reporting of information often found in standard English discourse. The word *say* is most commonly used in Gullah to introduce a direct quotation and is repeated before each clause, group of words, or single utterance, in order to assure that the listeners will recognize what follows as the exact words of another speaker. The use of *say* may be observed in Gullah as follows:

Gullah: He tell em, say, "E ain't no deer round here."
Say, "Where you de hunt?"

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•193 English: He told him, "There aren't any deer around here."
He asked, "Where are you hunting?"

It is noteworthy that the word *say* has parallels in West African languages in its use as an introductory verb. In Twi, for example, *say* has not only the same function but a similar phonetic shape: [sɛ].[18]

## The Complementizer *For* [fə]

The complementizer *for* [fə] is used in Gullah to signal the infinitive. It corresponds to the English word *for* in form, but it has more variable functions. It is amenable to English translation by the modals *must* or *should* and is most commonly used to introduce clauses of purpose or intent. It appears in contexts like the following:

Gullah: He must be born with something for see em.
For see, she could see em plain.
English: *She* must have been born with something to enable her to see them. You (must) understand, she could see them plainly. (For the pronoun switch see "The Pronominal System" below.)

It is true that some varieties of English have used *for* in similar contexts. *For* used before infinitives or even in conjunction with *to*, as in *for to*, was prevalent in English especially between 1200 and 1500, and it is apparently recorded in rural areas of England today. While *for to* has been recorded in Gullah speech, the simultaneous occurrence seem to be the exception rather than the rule, even in early descriptions of Gullah.[19] The assumption that Gullah has retained archaic features attributable to diverse areas of the British Isles is surprising, given that the Scottish, Irish, and East Anglian immigrants to America did not transmit these features to their own descendants.[20] The assumption that *for* is primarily of English origin loses more validity in light of the evidence that varieties of pidgin and creole language in West Africa today utilize the complementizer *for* in constructions similar to those in which it is used in Gullah, and there is no possibility of obsolete English influence there. Variants of *for* are common in West African languages; for example, Twi and Ewe use *fe* and Yoruba *fa*, all with syntactical functions similar to those of English *for*. This controversy (as

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193 well as some others involving Gullah and other creole languages) has theoretical import for the study of etiology in pidgin and creole languages. The form may be English or may be African, but most probably it resulted from both, since the occurrence of a similar word with similar functions is characteristic of both parent language groups.

## 193 Verb Reduplication

195 Reduplication is very common in Gullah. It is used to intensify; to indicate degree, magnitude, quality, or duration; and to express great excitement. Variation in repetition is often the key to the rhythm of Sea Island speech. Words or phrases are not repeated monotonously. Rather, each word or phrase starts with a low tone, rises to a mid tone with the first repetition, and reaches a very high pitch with the second repetition. The addition of repetitions usually modifies the meaning, as in the following:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gullah: | small small | English: | very small |
| | small small small | | extremely small |
| | clean clean | | very clean |
| | wrap up wrap up | | wrap up very tightly |
| | hungry hungry | | very hungry |

Some words may be preceded or followed by *too much*, to emphasize the meaning or alter it slightly: *small too much*, for example, means "very small" or "too small." Depending on intonation, *too much* can have a positive or negative connotation; for instance, *clean too much* signifies either "very clean" or "obsessed with cleanliness."

Reduplication forms are similarly widespread and are used to express a variety of meanings in African languages belonging to the Kwa group. Creole languages in general tend to follow the structure of the substrate language (in this case African), and it seems logical to conclude that the persistence of reduplication in Gullah is indeed an African carry-over.

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Igbo FF26



S
193 **The Pronominal System**

In the Gullah pronominal system one can still observe clear demarcations between European and West African language practices. Whereas English employs separate pronouns to specify masculine, feminine, and neuter genders, some speakers of contemporary Gullah adhere to a system in which gender is unspecified and the same pronoun, *e* [i], may be used to refer to males and females in the nominative and genitive cases. "E blink e eye," for example, can be translated either "He blinked his eye" or "She blinked her eye." The West African languages from which Gullah is in part derived also omit case and gender distinctions between pronouns. Note the system in Igbo, for example:

I
193

Nominative: $ya_3$, "he," "she," "it"
Genitive: $ya_3$ "his," "hers," "its"
Objective: $ya_3$ "him," "her," "it"

This schema is somewhat simplified because it does not indicate that the Igbo pronouns *o* and *ọ* are the inseparable forms and the forms used most frequently in indirect or reported speech, whereas $ya_3$ is used most often with tags, direct reports, or commands. Other variants, governed by vowel harmony or other linguistic structures, are employed as well. In Igbo and other tone languages, meaning is portrayed at least as much by the tone or manner in which something is said as by the word itself. The rhythm is inherent in the language, and in the words of an Igbo informant, "the language is actually sung." But the important fact for this discussion is that one pronoun, regardless of form, can be used whatever the case and gender. Specifications are indicated largely through context and prefixing.

I
[194]

S
193 The features outlined here are but a few of those distinguishing Gullah from English and known to have West African parallels. In addition to tense markers, for example, indicators of voice and number are often missing from the verb system in Gullah. Pronouns that would be expected in English may also be infrequent or absent in Gullah—for instance, the feminine pronoun *her*, the subject and object pronoun *it*, the first-person plural pronoun *us*, and the whole category of pos-

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•193 sessive pronouns. But even without further elaboration, it should be clear that an understanding of how the Sea Island language works will help in appreciating the tales and prayers that have been presented in this book, the authentic "old-time talk."

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# Appendix 3

# Phonetic Text: The Soul and the Spirit

539 128 19 The following text is included in this study primarily to show the language in context. It manifests many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of creole languages.[1] The English version following the transcription obscures many of the creole patterns; consequently, a word-for-word translation accompanies each line of phonetic script to illustrate underlying creole constituents such as the complementizer [fə], the introductory verb [sie], the future marker [go], and many other constructions.

This passage reveals specific segmental phonological phenomena, for example, vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for, such English phones as /β/ for /w/; /ɸ/ for /f/; /t/ for initial /δ/ and /θ/; and /ç/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, deviant words, or stuttering. It is extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of interference of birds and other outdoor noises on the tape. In such cases ellipsis dots indicate that a short passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a slash (/).

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline ( ∿∿∿ ).

Hyphens join two or more words run together in the transcription.

• 193 539 128 English translations of the preverbal markers and the third-person pronominal forms often misrepresent the creole utterance. The following notations are accordingly used to symbolize these forms:

(3 ♂ n) third-person masculine nominative
(3 ♀ n) third-person feminine nominative

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193 (3 ∅ n) third-person neuter nominative
539 (3 ♂ o) third-person masculine objective
128 (3 ♀ o) third-person feminine objective
(3 ∅ o) third-person neuter objective

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | present continuative | /də/ |
| (PaC) | past | /bɪnə/ |
| (T) | tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (L) | locative | /də/ |

539 dì soəl ɛn di speɪt

775 1. lɪsn mi gʊd nɔu / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wöl / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
19 *Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see, the, the, the soul*

2. əβə män go fiom dʊ di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔʔɹ / ɛn ɪɸ ju βədɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɒl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days,*

4. juə speit /ätə jʊ died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing, your spirit.*

5. juə soəl öp dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛʔ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɒri / ɛn däs də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də ɸek tu jʊ / jʊ si nɔ nɔ
*the body. And that's the one gone, gone do the effect to you. You see now now*

7. das das βɒɪ ɒɪ sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɒs ä pipü
*that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

8. dõn biliɸ / sie sie sieiz no guos / iz guos dɛə /bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

9. di ʔɑ̃ɹəmobil n tiŋ kɔm / n gɪt dɪ hɒɪβie nɔ / jʊsidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now, you-see-these, these thing*

10. käɪnə tɛk tu wʊd / äɪ mɛmbə wɔnäɪt / βi βi bɪn ɔut
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we, we (T) out*

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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

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CHAPTER 4

LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

4.0 Overview

121 The present chapter deals with three grammatical
193 categories chosen to represent the changes now underway in Gullah. The syntactic functions of the three categories--complementizer, preposition, and pronoun--are clearly distinct from each other in this creole. The morphemes used for the creole and standard forms within each category are distinct phonetically from each other, for the most part. Older Gullah texts indicate that variation has been present within these categories for at least the past century; for the complementizer, change to standard forms is almost complete for most speakers in the area studied. For each cate-
121 gory, analysis of the systematic linguistic changes in
128 progress will be presented. Section 4.1 examines the pre-infinitival complementizer, section 4.2 a static locative preposition, and section 4.3 the third person singular pronouns. Section 4.4 summarizes these findings.

121 4.1 Complementizer
193 A number of recent papers have presented evidence that many languages have morphemes which function both as

121 case markers and as complementizers (Ferguson, 1970; Moravcsik, 1972a and 1972b; Gorbet, 1973; R. Clark, 1973; Hinds, 1973; Joseph, 1975). Washabaugh (1975) has presented evidence for the existence of similar morphemes in a number of creoles. In order to adequately explore these relationships between the complementizer and other syntactic categories in Gullah, section 4.1.1 will describe the uses of the morpheme fE for the grammatical categories of preposition, complementizer, and conditional marker. Section 4.1.2 will present an analysis of the functions of the pre-infinitival complementizer in Gullah, along with a discussion of the direction of change presently shown by this grammatical category. Section 4.1.3 will summarize historical developments in this category for English and will point to possible universal relationships which obtain between complementizers and case markers in creoles and in fully expanded languages.

### 4.1.1 Uses of fE in Gullah

The particle fE, phonetically [fə], is used as a complementizer in Gullah in pre-infinitival position. This morpheme is also used as a preposition and as a conditional marker on the verb. Examples of the three syntactic uses of the particle fE are given below:

PREPOSITION
Benefactive: (1) but yet I reckon they doing that fE the children wey go to school (S2)

'but yet I reckon they're doing that for the children who go to school'

•193

(2) well I do need the kitchen fE me-self, 'cause them ain't gon do nothing fE me (S2)

'well I do need the kitchen for myself, because they aren't going to do anything for me'

Intensifier: (3) and I had to get work then fE true (S8)

'and I really had to get work then'

COMPLEMENTIZER
Purposive: (4) my brother he jump on the big boat fE let the people know what happen (S1)

'my brother jumped onto the big boat to let the people know what happened'

Adjunctive/
Relative: (5) I think I was too old fE be 'long with them (S1)

'I think I was too old to be along with them'

Object: (6) and so my cousin she tell me fE come on play with her (S17)

'and so my cousin told me to come on and play with her'

CONDITIONAL[1]
Future: (7) tomorrow I fE clean the house

'tomorrow I will clean the house' (interpretation by S18)

---

[1]I am indebted to William A. Stewart for calling these uses of fE to my attention and for providing the sample sentence (7) for use in checking the two meanings of fE as a conditional marker. Some speakers interpreted this utterance as meaning a simple future as did S18, while others interpreted it as carrying a sense of obligation: 'tomorrow I have to clean the house.' Generally, speakers who had the greatest number of creole features in their speech gave the simple future interpretation. Conditional here is used in the sense of 'non-factual' or 'unreal.'

[114]

•193 Obligative: (8) I do some everything what ee fE do in the world while I was coming up (S2)

'I did some of everything that should be done in the world while I was growing up'

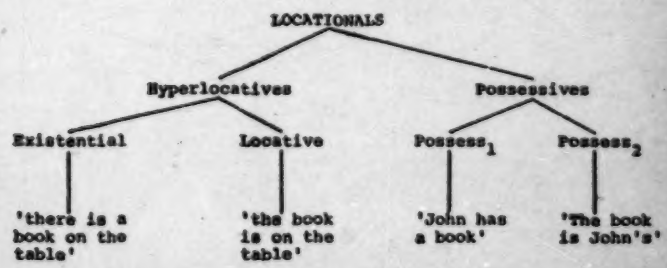
Fillmore (1968) and others have discussed the use of prepositions for case marking in English. As a preposition in Gullah, fE marks the benefactive case. In intention, it is associated with notions of possession. As a complementizer, the most frequent use of fE is for the introduction of clauses associated with notions of purpose and result as in (4). It is also used with adjunctive and relative clauses and with object clauses after certain verbs. The conditional use of fE has almost disappeared for present speakers of Gullah. The future use of (7) was obtained by direct elicitation, and all speakers did not agree with the gloss provided for the utterance. The use of fE as a conditional marker of obligation was retained by a few very old and by some children in spontaneous speech, but its occurrence in recorded texts was rare. In the same stretch of discourse in which (8) was recorded, speaker S2 indicated command of the standard English equivalent for the conditional with the following utterance:

(9) I done do everything in the world wey people should do (S2)

'I have done everything in the world that people should do'

[114] Washabaugh (1975) has recently argued that complementizers in creoles, and perhaps in other cases of language

193 elaboration, develop from locatives. To agree with his
114 analysis would mean identifying the preposition fE in Gullah
as a locative. I have argued elsewhere (Nichols, 1975) that
193 his claim is too strong. Benefactive prepositions in Gullah
and other creoles use morphemes identical to those for complementizers and cannot be considered true locatives. There does seem to be a close relationship between complementizers and markers for the benefactive and dative cases in many languages; some languages use homonymous morphemes to mark the conditional or subjunctive, as well as for complementizer and case. Gullah is one of these, having three uses for the morpheme fE. I have suggested that the abstract notion 'locational,' along lines discussed by E. Clark (1970), might be useful for examining relationships between these grammatical categories which often utilize the same morphems. Clark schematizes locational constructions as follows:



•193 Under such a schema, locatives and possessives can be seen as related although separate categories. The locatives found by Washabaugh for other creoles, and the benefactives carrying notions of possession in Gullah and other creoles, can be understood as 'locationals' which share important characteristics associated with this abstract grammatical category. As Washabaugh has indicated, the study of emerging creoles may provide valuable information about the possible universal relationships which may obtain between certain grammatical categories. The uses of the fɛ morpheme in Gullah provide additional evidence for a close relationship between complementizers and case markers.

### 4.1.2 Variation and Change in the Complementizer In Gullah

The complementizer shows considerable variation between creole and standard forms for older speakers. Most younger speakers use standard forms to and for NP to categorically at present.[2] Those speakers who retain the creole fɛ as complementizer show variation between the following forms, as well as considerable use of standard forms. No speaker in the data analyzed uses creole and nonstandard forms categorically.

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(194) [2] The phonetic realization of the for in standard for NP to is still [fə]. Most speakers in the region under study reduce or eliminate r in post-vocalic position; vowels become [ə] in unstressed positions, as in other varieties of English.

19 introduction of purposive clauses, the introduction of adjunctive or relative clauses, and the introduction of verb objects. Of these three clausal types, the purposive clauses show heaviest use of creole variants. Over half the complementizers used with purposive clauses in the data analyzed here (see Table 1) are creole and nonstandard variants listed above. Faraci (forthcoming) distinguishes three subgroups for the purposive infinitive clause in standard English (purpose, rationale, and objective clauses), but the data for Gullah do not warrant making such distinctions. Those clauses which indicate either purpose or intention and either reason or result for action in the matrix clauses are grouped together here for Gullah under the broad classification of 'purposive.' Examples of complementizer variants which introduce purposive clauses in the data presented in Table 1 are as follows:

• 193

PURPOSIVE

fE: (10) she just gone fE take a rest (S2)

'she just went to take a rest'

(11) I don't get up fE dance-- (S1)

'if I don't get up to dance--'

g: (12) they don't take over fifteen, twenty minutes g cut up some wood (S16)

'they don't take over fifteen, twenty minutes to cut up some wood'

fE NP g: (13) they had to push down the house fE my daughter g come here from New York (S2)

•193

'they had to push down the house for my daughter to come here from New York'

to: (14) we used to use the ox to plow, farm rice, farm our rice in the rice field (S8)

for NP to: (15) my mother had quit school for her younger sister there to go to college (S6)

Only about a third of the complementizers which serve to introduce adjunctive/relative clauses in the data are creole or nonstandard variants, but every possible variant is represented in the data for this clausal type. The term adjunctive is used here in the traditional sense of an element which serves as a constituent of some higher element, but which is not syntactically one of the principal structural elements of the sentence. The term relative is appended to this category because some of the clauses in this particular group are ambiguously either purposive or relative. Some adjunctive/relative clauses are attributive, modifying or giving additional information about a higher element as in:

(16) just 'bout time for the rice to harvest come a freshet tide (S8)

'just about the time for the rice to be harvested came a freshet (flood) tide'

Some are comparative, as in:

(17) there's enough for all ∅ put a house on (S8)

And some are ambiguously relative or purposive:

(18) you get soil to sow this ground (S19)

Examples of complementizer variants which introduce adjunctive/relative clauses are as follows:

193 ADJUNCTIVE/RELATIVE

fE: (19) you set a rice basket fE fan in (S2)

'you set out a rice basket to fan (the rice) into'

ø: (20) after he come he hire people you know ø get this place clean up (S1)

'after he came he hired people, you know, to get this place cleaned up'

fE to:[3] (21) they just change land 'cause they was no way fE to get out there (S1)

'they just changed land because there was no way to get out there'

fE NP fE: (22) they had Em they say fE--a place fE stack rice (S2)

'they had it they said for a place to stack rice'

fE NP ø: (23) the canal was too shallow fE the yacht ø come in (S1)

'the canal was too shallow for the yacht to come in'

to: (24) and ee'll grow until time to harvest (S19)

'and it'll grow until time to harvest (it)'

for NP to: (25) my eyesight ain't no good so no use for me to try (S6)

'my eyesight isn't any good, so there's no use for me to try'

Complementizers which introduce clauses used as verb objects show the least use of creole and nonstandard variants,

---

[126] [3]Only one example of this variant was obtained in all the recorded data, although older texts report its use and a few old songs retain this form.

•193 only about ten percent of the total number for this clausal type. None of the objects after inceptive verbs (e.g., start, begin, take up, go) is introduced by a creole or non-standard variant. Since no other category has only standard forms, the data suggest that complementizers which introduce objects after inceptive verbs have been the most susceptible to change. The following example shows the use of a standard variant as complementizer after an inceptive verb:

(26) they take up to go 'cross the river and work on them farm (S8)

'they began to go across the river and work on those farms'

A few objects after want-type or desiderative and psychological verbs are introduced by creole variants:

(27) I ain't know fE get Em off (S1)

'I don't know how to get it off'

Other verbs which take objects introduced by a complementizer are active or non-psychological verbs like tell, learn ('teach'), cause, get ('cause):

(28) and so my cousin she tell me fE come on play with her (S17)

'and so my cousin told me to come on and play with her'

Variants used to introduce verb object clauses are as follows:

VERB OBJECT
fE: (29) I ain't know how fE hitch Em (S2)

'I don't know how to fasten it'

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•193 g: (30) you got the rice what you want ∅ sell (S19)

'you have the rice that you want to sell'

to: (31) wish I could know how to do this thing (S2)

Distribution of the complementizer variants used by 11 speakers for the three clausal types is given in Table 1 below. All speakers except two are older men and women between 65 and 90 years old. Speakers 15 and 16 are young men between age 15 and 25.

As the table indicates, more standard than creole and nonstandard variants are used for the complementizer by present speakers of Gullah. Few speakers under the age of 65 use any creole variants at all in this grammatical category. Of the three clausal types for which the complementizer is used, purposive clauses show heaviest use of creole and nonstandard variants and verb objects show least. Although the table does not give the figures, no instances at all were found for creole variants after inceptive-type verbs taking objects.

In his analysis of a similar complementizer fu found in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton (1971) uses three sub-categories, based on the verb type found in the matrix clause: inceptives (start), desideratives (want) and similar psychological verbs, and non-inceptive/non-desideratives. Using a Bailey Wave Model, based on work of C.-J. Bailey (summarized in Bailey, 1973), Bickerton finds that implicational

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 58]

•193

TABLE 1

COMPLEMENTIZER DISTRIBUTION FOR ELEVEN SPEAKERS

| Speaker | PURPOSIVE + | | | | | PURPOSIVE - | | ADJUNCTIVE/RELATIVE + | | | | | ADJUNCTIVE/RELATIVE - | | VERB OBJECT + | | | | | VERB OBJECT - | | TOTALS + | TOTALS - | TOTALS %+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| 1 | 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 4 | | 8 | 4 | 66 |
| 2 | 11 | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | 1 | | | | 7 | | 17 | 9 | 65 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 43 |
| 3 | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 1 | 4 | 20 |
| 15 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 10 | | 2 | 10 | 17 |
| 16 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 7 | | 2 | 10 | 17 |
| 7 | | | | | | 5 | | | | | | 1 | 8 | | 2 | | | | | 12 | | 3 | 25 | 11 |
| 19 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 3 | | | 1 | | | | 2 | | 1 | 8 | 11 |
| 8 | 1 | | | | | 5 | | | | | | 1 | 7 | 1 | | | | | | 15 | | 2 | 28 | 6 |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 2 | | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| 6 | | | | | | 4 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 21 | | | | | 20 | | 11 | | | | | 26 | | 7 | | | | | 64 | | 39 | 112 | 29% |
| %+ | 51% | | | | | | | 30% | | | | | | | 10% | | | | | | | | | |

\+ = creole or nonstandard forms (1 - 5)
\- = standard forms (6 - 7)

1 = <u>fE</u>; 2 = <u>g</u>; 3 = <u>fE</u> <u>to</u>; 4 = <u>fE</u> <u>NP</u> <u>fE</u>; 5 = <u>fE</u> NP <u>g</u>; 6 = <u>to</u>; 7 = <u>for</u> NP <u>to</u>

193 relations exist between complementizers used for the three clausal types. If a speaker has creole forms for inceptives, that speaker will also have them for desideratives and others. If a speaker has only standard forms for inceptives but has some creole forms for desideratives, creole forms will also be used for the non-inceptive/non-desideratives. The data for Guyanese Creole indicates that similar processes are going on for its complementizer as are going on in Gullah, although Gullah may be at a later stage of development for this category. Older texts and recordings indicate that fE was once used with inceptive verbs in Gullah (Gonzales, 1924; recordings collected near Goose Creek, South Carolina, in the 1940's by students of Professor Virgil Anderson of Stanford University).

No figures for the proportional use of creole and standard variants are given in Bickerton's analysis of the Guyanese complementizer. Only the presence or absence of each type is indicated for each speaker in the three verbal groups. For the Gullah analysis here, actual numbers for occurrences of all variants in each speaker's recorded interview are given. The position taken here is that the significant differences between speakers is more a question of the relative presence of creole variants, rather than their categorical presence or absence--a position similar to that of Sankoff's (1974). In describing the final changes taking place at the end of a long process of change, more

193 detailed data may be essential in determining systematic patterns within speech communities. Such a detailed presentation of the data allows us to see that the purposive clauses in Gullah show heaviest use of creole variants, even though only one speaker uses creole variants categorically for these clauses. The adjunctive/relative clauses show more nonstandard variants (ø, fE to, fE NP ø) than other clausal types, indicating that this may be the category in greatest flux at present; overall it shows more standard than creole and nonstandard forms. The clauses having least use of creole forms are those used as verb objects, a finding similar to, but not identical with, Bickerton's finding for Guyanese.

Indications that creole forms are retained longest in Gullah for the purposive clauses leads us to ask questions about the semantic properties and syntactic functions of the complementizer in standard English.

000 4.1.3 The Complementizer in English

From Mustanoja (1960) and Visser (1966), the following stages in the development of the pre-infinitival complementizer in English can be sketched:

| | |
|---|---|
| Old English: | Verb + infinitival endings<br>to + Verb |
| Middle English: | to + Verb<br>at, till, for till + Verb<br>for to + Verb<br>for + Verb<br>NP + to + Verb |

19 being transported to the Carolina colony, as Hancock (1975)
177 suggests, the English which contributed to the development of the African-based creole was not that of the standard variety, either. Traugott's history of English syntax (1972) notes the importance of certain similarities between the English spoken by some Americans of West African ancestry today and that of seventeenth-century northern England and Scotland. So far as the complementizer is concerned, it is conceivable that the nonstandard for to or even for was the variant used in the kind of English heard by the early immigrants from Africa. Or that these were among the variants heard.

• 193 The heavy retention of fE for purposive clauses in Gullah, even as the change to standard forms for the complementizer in other environments is almost complete, argues for another explanation for the original choice of fE as complementizer than simply a dialectal one. Evidence from standard English and from other creoles points to the close relationship between particles used as prepositions or case markers to indicate notions of purpose and possession, and between homonymous particles having a complementizing function. In an influential discussion of factive and nonfactive predicates, Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) noted the close association between certain types of infinitival con-
000 structions and non-factive predicates. In a subsequent examination of psychological predicates in English, Aijmer

000 (1972) indicated that for in its use as an English complementizer can mark an event as unreal or uncertain. That and for after emotive predicates are used to distinguish between underlying indicative and subjunctive moods; these complementizers in modern English serve to comment on the reality of the statement contained in the embedded clause. Aijmer (p. 98) ~~contends~~ that the infinitive which contains for is "a potential subjunctive, associated with the presupposition that the speaker does not know whether the indicated event is •193 actual or not." (Here we recall the use of fɛ as a modal in Gullah, to express a future or obligatory event, both unreal 000 at the time of utterance.) That, in contrast, precedes an indicative clause and is used for the statement of specific events, associated with certainty. Bresnan (1972), in a study of complementizer types in English, also notes the distinction between for and that complements and maintains that the key to the meaning of the complementizer for lies in the meaning of the preposition for. On the meaning of for Bresnan states (p. 81), "I will tentatively refer to this basic meaning as 'intentional' or 'motivational,' terms which are meant to express at once the subjectivity and the directionality of for." It is relatively easy to see how the related notions of purpose and goal would be associated with a basic directional notion and to see this notion as common to the benefactive case-marking function of for as preposition and to its purposive clause-marking function as

complementizer. It is also easy to see that the subjectivity expressed by for is common to its irrealis mood-marking function as a "potential subjunctive," in Aijmer's terms.

121 193 I suggest an evolutionary sequence of [case marker > complementizer > conditional] for both standard English and Gullah, with Gullah showing an overt conditional modal and English only a 'potentially' subjunctive use of for. I suggest further that such a sequence may represent some universal process which can be expected in other developing creoles and which may be discovered historically for fully expanded languages. Washabaugh (1975) presents a well-argued case for such a relationship between case marking and complementizing functions for the particle fi in Providence Island Creole (Colombia). He proposes that the evolution of a complementizer from a locative preposition reflects a universal process, and cites evidence of a similar development in Sranan, the creole of Senegal, Mauritius Creole, American Indian Pidgin English, and Hawaiian Creole. As discussed earlier, the prepositional use of fE cannot be considered locative. With the qualification that the preposition or case marker be considered 'locational' in the sense discussed by E. Clark (1970), I find Washabaugh's analysis a useful one for investigation of other creoles. In Tok Pisin of New Guinea, presently undergoing the transition from pidgin to a creole, Sankoff (personal communication) has found evidence for a complementizer function developing for a particle

000 bilong, formerly used as a possessive. As complementizer, bilong introduces purpose and result clauses, and seems to be restricted to non-finite verbs. Another particle long is locative and is used as a more general complementizer in Tok Pisin. Data on relational terms in other creoles is scant as yet, but a search for similar relationships between case markers and complementizers may confirm the existence of important universal processes associated with these grammatical categories.

A recent historical analysis by Lightfoot (1976) of for as used before infinitives in earlier stages of English suggests that this particle remained a preposition throughout the history of standard English, never becoming a true complementizer. Whether or not this claim proves valid for • 193 standard English, it should be clear from the preceding discussion that fE in Gullah has been a true complementizer and retains this function longest for the introduction of clauses expressing purposive notions, notions which are associated also with the benefactive preposition fE and the almost extinct conditional marker fE.

4.2 Static-Locative Preposition to

128 193 The present section will deal with locative to, which can express both notions of 'movement toward' and 'position at' in Gullah. Its static-locative uses for the notion 'position at' will be examined for utterances such as:

Can we stay to the table?

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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128 Variation between to and at for static location is now evi-
193 dent for most speakers, although texts of Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide only two examples of at used for this notion, one of which expresses a temporal rather than a spatial idea. Section 4.2.1 will discuss the functions of locative to in Gullah, 4.2.2 will summarize the history of to and at as locative prepositions in English and for some of the English-related creoles of the Caribbean, while the final section will present an analysis of the changes underway at present for this grammatical category in Gullah.

193 4.2.1 Functions of Locative to in Gullah

Locative relations are probably universally designated across languages, although by different grammatical
000 categories in specific languages. Catford (1968) has discussed the use of different grammatical markers in a variety of languages for indicating spatial and temporal relationships between objects. In Finnish, local case suffixes attached to the noun mark such relations. In Karbardian, a language of the Caucasus, prefixes are attached to the verb following the noun phrase. For French, prepositions before the noun phrase are used, as in English. Locative distinctions which can be made by such markers include non-dimensional notions of location, source, goal, and path; static and dynamic positional notions; and dimensional notions such as surface, interior and exterior. For standard English, a

000 set of at least nine locative prepositions is seen as basic to English locatives in one analysis (see Leech, 1970; Fillmore, 1971; H. Clark, 1973; Traugott, 1974). The set of English locative prepositions considered basic here is as follows: at, on, in, to, onto, into, from, off, and out of. (Fillmore and H. Clark include also prepositions related to the notion of 'path' in their analyses; Householder, 1971, includes with and by in his set of 'primary' prepositions of English.) For the analysis which follows, the nine prepositions cited above are taken to be the basic locative prepositions of standard English, used for the designation of locative relations which are probably universal in some sense. In comparing these locative prepositions of standard English with the prepositions which mark locative relations in a pidgin and a creole variety of English, we find a reduced inventory of lexical items. A West African Pidgin English described by Agheyisi (1971) has one general locator, fo, while the creole Gullah uses the six prepositions to, on, in, from, off, and out. In Figure 2 below, the basic prepositions used to express locative relations in this pidgin, the creole Gullah, and standard English are compared along the dimensional and the directional axes. For changes now underway in Gullah, the directional axis is the more important of the two. The directional relations expressed by these prepositions can be either positive, including notions of 'position at' or 'movement toward' a center, or negative

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•193 orientation to some center. The markedness relationships which hold between positive and negative prepositions along the directional axis will be discussed below.

| Direction | Dimension: 0-3 | 0-1 | 1-2 | 2-3 | 0-1 | 1-2 | 2-3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| positive | | to | on | in | at / to | on / onto | in / into |
| negative | fo | from | off | out | from | off | out of |
| | pidgin WAPE | creole GULLAH | | | standard ENGLISH | | |

Figure 2. Locative Prepositions in West African Pidgin English, Gullah, and Standard English

The dimensional relations expressed by standard at, on, and in can be seen in sentences like:

Someone is at the door.

A fly is on the screen door.

Someone is standing in the doorway.

The directional relations expressed by these prepositions

•193 can be seen in the following sentences:

Someone is at the house.

Someone came to the house.

Someone went from the house.

As the examples suggest, the prepositions do not always carry the full locative notion by themselves; lexical items such as come and go share locational meanings, often in combination with certain prepositions. Fillmore (1971) and E. Clark (1974) have discussed these verbs in terms of the notion of 'deictic center,' a notion which will be extended to encompass the prepositions of Gullah in the discussion of markedness below. In the pidgin, the use of other lexical items in combination with the sole locative preposition fo is even more obvious. Examples are taken from R. Agheyisi (1971) and Pat Agheyisi (personal communication).

Di man de fo do. 'The man is at the door.'

Meri kom fo fam fo monitaim. 'Mary came to the farm in the morning.'

A komot fo fam dis monitaim. 'I came from the farm this morning.'

As locative copula in the pidgen, de expresses a neutral state with regard to motion, while kom expresses movement of a positive nature and the more highly marked komot indicates movement away from, or of a negative nature. In the creole, prepositions are often used along with other lexical items for the expression of locative notions, but the dependency on them is not as great. In Gullah, the locative prepositions typically express more than the single locative

•193 preposition of West African Pidgin, as the following Gullah examples indicate:

POSITIVE
static: (31) Dr. Flagg is a family doctor out here <u>to</u> his house (S3)

'Dr. Flagg was a family doctor out here at his house.'

(32) can we stay <u>to</u> the table (S22)

'can we stay at the table?'

toward: (33) then I leave Conway Lumber Company and went <u>to</u> Wilmington (S7)

'then I left Conway Lumber Company and went to Wilmington'

(34) everybody carry it <u>to</u> the cold storage (S8)

'everybody carries it to the cold storage'

NEGATIVE
away from: (35) they had to push down the house fE me daughter come here <u>from</u> New York (S2)

'they had to push down the house for my daughter to come here from New York'

(36) used to live <u>from</u> one place to another (S7)

'[people] used to live from one place to another'

For sentence (32), <u>stay</u> carries part of the notion of static location, while the prepositions of (34) and (36) carry the major part of the meanings 'movement toward' and 'away from.'

19 The marked relationships of <u>to</u> and <u>from</u> in Gullah have been discussed elsewhere (Nichols, 1973). Following the work on markedness theory by Greenberg (1966) and Kuryłowicz (1972), the position is taken that these locatives

000 overlapped throughout the major historical stages of English, so did the uses of to and at as locative prepositions. The Oxford English Dictionary has citations for to expressing simple position from as early as 925 and extending as late as 1901; this use of to for indicating static location is labeled as 'dial. and U. S. colloq' for Modern English. The use of at for expressing notions of 'motion toward' is labeled 'obsolete.' A citation for such use is given from as late as 1528, however. The use of at for pre-infinitival complementizer in dialects of northern England was mentioned in Section 4.1. Within the larger Germanic family of languages, the two lexical items to and at have long overlapped. In Modern German and Dutch, at is lost and its place largely taken by a form of to. In Scandinavian, to is lost, with at taking over the function of complementizer before the infinitive. Because of the variation between to and at in earlier English, particularly for nonstandard dialects, it is reasonably certain that early Gullah speakers would have been exposed to some variation in the use of these locative prepositions. Such variation has persisted even into the twentieth century; as late as 1960 the use of static-to was recorded in the speech of residents of a remote North Carolina island settled by English pilots and their families in the early 1700's (Morgan, 1960). I myself heard older white speakers of coastal South Carolina use it in informal conversation during 1974. Kurath (1949), however, reports

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193 177 that the use of static-to is not frequent in this area for an idiomatic expression like sick at my stomach, and Bryant (1962) reports studies of the expression to home which indicate heavy usage of static-to in rural New England but relatively infrequent use in the Southern states. From these sketchy reports, it seems reasonable to assume that static-to could be heard in early Carolina English, but that at was at least equally frequent. Despite this variation for English speakers, Turner's 1949 texts indicate that to was used almost exclusively by Gullah speakers for the expression of both static and dynamic locative relationships. The question arises as to why to, rather than at, was chosen for the expression of such relationships.

000 There exists no clear preference for static-to in other English creoles. The Caribbean creoles which derive from contact between English and African languages have a division of the semantic space 'locative' which is roughly similar to that of Gullah (see Traugott, 1974 on Barbadian and Trinidadian English Creoles). One lexical item is used to indicate both static location and movement toward ego. The Caribbean creole for which the greatest amount of data exist, Jamaican, apparently uses at for both static and dynamic notions (Cassidy, 1961; Bailey, 1966; Cassidy and LePage, 1967). There is much variation in all these creoles, but at is the preposition most favored for the indication of both static and notional notions; to is used to express

000 'movement toward' only in registers near to standard, or for speakers whose grammar is close to that of the standard (Lilith Haynes, personal communication). In Jamaican Creole, by varies with at for expression of static notions. Common
•193 to Gullah and these Caribbean creoles is the choice of one lexical marker for the same semantic space. The question as to why to was chosen in Carolina and at was chosen in the Caribbean cannot be answered definitively. The instability of these grammatical markers in the Germanic language family, of which English is a part, may have had something to do with the different choices in these English-related creoles. What is significant for the study here, however, is that the creoles have in common a reduced inventory of lexical items for the semantactic category 'locative,' and that this reduction is made at the same abstract level in the grammar. The basic division into positive and negative orientation along the directional axis is retained, but the further division of positive orientation into static and dynamic is not made by separate lexical markers at the most creolized
000 end of the language continuum. Figure 4 on page 76 represents the marking relationships between a composite set of locative prepositions in the English-based Caribbean creoles
193 of Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica, and Guyana. The difference in the lexical items chosen for Gullah and for the Caribbean creoles lends support to Hancock's claim (1975) for different origins for the Carolina creole and the Caribbean

000

| Direction | | Dimension: Non-inclusion UNMARKED 0-1 | Dimension: Non-inclusion UNMARKED 1-2 | Dimension: Inclusion MARKED 2-3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive UNMARKED | static / dynamic | at, by | pun, pan | in(a) |
| Negative MARKED | | from | off, down (from) | out(a) |

Figure 4. Locative Prepositions Used in Caribbean Creoles (based on Traugott, 1974 and data from Lilith Haynes)

193 creoles. The many similarities between them can be accounted for by their common creole typology and by the English and West African base common to the pidgin languages which preceded them. Their similar division of semantic space highlights the tendency of creoles, as non-expanded languages, to utilize a reduced inventory of lexical items for surface marking of grammatical categories. Their common expansion of the unmarked portion of the directional axis reflects universal tendencies of languages to expand unmarked, rather than marked, categories with the introduction of new lexical

•193 items.

4.2.3 Variation and Change for the Static-Locative Preposition in Gullah

In contemporary Gullah as spoken in rural Georgetown County, three prepositional variants are used for the expression of simple non-dimensional or one-dimensional static location:

to
ø
at

For adult speakers, to is by far the most frequent variant. Only two middle-aged women and two young people were recorded as having no static-to in their speech; the families of all these speakers used to. One older woman used to categorically, but most speakers used it along with another variant or variants. Examples of the three variants are given below:

STATIC-LOCATIVE

ø: (37) people used to live ø ^ the four corner (S5)

'people used to live at the four corners [of the island]'

(38) don't hardly salt Em down, cure Em ø ^ home--at home, no more now (S8)

'[they] hardly ever salt them [hogs] down and cure them at home any more now'

(39) they be home ø ^ four clock (S2)

'they'll be home at four o'clock'

•193 to: (40) we had to go with the boat used to stop to Waverly (S7)

'we had to go on the boat that used to stop at Waverly'

(41) I didn't hitch Em to my daughter-in-law, you know (S2)

'I didn't fasten it [clip-on mike] at my daughter-in-law's house, you know'

(42) can we stay to the table (S22)

'can we stay [seated] at the table?'

at: (43) they just had to stay at home and help take care of the children (S9)

(44) what you don't want to carry to the thrasher at Waverly Mill . . . (S20)

(45) you ain't know where they make Em at (S2)

'you didn't know where they made them [fanner baskets] at'

Because standard English also uses ø in phrases containing the lexical item home, it has sometimes been difficult to tell when a Gullah ø represents a true nonstandard or creole variant. Mustanoja (1960:97) observes that home was originally a dative in Old English and traditionally was not used with the prepositional marker which replaced dative endings in later stages of English. For the Gullah data, a construction has been considered a ø-variant where standard English would require a surface preposition.

The use of at as static-locative encompasses a nonstandard use as an adverbial particle, occurring at the end of a sentence:

•193

(46) ee ain't quite no place over here fE put you house at (S15)

'there isn't much of a place over here to put your house'

(47) I would rather bring my family up here where I was raised at (S16)

This use of at is counted with the creole and nonstandard variants, shown in Table 2. Although nonstandard at is found in other varieties of English, the position taken here is that this use may be one of the earliest uses in Gullah because of its salient position at the end of a sentence. In the data, one of its occurrences is in the speech of an older woman who uses ninety percent creole and nonstandard variants. No speaker who is a heavy user of standard at uses it. The other three uses of at are similar to those for standard English:

temporal: (48) it wouldn't burn but so much at a time no way (S8)

'it wouldn't burn but so much at a time anyway'

spatial: (49) if they, say, run out of wood during the week, and you are at school, then they may go out there and get a load like that (S11)

emphatic: (50) they was no house been no where 'round at all (S5)

'there weren't any houses around anywhere at all'

One use of at by a middle-aged woman seems to involve a hypercorrection; she uses at where standard usage would call for to:

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 81]

•193

(51) we had to walk a good ways, you know, to come over here at this area to school (S10)

As Table 2 indicates, the temporal uses of at are at least as frequent as the spatial uses. Emphatic uses are the least frequent; these uses are more figurative than the more basic spatial and temporal instances, including phrases like 'at all' and 'at least.' If temporal and emphatic uses of at are admitted to be more highly marked than spatial uses (following H. Clark, 1973; Traugott, 1974), then marked instances of static-at outnumber unmarked uses in the data collected for this study. Table 2 A shows the distribution of the variants used for static-locative preposition in the speech of seventeen adults.

The direction of change indicated by this distribution is that both ∅ and nonstandard at vary with static-to, when standard at begins to appear as a locative marker in Gullah. The figures are much too small to form an implicational scale, but the wide range of prepositional use by these adults for this category gives a strong suggestion of the direction of change. The early appearance of marked uses of at in these data and their greater frequency than unmarked uses suggests that the initial uses of the standard form may be for the expression of temporal and emphatic notions, later spreading to spatial notions formerly expressed by to. Continued study of Gullah speech communities as the spread of at progresses would help to establish this

A. [See Category 19, p. 80--Analyst]

•193 point. It is significant that the data show no temporal uses of static-to, as for sentences like:

*they be home to four o'clock

'they'll be home at four o'clock'

The absence of examples of static-to used for such temporal notions suggests that its semantic domain is limited to spatial notions only. The introduction of at to express static temporal notions could be seen as filling a gap in the Gullah lexicon initially, with subsequent expansion of the domain of the new lexical item to encompass that of older static-to for static spatial notions.

In summary, Gullah at present shows expansion of the prepositional category used to express unmarked positive locative relationships along the directional axis. Where to was previously used for the expression of 'position at' as well as for 'movement toward,' at is being introduced for the notion of 'position at' and is used categorically by a few speakers for this notion. Most speakers retain some instances of to for this notion, which co-exist with ø and nonstandard at. The standard at seems to enter first in its marked uses for temporal and emphatic notions, with later expansion to less marked spatial notions. The static-locative preposition, as a grammatical category undergoing change in Gullah, shows a much slower rate of change than the complementizer previously discussed.

4.3 Third Person Singular Pronouns

•193 This section focuses on the personal pronouns of Gullah. The pronouns for third person often differ from those for first and second person across languages, in distinctions made for gender, place, and levels of politeness. The pronouns used for third person singular in Gullah are the subject of the present discussion. Usage for this grammatical category is not entirely stable in other varieties of English, especially in appositional and conjunctive structures where a pronoun marked for objective or accusative case often appears in subject position. Considerable variation is exhibited in Gullah at present in all forms used for third person singular. Only usage of single pronouns is included in the present study; examples of double pronouns such as he and I have been eliminated from consideration because they would require a more detailed consideration of their use in standard English than can be provided here.

128 193 Evidence from other English-related pidgins and creoles will be presented in section 4.3.1 and from historical stages and dialectal varieties of English in section 4.3.2 to show that the variation exhibited by the third person singular pronouns of Gullah is systematic and characteristic of a creole, not an historical dialect of English. Section 4.3.3 will discuss pronominal variation in Gullah.

193 The forms for the personal pronouns in Gullah found

• 193 by Turner (1949: 227), Cunningham (1970: 21, 200), and the present investigator are given below. The absence of a form for a particular slot indicates that no form was reported in the data available. Values for the symbols used by the three different researchers are given below.

| | | TURNER | CUNNINGHAM | NICHOLS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| nom. sing. | 1 | mi, mɪ | me, I | me, I |
| | 2 | uno | you | you |
| | 3m | i | him, he | ee, it, he |
| | f | - | him, he, she | ee, he, her, she |
| | n | - | he, it | ee, he, it |
| nom. plur. | 1 | wi | we | we |
| | 2 | uno | hEnE, y'all | yunE, y'all |
| | 3 | dɛm, de | them, they | them, they |
| obj. sing. | 1 | mi | me | me |
| | 2 | uno | you | you |
| | 3m | hɪm, em | Em, him | Em, it, him |
| | f | - | Em, him, she | Em, she, her |
| | n | - | Em, him | Em, ee, it |
| obj. plur. | 1 | wi | we | we, us |
| | 2 | uno | hEnE, y'all | - |
| | 3 | dɛm | Em, him, them | Em, them |
| poss. sing. | 1 | mi, mɔɪ | me(-own), my | me, my |
| | 2 | uno | your(-own) | you, your |
| | 3m | hɪm | him(-own), he | ee, he, him, his |
| | f | i | she(-own) | ee, he, she, his, her |
| | n | - | - | ee |
| poss. plur. | 1 | wi | we(-own) | we, our |
| | 2 | uno | hEnE(-own), y'all | - |
| | 3 | dɛm, dɛm on | them(-own), they | them, they, their |

Figure 5. Gullah Personal Pronouns

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



•193 194 Values for the vowel symbols are as follows:

TURNER:
i - the vowel sound in meet
I - the vowel sound in hit
ɛ - the vowel sound in met
e - the vowel sound in fate
ə - the sound of a in Cuba
ɒ - the vowel sound in not, British pronunciation

CUNNINGHAM & NICHOLS
ɐ - the vowel sound in but or the unstressed vowel of Cuba
Standard orthography is used for all others.

193 The forms given by Turner seem to be normalized in the direction of what he considered to be the most typically creole form. His texts indicate considerably more variation for his speakers than does his paradigm. The text for Diana Brown of Edisto Island, for example, shows both una and you used for nominative singular and only you for objective singular, while the paradigm gives only the creole form una in both positions. For third singular, this informant uses i for all genders, as well as im for masculine gender and it for neuter gender in the nominative case. In the objective case she uses on for all genders. Cunningham's paradigm shows much greater variation, probably reflecting both her concern to record variant forms and the later date of her study. She does not, however, distinguish between aspirated and unaspirated variants of the nominative and possessive he. The present study makes this distinction on the grounds that the patterns for use of ee and he are of some theoretical interest. The variant forms of the personal pronouns found by both Cunningham and the present study are ordered, left

•193 to right, from most creole to most standard form.

000 4.3.1 Case and Gender in Other Pidgins and Creoles

The third person singular pronouns have been studied by a number of creolists. The findings of a representative sampling of them are briefly summarized here. Perlman's 1973 dissertation on Hawaiian Pidgin and Creole reported both a potential absence of gender marking in the forms used for this grammatical category and variation in their use. Perlman indicates that the masculine object can be realized as Vowel + [m], that the neuter object exhibits variation between ø, om, and it, and that the feminine object is realized by either ø, om, her, or it. Cassidy (1961) comments on a similar lack of gender marking in earlier stages of Jamaican Creole, noting that i was formerly recorded as used for all genders in the subject position. Apparently limited to neuter at present, i is recorded as used for both neuter nominative and objective by Bailey in her 1966 dissertation on Jamaican Creole. Like Cassidy, she reports im as the principal form used for masculine and feminine in all cases, sharing designation of neuter gender with i. Similar to Jamaican Creole, Melanesian Pidgin uses em as the basic third person singular pronoun for all genders in the nominative and objective cases, and varies with en for the neuter object (Mihalic, 1971). For the possessive in Melanesian, bilong em varies with bilong en. In his 1968 dictionary of

•193 groups can be seen to designate either 1) simple 'other,' as in Cameroons and Melanesian, 2) a further distinction of the 'other' as functioning in a particular grammatical role within the sentence, as in Sierra Leone Krio and Gullah, or 3) a distinction of the 'other' in terms of some natural-world characteristic, as in Jamaican Creole and perhaps in Guyanese. The following schema is offered to show these groupings:

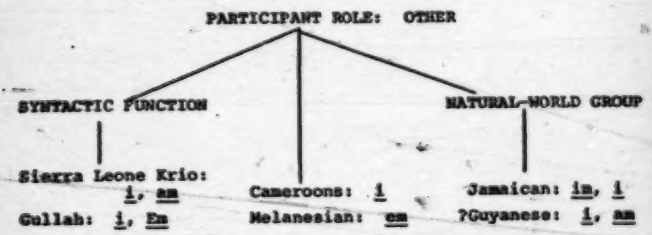


Figure 6. Third Person Singular Pronouns in Creoles and Pidgins

000 Standard English, as an expanded language with a full range of functions, classified the personal pronouns having deictic orientation toward 'other' by both syntactic function and by natural-world group. While it is not a necessary characteristic of all expanded languages that both classifi-

000 While it might be argued that some categorical reduction of genders does exist along lines of feminine-'all others,' the distributional factors associated with the various forms discussed above makes it unlikely that such a reduction would have been complete for any one dialect. The retention of case distinctions is clear.

•193 The striking differences between the forms used in Gullah for third person singular pronouns (Figure 5)[A] and those used both in earlier stages of English (Figures 7 and 8) and in modern dialects spoken in England (Figure 9) can be accounted for only by taking into account the history of Gullah as an English-related creole, spoken by people origi-
000 nating in West Africa. At no stage and in no dialect do the pronouns of English lose distinctions for gender. Pronominal systems characteristic of certain languages in West Africa lack such distinctions. Yoruba, to take just one example of a language spoken in western Nigeria, has a pronominal system which utilizes a single form ó for 'he,' 'she,' and 'it' in subject position; this particular language uses different pronominal forms for subject and
193 object functions within the sentence. As previously discussed, creoles and pidgins typically show reduced distinctions in the third person singular pronouns (see Figure 6),[B] some making natural-world distinctions of gender, some distinguishing between syntactic functions within the sentence, and others making only the distinction 'other' as a partici-

A, [For Figure 5, see Category 193, p.84--Analyst]
B, [For Figure 6, see Category 193, p.89--Analyst]

193 pant role for third person pronoun. The different patterns for Gullah and for the English-related Caribbean creoles in this grammatical category argue strongly for different origins for Gullah and for creoles like Jamaican and Guyanese. Further investigation may even show that different African languages served as the source languages for the original pidgins from which these creoles derive.

4.3.3 Variation in Gullah Third Person Singular Pronouns

Eight different forms are used for the third person singular pronouns in Gullah as it is currently spoken in Georgetown County. Examples of the variants used are given below for the three genders and cases corresponding to those used in standard English, with the exception of the neuter possessive. Almost no examples of neuter possessive occur in the data. The eight forms used for masculine, feminine and neuter subject, for masculine, feminine, and neuter object, and for masculine and feminine possessive are given below, with examples of their typical uses. The most creolized forms are given first, the standard forms last, in the examples for each category.

ee
Em
he
she
her
him
it
his

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•193 MASCULINE SUBJECT

ee (52) I ain't know; ee must-a hide in them-wood or something (S1)

'I don't know; he must have hidden in the woods or something'

he (53) he took ee mother 'long with Em (S1)

'he took his mother along with him'

FEMININE SUBJECT

ee (54) and ee had--Miss Hassell had--ee had all kinds of flowers (S2)

'and she had--Miss Hassell had--she had all kinds of flowers'

he (55) if he see me, he blow ee car (S2)

'if she sees me, she blows [the horn in] her car'

she (56) but she ain't see me and I ain't see her (S2)

'but she hasn't seen me and I haven't seen her'

NEUTER SUBJECT

ee (57) and ee was foggy, and they couldn't see (S1)

'and it was foggy, and they couldn't see'

it (58) it was kinda tough (S8)

MASCULINE OBJECT

Em (59) he build five house--one for ee-self and four for people that ee had to help Em (S8)

'he built five houses--one for himself and four for people that he had to help him'

•193

him (60) and that how I heard about him (S2)

'and that's how I heard about him'

FEMININE OBJECT

Em (61) but I ain't see she fE tell Em nothing (S2)

'but I haven't seen her to tell her anything'

her (62) but she ain't see me and I ain't see her (S2)

'but she hasn't seen me and I haven't seen her'

NEUTER OBJECT

Em (63) I ain't know fE get Em off (S8)

'I don't know how to get it [microphone] off'

it (64) you fan the rice out in it (S2)

MASCULINE POSSESSIVE

ee (65) ee mother was just as tall as he was (S1)

'his mother was just as tall as he was'

his (66) his brother Charlie older than him, he's a city doctor (S3)

'his brother Charlie who is older than he is--he's a city doctor'

FEMININE POSSESSIVE

ee (67) I'm the only colored girl on this place she hold in ee hand (S1)

'I'm the only colored girl on this place that she held in her hand'

her (68) so that been on her floor, in ee house (S2)

'so that was on her floor, in her house'

•193 only the forms used most frequently are given in the above examples as typical uses for a given category. Table 3 below shows the distribution of these forms for thirteen adult speakers, as well as the scattered occurrence of other forms which may represent hypercorrections in the transition from creole to standard forms. For example, it occurs three times for MSubject and twice for MObject in the speech of speakers who use primarily standard forms for every category. Her occurs once for FSubject and she three times for FObject. He occurs twice for the only speaker who has no standard forms for MSubject (Speaker 2), and ee occurs a few times as MObject for three different speakers. The possessive case shows a number of scattered, infrequent forms; both he and him occur a few times for MPossessive and she and his occur for FPossessive.

The table below represents the pronominal usage of thirteen speakers from a small portion of one county, most of whom interact with each other daily. Speakers 11 and 10 are husband and wife; speakers 12 and 14 are father and daughter. The speech data from these speakers were collected by me in similar recording environments, using almost identical topics for conversation. The distribution of pronouns used shows both considerable variation as well as the outline of a systematic pattern. The common categorical distribution seems to be in the direction of a distinction throughout between those forms marked for objective case and

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 101]

19 porting evidence for Hancock's claim (1975) for different origins for these creoles, and should be expected in light of the previous discussion about different patterns for marking participant roles in different creoles. That such differences persist today for Gullah and Guyanese Creole may reflect different developmental patterns in the change from creole to standard forms, stemming from original differences in classification for this grammatical category. Different source languages for Gullah and Guyanese Creole are suggested as the ultimate origin of this difference in pronominal marking.

•193 It seems clear that, while there is great variation in the forms used for this grammatical category in Gullah by speakers in rural Georgetown County, it is not possible to write a variable rule which would cover all speakers in the manner of Labov (1969). For neuter third person pronouns in the subject environment, to take just one example, Speaker 2 has ee categorically, Speaker 7 has variation between ee and it (with ee predominating), Speaker 16 has variation with it predominating, and Speaker 14 has it categorically. This particular grammatical category, with its large number of divisions by case and gender, lends itself to the kind of implicational scaling proposed by DeCamp (1971) and Bailey (1973) and used by Bickerton (1973) for pronouns in Guyanese Creole. Even for the small number of speakers in the Gullah study, the outline of an implicational

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TABLE 3

THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN DISTRIBUTION FOR THIRTEEN SPEAKERS

| Category | 'it' NSub | | | 'he' MSub | | 'she' FSub | | | 'it' NObj | | | 'her' FObj | | | 'him' MObj | | | 'his' MPos | | | 'her' FPos | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| variants | ee | he | it | ee | it | ee | he | her | Em | ee | it | Em | she | her | Em | it | him | ee | he | him | his | ee | she | his | her |
| Speaker | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Δ | Δ | | Δ | ▽ | Δ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | | ▽ | Δ | Δ | Δ | ▽ |
| 1 | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | | ▽ | Δ | | | ▽ |
| 8 | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | | Δ | | | | Δ | | ▽ | | Δ | | ▽ |
| 7 | Δ | | ▽ | | (▽) | | | | Δ | Δ | ▽ | | | | | | (▽) | | | | ▽ | | | | |
| 3 | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | Δ ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | | | (▽) | | | | Δ | Δ | ▽ | Δ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | | ▽ |
| 11 | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | Δ ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | Δ | ▽ | | | | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | | Δ | ▽ | | | | ▽ |
| 12 | | | (▽) | | (▽) | | Δ | ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | | Δ | ▽ | | | | | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ |
| 5 | Δ | | ▽ | | Δ ▽ | Δ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | | | | | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ |
| 6 | Δ | | ▽ | Δ | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ |
| 16 | Δ | | ▽ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ▽ |
| 10 | | | ▽ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | | | | | | | ▽ | | | | |
| 9 | | | ▽ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | | | | | | | | ▽ |
| 14 | | | ▽ | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ | | | | |

▽ = standard variant
Δ = creole or nonstandard variant
Shading indicates significantly greater number of tokens for this type of variant.
Deviations circled.

•193 those forms for other cases. The variant Em is reserved for object pronouns, occurring neither in the data for the present study nor in the forms reported by Cunningham and Turner for any other case. The variant ee is used for both subject and possessive forms. On the basis of both distribution across categories and frequency of occurrence, the two basic creole forms for Gullah third person pronouns of singular number are here identified as ee for both nominative and possessive cases and Em for objective case.

In Table 3, both variation of forms for each category is indicated as well as the predominance of one form over another when present for a given speaker. The number of speakers is small, and the scale represents an informal ranking rather than a statistically significant one.

Actual numbers of third person singular pronouns and percentages of creole and nonstandard variants used by the same thirteen speakers are provided in Table 4. The percentages in Table 4 indicate that all speakers except one use more standard forms for third person singular pronouns than creole or nonstandard forms. The distribution shown by Table 3 indicates that, as speakers change in the direction of the standard forms, the first forms to change have been those for feminine and masculine possessive,[7] followed by

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 103]

[7]As previously indicated, forms for neuter possessive have been omitted from the analysis because of their infrequence of occurrence in the data.

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TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND NONSTANDARD VARIANTS USED
FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS
BY THIRTEEN SPEAKERS

| | % Creole/ Nonstandard | No. Possible Occurrences |
|---|---|---|
| Speaker | | |
| 2 | 79% | 101 |
| 1 | 39% | 87 |
| 8 | 39% | 66 |
| 7 | 23% | 96 |
| 3 | 15% | 103 |
| 11 | 14% | 125 |
| 12 | 6% | 49 |
| 5 | 14% | 50 |
| 6 | 3% | 68 |
| 16 | 8% | 66 |
| 10 | 0% | 48 |
| 9 | 0% | 19 |
| 14 | 0% | 114 |

193 the object forms in masculine, feminine, and neuter genders. The last to change are those for subject. This distribution contrasts with that found for the third person singular pronouns in Guyanese Creole by Bickerton (1973). For Guyanese, Bickerton found masculine possessive forms to change last, while feminine subject forms changed first. Figure 10 shows the ranking of pronominal categories in the two creoles, from most creolized to least creolized:

| | GUYANESE | GULLAH |
|---|---|---|
| Most creolized | MPos | MSub |
| . | MSub | MSub |
| . | FPos | FSub |
| . | MObj | MObj |
| . | FObj | FObj |
| . | MObj | MObj |
| . | FSub | MPos |
| Least creolized | | FPos |

Figure 10. Creolization of Third Person Singular Pronouns in Gullah and Guyanese Creole

19 The lists are ordered, from most creolized to least creolized categories. The top category in each column is the last to show standard forms for each creole. Bickerton did not include masculine subject forms in his analysis, reporting that (h)i occurred in its pre-aspirated form even in the most

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.193 scale emerges. For such small numbers, it was necessary to look at the predominance of one form over the others used for a given environment rather than a simple yes/no indication of variation as used in the Bickerton study. I suggest that valuable information may be lost in the reduction of variation in the analysis to either occurrence or non-occurrence, and that new insights might be gained by indicating percentages in the manner of Labov (1969) or Sankoff (1974), or at least by showing which forms predominate for a given speaker. I also believe that Bickerton may be losing valuable information about linguistic change by ignoring social factors in his analysis. While it is true that the Gullah pronouns show systematic variation strictly in terms of linguistic environment (see Table 3), it is also true that social factors can be shown to be correlated with the activation of linguistic variation. The difficulty with using sociological categories developed in urban environments for rural creole communities will be discussed in the next chapter. I will indicate here only that the manner in which the present research was conducted, with the researcher having a functional role in the community, was an important factor in determining the natural age groupings, as well as the occupational and economic groups within the geographic area studied.

To summarize the systematic linguistic variation found here, the third person singular pronouns in Gullah

193 show a patterned change from simple distinction of two syntactic cases of objective and non-objective, to distinction of three cases and inclusion of the three gender distinctions based on natural-world categories which is characteristic of standard English. The pronominal category for which simple case distinctions characteristic of the creole are retained the longest is that of neuter subject, with subject forms generally being the last to change toward standard. The activation of the change from creole to standard forms is related to the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which are the subject of the final chapter.

4.4 Summary

A comparison of the use of creole and nonstandard variants for sixteen speakers in the three grammatical categories chosen for this study shows that the pre-infinitival complementizer is changing in the direction of the standard fastest of the three. The pronouns for third person singular are changing somewhat slower, and the static-locative preposition is slowest of the three, with all but two speakers using at least some creole and nonstandard variants in this category. Although the number of speakers is small, a clear implicational scale of their linguistic behavior for these three categories emerges. Table 5 indicates that if a speaker uses creole and nonstandard variants for the complementizer, that speaker will use such variants for the pronouns and the preposition as well. The preposition

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TABLE 5

CREOLE AND NONSTANDARD VARIANTS FOR THREE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES

| Speaker | PREPOSITION | PRONOUNS | COMPLEMENTIZER | % Δ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Δ (Δ) | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 78 |
| 1 | Δ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 68 |
| 15 | Δ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 52 |
| 16 | Δ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 42 |
| 8 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 39 |
| 7 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 35 |
| 5 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 38 |
| 3 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | 35 |
| 4 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | ∇ | 32 |
| 12 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | ∇ | 31 |
| 6 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | ∇ | 23 |
| 11 | Δ ∇ | Δ ∇ | ∇ | 15 |
| 13 | (Δ) | ∇ | ∇ | 33 |
| 10 | Δ ∇ | ∇ | ∇ | 8 |
| 9 | ∇ | ∇ | ∇ | 0 |
| 14 | ∇ | ∇ | ∇ | 0 |

Δ = creole or nonstandard variants
∇ = standard variants

Shading indicates significantly greater tokens for this type of variant.

Deviations circled.

•193 shows the most resistance to change; for most speakers creole or nonstandard forms predominate in this category, while standard forms predominate in the other two categories for most speakers. Variation for the complementizer and pronominal forms has been underway for some time; Turner's texts collected in the 1930's and 1940's show variation for these categories. Almost no use of standard at appears in his texts, however, indicating that the variation in the prepositional category is of relatively recent origin.

Even though an implicational scale seems to characterize the relationship between these linguistic variables, I find no internal evidence for changes in one category influencing those in another. Progression toward the standard seems to be relatively independent for each category. The common denominator across categories is the retention of creole variants longest in those meanings which seems most basic to the category. The particle fE, associated with notions of purpose and result, is retained longest as a complementizer for purposive clauses. The pronominal form ee is retained longest for indication of subjects in neuter gender, thereby retaining the original Gullah distinction between subject and object forms not made by standard English it. The preposition to is retained longest for indication of static location in space, while the standard at seems to be introduced early for temporal and figurative notions which are more highly marked than

193 spatial ones and which are never expressed by static-to.

193 As lexical items, the creole variants seem to have
177 their own individual histories, even though all seem clearly to be English in origin. The complementizer fE is likely to derive from English for, used as complementizer in earlier stages and in some modern dialects of English. The widespread use of a similar particle as both case marker and complementizer in other English-related pidgins and creoles suggests that a more universal process underlies the choice of this particle as complementizer, however (see Washabaugh's 1975 discussion of fo in a variety of West African Pidgin English, fi in Providence Island Creole and in the creole of San Andres Island in Colombia, fi in Jamaican Creole, fi and fu in Guyanese Creole, and fo in Hawaiian Creole). The pronouns ee and Em probably come from English he and him, but their use for all genders has no parallel in any dialect of English. The underlying categories marked by these creole forms, which differ from those categories marked by similar forms in Jamaican and Guyanese creoles, may reflect the structure of West African languages different from those languages serving as source languages for the Caribbean creoles. Finally, the to used as static locative preposition is undoubtedly English in origin and has the strongest claim for direct lineage from those English dialects which use to in a similar fashion. Older white speakers in rural South Carolina can still be found

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193 using to with the meaning of 'static location.' The use of
177 at and by with the meaning of both 'static location' and 'dynamic movement toward' by creole speakers in the Caribbean may indicate the early presence there of speakers of different English dialects, perhaps originating in northern England and Ireland. Although the variants used for static locative preposition in South Carolina and the Caribbean may derive ultimately from dialectal varieties of English common to those two parts of the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the reduced inventory of locative prepositions common to both Gullah and the Caribbean English creoles seems related more to the typology of creoles than to dialectal variation in English.

121 differences is included in the sections on age and mobility, as well as in the section which follows.

5.1.2 Sex Differences in the Mainland and Island Communities

In the present study, the two communities identified in Chapter 2 loosely constitute two social classes, in the region under study. The existence of these groups was determined by becoming a participant in the social life of the larger community of rural Georgetown County, in the manner described in Chapter 2. From the river island community, which was the primary focus of this study, two women and two men were selected from three age groups and the speech used by them in unstructured conversation was compared for the use of three linguistic variables. The age groups selected were determined to be natural groupings for the communities studied, and will be discussed in 5.2. From the mainland community, two men and two women in the oldest age group were compared for the use of the same variables. 121 The percentages of creole and nonstandard variants used by 193 these selected speakers for a static-locative preposition, the pre-infinitival complementizer, and the third person singular pronouns are given in Table 6 below, ordered according to the rate at which these variables are changing toward the standard forms. Validity for the findings presented here is not claimed solely on the basis of the small sample of sixteen speakers, but on the combination of this

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 121]

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TABLE 6

PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND NONSTANDARD VARIANTS USED BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS

| | | Speaker | PREPOSITION % | PREPOSITION N | PRONOUNS % | PRONOUNS N | COMPLEMENTIZER % | COMPLEMENTIZER N | Overall c/ns % | Sex Groups c/ns % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 100 | ( 7) | 39 | ( 87) | 66 | (12) | 68 | f 73 |
| | | 2f | 90 | (20) | 79 | (101) | 65 | (26) | 78 | |
| | | 3m | 70 | (10) | 15 | (103) | 20 | ( 5) | 35 | m 34 |
| | | 4m | 50 | ( 4) | 47 | ( 15) | 0 | ( 3) | 32 | |
| | | old adults | | | | | | | 53% | |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 57 | ( 7) | 14 | (50) | 43 | ( 7) | 38 | f 31 |
| | | 6f | 67 | ( 6) | 3 | (68) | 0 | ( 7) | 23 | |
| | | 7m | 70 | (10) | 23 | (96) | 11 | (28) | 35 | m 37 |
| | | 8m | 70 | (10) | 39 | (66) | 6 | (30) | 39 | |
| | | old adults | | | | | | | 34% | |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | ( 1) | 0 | ( 19) | 0 | ( 7) | 0 | f 4 |
| | | 10f | 25 | ( 4) | 0 | ( 48) | 0 | ( 7) | 8 | |
| | | 11m | 30 | (10) | 14 | (125) | 0 | (24) | 15 | m 23 |
| | | 12m | 86 | ( 7) | 6 | ( 49) | 0 | (11) | 31 | |
| | | middle adults | | | | | | | 8% | |
| | young | 13f | 100 | ( 2) | 0 | ( 5) | 0 | ( 3) | 33 | f 17 |
| | | 14f | 0 | (15) | 0 | (114) | 0 | (36) | 0 | |
| | | 15m | 100 | ( 4) | 40 | ( 5) | 17 | (12) | 52 | m 47 |
| | | 16m | 100 | ( 1) | 8 | ( 66) | 17 | (12) | 42 | |
| | | young adults | | | | | | | 32% | |

N = number of possible occurrences
f = female speaker
m = male speaker

121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close family relationships which obtain between several of the speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show striking differences in language use.

In the mainland community, older men use more
121 standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
562 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
193 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington,
184 D. C. For the island community, women generally use more standard forms than men in all three age groups, although speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145 possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in the island community.

I suggest that sex differences in language used by
121 the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
562 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
463 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
193 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only
184 indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
561 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
561 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social
184

121 factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker.
561 In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are mar-
193 ried to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while
(184) the husband uses some for two grammatical categories.
Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

There is some indication that sex differences in the
562 use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight
193 years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island
561 children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be com-
561 pared with the data from the longer adult conversations, but they give some indication that sex differences in language use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better in school than mainland boys in their group, but their language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar. These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' discussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972) operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the two social groups under discussion here, however, the pattern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in the island community.

5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

121 Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropologist who has studied language and social relationships in a black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

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193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older generation were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
(212) to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided
[423] a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167 MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND
166 NONSTANDARD VARIANTS
484
•193
184

| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

562 484 464 184 Mobility patterns are different for men and women in the two communities. In the mainland community, men have been considerably more mobile than women. As previously mentioned, one older woman had spent her entire life working as a domestic servant for the owners of a single plantation. The other woman had a more varied employment record as a field laborer, as a cannery worker for a local seafood factory, and as a cook for a middle-class white family. She had never moved far from the sphere of a single plantation, however. Of the men, Speaker 3 in his early thirties had moved onto a plantation with the help of an uncle, and had remained there as a laborer for fifty years. Speaker 4 was the most widely traveled of this group, having received more formal education in his youth than either of the others. He had worked outside the region during a portion of his middle years, acquiring some skills and obtaining better jobs than the other man. Women in this group use more creole and non-standard forms than men, a pattern which reflects both their lack of mobility and their limited occupational choices. [193]

562 484 184 On the island, older men have been slightly more mobile than older women. Of the women, Speaker 5 has been less mobile than Speaker 6, who lived for a portion of her middle years off the island. Speaker 8 was the only island resident encountered who had never attended school and has been less mobile than Speaker 7. These two men do not differ appreciably in their use of creole forms, however. For [193]

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562 older island residents, mobility does not seem to influence
484 language use to any great extent, when comparing island
184 residents with each other. When comparing island women and
193 mainland women, however, the greater mobility of island women may well be related to their greater use of standard forms. Among middle aged men from the island, mobility seems to be a factor in the greater use of creole forms by Speaker 12, who refused to commute to a job which prohibits his return to the island nightly. His use of creole features is twice that of Speaker 11, who spent some years working in Washington, D. C. In the younger group, the woman who has been least mobile uses more creole features than Speaker 14, who clerks regularly in a mainland store. Similarly, the young man (Speaker 15) with least mobility reflects this in his speech, when compared with Speaker 16, who works as a waiter in a resort motel during the tourist season. Sex of speaker appears to outweigh degree of mobility as an influence on language use, but within sex, mobility seems to be a contributing factor.

167 Over and above language use, mobility is an important factor in the population patterns of rural Georgetown County. In a report on Population and Economy in the region encompassing the county, concern is expressed about the migration patterns of younger black residents to northern cities. During a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970, 76.8 percent of black males and 72.6 percent of black females between

167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat-
[197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

000 them as active participants in communal life.

5.5 Conclusion

121 Language does not change in a vacuum. It changes as
178 part of the life experiences of people who use it. Because
•193 language is inherently a shared process, those who use it share in determining the direction of change. The analysis of the linguistic variables presented here has shown that the direction of change in Gullah is all in the direction of the standard variety of English. Within each category, speakers show systematic variation which indicates that the meanings or uses most basic to the original creole variables are last to change toward the standard. The variant fE as pre-infinitival complementizer is retained longest for the introduction of purposive clauses. The pronoun es is retained longest to distinguish neuter subject from neuter object Ea, a distinction not made by standard it. The static-locative preposition to is retained for indications of spatial notions, while standard at is introduced for expression of temporal and figurative notions never expressed by the creole to. Although individual speakers show shared patterns of variation in their movement toward the standard, they make separate choices about the speed with which they move toward it.
(562) Young and middle aged women in one community find it advantageous, probably for job-related reasons, to move faster toward the standard than any other segment of their speech

121 community. Older women in another community choose to resist
178 change toward the standard longest of any speakers in the
193 study. The social factors of sex, age, community membership,
562 and geographic mobility have been shown to influence the activation of change. Sex is indicated as the most influential of these social factors, but its effect is different in the two social groups examined here.

121 The pattern of change exhibited in Gullah does not
178 parallel that reflected in the history of English. For
193 standard English, to is the original pre-infinitival complementizing particle and retains this function today. Originally introducing infinitival forms in variation with infinitival verb endings, to later shared this function with other particles such as at, til, and for. Although some of these forms are retained today in certain dialects of English, to has never lost its original complementizing function in the standard dialect. The status of for in this grammatical category for standard English is presently the subject of debate by synchronic and historical linguists; in some analyses it has become a complementizer in the base structure, while in other analyses it has retained its prepositional status throughout the history of English. By way of contrast, the particle fE in Gullah was the original complementizing particle, now being replaced by standard to. In the English pronominal system, the singular personal pronouns were marked for gender throughout the history of

121 English; the animate pronouns were marked for case as well.
178 The original Gullah personal pronouns, ee and Em, are marked
193 for case but not for gender. As Gullah changes toward the standard, these pronouns are acquiring distinctions for gender, but the genderless form ee is retained longest where it marks an original case distinction for inanimates which English does not make. The preposition to was used to mark static location in some earlier dialects of English, as well as dynamic movement, and is still found in some nonstandard dialects today. In its use as a static-locative preposition in Gullah, to holds the strongest claim for origin as a dialectal variant of English. The pattern of expansion for this grammatical category in Gullah, however, is similar to that for English-related creoles in the Caribbean and argues for a development characteristic of an expanding creole rather than of a dialect of English.

The basic Gullah variants used for the pronominal
121 and prepositional categories discussed here suggest that the
193 Caribbean creoles and Gullah may have had different histories in important respects. For Gullah, the basic distinction in the personal pronoun system is between the syntactic functions of object and non-object. For the English-related creoles of Jamaican and Guyanese, the basic distinction seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. In the Gullah prepositional category, to is the variant used for basic locative relationships, while at and by are used

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121 193 in the Caribbean for the same semantic domain. These differences in forms used for fundamental grammatical categories suggest that further inquiry into the origins, as well as comparative studies, of all these English-related creoles might lead to further insights about the common patterns of development for expanding languages.

121 178 193 For the analysis of change in Gullah, aspects of both the dynamic model and the quantitative paradigm have been used and both have led to insights about underlying processes. For a complicated grammatical category like the personal pronoun system, the implicational scale utilized in the dynamic model has shown relationships and directions of change not readily perceived through simple frequency counts of variants used by each speaker. For greater faithfulness to the data, however, and for a clearer picture of the patterns of change than simple 'presence or absence' of creole variants would give, some indication of 'more or less' relationships between variants has been included. For showing important relationships between social factors and the activation of linguistic change, quantitative data on individual speakers, whose social characteristics were well established and readily compared with those of other speakers, have been essential. Both models are inadequate at those points where they insist upon categorical divisions rather than allowing for descriptions of continuous, systematic processes. To accurately and fully reflect the findings of the present

121 study, the dynamic paradigm must allow for systematic indi-
178 vidual variation in parts of the grammar undergoing change.
• 193 The quantitative paradigm must allow for more communal variation than is usually considered to exist within the boundaries of a single speech community. Both these models have moved us closer to a conceptualization of language as a process experienced by those who speak it.

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121 2. The variable should have a certain immunity from conscious suppression.
197 3. The variable should be an integral unit of a larger structure.
4. The variable should be easily quantified on a linear scale.

121 My aim is to investigate features that the discipline
197 accepts as characteristic of creole language, and then to
193 contrast frequency counts of these features with those of English. The features selected for this investigation are the preverbal markers and the unmarked third person pronominal forms. These are grammatical categories that will likely appear in any consultant's speech without suppression and with a certain regularity of frequency if they are a part of the speaker's natural grammar, and if the speaker speaks long enough. These variables are an integral part of the grammar of Gullah, and they are easily quantifiable. In addition, Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of these categories for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The investigation of these specific categories will help to determine the degree to which Gullah remains distinct or is evolving toward English. Bailey (1966:146) distinguishes the Creole system from the English system through the use of preverbs and third person pronouns in the following manner:

1. The tense system of the Creole is limited to the unmarked verb for general purposes, and a particle specifying 'past'; English has a more elaborate tense system.

2. There is no subject-verb concord in the Creole; the

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121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.
197
3. There is no matching of gender and sex in third person
•193 pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

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114 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguistically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

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# CHAPTER 2

# THE CREOLE VERB PHRASE

## 2.0 The Pre-Verbs

121 The quantitative measurement of linguistic variables in Gullah will necessarily involve a computation of variants. The counting itself may seem fairly simple. But, as is so fittingly indicated by Labov (1972a:82),

> ...even the simplest type of counting raises a number of subtle and difficult problems. The final decision as to what to count is actually the final solution to the problem at hand.

My procedure is to limit the number of variants to those which can be identified reliably and to set up appropriate categories for each class of variants. For example, one class of variable is the basilectal verb phrase in Gullah which has bare stems and the preverbal markers /dɑ/, /bɪn/, /bɪnɑ/ and /dɔɡ/.[2] A quantitative analysis of these forms and their relation to English verbs emerges from the speech of selected consultants whose performances indicate a slant toward:

121 193

(1) Isolect A, Creole

(2) Isolect B, a division of usage between Creole and English;

(3) Isolect C, English.

121 The notion of a linguistic continuum aids in the conceptualization of speech varieties ranging from those with features

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121 that is expected in creole communities, I now move to more specific investigations of the kind of variation involved in the analysis of the Creole preverbs and English correl-
121 ates. The corpus includes consultants selected from a
115 total of forty speakers ranging in age from 10 to 96 years. Twenty-one were selected from the forty primarily on the length of their recorded speech samples, and their willingness to participate in the study. The speakers are discussed in the Appendix,[A] and numerals corresponding to each name are used when reference is made to particular constructions.

•193 Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of the preverbal markers /da/, /bɪn/, /bɪna/, and /dɔŋ/ for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The preverbs are particles that function as members of the verbal auxiliary and may precede any type of main verb. The verbal categories are marked for aspect opposed to time (Cunningham 1970:63). According to Turner (1949:225) the unmarked form of the verb is used to refer to past, present, or future; and no particular form is used to indicate whether or not an action is continuous. Because Gullah employs a predominantly aspectual system, it is sometimes impossible to make one-to-one correlations with English. But, as with most languages, it is possible to make 'closest approximations'. In Table 2.1 the Creole preverbs and their closest approximation are counted and compared. Table 2.1 shows the diversity of the language situation on Wadmalloow Island, and that there is considerable

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ]

A. [See Category 115, pp. 148-152--Analysis]

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•193

| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | binə | bin | də | STEM |
| 12 | | | 6 | 4 | 10 | | | | 4 | 26 |
| 7 | 1 | | *10 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 13 | | | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 10 |
| 4 | | | *6 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 6 | 8 | 30 |
| 14 | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 12 |
| 15 | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 16 | | | | | 6 | | 2 | 3 | | 21 |
| 17 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 15 |
| 18 | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 19 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 6 |
| 20 | | | *5 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| 21 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 8 | 12 |
| 10 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 26 |
| 6 | 1 | | *9 | | 2 | 6 | | 7 | 5 | 25 |
| 22 | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 24 |
| 24 | | | 4 | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 3 | 12 |
| 8 | | | 5 | | | | 2 | 5 | 7 | 22 |
| 5 | | | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 21 |
| 3 | | | 5 | | 1 | | 5 | 9 | 7 | 23 |
| 23 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 35 |
| 2 | | | *8 | | 5 | | 1 | 5 | 10 | 30 |
| Totals | 2 | 0 | 69 | 11 | 62 | 27 | 35 | 70 | 73 | 378 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

*-s* = third person singular verb
*-ed* = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
*-ing* = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb *to be* excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.1
OUTPUT OF TWENTY-ONE SPEAKERS

[128] The numerals in the columns represent the number of times each speaker used the given forms over a period of time. For example, within a limited time span, speaker number 2 used thirty bare stem verbs, the pre-verbal marker /də/ ten times, and /bɪn/ five times. He used some form of the English verb *to be* eight times, but included in these times are at least four occurrences of *was* and /bɪn/ uttered in conjunction as in *I was bin there*, or used in a non-standard construction such as *I was come out the house* 'I came out of the house.'

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| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | binə | bin | də | STEM |
| 16 | | | | | 6 | | 2 | 3 | | 21 |
| 21 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 8 | 12 |
| 10 | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 4 | 26 |
| 6 | 1 | | *9 | | 2 | 6 | | 7 | 5 | 25 |
| 22 | | | 1 | 1 | 6 | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 24 |
| 24 | | | 4 | 1 | | 4 | 1 | | 3 | 12 |
| 8 | | | *5 | | | | 2 | 5 | 7 | 22 |
| 5 | | | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 21 |
| 3 | | | *5 | | 1 | | 5 | 9 | 7 | 23 |
| 23 | | | | | | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 35 |
| 2 | | | *8 | | 5 | | 1 | 5 | 10 | 30 |
| 19 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 6 |
| 15 | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| 4 | | | *6 | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 6 | 8 | 30 |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | 40 | 4 | 32 | 16 | 32 | 53 | 68 | 293 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

-s = third person singular verb
-ed = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
-ing = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb to *be* excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.2
BASILECTAL SPEAKERS

variation among speakers. But, the range of that variation is limited and clearly reflected by the homogenous grammar of the group. Systematic changes for the group are clearly activated in some categories and remain relatively inert in others. The categorical zero realization of the *-ed* suffix associated with English past tense compounded with the consistently high frequency count of the preverb /bin/ suggest that the Creole marker is retained by these consultants as the sole past tense indicator. Likewise,

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•193

| SPEAKERS | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | bina | bin | de | STEM |
| 12 | | | *6 | 4 | 10 | | | | 4 | 26 |
| 7 | 1 | | *10 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 10 |
| 13 | | | 3 | | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | | 10 |
| 14 | | | 2 | | 3 | 2 | | 3 | | 12 |
| 17 | | | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | | 2 | | 15 |
| 18 | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 20 | | | *5 | | 3 | 3 | | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| Totals | 1 | 0 | 29 | 7 | 30 | 11 | 3 | 17 | 5 | 85 |

* - Includes Non-Standard features

-s = third person singular verb
-ed = past tense morpheme for all verbs except *be*
-ing = verbal, adjectival and nominal form
*be* = all forms of verb to be excluding invariant *be*

TABLE 2.3
PRE-MESOLECTAL SPEAKERS

there is little data to indicate movement in the verbal suffix -s category. There are only two tokens for the whole group and each of these tokens is an example of faulty concord produced by a husband and wife. The other nineteen speakers adhere to the Creole pattern where there is no subject-verb concord at all.

128
193

Linguistic changes in other categories are obscured in the distribution. To normalize the findings and to give greater accountability to the data, Table 2.1 is divided in order to separate those speakers who show greater familiarity with English from those speakers who show greater retentions from the Creole. Of the twenty-one consultants, fourteen reveal features more characteristic of the basilect, and these fourteen are represented in Table

(115)

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•193

| | FORMS | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -s | -ed | be | dɔz | -ing | dɔŋ | binə | bin | də | STEM |
| Basilectal | 2 | 0 | 60 | 6 | 48 | 24 | 48 | 79 | 102 | 440 |
| Pre-mesolectal | 3 | 0 | 87 | 21 | 90 | 33 | 9 | 51 | 15 | 225 |

TABLE 2.4
PROPORTIONATE OUTPUT OF TWENTY-ONE SPEAKERS

Values obtained by extrapolation of data in Tables 2.2 and 2.3

128
193
[115]

2.2. Though the division is not clearly defined, the remaining seven speakers are considered pre-mesolectal because their speech patterns indicate greater movement from the preverbs /də/, /bin/, binə/ and /dɔŋ/. Equal useage of both English and Creole markers, suggesting a mesolectal speaker, was not apparent in the sample. The data from Tables 2.1 through 2.3 are summarized in Table 2.4. Here, the proportionate useage and frequency of occurrence of basilectal and pre-mesolectal forms in the total population are shown. For example, in proportion to the total population, the speakers in Table 2.2 use /binə/ five times more frequently than those in Table 2.3. These data were obtained by extrapolation. The specific pattern of movement and direction of change in individual categories can only be revealed by discussing particular variants.

## 2.1. The Verb Stem

The numerals in the verb stem column represent the total number of times an uninflected verb is used by a

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128 a speaker. The difference in that number and the figures
193 in the preverbal and postverbal columns would reveal the frequency with which the verb appears in the absence of a marker. Cases where the stem count does not exceed the cumulative categorical count are cases where one or more English or Creole forms appear in the absence of a stem verb.

Table 2.1 shows a significant number of verb stems used by all consultants. Plausible reasons for the use of verb stems in such great frequency are that they express both tense and aspect, occur with all pre-verbal markers, and occur independently in nominal constructions. For
193 example, the following constructions were obtained by asking the consultant to produce semantic equivalents of: *I shell peas daily, I am shelling them now, I shelled them yesterday, I have been shelling them all day, I have finished shelling them, I had finished shelling them a long time ago.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔi ʃɛlɔm | 'I shell them' (tenseless) | (1) |
| ɔi dɔ ʃɛlɔm | 'I am shelling them' | |
| ɔi bin ʃɛlɔm | 'I shelled them' | |
| ɔi binɔ ʃɛlɔm | 'I have been shelling them' | |
| ɔi don ʃɛlɔm | 'I have shelled them' | |
| ɔi bindɔn ʃɛlɔm | 'I had shelled them some time ago' | |

193 The fact that Creole verb stems have not been replaced
177 by standard English inflections indicates that it is more natural to retain an invariant verb stem than to acquire a new rule for a different system of marking. Consequently,

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128 a speaker. The difference in that number and the figures
•193 in the preverbal and postverbal columns would reveal the frequency with which the verb appears in the absence of a marker. Cases where the stem count does not exceed the cumulative categorical count are cases where one or more English or Creole forms appear in the absence of a stem verb.

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193 example, the following constructions were obtained by asking the consultant to produce semantic equivalents of: *I shell peas daily, I am shelling them now, I shelled them yesterday, I have been shelling them all day, I have finished shelling them, I had finished shelling them a long time ago.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔɪ ʃɛlɛm | 'I shell them' (tenseless) | (1) |
| ɔɪ do ʃɛlɛm | 'I am shelling them' | |
| ɔɪ bin ʃɛlɛm | 'I shelled them' | |
| ɔɪ binɔ ʃɛlɛm | 'I have been shelling them' | |
| ɔɪ don ʃɛlɛm | 'I have shelled them' | |
| ɔɪ bindɔn ʃɛlɛm | 'I had shelled them some time ago' | |

193 The fact that Creole verb stems have not been replaced
177 by standard English inflections indicates that it is more natural to retain an invariant verb stem than to acquire a new rule for a different system of marking. Consequently,

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193 the uninflected stem is not a stigmatized form as evidenced
177 by its ubiquitous appearance in the pre-mesolectal table (2.3). It seems under little if any social pressure within the Wadmalaw community to further conform to the English system of marking. But the more a speaker acquires Standard English verbs, the greater is the decline of the Creole pre-verbs /bɪn/, /bɪnə/, /dɔŋ/ and /də/. They have neither semantic cognates, syntactic functions nor graphemic shapes with parallels in the superstrate, which are reasons some of the preverbs become rare or non-existent as a speaker moves toward English.

193 Some Creole markers undergo replacement processes while others are exchanged or deleted in light of more prestigious English markings. Still others like the unmarked verb stem manage to survive.

Those verb stems that do survive well into the mesolect are usually synonymous semantically with English verb stems. But the range of function in creole languages is greater than in English, as exemplified in the following example. (The preverb /di/ is the semantic equivalent of /də/ in Gullah.)

| | |
|---|---|
| i di waka | 'he is walking' |
| sɔm waka man | 'a wanderer' |
| i di laf | 'he is laughing' |
| sɔm laf man | 'a joker' |
| i di krai | 'he is crying' |
| sɔm krai man | 'a complainer' (Todd 1973:4) |

193 English does utilize verbs as nominal modifiers such as *cry baby, go car* and *dance man*. However the creole does not have the treasury of synonyms that its parent languages possess. While *cry baby* is generally used in English to [195] refer to one who cries easily or constantly, *cry man* is often the only reference that the creole language has for a complainer, one who whines and one who cries easily or constantly.

The unmarked verb has a high frequency of occurrence in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. But, its appearance alone or in conjunction with certain preverbs is restricted. Non-stative verb stems do occur with /dɔ/, /bɪn/, /bɪnɔ/ and /dɔŋ/. However, /bɪn/ seems to occur most often with stative verbs indicating simple past. The preverb /dɔ/ does not appear in this corpus with stative verbs to produce a construction such as */i dɔ no/ *'he is knowing'; or */i dɔ ʃan/ *'he is wanting'. The seeming selectivity of the preverbal markers helps to account for the fewer tokens of /dɔ/ and /bɪn/ as compared with the higher count of unmarked verbs.

Table 2.4 shows stem verb useage for basilectal speakers exceeding that of pre-mesolectal ones by a factor of approximately two. An explanation for this pattern is 193 that the pre-mesolectal speakers show a rise in the use of 177 verbs ending in *-ing* and in the use of English 'be' verbs while at the same time they show a considerable decline in

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193 the use of the Creole continuative markers /bɪn/ and /de/.
177 This movement indicates fluctuation in the direction of English.[3]

19 2.2. The *-ed* morpheme

The *-ed* morpheme does not occur as a past tense indicator in the corpus for this study. Simple past is marked by a verb immediately preceded by /bɪn/: /i bɪn lɪθ/
19 'He left.' Many English inflectional morphemes are ac-
177 quired grammatical devices that are non-existent[3] in the basilect and extremely rare in the mesolect as exemplified by the data in this study.

The English marker *-ed* occurred only once in the data, and this one occurrence was considered a hyper-correction. Hyper-correction as defined by Fasold (1972:195) comes about when speakers are in the process of learning forms from a different linguistic system, and have not mastered all the constraints on their use. Consequently, they often extend usage to contexts which are never used by native speakers of the language or dialect from which the forms originated. The hyper-correction appearing in the data is /ɔɪ god oθɔ dɛ/ 'I went over there' (6). The speaker's knowledge of the English system of marking verbs may be incomplete. He may not have internalized *went* as the past tense marker of *go*, an irregular verb. As charac-

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A 193 [121] related standard English, and a concomitant practice of ignoring any variants between these polar lects.' Certain similarities between Black dialect and Gullah, S [193] however, are apparent, as will be shown. Labov, Fasold, A [177] Shuy, and others who study Black dialect have also noted an absence of the English past tense indicator *-ed* in certain environments.

2.2.1. *-ed* in Black Dialect: Traditionalist View. The absence of *-ed* is grammatical in the creoles. Labov A [194] and his associates relate the infrequency of *-ed* in Black dialect to purely phonological processes. Though it is commensurate with Labov's purpose, he does not relate the infrequency of *-ed* to grammatical processes where Black dialect would be shown to operate under a system similar to the creoles. Labov (1972a) and others have undertaken studies to show that though *-ed* is deleted in Black dialect, its deletion is only a surface manifestation because *-ed* has the identical grammatical function of marking tense in deep structure as *-ed* of standard English. They show A [194] *-ed* is present in Black English grammar and deleted through a series of phonological processes. Labov believes that the *-ed* suffix is inserted as the past tense marker by a regular grammatical rule long before the *-ed* deletion rule begins to operate. The following rule is Labov's treatment of the deletion of *-ed* and the simplification

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193 (A) A few days ago, they walk(ed).
194 (B) Every day now, they walk.

The results were inconclusive. The consultants gave the 'correct' answer fifty percent of the time, which means that the *-ed* was NOT pronounced as often as it WAS pro-
A 193 nounced. Consequently, any variable deletion associated with *-ed* forms that the consultants had, failed to furnish meaningful signals for the consultants' system of tense marking. Dillard concluded that there are justifications for eliminating inflections from the grammar of Black English, at least in the sense of tense as it is used in standard English (Dillard 1972:52).

A S Both Stewart and Rickford have drawn parallels with
193 some mesolectal varieties of Gullah and Black dialect. These creolists believe that inland Black dialect is descended from Gullah and possibly other creoles. While it is possible for 'dialect mixture' rather than convergence to have occurred, Rickford (1974) argues this claim is easily refuted by evidence of forms found in mesolectal varieties of Gullah today:

Stressed *bin* as remote-phrase marker:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah | - | *I bin had that.* |
| Black English | - | *I bin had that plant.* (Rickford 1974: 95) |

If the creolists are right, the absence of *-ed* in the grammar of Gullah would account for the infrequent occurrence of the *-ed* past tense form in Black English.
S The fact that present-day Gullah speakers, basilectal and
(197) mesolectal, have not acquired the English grammatical past

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tense marker adds more support to the hypothesis that the sporadic occurrence of *-ed* in Black dialect is a stage in language acquisition. The occurrence of the lone mesolectal speaker who said /ɔɪ god oθe dɛ/ 'I went over there' is not dissimilar from the constructions occurring in the speech of some Black dialect speakers who say *I knowed that already*. Furthermore, many of the same social and geographical factors which nurtured the growth and development of Gullah on the islands also nurtured Black dialect on the mainland. But historically the islands were closed communities with little in migration. The speech patterns were therefore much more stable than those of other inland Black people who had more interaction with English-speaking Europeans. Today, linguists continue to classify the people who speak Gullah as different from those who speak Black dialect. While it is possible to separate Gullah from Black dialect linguistically, it is no longer as easily done socially. With improved transportation to and from the islands, many Gullah speakers interact daily with inland Black speakers through economic and social activities. It is through this interaction that some language changes are occurring in Gullah. It is very likely that certain features associated with Gullah are being reinforced in inland Black dialect speakers through this same process.

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2.3. The -*s* morpheme

193 A final factor contributing to the high frequency of verb stems in the basilect and the pre-mesolect is absence of suffixal -*s*. Suffixal -*s* is represented phonetically as [z], [ɪz] and [s]. The pronunciation variant is dependant on the phonological makeup of the final segment of words to which -*s* is added. When heard as [z] the -*s* follows non-strident voiced segments as in [filz] *feels*; when heard as [ɪz] the -*s* follows a strident consonant as in [mɛtʃɪz] *matches*; and when heard as [s], -*s* follows nonstrident voiceless segments as in [laits] *lights* (Wolfram 1969:134). In English the suffix -*s* is the grammatical marker of third person singular present indicative, the marker of possessive, and the marker of noun plurals.

193 Historically, Gullah has not been marked for subject-verb concord and there is insufficient synchronic data to suppose that it is marked for it now. Only two of the [115] twenty-one consultants in the study show any traces of concord and these two examples are faulty. The other nineteen reveal no number concord at all. Though the data for this study reveal little linguistic activity in the -*s* suffix category, a review of the quantitative analysis undertaken on the -*s* in Black dialect and Guyanese creole, languages thought to be genetically

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S 193 related to Gullah, may project future changes for the -s suffix in Gullah.

A 193 The absence of subject-verb agreement, especially between third person singular subjects and present tense verbs in Black dialect has attracted the attention of many sociolinguists. Labov, for example, basing his investigation on quantitative data and structural clues concludes that the -s suffix is not an integral part of the grammar of the consultants involved in his New York study. He proposed that infrequent and unsystematic surface forms be considered importations from Standard

A 193 177 English. Wolfram (1969) demonstrates the manifestations of English importations showing in addition to the infrequent surfacing of the third person singular suffix, consultants participating in his Detroit study use -s to mark non-third person subjects as well. This kind of speech behavior is exemplified in the following example:

*I goes to church*[5]
*You goes to church*
*He goes to church*
*(he go to church)*
*We goes to church*
*They goes to church* (25)

A 193 114 Fasold (1972) reported slightly divergent findings from his Washington D. C. study. Unlike Labov and Wolfram, Fasold concluded that the -s realization with subjects other than third person singular was much less frequent than its non-use with third person singular

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days and the many activities involved in a complete day's work:

/ɛn dɔg pɪk kɔ̃tn aɪ go·z oβə dɛ/ (6)
'When I finished picking cotton, I went (past repetitative) over there.'

It is not possible to know the range of the speaker's competence. But, since the construction was produced by the same speaker who produced /aɪ go·d oβə dɛ/ 'I went over there', one can either dismiss it as 'systematic unaccountability', or generalize that (1) the speaker is in the process of learning English rules for marking tense and subject verb concord, but has not mastered the constraints on either rule; (2) the speaker has not learned the English constraints on irregular verbs; or (3) the -z is a reflection of a non-punctual past marker. Individual performances are often sporadic and seemingly unsystematic. But, the grammar of the group is consistent and clearly reflects a natural propensity to adhere to a creole unmarked verb structure rather than to undertake the tenuous process of acquiring new English rules for concord and postverbal marking.

2.4. /dɔ/

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This form is used by 67% of the total number of speakers interviewed. Table 2.4 shows that the form occurs seven times more frequently among basilectal than among

193 mesolectal speakers. Turner (1949) observed /dɔ/ in Gullah functioning primarily as a verb of incomplete predication. Cunningham (1970:66) provides a syntactic description of /dɔ/ + VERB and /dɔ/ + VERB + *ing* performing as the present continuative aspect markers. They appear with both transitive and intransitive verbs in which case /dɔ/ always precedes and *-ing* always follows. The two aspect markers /dɔ/ and *-ing* do not co-occur.

Table 2.2 shows /dɔ/ exceedingly more frequent than all quantitative counts for the English verbs 'to be'. The category includes any form of the verb 'to be', but an important fact obscured by the tables is that the English cognate selected most often to replace a creole preverb is *was*. Other present tense forms such as *is*, *am*, and *are* make few, if any appearances. Those numbers which are starred indicate that at least one half, in some cases more, of the appearances of the 'be' verb chosen, occurred in conjunction with either the Creole preverbal markers /dɔg/, /dɔ/, /bɪn/ or /bɪnɔ/ as a form of self-correction (i.e. /ɐɪ wɔz oβɔ dɛh - ɐɪ bɪn oβɔ dɛ βɪd dɛm/ 'I was over there - I bin over there with them' (6)), or the form appeared in a construction other than standard English or 'basilectal Creole' (i.e. /ɐɪ wɔz kɔm ɔut ðɔ hɔz/ 'I had come out of the house.') It appears

(177) that *was* is acquired from English, not only to mark simple past for *be* verbs, but as past marker in general, as in: /dio βɔz pɔnɪʃ ju di βie die fillɛk/ 'They punished you

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193 in the manner they saw fit' (2). Considering that
197 the category is composed of English *be* verbs which were used in lieu of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/ the number is quite low, especially when compared to the total number of occurrences of /də/, /bɪn/ and /bɪnə/ in Table 2.2. As expected, Table 2.3 shows a higher occurrence of *be* forms beyond the basilect than occurrences of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/. Likewise, all the consultants in Table
[115] 2.3 showed some familiarity with English *be* verbs. As evidenced by their performance, five of the fourteen speakers in Table 2.2 show no familiarity with English *be* verbs at all.

193 The preverb /də/ performs a number of functions in addition to marking present continuative. The high frequency of /də/ in Table 2.2 is related to this as well as other functions:

*/də/ as present continuative aspect marker:*

/ɔɔᵊm ɹɛit ɡəndə dɹdɪ də stæn əp/ (3)
'See it right there daddy. Standing up.'

/i də ʃek totə/ 'She is shaking potatoes.' (23)

/də mɔŋki də hol/ 'The monkey is holding on.' (5)

*/də/ as past continuative aspect marker:*

Cunningham notes that the past continuative is marked by /bɪn/ + ɛ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing:*

*When you call me, I been ɛ cook my dinner.*
'When you called me, I was cooking my dinner.'

*I been driving one day* 'I was driving one day'
(Cunningham 1970:67-8)

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193 She treats /dɐ/ solely as a present continuative marker. In this study, /dɐ/ does indeed have that function in addition to performing as an iterative past marker. The following constructions exemplify /dɐ/ + VERB performing in this capacity:

/dɐ ɸɑɪ dɐ blez ndi tʃimi/ (10)
'The fire is/was blazing in the chimney'

/mi ɛn dɐ dɔg dɐ ɹiɛs ɸɐ gɪt dɐ mit ɸɐ it/ (8)
'He and the dog raced to get the meat to eat'

/dɪ kʌtn dɐ drɔp blɔsm/ (Turner 1949:213)
'The cotton was dropping its blossom'

*/dɐ/ as future marker:*

The future is usually marked in Gullah by /gɐ/ + VERB, but depending on the speaker's frame of reference, context, and intonation, /dɐ/ + VERB may also mark future:

/ɔɪ gɐ dʌk n tɹɔ mɔggɪ dɔg/ (5)
'I will duck and throw the monkey down'

/das dɐ wʌn gɐ du dɐ ɸɛk tuju/ 'That's the one that will do the effect to you' or 'That's the one that will harm you.' (3)

/i dɐ ɸɪks ɸɐ ju tʰu/ (3)
'He will (stand in) wait for you too'

/i dɐ gɐ/ 'he will go' (3)

Labov defines specific linguistic contexts which effect the variability of copula realization. It is an interesting fact that the preverb /dɐ/, the locating verb /dɐ/ ($V_L$) and the equating verb /dɐ/ ($V_{Eq}$) (Cunningham 1970:40) appear in identical syntactic environments where the copula is deleted in Black dialect:

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*Before Predicate Adjectives:*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah: | i de ske | (23) |
| Black Dialect: | *She scared* | (27) |
| Standard English: | *She's scared* | |

*Before Nominals: ($V_L$)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah: | i de hom | (1) |
| Black Dialect: | *He home* | (27) |
| Standard English: | *He is home* | |

*After Existential Subjects:*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah: | di xienide kom | (1) |
| Black Dialect: | *It raining* | (27) |
| Standard English: | *It is raining* | |

In addition to /de/ occurring in context where Black dialect speakers can delete the copula, it also occurs in Gullah in some constructions where the copula is obligatory in Black dialect:

*Under Emphasis*

/i "de dɛ/ 'It IS there' (11)

*In embedded questions, after WH- attraction:*

/enibɛ̃ ju "de indɛ ai gon ɡain ju/ (11)
'Anywhere you are in there I will find you.'

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Furthermore, it seems more than just coincidence that the copula forms *is* and *are* which appear infrequently in the corpus for this study also appear rather infrequently in the quantitative studies on Black dialect. The categorical contraction and zero realization of *are* and *is* in the grammar of some Black dialect speakers have caused some

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A 193 some persons to believe that these forms are not an integral part of these speakers' grammar. Wolfram reports that contraction plus zero realization is slightly higher for *are* than for *is*, but the difference is not nearly as great as that between the percentage of zero realization for the two forms. In most cases, the frequency of zero realization for *are* is twice as great as the frequency for *is*. He reports also that only one consultant had no *is* contraction. But, of the 24 working-class consultants that he interviewed, seven had a categorical absence of *are* contraction. Likewise, the zero realization of *are* for each social class was greater than the zero realization of *is* on the next lower social class level (Wolfram 1969:173).

S [193] On the basis of the correlations between the contraction and deletion of the copula in Black dialect and the realization of /dɔ/ in Gullah in identical contexts, and on the basis of the high percentage of zero realization of *is* and *are* for both Black dialect speakers and Gullah speakers, one has evidence for a different theoretical orientation for explaining the absence of the copula in Black dialect. If /dɔ/ is rejected as a speaker masters a greater portion of an abstract creole continuum, and the form is NOT replaced by *is* or *are*, then zero realization of the English copula in Black dialect may result from the loss of /dɔ/, a historical creole marker. In S 193 Gullah, the preverb /dɔ/ shows an accountable decline

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S 193 in frequency in Table 2.3 (Pre-mesolectal speakers) as compared to Table 2.2 (Basilectal speakers). Only two speakers in Table 2.3 show any use of /de/ at all, while all of them reveal some familiarity with English 'be' verbs. These speakers are more socially mobile than the speakers in Table 2.2. Thus, they have more outside motivational forces as well as more opportunities to interact with English speakers outside the community.

Whether I am correct or not, the loss of a historical marker which performs in Gullah many functions that the English copula performs would at least offer an alternative to Labov's contraction deletion theory. He sees A 193 zero realization of the English copula in Black dialect from the viewpoint of a grammar in which rules are ordered so that a deletion rule operates on a contracted form to delete the copula (Labov 1972a:114). The deletion of a historical creole marker seems a plausible and less complicated process of explaining the variability of the English copula in Black dialect than a speaker restructuring his grammar to learn an English rule for copula insertion only to learn two other rules to contract and delete it.

S 193 2.5. /bɪn/

Past tense is marked in Gullah by the preverb /bɪn/, and 90% of the speakers in this corpus use it.

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193 It precedes the verb or predicate adjective that it marks or it may perform alone as the main verb constituent. It can co-occur with the equating verb /ɪz/, or the locating verb /dɒ/, but the forms do not generally occur together (Cunningham 1970:64). Creole /bɪn/ may be borrowed from English, but it should not be confused with the English past participle *been*. Other than vowel lengthening as in English /bɪːn/, it is difficult to claim any phonological disparity between them, but semantic and syntactic differences between *been* and /bɪn/ are more clearly defined. English *been* has an invariant grammatical function, to perform primarily as a perfective and past participle of 'be' verbs. Other features associated with its use are (+ PERFECT), (± PASSIVE), (± STATIVE). In some cases it can act as the main verb in constructions such as *He has been here*. But *been* does not occur in standard English without the aid of an auxiliary verb.

193 194 **Unstressed /bɪn/.** When unstressed /bɪn/ signals a completed action in Gullah, the data in this study show this use of /bɪn/ is replaced by *was*. Several constructions show them both occurring in combination:

/ɒɪ wɒz oβə dɛʰ (correction) ɒɪ bɪn oβə dɛʰ/ (6)
'I was over there with them.'

/ɒɪ wɒz bɪn ɹɒŋ dɛʰ/ 'I was around there.' (8)

/dio wɒz pönɪʃ ju (correction) bɪn pönɪʃ ju di βio dio fi·l lɛɪk/
'They punished you in the manner they saw fit.' (2)

193 197 The foregoing sentences show one operation of language

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•193 change as the Creole and the English replacement occur in
177 conjunction. The self-correction may indicate that the Creole is the more natural choice. Seemingly insecure about which form to use, each of the three speakers corrected his speech in favor of the language that he knew best. The last sentence shows the English replacement was occurring in pre-verbal position with a stem verb, where the preverb /bɪn/ would normally occur. The past tense indicator *-ed* is omitted and tense is marked by *was* as it would have been marked with /bɪn/. The joint appearance of the English past tense form with a Creole form owes its existence to a convergence of Creole and English grammar which produced a sentence which is neither Creole nor English. Even more important, the examples offer linguists an opportunity to observe abstract conceptualization processes that a speaker undergoes to reconcile the conflict between competing rules involved in linguistic change.

19 Stressed /bɪn/. Neither Turner nor Cunningham acknowledge stressed /bɪn/ as a remote past marker in Gullah. Consultants 1, 2 and 3 produced examples of a stressed /bɪn/ which could not have been a variant form of the unstressed form because the sentences were uttered in a context which does not allow substitution by a simple past tense marker without alterning the meaning:

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A 193 194 'She is married now and has been married for an extended period of time' (Labov 1972a:54-5). Rickford also observes that /bɪn/, the remote past marker occurring in mesolectal varieties of Gullah, also appears in Black dialect:

S 193 A [193]

| | |
|---|---|
| Gullah: | *I bin had that*<br>'I've had that for a long time' |
| Black dialect: | *I bin had that plant*<br>'I've had that plant for a long time'<br>(Rickford 1974:95) |

The data in this study does not support a chiefly mesolectal existence for stressed /bɪn/. The three consultants using the form most frequently also use forms more representative of basilectal Creole, but these speakers are unlikely candidates for social mobility or language change because of their age. This one social factor does not provide a clue concerning the variety of creole from which stressed /bɪn/ originated. Unstressed /bɪn/ continues to appear in Gullah as the primary past tense indicator. But, for some speakers /bɪn/ is in clear competition with English was which suggests some variable movement away from the Creole in the /bɪn/ category.

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2.6. /bɪnə/

The preverb /bɪnə/ is an aspect marker. It may signal past progressive, simple past, present perfect, or future perfect progressive. According to Cunningham (1970),

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193 it may sometimes perform the functions of the past perfect progressive if the speaker focuses on the action before it was terminated, rather than the fact that it was terminated. Usually the speaker focuses on the latter, and the past perfect progressive is indicated by /dɔŋ/, the perfect marker.

The preverb appears to be a derivative of /bɪn/ + /dɔ/. A counterpart appears in Guyanese, Cameroon and other English creoles:

/dat woman bin di sel ndʒaŋgi/ 'That woman sold crayfish (as her job over a period of time)' (Todd 1974:6)

Constructions involving /bɪn/ + /dɔ/ occur infrequently in Gullah; more often one hears the contraction /bɪnɔ/.

[194] However, /dɔ/ occurs with stressed /bɪn/ to indicate past progressive:

/ɔɪ bɪn dɔ go/ 'I have been going for some time now.' (1)

The progressive has two variants: /bɪn/ + /ɔ/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The -*ing* category in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 result primarily from the use of the /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* form, though the /bɪnɔ/ + VERB form occurs most often:

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB

/ɔɪ bɪnɔ liɡ dɔŋ sɔm bɪn on mɔɪ hɔrd/ (8)
'I was lying down and something was on my head.'

/ju dɔ ɸɛn bɪnɔ drɪŋk mɔɪ ɸɛrɔ ɔl dɔ tɔɪm/ (8)
'You are the one who has been drinking my water all this time.'

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB + *ing*

/i bɪn tɪŋk di lɔd ɸɛn i bɪnɔ goɪn bɔt i bɪn ɸɪd di hɛp ɔdi ɡud lɔd ɸɛn i bɪnɔ kɔmɪn bɔk/
'He was thanking the Lord when he was going but it was with the help of the good Lord when he was coming back.'

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•193 Of the twenty-one speakers consulted, 67% used /bɪnə/. As shown in Table 2.4, the form can be expected to occur five times more frequently among basilectal than among pre-mesolectal speakers. The decline in usage by the pre-mesolectal speakers may be caused by /bɪn/ being replaced by more English-like progressive markers (e.g. *been going* as opposed to /bɪn go/ or /bɪnə goin/. English replacements would account for /bɪn/ becoming rare as one moves beyond the basilect. Only two of the seven speakers considered to be pre-mesolectal in Table 2.3 use the form. These same speakers show a decline in frequency of useage of the Creole progressive aspect markers /bɪn/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The ratio of -*ing* useage among pre-mesolectal to basilectal speakers is about 2:1. The higher frequency of the pre-mesolectal speakers may be attributed to their having acquired from English many -*ing* morphemes as whole words in the form of participials and nominals.

/də stə ɔ lɪl dɪɪdlɪn ɹeɪn/ (2)
'It started to drizzle rain a little.'

/də 'ðɪrə də 'klo·zɪn ɪn/ (2)
'The weather was closing in.'

/də 'heɸie də wəz gɪrn/ (2)
'the heavier it was getting'

Participial and nominal -*ing* are 'special' items, - acquired through grammatical rules. They are probably first added as simple vocabulary items which do not impose on the Creole verbal structuring. Through continual use

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•193 and interaction with other users of verbal *-ing*, the suffix spreads and eventually becomes a productive grammatical rule (see Bickerton 1976:73).

2.7. /dɔŋ/

The occurrence of this form is low in the data for pre-mesolectal and basilectal speakers, with only 43% of the total sample using it. The completive is marked in Gullah by /dɔŋ/. It may perform as an auxiliary, as a verb substitute and as an adverbial.[6] It may combine with the past tense indicator /bɪn/, which precedes it, and /de/ which follows it; or all three may combine as /bɪn/ + /dɔŋ/ + /de/ to refer to a remote perfected time.

/i bɪn dɔŋ de go/ 'He has been gone for a long, long time.' (2)

This construction is rare in Gullah, but it is used when the speaker is referring to a remote past. The verb /bɪn/ marks past time and can co-occur with /dɔŋ/ in some positions, but /dɔŋ/ is more emphatic.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| /ɐɪ bɪn it/ | 'I ate' | (1) |
| /ɐɪ dɔŋ it/ | 'I ate already' | (1) |
| /ɐɪ dɔŋ go/ | 'I have gone already' | (1) |
| /ɐɪ bɪn go/ | 'I went' | (1) |

000 Todd and Jones note the combining power of the completive /dɔŋ/ and the continuative /di/ in Cameroon and Krio, though both attest to the rare appearance of the three

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000 markers together:

Cameroon: /a bin dɔŋ di wɔk lɛik tri awa/
'I had been working for about three hours.' (Todd 1974:6)

Krio: /a bin don de rait/
'I had been writing.' (Jones 1971:87)

A 193 Bickerton has not noted the three markers occurring together in Guyanese creole, but *done* can combine in Black dialect with *bin* to intensify an action, as in *I bin done done that* (27) 'I did that a very long time ago.'

Labov found that in Black dialect *done* had an 'intensive meaning' which has no equivalent in other dialects of American English, and that the formal properties of *done* are not equivalent to *have*. He suggests that in Black dialect, *done* has become an adverb functioning sometimes like *already* or *really* (Labov 1972a:56), e.g. *I done about forgot mosta those things*. The following constructions S [193] indicate that Black dialect's *done* closely parallels the adverbial properties of /dɔŋ/ in Gullah:

/ju bi dɔŋ ske/ 'You are afraid already' (23)

/ɔi bɪŋgɛm bɛk dɔŋ gɪ̃ɛin/ 'I brought it back already ground' (6)

The incidence of /dɔŋ/ is low in the data perhaps because situations producing its appearance did not occur. It would be expected to occur in methodological descriptions involving a process or sequence, such as planting potatoes or grinding corn where the speaker uses /dɔŋ/ to signal the completion of a procedure. Labov's observation that *done* does appear in Black dialect in context unparallelled in dialects of American English has significant

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A 193 import for creole language studies. Even though *done* as it is sometimes used in Black dialect has no American S A English parallel, it does have a very similar one in 193 Gullah. From a transformational generative grammar point of view, this similarity shows that the grammar rule governing the appearance of *done* is motivated by a rather resitant Creole deep structure rule. This rule offers A [197] additional evidence that Black dialect is descendant from a creole language, possibly Gullah, and that some creole forms manage to escape extinction longer than others.

2.8. /dɔz/

The occurrence of /dɔz/ in both the basilect and the pre-mesolect was rare with only three tokens from three different speakers in each group. But Rickford (1974) has studied this form extensively in Gullah and reports that it is a mesolectal feature which should provide new evidence on the origin of *bɔ* in Black dialect. He relates its primary function as that of a habitual marker. He S 193 hypothesizes that *Blan*, a historical habitual aspect marker for Gullah, may have co-existed with /dɔ/, the present-day habitual marker:

> *Blan* may have coexisted from the inception of SIC [Gullah] with *da*, the oldest habitual marker which can still be found in basilectal varieties today. In all probability this form, like its equivalent *a* in Guyana was originally ambiguous in function between continuative and habitual aspect. Later it was split:

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•193 *da* ~ *a* being retained for continuative aspect, and *doz* introduced to signal habitual aspect alone. (Rickford 1974: 102)

According to Rickford, invariant *be* is introduced in Gullah and becomes obligatory before VERB + *ing* to express habitual and continuative aspect at once (e.g. *He does be working*). Later, /dɔz/ is deleted and *be* is left to mark habitual aspect as it does in Black dialect. The data for my study seem to support a more mesolectal existence for the /dɔz/ form. The proportionate usage of /dɔz/ in the pre-mesolect is more than three times that of its occurrence in the basilect. When the form appears in the sampling, it appears in constructions very similar to those in Rickford's study, e.g. /ɐi dɔz bi taɪd/ 'I am tired (habitually)'.

## 2.9. Conclusions

[197] The analysis of preverbs is based on the assumption that there are levels of Creole spoken on the island ranging from present-day basiloct to pre-acrolectal Gullah. The conclusions emerging from an analysis of English verb markers and Creole preverb markers are:

(1) The data on suffixal *-s* clearly show that none of the consultants in this corpus have acquired conventional English rules for concord. The *-s* suffix is absent, and

•193 its absence can not be accounted for by any appeals to grammatical or phonological deletion processes because there is no evidence that Gullah speakers, mesolectal or basilectal, ever had any production rule for its use, nor do they have any now.

(2) An investigation of the *-ed* morpheme shows it to be absent also. There is a category of past tense in the grammar of Gullah, but it is clearly not marked with *-ed* as it is in English. Again, only one *-ed* occurred in the data, and that one was assigned to performance error. It is clear from the data that when tense is indicated, it is marked in Gullah most frequently with preverbal /bɪn/.

(3) Cunningham (1970) makes no attempt to 'weed out' those constructions which are exclusively Creole. She observes *is* as the equating verb or the verb joining two nominals, or a nominal with a *for* phrase functioning as a possessive. The data for this study show /dɔ/ as the primary equating verb, though consultant number 3 shows a fairly consistent frequency of /ɪz/ joining two nominals (e.g. /däs truθ/ 'That is the truth'). However, there are (177) interferences from English in the *be* category. The main English *be* verb used in Gullah is /wɔz/. Other verbs like *is*, *am*, *are*, and *were*, rarely occur. Their positions are filled by /dɔ/, marking present tense, and /bɪn/ and

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193 /bɪnə/ marking past and progressive. This class of features is hard to analyze because the English verbs often occur along with the Creole preverbs.

(4) A quantitative decline is apparent in the absence of /də/ and /bɪnə/ as revealed by Table 2.3 (pre-mesolectal speakers). These variants are less resistant to change than /dəŋ/ and /bɪn/ which have phonological cognates in English but have quite different semantic and syntactic functions. The consultants in this sampling are not familiar with the English restrictions, as evidenced by their performance.

193 Finally, attention may be drawn to the fact that
177 though all speakers selected used some Creole verbs:
(1) there are no speakers in the sample whose total count of English *be* verbs exceed the count of Creole preverbs;
(2) some speakers used no English *be* verbs at all;
(3) no speaker in the sample could be classified, according to his features of speech, as a Black dialect speaker.

19 The conclusion made explicit by these generalizations is that all speakers in the sampling, basilectal and pre-mesolectal, are speakers of Creole in their choice of verbs. They differ only in the level of Creole spoken.

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121 The cycle suggests that syntactic and morphological
19 elaboration can serve at least three functions in a language: (1) maintaining an adequate level of redundancy to allow for communication under inadequate conditions (the theory of redundancy formulated by Martinet and others); (2) providing material for stylistic variations (hypothesized by Labov 1971); and (3) expressing the categories of natural syntax (the theory hypothesized by Traugott 1973) (Dreyfuss 1975).

The pronominal system of creole languages has been studied by a number of creolists. Their findings indicate that creoles are not complicated by redundancies and elaborate systems of gender and case marking often found in Indo-European languages. For example, Jamaican Creole has little or no case marking but maintains gender marking for animate and inanimate. Cameroons Creole and Melanesian Pidgin mark neither case nor gender. Sierra Leone Krio
121 marks case but not gender. Historically Gullah has been
193 marked for case but not gender (Nichols 1976:86-7). If present-day Gullah maintains a similar pronominal structure, one expects the categories of case and gender to be unspecified, and the nominative, objective, and possessive forms of third person singular pronouns to be essentially the same.

As a first test of this hypothesis, a survey was conducted of the use of third person singular pronouns throughout the Wadmalaw community. Third person singular

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121 pronouns were tested because sex reference is generally
•193 marked in English by these forms.

The corpus included twenty speakers selected from the Island, ranging in age from ten to ninety-six years. A quantitative survey was taken of the pronominal distribution for each speaker.[7] Nine were selected on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study and on the range of pronouns used. These nine consultants are among the ones who assisted in the verb study as well.

Though the concern of this chapter is third person singular pronouns, Table 3.1 is presented to show the distribution for a range of pronominal possibilities in Gullah.

All of the following variants are used by the nine
193 consultants, though all are seldom used by the same
(115) consultant:

GULLAH THIRD PERSON SINGULAR CASE PRONOUN VARIANTS

| *Nominative* | *Variants* | |
|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | ɪm i hi | 'he' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i hi ʃi | 'she' |
| *neuter* | ɪm i ɪt | 'it' |
| *Objective* | | |
| *masculine* | ɔm i hɪm | 'him' |
| *feminine* | ɔm i ʃi hɔr | 'her' |
| *neuter* | ɔm i ɪt | 'it' |
| *Possessive* | | |
| *masculine* | ɪm i ɪz hɪz | 'his' |
| *feminine* | ɪm i ʃi hɔr | 'her' |

Tables 3.2 and 3:3 show the distribution and
percentage of occurrence of each variant. Nichols' study
(128) on pronominal variation in Gullah, undertaken on a neigh-

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| | FIRST PERSON | | SECOND PERSON | | THIRD PERSON | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | S | P | S | P | S | P |
| NOMINATIVE | ɔi / mi (I / me) | βi (we) | uno / ju (you) | jɔl (y'all) uno / ju (you) | M, F, N } i (he) | dɛm (them) |
| OBJECTIVE | mi (me) | | | | M, F, N } ɔm (him) | |
| POSSESSIVE | -uon (own) -sɛf (self) | | ju / -uon (you) (own) / -sɛf (self) | -uon (own) -sɛf (self) | M, F, N } i-uon | dɛm (them) -uon (own) -sɛf (own) |

The pronouns are described phonetically because Gullah speakers use forms which do not have English counterparts. Some forms were selected from among others because of their frequency of occurrence. For example, /una/ marking second person singular and plural has parallels in Igbo and Jamaican Creole (see Turner 1949 and Bailey 1966). /i/ and /ɔm/ are general markers for third person nominative and objective cases. The practice of not distinguishing gender is paralleled in Igbo, Gã, and Yoruba (Turner 1949).

TABLE 3.1
PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN GULLAH

[128] boring island in Georgetown County, revealed similar results for third person pronouns, though I altered her phonetic symbols to conform with my system of marking:

*Nominative*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | i | hi | it | |
| *feminine* | i | hi | hɛz | ji |
| *neuter* | i | hi | it | |

*Possessive*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | i | hi | him | hiz |
| *feminine* | i | hi | ji | hin hɛz |
| *neuter* | i | | | |

*Objective*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *masculine* | ɔm | it | him |
| *feminine* | ɔm | ji | hɛz |
| *neuter* | ɔm | i | it |

(Nichols 1976:84)

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| PRONOUNS | PERCENT USAGE OF FORMS | | | | | | | | Total No. of Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Person Gender Case | BASILECT | | PREMESOLECT | | MESOLECT | | ACROLECT | | |
| | form | % | form | % | form | % | form | % | |
| 3 ♀ N | im | 0 | i | 55.2 | hi | 16.4 | ji | 28.4 | 67 |
| 3 ♂ O | om | 71.5 | i | 4.5 | im | 21.0 | him | 3.0 | 61 |
| 3 ♀ O | om | 74.2 | i | 3.2 | ji | 12.9 | hor | 9.7 | 31 |
| 3 ♂ P | im | 13.8 | i | 62.1 | iz | 20.7 | hiz | 3.4 | 29 |
| 3 ♀ P | im | 0 | i | 83.8 | ji | 16.2 | hor | 0 | 6. |

TABLE 3.2. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH FOUR VARIANTS

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 ♂ N | im | 3.6 | | i | 77.6 | hi | 18.8 | 165 |
| 3 ♦ N | im | 13.2 | | i | 84.2 | it | 2.6 | 38 |
| 3 ♦ O | om | 96.0 | | i | 2.0 | it | 2.0 | 51 |

TABLE 3.3. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH THREE VARIANTS

♀ = Feminine
♂ = Masculine
♦ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Two tables are required to show a systematic distribution of third person singular pronouns in Gullah. One table contains pronouns with four variants while a second table contains pronouns with three variants. On the surface, the system seems more elaborate and complicated than that of its English superstrate. But the variants represent levels of Creole speakers and possibly stages in the acquisition of standard English. For example, to produce a semantic equivalent of *her* in the sentence *I know her*, a speaker will select a pronoun from his repertoire of rules governing third person objective forms. The one that

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196
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193 is selected will depend on the speaker's knowledge of
196 Gullah and standard English, as well as social factors such
[197] as audience, age and education. According to the data, there are four forms from which a speaker may select:

1) If the speaker is basilectal or wishes to appear as such, he will select /ɔm/ and produce /ɔɪ nuo ɔm/ 'I know her';

2) If the speaker has acquired a rule for the use of /i/, then he will say /ɔɪ nuo i/ 'I know her';

3) If the speaker has a grammatical rule for the use of a form distinguishing male from female, then he will probably say /ɔɪ nuo ʃi/ 'I know her';

4) Finally, if a speaker has acquired the acrolectal feminine, he will say /ɔɪ nuo hɔɪ/ 'I know her'.

193 Few speakers use all four variants, offering some credibility to DeCamp's theory that each creole speaker masters a span of a language acquisition continuum, and that no speaker masters both extremes unless he masters the intermediate varieties as well (DeCamp 1971).

But data in this study support the hypothesis that it is possible for a child growing up in a Creole-speaking community to learn to use the pronouns /ɔm/ and /hɔɪ/ (both polar forms) to mark third person feminine objective case without having acquired a rule for the use of /hi/ to mark feminine object.

The third person singular pronouns in Gullah are discussed according to case and frequency of occurrence. It will be shown that the status of a form may vary

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•193 according to each category and stage of acquisition.

### 3.1. The Nominative Case Pronouns

The data revealed three variants marking the third person masculine nominative case: /ɪm/, /i/, and /hi/. 193 The appearance of three forms is one indication that the 178 Creole is alive but in a state of flux and development. While neither of these charts represents any one speaker's acquisition of English pronouns, Table 3.4, showing individual variation, indicates that there are stages of language acquisition during which a speaker will produce some forms from the basilect, some from the mesolect, and others from the acrolect until the Creole form is eliminated from the lexicon.

193 The data in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 display the variability of current usage. They indicate that from a total quantitative count of 165 /i/ the unaspirated form of the third person masculine nominative pronoun is chosen 77.6% of the time. While /i/ co-varies with /ɪm/ and /hi/, both polar forms with fewer occurrences than /i/, the English form /hi/ occurs more frequently than /ɪm/. The English form has a frequency of occurrence of 18.8% while /ɪm/ has a frequency value of only 3.6%. This finding suggests that there is variation in the masculine nominative category. But /i/, the form making

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193 the replacement, is not only Creole but the pronominal form which Gullah speakers use to mark this category MOST frequently. The fact that some speakers of Gullah 193 194 seldom articulate initial [h] is one reason that phonological change is slow to occur in this category.

Gullah: i tɔk di: ho ɛn lɪkɔm
'He took the hoe and hit him.' (23)

i bɔsɔt kɹɔ:
'He burst out crying.' (23)

i ɛ̃ nou ɛn i ɛ̃ kɛ
'He doesn't know and he doesn't care' (15)

193 Unlike the forms marking the masculine subjective case, there are four variants from which Gullah speakers may select markers for the third person feminine nominative case. These variants are /ɪm/, /i/, /hi/ and /ʃi/, all of which correspond to English *she*. The data reveal that /ɪm/ has been either eliminated from the lexicon of these consultants, or that they, for extralinguistic reasons, chose not to use it. Turner's (1949) study indicated that /ɪm/ was a possible pronoun item marking third person feminine nominative case, and Bailey (1966:22) reported that /im/ is the form used to mark the nominative case for all genders in Jamaican Creole. Consequently, /ɪm/ was included in this study as a check for linguistic change.

The most significant linguistic data that are revealed from the study of variants marking the feminine nominative case is that of the 67 times that the consultants selected a third person feminine nominative pronoun, /i/ was selected

•193 37 times, /ʃi/ 19 times, and /hi/ 11 times. In total, the Creole form marks this category more than 71% of the time. Likewise, speakers whose performance revealed alternations between /i/ and /hi/ seldom used /ʃi/.

[194] Furthermore, /hi/ occurred primarily in stressed positions as an appositive, often AFTER the gender of the person or persons had been specified. Consequently, there could not have been any confusion on the part of the linguist or on the part of the speaker as to whom the speaker referred to when the pronoun /hi/ was used.

mi mɑrə, hi βɔrn klɔtʃ
'My mother, she was in church.' (2)

βɛl, hi gɪt ßom lɪrl ϕo dɪʰ ol mɛn
'Well, she got home a little before the old man.' (2)

The pronoun /i/ is not only the form used to mark masculine and feminine nominative slots, but is the form most frequently used to indicate third person nominative, neuter gender. The variants marking this position are /ɪm/, /i/, and /ɪt/. /i/ occurred as neuter marker 32 times, contrasted with the 5 occurrences of basilectal /ɪm/, and 1 occurrence of the pronoun /ɪt/. A greater number of speakers chose /ɪm/ rather than /ɪt/ to mark neuter subject.

In light of this data, one can assume that creole neuter subject pronouns are very resistant to change. Even existential is not marked by the English pronoun *it*. As first noted by Turner (1949), /do/ is the form used by Gullah speakers to mark existential where speakers of English use *it*:

•193 /da/ as existential

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| do zien i do kom | 'It is raining'<br>'It was raining'<br>'It will rain'<br>'It rained' | (1) |
| do sto ono sondi mogin | 'It started on Sunday morning' | (2) |
| do liere do gien giel | 'The later it was getting, gal.' | (2) |

/i/ as neuter it

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i βere saiklon | 'It was a cyclone' | (2) |
| das βt i iz | 'That's what it is' | (8) |
| iĨ had no herd | 'It didn't have any head.' | (8) |

The frequency count of pronouns marking third person masculine, feminine and neuter nominative case revealed that /i/ marks all three genders, most of the time. In view of this, one can conclude that most of the time these consultants do not formally distinguish between masculine, feminine and neuter gender, which gives these forms for the nominative case, respectively: /i i i/.

19

### 3.2. The Possessive Pronouns

There are four variants from which Gullah speakers may select to mark third person masculine possessive pronouns: /iz/, /i/, /iz/, /hiz/. It is necessary to provide a separate category for /iz/ and /hiz/ because most consultants delete initial [h] when pronouncing English words like *heart*, *hear*, *his*, *her*, *home* and *hunt*. The unaspirated form /iz/ occurred six times more frequently than the

19 in general by supplying extra linguistic data such as the
[115] demonstrative pronoun *that one* and the article *a*.
•193 Cunningham (1970:22) writes that the definite article *the* may also mark possession, and it is not restricted to marking inalienable possession. Nichols (1976) excluded the possessive pronouns from her analysis because of the infrequency with which they occurred in her data. The following sentences exemplify one way that the consultants appear to avoid these forms:

so i kɪk ɔm wɔn, da ʃut ʃɛsɪn... (8)
i tak' i ied, n bɛm, dɪ̃ ʃɔn ʃɛsɪn
so i dʒɛs are tiel nɔ

'So he kicked him one (and) his foot fastened.
He took his head and "bam"! His head fastened.
So he just had his tail (free) now.'

As with the nominative case pronouns, the same pattern emerges in the possessive case with /i/ as the general marker for both masculine and feminine pronouns: i i i / i i.

### 3.3. The Objective Forms

The third person singular objective pronouns show the least amount of change. The /ɔm/ form is dominant for masculine, feminine and neuter objects. It can be
[194] argued that /ɔm/ is an unaspirated, etymological allomorph of /hɪm/, just as /i/, /ɔɹ/, and /ɪz/ are unaspirated allomorphs of /hi/, /hɔɹ/ and /hɪz/. However, the data

•193 sample indicates that /əm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /əm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position. [194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /əm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /əm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also. [197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers."

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /əm/ is slight, and thus would make /əm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. [114] The evidence indicates that /əm/ is still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

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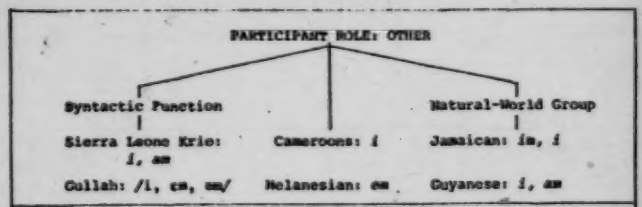
•193 (114) supportative of Nichols' claim that the basic distinction between the forms of personal pronouns used in the creoles is related to participant roles within a given discourse whereby the third person category is used to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. The basic distinction between the forms of personal pronouns in Gullah (/i, em/) and Krio (*i*, *em*) is in the syntactic function of object and non-object. The basic distinction between forms used in Jamaican (*im*, *i*) and Guyanese (*i*, *em*) seems to be between animate and inanimate natural-world classes. Cameroon (*i*) and Melanesian (*em*) simply use a one form classification 'other' to designate persons or things other than the speaker or hearer. She offers the following schema to show these groupings:




Third Person Singular Pronouns in Creoles and Pidgins (Nichols 1976:89)

Though it is not a universal that languages with a full range of functions must classify personal pronouns by both syntactic function and natural-world group, English

•193 does utilize both classifications. Nichols suggests that it may be a typological characteristic of pidgins and creoles that either one or the other feature be found, but not both.

The analysis of the objective case pronouns, however, is obscured by the appearance of /i/. That fact that /i/ appeared in even a small percentage (the masculine 4.5%, the feminine 3.2%, and the neuter 2.0%) indicates that the form is a segment of an historical change process. Diachronically, /ɪm/ has been the marker of the objective slot, occurring in no other case for this study, nor for the studies undertaken by Turner (1949), Cunningham (1970), or Nichols (1976). A pattern emerges which may explain the appearance of /i/ in the objective case: It is known that /i/ and /ɪm/ are variants for the nominative and possessive cases in Gullah. The data for this study, as well as the data for Nichols' study, show that of these variants /i/ now occurs most frequently. Investigations of Gullah and other Atlantic creoles show /ɪm/ to be the more basilectal form. In the change from /ɪm/ to /i/ in the nominative and possessive cases, a given speaker acquires the pronoun /i/ and uses it to mark all genders in the nominative case. Once he becomes comfortable using /i/ opposed to /ɪm/ to mark the nominative case, he will then begin to use /i/ to mark the possessive case. Consequently one hears both of the following in present-day varieties of Gullah:

i nuo i βic hom
ɪm nuo ɪm βic hom } 'He knows his way home.' (1)

193 Since Gullah speakers are generally accustomed to a genderless pronoun system, /i/ is perhaps substituted for /əm/ in the objective case by some speakers. But because Gullah is marked for objective case, one would not normally hear /ɔɪ nuo i/ 'I know it.' Sentences employing /i/ in objective position would be considered, in the words of Consultant 1, /ba· tɔk/ 'bad talk', or at best questionable. However, Gullah speakers do say:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ai no ʃi | 'I know her' | (1) |
| ɪm it ʃi | 'He hit her' | (1) |

But they do not usually say:

| | |
|---|---|
| *ai no i | to mean 'I know him, I know it' |

Gullah speakers use the basilectal forms of the feminine objective pronouns with great frequency: for example, /əm/ comprises 74.2% of the total count, /i/ 3.2%, /ʃi/ 12.9%, and /hɔɪ/ 9.7%.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ɔɪ kɔl əm jicɪə | 'I call her Yatta.' | (2) |
| ɔɪ kicm tə de ɦospɪrl | 'I carried her to the hospital.' | (3) |
| ɔɪ ɛ̃ ʃi əm | 'I haven't seen her.' | (3) |
| kit i ɔn əβie | 'Take it on away (from here).' | (2) |

Change from the creole occurs the least in the neuter objective slot. For example, /əm/ was selected for this category 96% of the noted occurrences, leaving only 2.0% for /i/ and /ɪt/ respectively. The pronoun /ɪt/ does not normally appear in creole languages.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ai ʃi kuro ʃɔ əm pleˈən | 'See, she could see it plain.' | (3) |
| ju ku ɸilem | 'You could feel it.' | (3) |

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•193 i it em 'He hit it' (2)

Variant forms and their frequency of occurrence offer a clue to the stages of pronominal acquisition in Gullah. Following the model that Bickerton outlined for Guyanese [128] Creole, I divided each stage of development into three groups consisting of forms representing, in each case,

1) masculine, feminine, and neuter subject /
2) masculine and feminine possessive /
3) masculine, feminine, neuter objects,

respectively. The data for third person singular pronouns suggest on the whole that the language is decreolizing but not as rapidly as some have predicted. There is a 193 progression from the system first noted by Turner (1949: 197 227):

im im im / im im / em em em

While each speaker displays variation in the choice of pronouns, a compilation of the MOST dominant forms reveals that the consultants in this study maintain a genderless pronominal system:

i i i / i i / em em em

A similar study of linguistic change in Gullah was undertaken recently quite independent of my own. The study reveals identical findings:

> On the basis of both distribution across categories and frequency of occurrence, the two basic creole forms for Gullah third person pronouns of singular number are here identified as oo for both nominative and possessive cases and oo for objective case. (Nichols 1976:101)

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### 3.4. Stages in Language Acquisition

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A diachronic look at Gullah indicates that Turner (1949:227) cites the appearance of the creole pronoun /i/ in nominative position co-occurring with /ɪm/. The co-occurrence of these forms suggests that a rule conflict was in progress and /i/ would eventually replace /ɪm/ as the general marker of gender in nominative position. The pronoun /i/ is said to make the replacement because historically there are fewer occurrences of /ɪm/ as nominative marker in the basilect than there are occurrences of /i/, and because /ɪm/ has been recorded to mark or co-occur with /i/ in nominative position for all genders in Jamaican Creole (*im*)(Bailey 1966), and Guyanese Creole (*am*)(Bickerton 1975). The evidence indicates that unlike Bickerton's model for Guyanese Creole, the diachronic model for Gullah is more conservative in Stage I:

*Stage I.* i i i / i i / am am am
(Model for Guayanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

Stage I for Gullah:

ɪm ɪm ɪm / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ɔm ɔm

The difference in the stage I pattern for Gullah and Guyanese Creole may be accounted for by different origins, different developmental stages, or different source languages. Both models are reminiscent of certain West African languages such as Yoruba, for example, which uses one form /ɔ, ɔ̃ɪ/ for 'he', 'she', and 'it' in subject

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•193 position (Turner 1949:228). It is characteristic of
197 Atlantic creole languages to display a reduced distinction of third person singular pronouns.

Contact between language systems caused a change in the Stage I pattern, and Turner's data indicates that discrimination of gender occurred first in the neuter subject before taking place in the human subjects.

Stage II: im im i / im im / on on on

One theory that can be proposed is that neuter /i/ was linearly transferred intra-categorically to the masculine and feminine forms before making other changes in the objective categories. Stage III is essentially the same undifferentiated gender as Stage I:

Stage III: i i i / im im / on on on

I attribute this change to partial selection, where Gullah speakers approximated the contact language's pre-aspirated /(h)i/ and incorporated it intra-categorically into their genderless mold, to make minimal adjustments to accommodate the new form.

i ɛ̃ bene kom bɛk til die klɪn (3)
'She didn't come back until morning.'

Only in Stage IV does Gullah reveal a system identifiable with Bickerton's Stage I:

Stage IV: i i i / i i / on on on (Gullah)

As exemplified by the survey, the consultants involved in this study use the Stage IV system.

[194) /i/ marking feminine subject is being replaced by

193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar fricative /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / im im / om om om

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

*Stage IV:* i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

Stage VI: i ʃi i / im im / om ʃi om

19 Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /om/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

000 easy relexification.

•193 197 In the last stages of decreolization, if one can assume that total decreolization will occur, a point on the continuum is reached where non-standard use of pronouns is more perceivable, and final replacement occurs:

Stage IX: i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm ʃi ɪt

Stage X: i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm hɛz ɪt

Stage IX is a pre-acrolectal or very advanced stage for Gullah. Few speakers of Gullah use standard English *her*. The final stage involving replacement of possessive items is omitted by Bickerton. I include this stage for Gullah because of its widespread occurrence. The masculine and feminine possessive are often marked in Gullah by the definite article *the* + *own* which may account for the infrequent use of pronouns to mark the possessive.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i kʌt de on hied | 'He cut his own head' | (2) |
| ʃi kʊk de on fud | 'She cooks her own food.' | (4) |

This change is difficult to account for in the evolution of pronouns in Gullah. One would not expect it to occur as a pre-acrolectal stage because *the* is not present in the superstrate language indicating possession in any way, even allowing for phonetic alternations. I believe that this change was occurring with other basilectal changes before the introduction of *she* marking possessive when we get forms like:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʃi du ʃi on hɛ | 'She does her own hair.' | (9) |
| i kɔn ʃʌk im on baʔl | 'He can suck his bottle.' | (1) |

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194 This theory of possessive placement would then be in accord with Bickerton's concept that the completion of the possessive category is the final stage, with *her* occurring by transference to possessive position and finally *his* being the last form introduced to replace /ɪm/.

**Stage XI:** hi ʃi ɪt / iz ɛz / ɛm ɛr ɪt

**Stage XII:** hi ʃi ɪt / hiz hɛz / him hɛz ɪt

It is difficult to say exactly where the last four stages (IX, X, XI and XII) occur in relation to each other. The data have too few occurrences of *his* or *her* to really be able to point to a change sequence. However, it is apparent that pronominal forms show up very early in Guyanese Creole which are just beginning to appear in Gullah. Yet the Guyanese distribution seems less systematic, which is not to say that speakers are necessarily systematic in acquiring another language; but it appears that in the system that Bickerton proposes, the speakers zig-zag across categories in their acquisition of pronominal forms. The consultants in the pronominal study for Gullah seem to show SOME system. Correlation of the data shows that they acquire a form, and use this one form to saturate each case before selecting another form. Other forms are acquired simultaneously but not distributed until the process is well underway with the first selection. The stages are theoretical but do not necessarily represent an idealized model for linguistic change in Gullah. These stages can be shown on a grid developed from raw data.

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| CONSULTANTS | PRONOUNS | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 ϕ O | 3 ♀ O | 3 ♂ O | 3 ϕ N | 3 ♂ P | 3 ♂ N | 3 ♀ P | 3 ♀ N |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | 2 | 2 | (1) 2 3 | 2 | (2) 3 |
| 8 | (1) 2 3 | 1 | (1) 2 | 2 | - | (2) 3 | - | (2) 3 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | 1 | (2) 3 4 | 1 2 3 | 2 | - |
| 23 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | (1) 4 | 2 3 | (1) 2 | (1) 2 | 2 3 | (2) 4 |
| 3 | 1 | (1) 3 | 1 | 2 | - | (2) 3 | - | (2) 3 4 |
| 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| 6 | 1 | (1) 4 | (1) 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | (2) 3 |
| 24 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 (2) 3 | 2 | - | (2) 3 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 (2) 3 | - | (2) 4 |
| KEY | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=ɪt | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=ʃi<br>4=hɪz | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=ɪm<br>4=hɪm | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=ɪt | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=ɪz<br>4=hɪz | 1=ɪm<br>3=i<br>3=hi | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=ʃi<br>4=hɪz | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=hi<br>4=ʃi |

TABLE 3.4.
IMPLICATIONAL SCALE FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS IN GULLAH

♂ = Masculine
♀ = Feminine
ϕ = Neuter

N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently.

193 Bickerton's data and charts differ substantially from mine because his are based on groups of speakers, whereas I limited myself to showing pronoun distribution for nine

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193 individual consultants.

121 193 To devise an implicational scale, I designated numerical indices to pronominal forms and their alternates in sequential order away from the basilect. The basilect form is numbered one, its first replacement is numbered two, its second replacement three, etc. The highest number for any form represents the acrolect for that category. The presence of two or more numbers in a single cell represents the existence of a rule conflict. Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently (Table 3.4).

193 Table 3.5 shows a number of pronoun variants used by each consultant. However, the degree of fluctuation between English and Creole reveals that the speakers' grammar is closer to Creole than it is to English. Some variants are clearly a reflection of English intrusions but a quantitative survey of the most frequently used forms show only slight movement from the creole pattern recorded by Turner in 1949.

Many of the cells are split, indicating rule conflicts in performance. The presence of six empty cells in the third person feminine possessive column again suggests that speakers avoid marking this position. When forced to select a feminine possessive pronoun, /i/ is the one chosen 86% of the time. Most often, speakers supply extra linguistic data or mark this slot with the definite article *the*, which is also done in Krio and Jamaican Creole:

Gullah: i kot de fut, mɑn 'She cut her foot, man', or 'He cut his foot, man' (1)

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| CONSULTANTS | PRONOUNS | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3ϕO | 3♀O | 3♂O | 3ϕN | 3♂P | 3♂N | 3♀P | 3♀N | |
| | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | STANDARD BASILECT |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 2 3 | - | 2 4 | GULLAH |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 3 | 1 | 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 | 2 | - | |
| 24 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 2 3 | 2 | - | 2 3 | |
| 23 | 1 | 1 2 3 | 1 4 | 2 3 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 2 3 | 2 4 | |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 2 3 | 2 | 2 3 | |
| 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | |
| 8 | 1 2 3 | 1 | 1 2 | 2 | - | 2 3 | - | 2 3 | |
| 6 | 1 | 1 4 | 1 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 3 | |
| 3 | 1 | 1 3 | 1 | 2 | - | 2 3 | - | 2 3 4 | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | STANDARD ENGLISH |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | |
| | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | |
| KEY | 1=am | 1=am | 1=am | 1=im | 1=im | 1=im | 1=im | 1=im | |
| | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | 2=i | |
| | 3=it | 3=ji | 3=im | 3=it | 3=iz | 3=hi | 3=ji | 3=hi | |
| | | 4=hoz | 4=him | | 4=hiz | | 4=hoz | 4=ji | |

♂ = Masculine
♀ = Feminine
ϕ = Neuter

N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

A standard basilect and Standard English are included to show the approximate distance from which Gullah has progressed and the distance it has yet to go in terms of rules to reach Standard English.

TABLE 3.5. IMPLICATIONAL SCALE FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS

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•193 Unlike the feminine, there are high numbers in the cells for the column marked THIRD PERSON MASCULINE POSSESSIVE. One speaker shows usage of /i/, /iz/ and /hiz/, though most speakers have marked this category with /i/. It is significant that speakers 8 and 3 leave both masculine and feminine possessive case unmarked. It is significant because it adds more credibility to possessive cases being unmarked by pronouns in the basilect.

[197] The pronominal system shows the least amount of change in the masculine, feminine and neuter objective case. All the consultants continue to use /im/ regardless of gender on sex-reference. It is my belief that the objective slot is the only one still marked for case.

193 197 The greatest degree of change has occurred in the nominative case. Five of the nine consultants have acquired a rule for aspirating /i/ to produce English *he*, but the rule is not stable. Of the 165 times that the masculine subject appears in the data, 78% were marked with /i/ and only 19% were marked with aspiration (/hi/). The fluctuation and variability between /i/ and /hi/ where there has been no variation historically is indicative of linguistic change within a creole configuration. Turner 193 records /him/ 'him' as the only pronominal form appearing 194 with aspiration in Gullah. Five of the consultants in 197 this study are moving toward aspiration of other forms, particularly /hi/. The change, however, is only a phonological manifestation of an underlying Creole grammar

193 194 197 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male and female in Gullah.

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance (177) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 197 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject. The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of (177) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though those three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

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193 The evidence indicates that MOST OFTEN these consultants do not formally specify gender in their pronominal system:

i i i / i i / em em em

These forms are very unlike the English superstrate's pronominal forms. However, in structure it shows a resemblance to the unspecified case and gender of the pronominal system of ONE of its African substrates. Compare third person singular pronouns in Igbo, for example:

yɑ; yɑ; yɑ; / yɑ; yɑ; / yɑ; yɑ; yɑ;
(Model for Igbo, Turner 1949:227)

Unlike Igbo, however, the objective case is marked in Gullah by a different pronoun. Commensurate with the speakers of some other pidgin and creole languages, most of the consultants in this study do not formally mark pronouns for case; nor do they make a formal distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter gender, which is a system diametrically opposed to English.

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194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 539 The following texts are included in this study primarily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more [193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fe/, the introductory verb /sie/, the future marker /go/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /ɸ/ and /w/; /ɸ/ and /f/; /t/ for initial /θ/ and /ð/; and /o/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, [126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

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NOTES

121 1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to
197 fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among
198 people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was ample linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

121 2. No consensus has been reached on what features
193 the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

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S 121 regarded BASILECT as that speech variety which is farthest
193 from standard (#10, the acrolect). MESOLECT has been used to refer to that variety falling approximately midway (#5). All intermediate varieties may be recognized by the prefixes *pre-* or *post-*. These terms, however, should be understood to represent gradations of a speech continuum with one grade merging into the other in a manner similar to a color spectrum. They are not to be regarded as separate entities (see Bailey 1974, DeCamp 1968, Bickerton 1975). Cunningham (1970:67) says the past progressive results from a combination of *been* + *da* → /bɪnə/. It is
S [128] written /bɪnə/ in this study. The slash marks (/ /) are used to represent broad phonetic rather than strictly phonemic transcription.

S 193 3. The *-ing* morphemes appear in the basilect, but generally in relation to /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* as the progressive aspect marker.

A 121 4. For opposing arguments see Krapp (1924), McDavid
193 and McDavid (1951). For arguments for a creole origin see Stewart (1967), Dillard (1972), Rickford (1974), and Bickerton (1970).

A 193 5. Black dialect consultants 25, 26 and 27 assure me that the *-s* suffix is used consistently to mark all persons and numbers by some speakers.

S 193 6. For more detailed discussion, see Cunningham 1970.

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /ɔm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /ɔm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiɛɾɛ̃] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 128 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɔ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 776 775 14. *Bag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders. It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 193 539 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

000 himself understood.

539 (538) 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naïf and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

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538 1. *snake* [sinick] $\emptyset \rightarrow V$ / C __ C
.193 2. *program* [pogɛm] $r \rightarrow \emptyset$ / C __
[pogam] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or
[197] direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /no/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm dɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /uno/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

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## THE DIALECT

197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

"The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left.""

[194] [193]

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."" White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

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"I, 377.

[113] "J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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*Short Cuts*

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The simple form *run*, for example, does duty for "run, runs, is or are running, has or have run, ran, etc.", singular and plural of all tenses. *'Ee* serves interchangeably for "he, she or it"; *'e dead; 'e hab chile* (of a mother); *'e cry; 'e kick* (of a mule); *'e freeze; 'e hot; 'e rain; 'e gwine wedduh* (of an approaching storm). Similarly *'um* stands for all objective case forms of the third person pronoun: *'e tief 'um* (steals or stole it or them); *'e lick 'um* (of wife, child, or mule); *'e bu'n 'um; uh done 'um; uh shoot 'um.*

Distinctions of gender,[24] even in the pronoun, are likewise lacking. As Harris succinctly remarks: "It (Gullah) recognizes no gender, and scorns the use of the plural number except accidentally."[25] For example, a country darkey boarding the train near Georgetown handed the conductor two tickets, and was asked whom they were for. *"Dis one fuh him"* (pointing to his wife), *"and dis one fuh we,"* pointing to himself. A visitor to the office of a masculine attorney who had stepped out for a moment was told by the Georgetown darkey office boy: "She is out; 'e yent come back, not yit; him soon will."[26]

*'Ee see 'um* or the syncopated form *'Ee shum* may have any of the twenty-four possibilities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| He<br>She<br>It | sees<br>saw | her<br>him<br>it<br>them |

Depending upon its inflection and accent, *shum* by itself

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[24]Compare Mrs. Parsons' statement: "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic distinctions. The persistence of the indifference in Negro dialects, in English, French, and Portuguese, is an interesting fact in the psychology of language." *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Preface, XX.

[25]*Nights With Uncle Remus*, Intro., XXXIII.

[26]Mr. Bennett is likewise authority for the following uniquely practical explanation of sex and gender: "An old Negro was asked about the difference between the masculine and feminine genders and replied: 'O, yes; me yis know dat. W'en 'omans eat mahry (married) 'e a male; w'en 'e mahry 'im bun uh female."

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•193 may mean "See it, him, them?" The height of laconicism is achieved in

*"Shum?"*
*"Shum!"*

*Uh yeddy 'um but 'uh ent shum* may have any of the sixty-four possible combinations:

I {hear / heard} {it / her / him / them} but I {didn't / don't} see {it / her / him / them}

One of the most convenient and expressive words in Gullah is the interrogative or affirmative exclamation *enty*, equivalent to the German *Nichtwahr* or the French *N'est-ce pas?* It means "isn't, aren't, didn't, doesn't, don't, you, she, it, they, we," etc., etc. *Enty you shum?* or *You shum, enty?*

*Gullah "A"*

194 To unaccustomed ears, the most characteristic and peculiar sound in Gullah is the prevalence of the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "at" "hat" "bat", drawled or prolonged to *"aa"*. This sound on Gullah tongue represents both the median and broad *a* sounds, and gives *paa't* for both path or part; *smaa't* for smart; *cyaa't* for cart; *haa't* for heart; and similarly *shaa'p, baa'n, maa'k, staa't, daa'k, yaa'd*, etc. As Mr. Bennett remarks: "To hear a small black girl, striving after the higher education but forever indelibly saturated with Gullah, recite the inspired line, 'Hark! hark! the lark!' as 'Haa'k! haa'k! de laa'k!' is inevitably to smile."[40]

Conversely the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "fat", "hat," "rat," etc., is broadened to *o* or *ah*,[41] giving *ha(h)t* for hat, *ca(h)t* for cat, *ba(h)g* for bag, and *ba(h)k, cra(h)k, fa(h)c'* and *ma(h)n* for back, crack, fact, and man. By this reversal of *a* sounds, curious results follow.

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[40] Bennett II, 42.
[41] Not exclusively Gullah, but also impeccable white low-country usage.

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Thus, a "smart man" becomes a *smaa't ma(h)n*, and a 194
'dark bag" becomes a *daa'k ba(h)g*.

### *Consonant Shifts*

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Voiced *th* (as in *then*) > *d*

Aldo', anudduh, dat, den, dey dey (right there), bodduh, todduh (t'other), demself.

Voiceless *th* (as in *thin*) >t, either initial or final.

T'ick, t'in, t'ing, t'ink, t'ief, t'irty, t'istle, t'irteen, t'row, t'roat, t'ree, t'rough.

Eart' (or yut'), bre't', fait', trut', teet', lat' (lathe), pat', wut (worth).

*r* > *b*

Bittle (victuals), beabuh, bee-hibe, Benus (sometimes Wenus), behabe, berry (sometimes werry) 'ceebin (deceiving), grabe, hebby, driber, drobe, Ebe, ebenin', fabuh, leabe, lib', libe, febuh, fibe, fiabuh, glub, moobe.

*v* > *w*

Wenus (sometimes Benus), werry (sometimes berry), Nowembuh, puhwidin', puhwiduh, puhwishun, puhwoke, puhwokin', waa'mint (varmint), wegetubble, westibule (of vestibule limited train), wictoria, wine, wineguh, wisit.

*z* > *dj*

Medjuh, pledjuh, pledjuhr'um (pleasure him or them), tredjuh, tredjuruh.

*R*, of course, drops[a] or softens to *h*, except intervocalically as in *tredjuruh*, and *fuhr'um*, for *fuh um* (for them).

Final *d* or *t* is dropped or slurred:[a] Bandon' (abandoned), Babtis', buss', fiel'-han'.

An initial *u* is added before *u* (with a vanishing *y* sound), as in Newinted States, Nyankee, nyung, nyounges', nyuse, nyuzen' (usen't).

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[a]As always in the best company, R's are seen and not heard.
[a]Likewise in general usage.

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193 194 Preceded by a vowel an initial *y* sound is added to *i* and *e*. Thus *iz* and *ent* become *yiz* and *yent*. *Him is*, but *'e yiz; him ent*, but *'e yent; 'e yeye red.*.

Initial *s* is dropped in the hard consonant combinations *sc, sp, sk, st.*

'Cratch, 'crape, 'kin, 'corch, 'tan, 'tink, 'take, 'tir, 'top, 'ting, 'tep, 'ticky, 'traight, 'tring, 'tretch-out, 'tir, 'pin, 'pat, 'pit, 'plash, 'pend, 'tore.

*Prefixes*

193 Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped, as *at-, o-, ap-, e-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-*, etc.

'Ten, 'tenshun (for attend or intend, attention, intention), 'pinion (opinion), 'pint, 'pintment (appoint, appointment), 'pistle (epistle), 'jeck' (reject, object), 'tack, 'tagnhize (antagonize), 'mirashun (admiration), 'scusshun (excursion), 'spishun, 'spize, 'splain, 'špon', 'spose (suppose, expose), 'spute, 'stonish, 'stead'ub (instead of), 'stracted, 'struckshun (construction, destruction).

The prefix *re-* is the favorite, being sometimes retained when the others are dropped, and frequently being substituted for other less euphonious prefixes:

Recishun (for decision); refen' (defend), remonia (pneumonia), renite (unite), repeah (appear), repose (oppose), resplain (explain), refen ('fen', defend). "Anoint" becomes *'nint*, but the pastor is the *Lord's renointed.*

*Survivals (Archaisms)*

192 *Fo'punce* and *seb'npunce chickens*, to indicate the size of a chicken sold for those amounts before the Revolutionary War.

*Coz, cuz*, or *cuzn* as a form of address, like the Elizabethan "coz".

*Jook* in the sense of jab or jabbed.

*Tittie* or *tittuh* for sister.

*Toad* for a young female dog.

*Tosey*, as a diminutive of "toad," as a humorous nickname for man or woman.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[15]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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Thus *medguh*, *pledguh*, *treadguh*, etc., pronunciations which are not uncommon among illiterate white people. 194

*Loss of Syllables*

As Professor Smith says, "Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped as *at-*, *o-*, *ap-*, *re-*, *op-*, *ad-*, *ex-*, *dis-*, *as-*, *con-*, etc." Thus *'ten'* (attend, intend), *'pinion* (opinion), *'spose* (suppose, expose), *'spise* (despise), *'stonish* (astonish), and so on through dozens of words. In addition, medial syllables are often lost, as in *diffunce* (difference), *eb'ry* (every), *gen'ly* (generally), etc.[87] Now it is easy to assume that the Negro dropped such syllables because of some natural tendency toward economy of vocalization, but it is doubtful whether this is the true explanation. According to Wright, such pronunciations as *'bout* (about), *'quaint* (acquaint), *'gree* (agree), *'low* (allow), *'cause* (because), *'sturb* (disturb), *'lev'n*, *'leb'm* (eleven), *'cept* (except), *'casion* (occasion), *'tice* (entice), *comp'ny* (company), *diff'ent* (different), *gen'ral* (general), etc., were very frequent in the English dialects.[88] The Negro probably omits little that was not omitted in the patterns set by his English associates in the early days in the South Carolina low-country. 194 193

*Combinations*

The phonology of the dialect is further affected by the combinational process, by which the Negro utters several words as a single vocable, thus making it inevitable 194

[87] There are of course many vocalic *m's* and *n's*, as in *bott'm* (bottom), *heav'n* (heaven), *bac'n* (bacon), *happ'n* (happen), etc., but these are so common among white people that I do not mention them as Gullah characteristics.

[88] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 204-5. Such pronunciations as *monsus* (monstrous), *sartenly* (certainly), *sum'dy* (somebody) etc., will be found in specimens of English dialect in the works of Halliwell, Wright, Barnes, Skeat, and others.

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193. [191] [177] [128]

*Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox, t'ree*

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*ox*, etc. Sometimes a plural creeps in unexpectedly, as in a "five-dolluhs" hat, a "two-bits" collar, etc.[70]

The sign of the genitive is nearly always omitted. Thus "'e fadduh house" means "his (or her) father's house;" "dem brudduh wife" is "their brother's wife;" "Buh Wolf pig" is "Buh Wolf's pig," etc.[71] The thing possessed is sometimes widely separated from the possessor. "Is that your goat?" I asked a man. "No suh, dat de man what lib obuh dere een dat nex' house goat."[72]

Judging from the pronouns used, most inanimate objects are personified[73] and are masculine, being referred to as *he*.

### *Adjectives and Adverbs*

Most adjectives are the same as in the standard language. Occasionally an ending is corrupted, as *brinly* (brindled), *speckly* (speckled), *cackly* (cackling), etc.

A few irregular forms, such as *worser*, *worsest*, *more better*, *morest*, *more longer*, and the like, occur in the comparison of adjectives.[74]

### *Pronouns*

The nominative and objective forms of the personal pronouns are often reversed. "Him sent dis to we," "me said to he," "him an' me went," "dem got a long way to go to ketch up wid he," etc. *Um* is a sort of catch-all,

[70] For double plurals and use of singular for plural in English dialects, see Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 263-64.

[71] *Cf.* English dialect: "The Queen Cousin," "My father boots," etc., Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265. A Lancashire magistrate is said to have asked a witness, "Was it your brother dog?" Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 144.

[72] This form, with the genitival *s*, of course, is still common in this country. *Cf.*, also English dialect, "I've just seen Tim Dutton him as went to America's wife," etc. Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[73] Same widely true in English dialects. *Cf. E. D. G.*, p. 265.

[74] *Cf. E. D. G.*, pp. 267-69.

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serving for *her, it, him, them,* except in emphatic positions. Thus, "'e got 'um" may mean that he, she, or it got or gets it, him, her or them. This confusion of pronouns is not a Negro invention, nor does it reflect an inability on his part to master English pronouns. He simply copied the pattern which was set for him.[75]

*You,* singular and plural, is nearly always *oona, woona,* or *yoona:* "oona gwine?" "oona help we," "I tell oona duh trut'," etc. The origin of *oona* is not clear. There seems to be no record of any such pronunciation of *you* in English dialect. It may be of African origin.[76]

The masculine pronouns are used almost exclusively. "'E go wid 'e 'usban'" means "she goes (is going, went) with her husband." "My wife, 'e yent feel so well," "My daughtuh, 'e los' 'e (or him) pig," etc. If the feminine is used, it is usually in the wrong place, as when a Negro refers to his nephew, his ox, or his bull as *she.* This confusion of genders had its basis in the peasant English speech. *He* was widely used in England for inanimate objects and feminine animals.[77] It used to be a common saying that in Hampshire "everything is called *he* except a tom-cat which is called *she.*"[78]

[75] *Cf. E. D. G.,* pp. 270-73. "In all the dialects of Scotland and England the objective form of the personal pronoun is used for the nominative. . . . In all the dialects of the south-midland, eastern, southern, and south-western counties the nominative of the personal pronoun is used as the emphatic form of the objective case." Thus, "it was her that did it," "him and me did it," "Jack and us went together." See also Halliwell's *Historical Sketch of the Provincial Dialects of England* for numerous examples. In Worcestershire, for example, "they said, "her's going for a walk with she." The unstressed form of *him* was *un* or *'im,* of *her, eh* or *uh,* of *them, um* or *'em,* in many of the dialects.

[76] See below, under African words.

[77] *E. D. G.,* p. 272. In Thomas Wright's *Dict. of Obsolete and Provincial English,* the meanings *they* and *she* are listed under *he.*

[78] Halliwell, *Prov. Dial.,* p. 43.

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•193 It will have been noticed already that the possessive pronouns are not common in Gullah. "His boat" is represented by "'e boat" or "him boat." "Our house" is "we house" or "us house." Disjunctively we have *him-own, we-own, you-own, dem-own,* etc. This way of expressing the possessive by means of the nominative or objective personal pronouns was widespread in the English dialects.[79]

The usual forms of the reflexive pronouns are *'ese'f, deyse'f* (sometimes *demse'f*), *myse'f* and *wese'f*. These correspond to the reflexives used in many of the midland and southern counties in England.[80]

The demonstratives besides *dis, dat,* and *dese,* are *disyuh*[81] (this here), *da' deh*[82] (that there), *dese* (these), *dese yuh*[83] (these here), *dem* (them, used for those), *dem deh*[84] (them there). *Those* is never heard among the dialect speakers. As in the English dialects, *that* is used adverbially with the meaning *to such an extent,*[85] as "'e dat 'fraid him oxin gwine die, 'e sell 'um cheap."

*Wuh* (what, that) is the relative pronoun most used. *Who,* as a relative, is seldom used, *whom* is never used. *Which* is sometimes heard, but is usually in a clumsy construction, as "de nine kitten, which all dem eye ent open yet."

[79] *E. D. G.,* p. 274.

[80] *E. D. G.,* p. 276.

[81] "*This here* . . . general in England." *E. D. G.,* p. 277.

[82] "*That there,* general in England; a second *there* is often added." *E. D. G.,* p. 277.

[83] *These here,* common in Midland and Southern England. *E. D. G.,* p. 279.

[84] "*Those* is seldom or never heard in genuine dialect speech. Its place is supplied by: (1) *Them* . . . (2) *Them there.*" *E. D. G.,* p. 279.

[85] *Cf. E. D. G.,* p. 278.

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*Verbs*

Verbal endings are cut to the minimum in Gullah. With scarcely any exception one form of a verb serves for all tenses. "'E run" means that he, she, or it *ran, has run, runs, is running,* and sometimes *will run.* The last, however, would as a rule be expressed by "'e gwine run." An air of finality is lent by "'e done run,"[86] and sometimes the present action of running is "'e duh run" (he does run). 1930

When compound forms for the past are used, the verb stem remains the same, but it is preceded by *uh,* a survival from English dialects still commonly heard among white Americans. Thus the Negro would say, "if I had *uh hit* um," "'e been *uh laugh* at me," etc.[87]

There are a few remnants of the old *th* ending in the third person singular, as in "w'en de win' blowet' " (blow-eth), owing their perpetuation largely to Biblical usage. *Fuh* (for) is sometimes used as the sign of the infinitive: "'E haffuh hab wife fuh cook fuhr'um, enty?"[88]

Adjectives and nouns are freely converted into verbs. "'E want a mortgage on sometin' what won't *dead.*" "De young gal *pledjuh* (pleasure) heself," "Look out! De plank gwine uh *broke.*" Him gwine uh *foolish* aroun'." "Me *happy* mese'f wid um." This trait survives in Eng-

[86] An old man to whom ideas of time were vague was trying to tell how long his daughter had been away from St. Helena: "Oh, 'e *been been* gone."

[87] These simplified verb forms were due in part to the fact that the white settlers simplified their speech as much as possible in dealing with the slaves. Some of these characteristics, however, were regularly found in English dialects. See *E. D. G.,* pp. 281-98. For example, the endings *s* and *es* in the third person singular were often omitted in the south midland, eastern, and southern dialects. The use of the form with *do (he does love* for *he loves)* was common in the southwestern dialects.

[88] *Cf. E. D. G.,* p. 298.

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•193 land, and it has been observed especially among the whites of our Appalachians and Ozarks.

There are two or three unusual verb forms used in the dialect. *Hear* is *yerry* or *yeddy*. *See*, plus its object, has become *shum*, meaning see (sees, saw), it, him, her, them, etc. The former is probably derived with little change from the English dialect pronunciation of *hear*, *heard*, as *year*, *yeard*.[89] Likewise *see*, being nearly always followed by its object, which was usually *um*, was transformed in the rapid Gullah speech to *shum*.

Several English dialect forms like *pit* (put) and *remoan* (remove) survive in the Gullah, besides a number of archaic meanings of certain verbs.[90]

### *Conjunctions*

In addition to the standard uses, the following peculiarities occur. *Than* is often expressed by *nuh* (nor), as it was, in fact still is, in England. Thus "Tek care mo' bettuh nuh be sorry" (to take care is better than to be sorry). *And* is also sometimes *nuh*, as in "you nuh me" (you and I).

### *Numerals, Etc.*

802 *Twice*, *second*, *third*, etc., are rarely heard among the older dialect speakers, who prefer *two*, *two-time*, etc. "De t'ree (third) Sunday in November," "Now, in de two place" (second place), "Uh tol' 'um two-time" (twice), "Muh wife 'e been sick now strike de two mont'." *Both* is always *all-two*.[91] "Buh Rabbit en Buh Wolf all-

[89] Some verbs had an *i* or *y* ending in England, e. g., *look* was sometimes *looky*, a form surviving in America.

[90] See the list of archaic and provincial usages given below.

[91] A rare English usage, heard nowhere in this country now except in the Gullah dialect. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 802
'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc.

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be 193
mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92]

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of 177
Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the 19
case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch.

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

7: Jackson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For text illustrating various manifestations of Gullah phonological and grammatical constructions, see Categories 538 and 539.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Notes to the Reader*

128 PRONUNCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS, ELISION, and emphasis play almost equal roles in the Negro speech of this section. Except for the spelling of surnames, dialect in the interviews has been faithfully transcribed. Great care has been taken to try to represent the pronunciation, but to have represented literally the elision and emphasis would have made the text unintelligible to the average non-scientific reader. Therefore the elision has been moderated and the emphasis left to the reader. Diacritical marks have not been used because it was thought it would give the text too foreign an appearance, and apostrophes commonly used in dialect have been discarded for simplification. Many variations in pronunciation occur even in a small area; younger members of a community speak differently from older, the better educated differently from the less well educated. Excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses. Almost universally *uh* is substituted for *er* and *d* for *th*, though there are more exceptions to the latter than to the former. An *h* is nearly always substituted for an *r* following a vowel and *ah* is substituted for the terminal *re;* thus *here* becomes *heah*. This latter spelling is as near as can be achieved, and though the diphthong is present the *e* is very short. In certain cases persons have learned to pronounce certain words correctly while other words of the same type will still be spoken in dialect. *Mother* is a common example of this. The *th* in this word has often been deliberately learned

128 194 195

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



128 though the final *er* will still be pronounced *uh*. Initial
194 syllables are often pronounced differently from the same
195 syllable occurring in the middle of a sentence. The pronoun *I* at the beginning of a sentence is almost always pronounced correctly, whereas *I* in the middle of the sentence is usually pronounced *uh*. Thus the same word often varies according to its importance and the need of the speaker for emphasis, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Some of the above mentioned points may not seem worthy of mention to the student familiar with white speech of the same section. But because the white speech has many similarities of pronunciation, it does not make the recorded speech of these studies any less of a dialect nor any less of a variation from standard speech.

128 African parallels will be found in the appendix. These have been grouped according to subjects and the subjects arranged alphabetically and numbered consecutively. Text reference numbers (Arabic) refer to the appendix numbers where pertinent parallels may be found. Where an appendix number is followed by a letter, the parallel under this heading is especially noteworthy. Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns, the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the intentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's 177 871 where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak [193] funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other [194] forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

193 Under such a schema, locatives and possessives can be seen as related although separate categories. The locatives found by Washabaugh for other creoles, and the benefactives carrying notions of possession in Gullah and other creoles, can be understood as 'locationals' which share important characteristics associated with this abstract grammatical category. As Washabaugh has indicated, the study of emerging creoles may provide valuable information about the possible universal relationships which may obtain between certain grammatical categories. The uses of the fE morpheme in Gullah provide additional evidence for a close relationship between complementizers and case markers.

### 4.1.2 Variation and Change in the Complementizer in Gullah

The complementizer shows considerable variation between creole and standard forms for older speakers. Most younger speakers use standard forms to and for NP to categorically at present.[2] Those speakers who retain the creole fE as complementizer show variation between the following forms, as well as considerable use of standard forms. No speaker in the data analyzed uses creole and nonstandard forms categorically.

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(194) [2]The phonetic realization of the for in standard for NP to is still [fə]. Most speakers in the region under study reduce or eliminate r in post-vocalic position; vowels become [ə] in unstressed positions, as in other varieties of English.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



193 Values for the vowel symbols are as follows:
194

TURNER:
i - the vowel sound in meet
I - the vowel sound in hit
ɛ - the vowel sound in met
e - the vowel sound in fate
ə - the sound of a in Cuba
ɒ - the vowel sound in not, British pronunciation

CUNNINGHAM & NICHOLS
E - the vowel sound in but or the unstressed vowel of Cuba
Standard orthography is used for all others.

193 The forms given by Turner seem to be normalized in the direction of what he considered to be the most typically creole form. His texts indicate considerably more variation for his speakers than does his paradigm. The text for Diana Brown of Edisto Island, for example, shows both unə and you used for nominative singular and only you for objective singular, while the paradigm gives only the creole form unə in both positions. For third singular, this informant uses i for all genders, as well as im for masculine gender and it for neuter gender in the nominative case. In the objective case she uses əm for all genders. Cunningham's paradigm shows much greater variation, probably reflecting both her concern to record variant forms and the later date of her study. She does not, however, distinguish between aspirated and unaspirated variants of the nominative and possessive he. The present study makes this distinction on the grounds that the patterns for use of əə and he are of some theoretical interest. The variant forms of the personal pronouns found by both Cunningham and the present study are ordered, left

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



2.3. The -*s* morpheme

193 A final factor contributing to the high frequency of verb stems in the basilect and the pre-mesolect is absence of 193 suffixal -*s*. Suffixal -*s* is represented phonetically as [z], •194 [ɪz] and [s]. The pronunciation variant is dependant on the phonological makeup of the final segment of words to which -*s* is added. When heard as [z] the -*s* follows non-strident voiced segments as in [filz] *feels*; when heard as [ɪz] the -*s* follows a strident consonant as in [mɛtʃɪz] *matches*; and when heard as [s], -*s* follows nonstrident voiceless segments as in [laits] *lights* (Wolfram 1969:134). In English the suffix -*s* is the grammatical marker of third person singular present indicative, the marker of possessive, and the marker of noun plurals.

193 Historically, Gullah has not been marked for subject-verb concord and there is insufficient synchronic data to suppose that it is marked for it now. Only two of the [115] twenty-one consultants in the study show any traces of concord and these two examples are faulty. The other nineteen reveal no number concord at all. Though the data for this study reveal little linguistic activity in the -*s* suffix category, a review of the quantitative analysis undertaken on the -*s* in Black dialect and Guyanese creole, languages thought to be genetically

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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193 It precedes the verb or predicate adjective that it marks or it may perform alone as the main verb constituent. It can co-occur with the equating verb /ɪz/, or the locating verb /dɔ/, but the forms do not generally occur together (Cunningham 1970:64). Creole /bɪn/ may be borrowed from [177] English, but it should not be confused with the English past participle *been*. Other than vowel lengthening as in English /bɪ:n/, it is difficult to claim any phonological disparity between them, but semantic and syntactic differences between *been* and /bɪn/ are more clearly defined. English *been* has an invariant grammatical function, to perform primarily as a perfective and past participle of 'be' verbs. Other features associated with its use are (+ PERFECT), (± PASSIVE), (± STATIVE). In some cases it can act as the main verb in constructions such as *He has been here*. But *been* does not occur in standard English without the aid of an auxiliary verb.

193 **Unstressed /bɪn/.** When unstressed /bɪn/ signals a
194 completed action in Gullah, the data in this study show this use of /bɪn/ is replaced by *was*. Several constructions show them both occurring in combination:

/bɪ wɔz oβə dɛʰ(correction) bɪ bɪn oβə dɛʰ/ (6)
'I was over there with them.'

/bɪ wɔz bɪn ɹɔg dɛʰ/ 'I was around there.' (8)

/dio wɔz pɛ̃niʃ ju (correction) bɪn pɛ̃niʃ ju di β̞io dio fi·l lɛɪk/
'They punished you in the manner they saw fit.' (2)

193 The foregoing sentences show one operation of language
177

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina
American Blacks NK4



A 193 194 'She is married now and has been married for an extended period of time' (Labov 1972a:54-5). Rickford also observes S 193 that /bɪn/, the remote past marker occurring in mesolectal A [193] varieties of Gullah, also appears in Black dialect:

Gullah: *I bin had that*
'I've had that for a long time'

Black dialect: *I bin had that plant*
'I've had that plant for a long time'
(Rickford 1974:95)

The data in this study does not support a chiefly mesolectal existence for stressed /bɪn/. The three consultants using the form most frequently also use forms more representative of basilectal Creole, but these speakers are unlikely candidates for social mobility or language change because of their age. This one social factor does not provide a clue concerning the variety of creole from which stressed S /bɪn/ originated. Unstressed /bɪn/ continues to appear [194] in Gullah as the primary past tense indicator. But, for some speakers /bɪn/ is in clear competition with English *was* which suggests some variable movement away from the Creole in the /bɪn/ category.

## 2.6. /bɪnə/

The preverb /bɪnə/ is an aspect marker. It may signal past progressive, simple past, present perfect, or future perfect progressive. According to Cunningham (1970),

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193 it may sometimes perform the functions of the past perfect progressive if the speaker focuses on the action before it was terminated, rather than the fact that it was terminated. Usually the speaker focuses on the latter, and the past perfect progressive is indicated by /dɔg/, the perfect marker.

The preverb appears to be a derivative of /bɪn/ + /dɔ/. A counterpart appears in Guyanese, Cameroon and other English creoles:

/dat woman bin di sel ndʒaggi/ 'That woman sold crayfish (as her job over a period of time)' (Todd 1974:6)

Constructions involving /bɪn/ + /dɔ/ occur infrequently in Gullah; more often one hears the contraction /bɪnɔ/.

[194] However, /dɔ/ occurs with stressed /bɪn/ to indicate past progressive:

/ɔɪ bɪn dɔ go/ 'I have been going for some time now.' (1)

The progressive has two variants: /bɪn/ + /ɔ/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The *-ing* category in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 result primarily from the use of the /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing* form, though the /bɪnɔ/ + VERB form occurs most often:

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB

/ɔɪ bɪnɔ lie dɔg sɔm bɪn on mɔɪ herd/ (8)
'I was lying down and something was on my head.'

/ju dɔ ðɔn bɪnɔ drɪŋk mɔɪ ðarɔ ɔl dɔ tɔɪm/ (8)
'You are the one who has been drinking my water all this time.'

/bɪnɔ/ + VERB + *ing*

/i bɪn tɪŋk di lɔd ðɛn i bɪnɔ goɪn bɔt i bɪn ðɪd di hɛp ɔdi gud lɔd ðɛn i bɪnɔ kɔmɪn bɔk/
'He was thanking the Lord when he was going but it was with the help of the good Lord when he was coming back.'

193 the replacement, is not only Creole but the pronominal form which Gullah speakers use to mark this category MOST frequently. The fact that some speakers of Gullah 193 194 seldom articulate initial [h] is one reason that phonological change is slow to occur in this category.

Gullah: i tɔk di: ho ɛn lɪkom
'He took the hoe and hit him.' (23)

i bɔsɔt kɹɔɪ
'He burst out crying.' (23)

i ɑ̃ nou ɛn i ɑ̃ kɛ
'He doesn't know and he doesn't care' (15)

193 Unlike the forms marking the masculine subjective case, there are four variants from which Gullah speakers may select markers for the third person feminine nominative case. These variants are /ɪm/, /i/, /hi/ and /ʃi/, all of which correspond to English *she*. The data reveal that /ɪm/ has been either eliminated from the lexicon of these consultants, or that they, for extralinguistic reasons, chose not to use it. Turner's (1949) study indicated that /ɪm/ was a possible pronoun item marking third person feminine nominative case, and Bailey (1966:22) reported that /im/ is the form used to mark the nominative case for all genders in Jamaican Creole. Consequently, /ɪm/ was included in this study as a check for linguistic change.

The most significant linguistic data that are revealed from the study of variants marking the feminine nominative case is that of the 67 times that the consultants selected a third person feminine nominative pronoun, /i/ was selected

193 37 times, /ʃi/ 19 times, and /hi/ 11 times. In total, the Creole form marks this category more than 71% of the time. Likewise, speakers whose performance revealed alternations between /i/ and /hi/ seldom used /ʃi/. Furthermore, /hi/ occurred primarily in stressed positions as an appositive, often AFTER the gender of the person or persons had been specified. Consequently, there could not have been any confusion on the part of the linguist or on the part of the speaker as to whom the speaker referred to when the pronoun /hi/ was used.

[194]

mi mɑrə, hi βɔrn klɔtʃ
'My mother, she was in church.' (2)

βel, hi gɪt fɔm lɪrl ɸo diʰ ol mɛn
'Well, she got home a little before the old man.' (2)

The pronoun /i/ is not only the form used to mark masculine and feminine nominative slots, but is the form most frequently used to indicate third person nominative, neuter gender. The variants marking this position are /ɪm/, /i/, and /ɪt/. /i/ occurred as neuter marker 32 times, contrasted with the 5 occurrences of basilectal /ɪm/, and 1 occurrence of the pronoun /ɪt/. A greater number of speakers chose /ɪm/ rather than /ɪt/ to mark neuter subject.
In light of this data, one can assume that creole neuter subject pronouns are very resistant to change. Even existential is not marked by the English pronoun *it*. As first noted by Turner (1949), /dɔ/ is the form used by Gullah speakers to mark existential where speakers of English use *it*:

19 in general by supplying extra linguistic data such as the
[115] demonstrative pronoun *that one* and the article *a*.
193 Cunningham (1970:22) writes that the definite article *the* may also mark possession, and it is not restricted to marking inalienable possession. Nichols (1976) excluded the possessive pronouns from her analysis because of the infrequency with which they occurred in her data. The following sentences exemplify one way that the consultants appear to avoid these forms:

so i kɪk əm wɔn, da ɸut ɸɛsɪn...
i tak' i ied, n bam, dä βɔn ɸɛsɪn
so i dɣɛs are tiel nɔ (8)

'So he kicked him one (and) his foot fastened.
He took his head and "bam"! His head fastened.
So he just had his tail (free) now.'

As with the nominative case pronouns, the same pattern emerges in the possessive case with /i/ as the general marker for both masculine and feminine pronouns: i i i / i i.

### 3.3. The Objective Forms

The third person singular objective pronouns show the least amount of change. The /əm/ form is dominant for masculine, feminine and neuter objects. It can be
[194] argued that /əm/ is an unaspirated, etymological allomorph of /hɪm/, just as /i/, /əɪ/, and /ɪɪ/ are unaspirated allomorphs of /hi/, /hɔɪ/ and /hɪɪ/. However, the data

193 sample indicates that /əm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/ in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic pattern observed in the use of /əm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/. The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used for object position only. When reference is made to a pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel /ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position. [194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of *him* in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5% occurrence of /əm/. Up to this point, the pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form before going on to another selection, so that each form selected appears in each of the three cases. If /əm/ is etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also. [197] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pronouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter case markers."

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /əm/ is slight, and thus would make /əm/ easily replaceable by /ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated allomorph /hɪm/. The evidence indicates that /əm/ is [114] still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193 position (Turner 1949:228). It is characteristic of
197 Atlantic creole languages to display a reduced distinction of third person singular pronouns.

Contact between language systems caused a change in the Stage I pattern, and Turner's data indicates that discrimination of gender occurred first in the neuter subject before taking place in the human subjects.

Stage II: ɪm ɪm i / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ɔm ɔm

One theory that can be proposed is that neuter /i/ was linearly transferred intra-categorically to the masculine and feminine forms before making other changes in the objective categories. Stage III is essentially the same undifferentiated gender as Stage I:

Stage III: i i i / ɪm ɪm / ɔm ɔm ɔm

I attribute this change to partial selection, where Gullah speakers approximated the contact language's pre-aspirated /(h)i/ and incorporated it intra-categorically into their genderless mold, to make minimal adjustments to accommodate the new form.

i ɜ̃ bene kom bɛk til die klɪn (3)
'She didn't come back until morning.'

Only in Stage IV does Gullah reveal a system identifiable with Bickerton's Stage I:

Stage IV: i i i / i i / ɔm ɔm ɔm (Gullah)

As exemplified by the survey, the consultants involved in this study use the Stage IV system.

• [194) /i/ marking feminine subject is being replaced by

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar frica-
197 tive /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is
[194] still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / im im / om om om

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

*Stage IV:* i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

Stage VI: i ʃi i / im im / om ʃi om
19 Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /om/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193 Unlike the feminine, there are high numbers in the cells for the column marked THIRD PERSON MASCULINE POSSESSIVE. One speaker shows usage of /i/, /iz/ and /hiz/, though most speakers have marked this category with /i/. It is significant that speakers 8 and 3 leave both masculine and feminine possessive case unmarked. It is significant because it adds more credibility to possessive cases being unmarked by pronouns in the basilect.

[197] The pronominal system shows the least amount of change in the masculine, feminine and neuter objective case. All the consultants continue to use /em/ regardless of gender on sex-reference. It is my belief that the objective slot is the only one still marked for case.

193 197 The greatest degree of change has occurred in the nominative case. Five of the nine consultants have acquired a rule for aspirating /i/ to produce English *he*, but the rule is not stable. Of the 165 times that the masculine subject appears in the data, 78% were marked with /i/ and only 19% were marked with aspiration (/hi/). The fluctuation and variability between /i/ and /hi/ where there has been no variation historically is indicative of linguistic change within a creole configuration. Turner records /him/ 'him' as the only pronominal form appearing with aspiration in Gullah. Five of the consultants in this study are moving toward aspiration of other forms, particularly /hi/. The change, however, is only a phonological manifestation of an underlying Creole grammar

193 194 197

193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.
197

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance
(177) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
(177) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /im/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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## CHAPTER 4

•194 The sound system is a system of features which asserts the uniqueness of Gullah apart from English. The phonology differs in several respects from that of English, showing a noticeable resemblance to the sound system of other Atlantic Creoles, particularly Jamaican and Sierra Leone. The phonemes of Gullah are described and compared with these and other Atlantic creoles as well as with inland Black dialect and other varieties of English where comparison is possible.[11]

The treatment of the segmental phonemes is based on phonetic transcriptions of speech samples from seven consultants selected from among those participating in the verb and pronoun survey. These seven were selected because (1) they represent a range of social and economic backgrounds; (2) they are representative of the speech community; and (3) they offer a variety of narrative styles. The orthography is based primarily on symbols suggested by the International Phonetic Association.

### The Consonants within Morphemes

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| p | - | [pien] | 'pain' | - | [pɛ] | 'father' |
| b | - | [biek] | 'bake' | - | [bɔɪ] | 'boy' |
| t | - | [tiɡ] | 'thing' | - | [tɔɡ] | 'town' |
| d | - | [dɒɪ] | 'die' | - | [dɛβəl] | 'devil' |
| k | - | [kɔɸɪm] | 'coffin' | - | [kɹɔk] | 'creek' |
| g | - | [ɡɹt] | 'got' | - | [ɡɔ̃n] | 'went' |
| f | - | [fɪks] | 'lay in wait' | | [nof] | 'enough' |

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| | Labials | Apicals | Velars | Glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Stops* | p | t | k | ʔ |
| | b | d | g | |
| *Fricatives* | ɸ(f) | s(ʃ)(ɕ) | | |
| | β(v) | ɣ | | ɦ |
| *Affricates* | | tʃ | | |
| | | dʒ(ʒ) | | |
| *Nasals* | m | n | ŋ | |
| *Lateral* | | l | | |
| *Retroflex* | | r | | |
| *Semi-vowels* | | j | w | |

TABLE 4.1. CONSONANTS OBSERVED IN GULLAH
Significant allophones are in parentheses

The consonants within morphemes, continued.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ɸ | - | [ɸɤ̃in] | 'frighten' | - | [ɸieβ̃ɨ] | 'fever' |
| β | - | [βe] | 'where' | - | [βie] | 'way' |
| s | - | [spelt] | 'spirit' | - | [bɪgɪs] | 'biggest' |
| ɕ | - | [ɕiəm] | 'see them' | - | [ɕɤi] | 'tree' |
| ɣ | - | [ɣiezn] | 'raisin' | - | [ɣiez] | 'raise' |
| ʃ | - | [ʃʊin] | 'shine' | - | [mɛʃ] | 'marsh' |
| dʒ | - | [iedʒ] | 'edge' | - | [iedʒ] | 'age' |
| h | - | [huk] | 'holler' | - | [hom] | 'home' |
| tʃ | - | [tʃɛkɪn] | 'catching' | - | [tʃɛtʃ] | 'church' |
| m | - | [mäsə] | 'master' | - | [ʃiem] | 'shame' |
| n | - | [nɔ̃u] | 'now' | - | [nuo] | 'no' |
| ŋ | - | [dɔŋ] | 'down' | - | [ɣɔŋ] | 'round' |
| l | - | [lɔɪ] | 'lie' | - | [kuol] | 'cold' |
| ɹ | - | [ɹɪβə] | 'river' | - | [ɹien] | 'rain' |
| w | - | [wʊd] | 'wood' | - | [wɛrɛ] | 'water' |
| j | - | [jəudə] | 'yonder' | - | [jiet] | 'yet' |

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| The Vowels | The Diphthongs |
|---|---|
| i u | ie |
| ɪ ʊ | ʊɪ |
| e ø o | ʊu |
| ɛ ɔ | uo |
| ä ɒ | |

TABLE 4.2. VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS OBSERVED IN GULLAH

**The Vowels within Morphemes**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i | - | [tit] | 'teeth' | - | [θɹi] | 'three' |
| ɪ | - | [jɛɹɪ] | 'hear' | - | [bɪn] | 'was' |
| e | - | [βe] | 'where' | - | [eg] | 'egg' |
| ɛ | - | [dɛk] | 'dark' | - | [kɛt] | 'cart' |
| ä | - | [tʃäis] | 'choice' | - | [äis] | 'ice' |
| ɒ | - | [ɒɹe] | 'other' | - | [pɒt] | 'Pat' |
| ɔ | - | [kɔmiə] | 'come' | - | [sɔk] | 'sock' |
| o | - | [oβə] | 'over' | - | [do] | 'door' |
| ʊ | - | [gʊd] | 'good' | - | [kʊk] | 'cook' |
| u | - | [unə] | 'you' | - | [but] | 'boot' |

**4.0. Descriptions of the Vowels**

/i/ is a tense high front vowel in Gullah which closely resembles cardinal 1.

/ɪ/ [ɪ] is a lax, high front vowel produced by retracting the tongue from its position in the articulation of cardinal 1 to a position slightly above cardinal 2. There are two allophones of /ɪ/:

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1. A centralized retracted variant occurring, for example, after /g/ as in [mɔgɡiˑ] 'monkey'.
2. a short allophone occurring medially as in [jɛstiˑdie] 'yesterday' and word-finally, as in the name [kusi] Cutsey.

/e/ is seldom a clear cardinal sound in Gullah. It is most often diphthongized to [ie], though consultant 6 uses [ei] as a variant pronunciation. Turner (1949) described /e/ as slightly higher than cardinal 2. Possibly the sound that he heard was influenced by cardinal 1, the first member of the diphthong pair. The diphthongization of /e/ occurs also in Jamaican and Sierra Leone Creoles, and the following words are pronunced in all three languages as:

| | |
|---|---|
| [kiek] | 'cake' |
| [liet] | 'late' |
| [pien] | 'pain' |

Such pronunciations reinforce the claim that these languages are historically related.

/ɛ/ [ɛ] is a mid-front vowel in Gullah very close to cardinal 3. A short and more open allophone occurs word-finally and before nasals, which results in words such as 'care' [kɛ] and 'can't' [kɛ̃t] becoming minimal pairs in Gullah. A rounded variant of /ɛ/ appears between homorganic stops and before /l/, e.g.

•194 [dɛ̰di:] 'daddy', [βɛ̰l] 'well'.

/a/ The low front vowel is often centralized in Gullah. An allophone slightly above cardinal 4 is heard medially between a stop and post-alveolar /r/. Older consultants frequently substitute [ɑ] for [a], the vowel heard in received English pronunciation in the words *dark, car, hard,* and *cart*. These and words with similar morpheme structure were pronounced with a raised [aˆ] or [ɛ] by all consultants when requested to pronounce the words in the manner of the 'old time talk'. But pronunciation with [ɑ] and [ɛ] is stigmatized, and the newer pronunciation with [a] is gaining acceptance. Reed Smith (1926:27) recorded a similar pronunciation for Gullah in 1926. The present analysis indicates that the unusual pronunciation still continues. Jones notes the substitution of [a] by [ɑ] in Krio as well:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *sharp* | shap | |
| *market* | makit | |
| *bark* | bak | |
| *lard* | lad | (Jones 1971:72) |

(Jones' symbols have been altered to conform with my own. The values, of course, are the same.)

/ɔ/ In Gullah, /ɔ/ is a low back vowel similar to cardinal 5, pronounced with or without lip rounding.[13] It is normally the reflex of General American English /ɑ/ and /ɔ/, e.g.

194 [ɸɔɾə] 'water', [ɛɸibɔɾi] 'everybody', [ɔɾə] 'other'. /ɔ/ occurs as the first member of the diphthong pair /ɔu/, e.g. [ɔjɔundə] 'yonder'. Speakers 24 and 2 use the raised central vowel [ɵ] instead of [ɔ] when the diphthong /ɔu/ is followed by a voiceless consonant, e.g. [ɔbɵut] 'about'. These speakers likewise use the raised central vowel [ɵ] as a variant pronunciation of /ɔi/, e.g. [dɵin] 'dying', [lɵiɸ] 'life'.

/ɔ/ The back vowel /ɔ/ closely resembles cardinal 6 in Gullah. A centralized allophone occurs before nasals in words such as [sɔ̃mbɔdɪ] 'somebody' and [mɔ̃nɪn] 'morning'. If a velar nasal appears following [ɔ] and in syllable final position, the nasal is often completely assimilated by the preceding vowel, e.g. [dɔ̃] 'down', [tɔ̃] 'town'. An identical assimilation process involving velar nasals following back vowels occurs in the following creoles:

| | 'down' | 'town' |
|---|---|---|
| Gullah | dɔŋ | tɔŋ |
| Jamaican | doŋ | toŋ |
| Cameroon | dɔŋ | tɔŋ |
| Guyanese | dɔŋ | tɔŋ |

(Unlike other Atlantic creoles, Krio shows [ɔ] in English /aun/ sequences.)

/o/ [o] is a mid back vowel very close to cardinal 7. Consultants 3, 8 and 5 use a centralized allophone

•194 in connected speech, as in [gö̞ö̞ɐzɐɪd] 'go for a ride'. But /o/ is generally diphthongized in Gullah and Jamaican creoles as a reflex of English /o/:

| | |
|---|---|
| [kʊot] | 'coat' |
| [nʊo] | 'no' |
| [mʊo] | 'more' |

/ʊ/ [ʊ] is a high back vowel in Gullah produced with more lip rounding that /ʊ/ of the American English /kʊk/ 'cook'.

/u/ In Gullah [u] is a high back rounded vowel very close to cardinal 8. A less retracted variant appears after palatals and alveolars, e.g. [dʒuk] 'to poke', and [dukɪ] 'feces'.

/ə/ In Gullah the mid central vowel has two variants:
1. a short unstressed allophone which occurs initially, e.g. [ə'ɹɔŋ] 'around';
2. a longer retracted allophone which occurs medially and word-finally, e.g. [bəzəd] 'buzzard', [də] 'the locative verb'. Turner (1949) noted that [ʌ] was being replaced by [ə']. The data for this study indicate that, with the exception of speakers 3, 6 and 24 (who occasionally use [ʌ] and [ə'] interchangeably) the replacement of [ʌ] by [ə'] is almost complete. English words ending with /ə/, such as *pencil*, *devil*, and *apple* are pronounced in Gullah and Krio as /u/:

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| Krio | Gullah |
|---|---|
| [dɛbul] | [dɛβul] |
| [pɛnsul] | [pɛnsul] |
| [apul] | [apul] |

/w/ The semi-vowel [w] alternates with the bilabial approximant [β] before front vowels, e.g. [βie] 'where', [βen] 'when'.

/j/ The semi-vowel [j] is approximately the sound heard in English *yet*, e.g. [jiːzi] 'hear'.

4.1. The Diphthongs

The diphthongs [ie ɒɪ ɒu uo] occur in Gullah. The falling diphthing [ie] is a reflex of English /e/, and is heard more often in Gullah than [e]. When [ie] follows a consonant, the consonant is always strongly palatalized, e.g. [pien] 'pain', [ciem] 'see them'. Krio and Jamaican Creole also follow this palatalization process.

In English words where /ai/ is heard in received pronunciation, Gullah speakers use [ɒɪ], e.g. [dɒɪ] 'die', [nɒɪt] 'night'. When [ɒɪ] is preceded by the consonants [ʒ] and [b], a more advanced and centralized variant appears, so that *John* and *join*, *boil* and *bile* are homophones, e.g. [ʒäɪn], [bäɪl].

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194 The rising diphthong [ɔu] is heard most frequently in words ending in *ow*, e.g. [nɔu] 'now', [plɔu] 'plow'.

The slightly falling diphthong [uo] is heard most frequently in Gullah and Jamaican Creole as an allophone of /o/, e.g. [nuo] 'no', [guos] 'ghost'.

19 4.2. The Consonants

/p/ [p] is a voiceless bilabial stop which occurs initially without aspiration for speakers 3, 6, 8 and 13. Other speakers aspirate [pʰ] initially. An unusual kind of stop called an EJECTIVE is heard in the speech of consultants 6 and 8, in the words [pʔɔt] 'pot' and [tʔɛk] 'take'. The sound is produced when air is released from the glottis and the mouth almost simultaneously. As air flows from the mouth, it is followed immediately by the sharp popping sound of the glottis opening. A palatalized variant of /p/ is always heard before the diphthong [ie] as in [pien] 'pain'.

/b/ The voiced bilabial stop is often unvoiced when it appears in final syllables, e.g. [biebi] 'baby', but it is undetermined if devoicing occurs in /d/ and /g/ as well. Consultants 3, 12 and 23 sometimes use an implosive [ɓ] initially, e.g. [ɓɔn] 'born'.

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19 sensitive. The entire cluster is eliminated when the following morpheme begins with a stop, sibilant, or a glide. When the following morpheme begins with a vowel, one but not both members may be retained. Most often the nasal is assimilated by a preceding vowel and the /t/ is eliminated:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| du ɜnɔm ɸo mi | 'Do hunt it for me.' | (23) |
| ɔɪ ɔ̃ no | 'I don't know.' | (1) |

When consonant clusters have the same point of articulation in Black dialect, only the final member is deleted (Labov et al.; Lueldorff 1970).

| | |
|---|---|
| *meant* | *men* |
| *sent* | *sen* |
| *ain't* | *ain* |

In stressed position, /nt/ is articulated in Gullah, e.g. [ɛ̃nti] 'isn't it', where its appearance is also favored by a following vowel.

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/d/ The voiced alveolar stop has several allophones in Gullah. It is heard:

1. as a lingual flap intervocalically: [ɔɾɪs] 'oldest'
2. as a retroflex before /l/: [bäɖl] 'battle'
3. as an implosive initially: [ɗɔg] 'dog'
4. as a palatal before front vowels: [ɖie] 'day'.

The data for this analysis show that in Gullah and other Atlantic creoles /d/ is generally the reflex of initial and intervocalic *th*: [ɖi] 'the', [mäɾɔ]

•194 'mother'. Dillard (1972) claims that there is a stylistic alternation among Black speakers in the use of [v] and [d], with [v] as the more elegant usage. Though I have not observed the elegant and inelegant alternation, I have noticed that most words with intervocalic voiced *th* are pronounced [d] in the South, while many northern Black dialect speakers pronounce intervocalic voiced *th* as [v]. In his 1949 study, Turner recorded intervocallic voiced *th* as [v] in Gullah. The speech is known to differ on each island, which may account for the /d/ ~ /v/ variation. [197]

/k/ [k] is a voiceless velar stop which is palatalized before high front vowels in Gullah. This process sometimes results in words such as *cake* and *kick* becoming homophones for some speakers. Consultants 2, 3 and 23 often substitute the voiceless affricate /tʃ/ for /k/ before front vowels and words beginning with *c* as in [tʃies] 'case' and [tʃies] 'chase', words which are homophones in Krio and for some Gullah speakers. Speakers 3 and 24 often interchange the /k/ and /tʃ/ sounds in the words [tʃɛkɪn] 'catching' and [klɔtʃ] 'church'. Like /p/ and /t/, a slightly glottalized /k/ appears in some words, e.g. [kʔɛbɪdʒ] 'cabbage'.

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•194 /g/ [g] is a voiced velar stop which in Gullah, Jamaican Creole and Krio is palatalized before high front vowels, e.g. [gɪet] 'gate'. After velar nasals, [g] is substituted for [k] as in the word *monkey*, pronounced by most Gullah speakers as [mɔŋg] or [mɔŋgɪ].

[ʔ] Glottal stops do not appear to be phonemic in Gullah, but the observation may be significant to the study of other creoles that a glottal stop is heard frequently in the speech of consultants 1, 3, 4 and 6, preceding and following low centralized and low back vowels, e.g. [ʔɔɸɔ] 'after', and [ʔɔrəmobil] 'automobile'. A stop also appears after word-final nt clusters when the final member is dropped, e.g. [ɦɔnʔ] 'hunt'.

/ɸ/ [f] The consultants in this study alternate the labiodental voiceless fricative [f] with the bilabial voiceless approximant [ɸ]. When followed by schwa, before and after high front vowels [f] and [ɸ] appear in free variation, but before /ɪ/ and low front, and back vowels, [ɸ] is used.

/β/ The bilabial voiced approximant occurs intervocalically, and in words where English uses /b/, /v/, and /w/, e.g. [βɪe] 'way', [hɑβ] 'have', [dɛβɔl] 'devil'.

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194 Lawton (1963:40) observes that [v] does not occur in Jamaican Creole, but is replaced by the bilabial approximant: [loβ] 'lover'. The [v] does not appear in the data for this study. Gullah has a peculiar palatalized allophone of /β/ before /i/, as in [ʒie] 'weight'. The phonemes /ɸ/ and /β/ are possibly sounds that early writers of Black dialect such as Edgar Allan Poe heard as /b/, e.g. *debbil, gib* and *hab* in *The Gold Bug*. The sounds are unusual for English, but Turner (1949:212) offers an explanation for their occurrence in Gullah:

> The bilabial fricative is foreign to English, but is found in several West African languages spoken in those areas from which the Gullahs were brought to the United States as slaves. In some of these languages, the bilabial sounds occur, but the labio-dentals [f] and [v] do not. In others, however, the bilabial fricatives occur side by side with the labio-dentals. In Yoruba, Hausa, Efik and Twi, there is no [v].

/s/ The voiceless alveolar fricative has three allophones in Gullah:

1. a palatalized variant appearing before high front vowels: [ʒiem] 'same';

2. a voiceless palato-alveolar [ʃ] occurring initially before high, low, front and back vowels: [ʃɔm] 'see them'; and

3. an alveolar palatal [ɕ] appearing most often before high front vowels: [ɕiɔm] 'see them. [ɕ] often replaces English /t/ before /i/. When it does, *tree*

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•194 and *three* become homophones pronounced [ɸɜi]. Consultant 1 pronounces the word *shrimp* [ɸimps], but most Gullah speakers pronounce the word [ɸiβimps], which is consistant with the pronunciation of some inland Black dialect speakers that I have heard.

[h] The voiceless glottal fricative is often omitted initially in Gullah. A voiced variant [ɦ] occurs only in stressed positions, and is produced with forceful egressive flow, e.g. [ɦom] 'home'. The [h] is rare in most English- and French-based creoles. When it is pronounced, it is pronounced mainly in initial position. Though /h/ is often deleted in English, it does not have the same phonemic status in the creoles. Since [h] is not phonemic in Gullah, Jamaican Creole and Krio, creolists are (according to Lawton 1963:40) faced with setting up a 'floating' phoneme or not setting it up. The [h] may or may not be present before vowels and is often absent when one expects to find it, e.g. [ᵃaba] 'harbor'. There are no minimal forms in which [h] is distinctive, and to set up [h] as phonemic, Lawton concludes, violates the linguistic facts.

/tʃ/ The voiceless palato-alveolar affricate occurs in words such as [tʃɜtʃ] 'church'. A strongly palatalized variant appears before high front vowels: [tʃia]

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•194 'chair'.

/dʒ/ The voiced counterpart of /tʃ/ is heard in [iedʒ] 'age' and [iedʒ] 'edge', homophones in Gullah. Before front vowels and low central vowels, the voiced palatal stop [ɟ] is heard as an allophone of /dʒ/, e.g. [ɟɛksɔn] 'Jackson', [ɟizəs] 'Jesus'.

/m/ The voiced bilabial nasal occurs in words such as [mɔn] 'man', [ŋiem] 'name' and [zamɪn] 'examine'.

/n/ The voiced alveolar nasal is replaced with [m] by speakers 1, 3 and 23 when it occurs at the end of some words, e.g. [pɛ̃tərɔm] 'pattern', [ɸom] 'phone'. This substitution is apparent in Black dialect also. Speaker 8 substitutes /l/ for /n/ in the word *chimney* [tʃɪmli].

/ŋ/ The velar nasal is heard in Gullah and other Atlantic creoles in medial and final position:

| *Gullah* | *Guyanese* | *Jamaican* | *Krio* | *English* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| liedɔŋ | ledɔ́ŋ | lidɔŋ | lidɔ́m | lay down |
| tiŋk | tiŋk | tiŋk | tiŋk | thing |
| tɔŋ | tɔŋ | tɔŋ | tɔŋ | town |

In these languages /ŋ/ is frequently assimilated by a preceding vowel, e.g. [dɔŋ] → [dɔ̃] 'down'.

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194 /l/ The voiced alveolar lateral is generally clear. Speakers 3 and 6 use a velarized [ɫ] in the words [fiɫin] 'feeling' and [juɫ] 'you will'.

/ɹ/ The voiced post-alveolar approximant is lost after a vowel in Gullah as it is in some dialects of English. Consultant 3 uses a uvular flap when he pronounces words with English reflexes spelled *thr-*: [tʁo] 'throw'. But /ɹ/ is seldom pronounced word-finally in Gullah. While r-lessness is a feature of Boston, New York, Richmond, Charleston and other English dialects, according to Labov (1972:13) Black dialect speakers show a higher degree of r-lessness in their speech and are also known to use /l/ and /ɹ/ in alternation, e.g. [mel:] 'Mary', which happens also in Gullah and Jamaican Creole. The /l/ and /ɹ/ alternation is not a feature of English dialects, but Cassidy notes that it is a feature of English contact languages. Turner observed the variation and attempted to explain it:

> This substitution may be due to the fact that in many African language, including Kongo, Umbundu, Bobangi, Tshiluba, and others, from the vocabularies of which many Gullahs use a large number of words, [r] does not occur at all. In some other African languages [l] and [r] are interchangeable. In the Mandingo languages, for example the word for 'mountain' is *kule* or *kuru*. In the Kru language the word for 'knee' is *kulu* or *kuru*, and both *blablo* and *brabre* are used for 'sheep'. (1949:243)

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194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 539 The following texts are included in this study primarily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more [193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fə/, the introductory verb /siə/, the future marker /gɔ/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /ɸ/ and /w/; /ɸ/ and /f/; /t/ for initial /ð/ and /θ/; and /ɔ/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, [126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

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193 7. Some consultants who aided in the pronoun survey
115 participated in a very informal 'story-telling' contest
124 for which a prize was awarded to the one who told the most interesting tale. The stories were recorded and a frequency count was taken of third person singular pronouns as they occurred.

193 8. I consider /əm/ the most basilectal form for Gullah because, of the variants filling third person feminine objective slot, /əm/ is least like the form used in the acrolect. The /i/ form appeared in the objective slot infrequently, but it is not regarded as a performance error because it occurs in this position in Guyanese and Jamaican Creoles. It may be a stage in pronominal acquisition, but it may not be a stage that all speakers go through. *She* is considered mesolectal because it would seem to indicate that a speaker has acquired one acrolectal form to distinguish male from female.

193 9. Different intonation patterns were observed with
194 each tense. Unfortunately, I was not able to capture this
[126] on tape. The consultant assured me that all of the contexts were possible.

19 10. There were only six tokens of /i/ counted in this category. The form [hiːɛɸ] 'himself' occurs in the data to mark third person feminine possessive as well as third person masculine possessive. It was not included with the other forms because I perceived it to be used by

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɔ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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## THE DIALECT

197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

"The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not [194] always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are [193] strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left.""

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."" White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

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"I, 377.

[118] "J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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191 on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[19]

197 To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of
212 its most interesting features,[20] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

197 Both on this account and also because it has had to mud-
dle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[21] Furthermore, when it was
19 first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[19] Bennett I, 340.

[20] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVIII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *dey-clean, man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainter* (South Carolina *ents*), *yeye* (eye), *titta*, (sister), and *oonuh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Sastee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[21] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

[197]

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193 may mean "See it, him, them?" The height of laconicism is achieved in

*"Shum?"*
*"Shum!"*

*Uh yeddy 'um but 'uh ent shum* may have any of the sixty-four possible combinations:

$$\text{I} \begin{Bmatrix}\text{hear}\\ \text{heard}\end{Bmatrix} \begin{Bmatrix}\text{it}\\ \text{her}\\ \text{him}\\ \text{them}\end{Bmatrix} \text{ but I } \begin{Bmatrix}\text{didn't}\\ \text{don't}\end{Bmatrix} \text{ see } \begin{Bmatrix}\text{it}\\ \text{her}\\ \text{him}\\ \text{them}\end{Bmatrix}$$

One of the most convenient and expressive words in Gullah is the interrogative or affirmative exclamation *enty*, equivalent to the German *Nichtwahr* or the French *N'est-ce pas?* It means "isn't, aren't, didn't, doesn't, don't, you, she, it, they, we," etc., etc. *Enty you shum?* or *You shum, enty?*

*Gullah "A"*

• 194 To unaccustomed ears, the most characteristic and peculiar sound in Gullah is the prevalence of the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "at" "hat" "bat", drawled or prolonged to *"aa"*. This sound on Gullah tongue represents both the median and broad *a* sounds, and gives *paa't* for both path or part; *smaa't* for smart; *cyaa't* for cart; *haa't* for heart; and similarly *shaa'p, baa'n, maa'k, staa't, daa'k, yaa'd*, etc. As Mr. Bennett remarks: "To hear a small black girl, striving after the higher education but forever indelibly saturated with Gullah, recite the inspired line, 'Hark! hark! the lark!' as 'Haa'k! haa'k! de laa'k!' is inevitably to smile."[*]

Conversely the narrow or flat sound of *a* as in "fat", "hat," "rat," etc., is broadened to *o* or *ah*,[**] giving *ha(h)t* for hat, *ca(h)t* for cat, *ba(h)g* for bag, and *ba(h)k, cra(h)k, fa(h)c'* and *ma(h)n* for back, crack, fact, and man. By this reversal of *a* sounds, curious results follow.

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*Bennett II, 42.
**Not exclusively Gullah, but also impeccable white low-country usage.

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Thus, a "smart man" becomes a *smaa't ma(h)n*, and a "dark bag" becomes a *daa'k ba(h)g*. 194

*Consonant Shifts*

193 194

Voiced *th* (as in *then*) > *d*

Aldo', anudduh, dat, den, dey dey (right there), bodduh, todduh (t'other), demself.

Voiceless *th* (as in *thin*) >t, either initial or final.

T'ick, t'in, t'ing, t'ink, t'ief, t'irty, t'istle, t'irteen, t'row, t'roat, t'ree, t'rough.

Eart' (or yut'), bre't', fait', trut', teet', lat' (lathe), pat', wut (worth).

*r* > *b*

Bittle (victuals), beabuh, bee-hibe, Benus (sometimes Wenus), behabe, berry (sometimes werry) 'ceebin (deceiving), grabe, hebby, driber, drobe, Ebe, ebenin', fabuh, leabe, lib', libe, febuh, fibe, flabuh, glub, moobe.

*v* > *w*

Wenus (sometimes Benus), werry (sometimes berry), Nowembuh, puhwidin', puhwiduh, puhwishun, puhwoke, puhwokin', waa'mint (varmint), wegetubble, westibule (of vestibule limited train), wictoria, wine, wineguh, wisit.

*z* > *dj*

Medjuh, pledjuh, pledjuhr'um (pleasure him or them), tredjuh, tredjuruh.

*R*, of course, drops[20] or softens to *h*, except intervocalically as in *tredjuruh*, and *fuhr'um*, for *fuh um* (for them).

Final *d* or *t* is dropped or slurred:[21] Bandon' (abandoned), Babtis', buss', fiel'-han'.

An initial *n* is added before *u* (with a vanishing *y* sound), as in Newinted States, Nyankee, nyung, nyounges', nyuse, nyuzen' (usen't).

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[20]As always in the best company, R's are seen and not heard.
[21]Likewise in general usage.

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193 Preceded by a vowel an initial *y* sound is added to *i* and *e*. Thus *iz* and *ent* become *yiz* and *yent*. *Him is*, but
• 194 *'e yiz; him ent*, but *'e yent; 'e yeye red.*.

Initial *s* is dropped in the hard consonant combinations *sc, sp, sk, st.*

'Cratch, 'crape, 'kin, 'corch, 'tan, 'tink, 'take, 'tir, 'top, 'ting, 'tep, 'ticky, 'traight, 'tring, 'tretch-out, 'tir, 'pin, 'pat, 'pit, 'plash, 'pend, 'tore.

*Prefixes*

193 Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped, as *at-, o-, ap-, e-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-*, etc.

'Ten, 'tenshun (for attend or intend, attention, intention), 'pinion (opinion), 'pint, 'pintment (appoint, appointment), 'pistle (epistle), 'jeck' (reject, object), 'tack, 'taguhnize (antagonize), 'mirashun (admiration), 'scusshun (excursion), 'spishun, 'spize, 'splain, 'spon', 'spose (suppose, expose), 'sputе, 'stonish, 'stead'ub (instead of), 'stracted, 'struckshun (construction, destruction).

The prefix *re-* is the favorite, being sometimes retained when the others are dropped, and frequently being substituted for other less euphonious prefixes:

Recishun (for decision); refen' (defend), remonia (pneumonia), renite (unite), repeah (appear), repose (oppose), resplain (explain), refen ('fen', defend). "Anoint" becomes *'nint*, but the pastor is the *Lord's renointed.*

*Survivals (Archaisms)*

192 *Fo'pence* and *seb'npence chickens*, to indicate the size of a chicken sold for those amounts before the Revolutionary War.

*Coz, cuz*, or *cuzn* as a form of address, like the Elizabethan "coz".

*Jook* in the sense of jab or jabbed.

*Tittie* or *tittuh* for sister.

*Toad* for a young female dog.

*Tosey*, as a diminutive of "toad," as a humorous nickname for man or woman.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 never speaks the words of a song as he sings them.[11] To catch what is sung is diffi-
126 cult, but it is the only way that the tricky rhythm of a song can be learned. Any person who wishes to give an authentic presentation must be respectful of the older Negroes' disregard of our rules of spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation, and above all resist the temptation to use a formula. As the editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* say in their preface: "The remarks upon the dialect which follow have reference . . . almost exclusively to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island [South Carolina]. They will, no doubt, apply in a greater or less degree to the entire region of the southeasterly slave States, but not to other portions of the South. It should also be understood that the corruptions and peculiarities here described are not universal, even here. There are all grades, from the rudest field-hands to mechanics and house-servants, who speak with a considerable degree of correctness." These words apply perfectly to the types of dialect found on the Georgia coast, and explain the lack of consistency in the songs of this collection.

533 Few people realize that the slaves—like their African cousins—sang on every possible occasion. Religious ceremonies, as well as work and play, were all conducted to music. Naturally there were times when singing was a solo matter—as over the wash-tub—but the Negroes have always been gregarious (private life as we know it has never been popular among them), and it is no wonder their singing reflects this characteristic. In consequence it is particularly important to know how each of the two or three outstanding singers handles his contribution to the effect produced by the group. It seems to me that Creighton Churchill has succeeded admirably in conveying this idea—but as he frankly says, the whole problem is one of approximation. When it comes to reproducing peculiarities of African music and tones for which we have no symbols, we are out of luck. As Fenner indicates, the best we can do is to listen to an accredited singer.

Those who sing in the traditional manner never appear to take breath when

[11] *Syllables are frequently divided arbitrarily to suit the rhythmic needs of a tune. Sometimes the last syllable of a word is attached to the one-syllable word that follows, and whole syllables*
• [194] *are occasionally omitted. The slave disliked certain sounds in the English language. Th was difficult for him to pronounce, so was final g, and he dropped an r whenever it interfered with fluency. It is no wonder that a white man cannot compose an authentic slave song, for the transplanted African thought in the speech pattern of his native land, and employed his limited English in that fashion. He also disregarded genders as he did in Africa. On Hilton Head, South Carolina, the dialect of the Negroes sounds—at a little distance—like a foreign tongue because of its curiously different emphasis and intonation. Close at hand, however, the meaning becomes clear enough.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

Hate that [9] sin that made me moan
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Chorus: Hay John—John's on nuh [10] islun
Hay John—E-li Ah can't stan'! [11]

* * *

John's on the isle uh Pat-te-mos
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Take one brick out Satan's wall
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
Satan's wall come tumblin' down
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
One a these days I'm goin' away
Eli—can't stan'!
Won't be back 'till judgment day
Eli—can't stan'!

[194]

[9] "That" sounds like "tat," and "Ah" sounds very like a short "eh."
[10] "The"—following a final "n"—has the sound of "nuh."
[11] The chorus is repeated after every two or three verses.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well. White speech has undergone some degree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

## SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *load, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

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194 126 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have [114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 [19] The following specimens will not only serve to introduce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood. 539 19 194

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects. 128 193 194 (177)

## PHONOLOGY[15] 194

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[15] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data. (113)

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194 comes *laak*, *spark* is *spaak*, and *palm* is *paam*. These flat *a* sounds are merely survivals of English dialect speech.[16] They are still found in England, and they are common among the low-country white people in South Carolina.[17] Their frequency gives a flat tinge to the whole Gullah dialect.

In words like *father*, *water*, *watch*, the *a*, not being affected by an *r* or an *l*, is pronounced practically the same as in standard English, although local and individual variations occur, ranging from the flat *a* of the type mentioned above to the broad *a* of *father*.

(*a*, as in *hat*)

Many words which in the standard language have this sound of *a* have in Gullah the broad *a*, as in *father*. Acoustically this sound is about the same as the *o* in *hot*, *pot*, etc. Thus we hear *mon*, *bock*, *plont*, *robbit*, *foctry*, for *man*, *back*, *plant*, *rabbit*, *factory*. This *a* sound gives some strange effects when used with words having the flat *a*. Thus *daak mon* for *dark man*, *maash lon* for *marsh land*. Occasionally *back* is pronounced *beck* [pɛt]. In England the prevailing sound of *a* in these words was broad, with a sprinkling of narrow *a* in the southern counties.

[128] In order that the general reader may not be disturbed over phonetic symbols which mean nothing to him, I have not used any symbols other than the conventional alphabet. However, by means of bracketed words I have tried to describe the various sounds accurately, so that any phoneticist may translate them into his system if he desires. A word inclosed in brackets indicates the vowel sound meant in a certain spelling. For example, the statement that "*cost* is pronounced *caust* [hasl]" means that the vowel sound *au* is to be pronounced exactly like the *au* in *haul*.

[16] See *English Dialect Grammar*, Chap. i, also pp. 30-32, also index under various words having this *a* sound. Hereafter this work will be referred to in footnotes as *E. D. G.*

[17] *Paa* and *maa* for *pa* and *ma*, *maash* for *marsh*, and many others are frequent.

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(*a, ea, ai,* as in *take, great, wait*)

Words like *bake, take, wait, great,* etc., are pronounced as if the vowel were the *e* in *get, pet,* etc. Thus *bek, tek, wet, gret.* One hears in the spirituals that "heaven is a beautiful *pless,*" and that "I'm on my *weh, prez* de Lawd, I'm on my *weh.*" The source of these pronunciations is again the English dialects. For example, the *English Dialect Grammar* records fifteen pronunciations of *bake,* ten of which have the *e* [get] sound or a very close approximation to it. These occur chiefly in the midland, southern, and southwestern counties.

(*e, ea,* as in *bed, dead*)

A few words which have this sound in the standard language have almost the sound of *ai* as in *pail, nail.* Thus *baid, baig, daid, haid,* for *bed, beg, dead, head.* These pronunciations, according to the *English Dialect Grammar,* are still common in England. They are found in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Northampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Somerset, and Devonshire.

There are some interesting exceptions, however, in the pronunciation of this vowel sound. For example, for *instead,* some Negroes would say *instid* or *stid,* others would give the vowel the standard pronunciation. For *yellow* it would be difficult to find anything but *yalluh; get* is invariably *git,* and *deaf* is always *deef.* These variations are all rooted in English dialect pronunciations. *Stid* and *stead* were of about equal popularity in England.[18] *Yalluh* and *yawluh* were so common as to leave room for few other pronunciations of *yellow.*[19] As for *get,* Wright has

[18] *E. D. G.,* index, p. 618.

[19] *E. D. G.,* pp. 692-93.

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not recorded a single instance of the *e* being changed to *ai* [*pail*], but *git* occurs in Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Leicester, Worcester, Buckingham, Bedford, Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Isle of Wight, Somerset, Devonshire, Cornwall, and parts of Ireland.[20] *Deef* for *deaf* occurs in practically all of the above counties and in the following besides: Stratford, Derby, Northampton, Shropshire, Pembroke, Gloucester, Cambridge, Essex, Dorset.[21] With such an incidence the Negro could hardly have escaped saying *git* and *deef*.

(*e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, plus *r*, as in *certain*, *circle*, *word*, *church*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally pronounced in the Gullah with the sound of *uh*, like the *u* in *bud*. Thus *sutn* for *certain*, *sukkle* for *circle*, *wud* for *word*, *chuch* for *church*, etc. These are all English dialect pronunciations, arising from the effect of the *r* following these vowels. The *English Dialect Grammar* shows these pronunciations to be common at present in the south midland and southern English dialects. For example, *bird* is listed under seven pronunciations, three of which might be represented by *bahd*, *bawd*, and *brid*. The others are all *bud*, or very close approximations to it, and they are found in midland and southern England. Similarly, eighteen pronunciations of *word* are listed, eleven of which, found in all sections below Northumbria, are like the Gullah *wud*.

In a few words of this class we find alongside the *uh* sound other pronunciations which reflect the Negro's tend-

[20] *E. D. G.*, p. 460.

[21] *E. D. G.*, p. 400. *Git* and *Deef* are, of course, still widely used by uneducated white people in the United States.

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ency to take over exactly the pronunciation with which he came in contact. Thus besides *sutn* for *certain*, we also find *sartn*, *sairtn* (the *r* is actually pronounced!); besides *subbunt* for *servant*, also *sarbunt*, *sairbunt*, *saabunt*, etc.; besides *such* for *search*, also *sarch*, *saach*, etc. One thinks immediately of the Englishman's *Darby*, *Hartford*, *clark*, for *Derby*, *Hertford*, *clerk*, and of the pronunciation of *vermin* as *varmint*, so common among uneducated whites in this country. In fact, all of the pronunciations of this sort in the Gullah are also found in various parts of the country among illiterate whites.

(*i*, *y*, as in *hit*, *physic*)

Words having this vowel sound are ordinarily pronounced as in standard English. Such exceptions as exist are easily accounted for by English dialect. For instance, *feesh* and *fush* [push] for *fish* are sometimes heard, likewise *deesh* for *dish*, *sperit* [merit] for *spirit*, and *leetle* for *little*. Wright states that in England *i* has been lengthened to *ee* before *sh* in words like *fish* and *dish* in parts of Lancashire, Derby, Norfolk, Somerset, and Devon.[22] *Sperit* for *spirit* is common in parts of Lancashire, Lincoln, Worcester, Gloucester, and Oxford.[23]

(*o*, *oa*, as in *note*, *coat*)

Words having this vowel sound are generally given the standard pronunciation, except that occasionally there is a tinge of the sound of *u* as in *but*. Hence *goat* may sound like *guet* (*u* as in *but*, *e* unstressed).[24]

[22] *E. D. G.*, p. 71. [23] *E. D. G.*, p. 183.

[24] This pronunciation noted in the *E. D. G.*, p. 188, as found in several counties in words like *coat*, *coach*, *roam*, *pony*.

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(*o*, *a*, as in *not*, *was*)

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This sound does not differ much from the standard. *Was* and *what* become *wus* and *whut*, but these are about as common among illiterate whites as among Negroes. Words like *cost*, *lost*, *coffin*, become *caust* [h*au*l], *laust*, *caufin*. These are such good white pronunciations that many people would not understand why any distinction is made between *cost* and *caust*. In this connection it is interesting to note that Wright says that this short *o* sound has been lengthened into the *au* sound in the south midland, southern, eastern, and southwestern English dialects.[25]

(*ou*, *ow*, as in *out*, *cow*)

Most words having this vowel sound are given the standard pronunciation. However, *cow* is usually pronounced *coe* [t*oe*] and *sow* is usually *soe*. These pronunciations were common in midland and southern England.[26]

(*oi*, *oy*, as in *oil*, *oyster*)

This vowel becomes *i* [p*i*le]. Thus *oil* is *ile*, *boil* is *bile*,[27] *poison* is *pizen*, *oyster* is *eister* [h*ei*ght]. These pronunciations were and are common in England and are still so frequently heard in this country as to need no comment on their occurrence in the Gullah. An exception here is *boy*, which is usually given the standard vowel sound. This is probably due to the fact that in England the *i* sound in this word was not nearly as widely used as in the other *oi* and *oy* words.[28]

[25] *E. D. G.*, p. 184.

[26] See *E. D. G.*, index, under *sow*, etc.

[27] Samuel Johnson wrote: "*Bile*: this is generally spelt *boil*, but, I think, less properly."

[28] *E. D. G.*, index, under *boy*, *oil*, etc.

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(*u, o, oo, ou,* as in *rule, who, food, you*)

This vowel is the same in the Gullah as in literary English, except that *to* is pronounced *toe* [hoe] and *you* is sometimes *yoe*. This pronunciation also survives among many of the old white families of the low country.

(*u, ou,* as in *brush, touch*)

When this sound occurs in initial *un*, it becomes *on*. Thus *oncommon, onbutton, onlock*, etc. This pattern came from the English dialects. In various dialect glossaries and in *The English Dialect Dictionary* are found *un*-words spelled with *on*, as *onaccountable, onchoke, onderground, oncouth*, and numerous others.

In words where this vowel follows a consonant it usually becomes *e* [met][29]. The chief examples of this kind are *brush, judge, just, touch*, which are pronounced *bresh, jedge, jest* (also *jist*), *tetch*. These are all of English dialect descent[30] and are common among illiterate whites in the South.

With insignificant exceptions, the remaining vowel sounds are the same in Gullah as in standard English. It is little short of remarkable how the vowel pronunciations in the Gullah correlate with the deviations of English dialect from the standard language. I have yet to find an example of a pronunciation, other than an individual idiosyncrasy, which is not easily explicable on the basis of midland and southern English dialect.

[29] And in a few words *i* [*sit*]. Thus *jist* for *just*, *kiver* for *cover*. These pronunciations are general in the dialects of England, Scotland, and Ireland. See *E. D. G.*, p. 192.

[30] *E. D. G.*, index, under the various words having this vowel sound, also p. 192.

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*Consonants*

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The points wherein the consonants in the dialect differ from the standard language will now be indicated. For simplicity I am taking the consonants in alphabetical order rather than classifying them as liquids, labials, gutturals, etc., as is sometimes done.

*b.* This consonant is sometimes omitted in the medial position in words such as *nummuh*, number, *rammle*, ramble, *grumlin*, grumbling, etc. Similar pronunciations are found among uncultivated whites, who inherited them from England. Wright says, *b* "hardly ever occurs in any of the dialects between *m-l* or *m-r* in such words as *bramble, thimble, chamber, number.*"[31]

In some words medial *b* is changed to *v*. Thus *navuh*, neighbor, *lavuh*, labor.[32] A *b* is nearly always found in chimney: *chimbly*.[33]

*c.* This consonant has generally remained the same as in standard English.

*d.* In a few words *d* has become *j*: *ijuh*, idea, *jew*, dew, *jues*, dues, *Injun*, Indian, etc.[34] Medial *d* is omitted in some words, e. g., *bunnle*, bundle, *cannle*, candle, *chillun*, children, etc.[35] Final *d* is omitted in a great many words where *d* follows *n* or *l*, as in band, bind, blind, fold, bold, hand, land, wind, etc. This is common among American white people and was brought over from the

[31] Elizabeth Mary Wright, *Rustic Speech and Folk-Lore*, p. 135.

[32] Gonzales reports these in his glossary in *The Black Border*. They are not at all common on St. Helena. A parallel is found in the widespread English dialect pronunciation, *marvel* for *marble*. See Wright, *Rustic Speech*, p. 135.

[33] Very common in England.

[34] *Cf.* Wright, *Dialect Grammar*, p. 231, for identical tendency in English dialect.

[35] The same is true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

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southern and midland English dialects.[36] In a few words final *d* becomes *t*, as *islant*, island, *rappit*, rapid, *sallet*, salad, *ballet*, ballad. This is also an English dialect characteristic. 1940

*f*. This consonant is generally the same as in literary English. In *after*, however, it is omitted: *atter*.[37] Because of the close kinship of *f* and *v*, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a speaker has said *afford* or *avord*, *before* or *bevore*, *if* or *iv*.[38] However, I am fairly certain that I occasionally heard the *v* sound in such combinations as these where the vowel of a preceding word made the transition to *v* easy: "de vamous mahn," "Uh veed muh oxen," " 'e veel bahd," etc.

*g*. This consonant is the same in all positions in the dialect as it is in standard English, except for the occurrence of an unnecessary *g* in a few words, e. g., *reinge*, reins; *mange*, mane.

*h*. This consonant follows the standard English habit: in the initial *wh* position it is dropped in many words, but is sometimes prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel, especially when the speaker wants to be emphatic. Thus *halligatuh*, alligator, *w'ite*, white, *w'en*, when.

*j*. and *k*. Both of these consonants are the same in all positions as in standard English, except that *k* sometimes sounds more like *g* than *k*. Thus *teng Gawd*, thank God.

*l*. Medial *l* is dropped in a few words, e. g., *a'ways* (sometimes *allus*), *a'most*, *a'ready* (sometimes *'ready*),

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[37] Wright, *ibid.*, p. 227, says that in England "*f* has disappeared before *t* in *after* in the eastern, midland, southern, and south-western counties." *After* and *water* in *Jack and Jill* were supposed to rhyme.

[38] The use of *v* for initial *f* was quite common in England at the time of the settlement of South Carolina. It is now obsolescent.

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*se'f, he'p.* All these forms are English dialect forms and are still widely used by white people. *Frail*, meaning to whip or lash, survives in the Gullah. It originated in England through a change of *l* to *r* in the word *flail*. It is also common among Southern white people. An *l* occurs in chimney: *chimbly*.

*m*. This does not differ from the use of *m* in the standard language.

*n*. An *n* is prefixed to some words, especially words beginning with a *u* or *yu* sound: *Nyankee*, Yankee, *nyoung*, young, *nyam*, yam,[39] *nused*, used, *nignore*, ignore, etc. English dialect contains numerous words like *namble*, amble, *narrow*, arrow, *naunt*, aunt, *nuncle*,[40] uncle, *noration*, oration, *nidiot*, idiot, but practically all such words arose from the *n* of a preceding *an* being carried over. It is doubtful if this tendency can account for all the intrusive *n*'s in Gullah. It may be that here we have a survival of an African language trait.

An initial *n* sound often precedes a consonant in West African words. *However, the Gullah exhibits no instance of intrusive n preceding a true consonant.* Furthermore, the number of words having this intrusive *n* is relatively small. It may be, then, that, after all, the instances noted above either came from English dialect or arose in the Negro's English learning process.

Medial *n* is pronounced as *m* in a few words: *grampa* or *grumpuh*, grandpa, *gramma*, grandma. These were English dialect pronunciations in the south midland and southeastern counties. They are also common among American white people.

[39] *Yam*, to eat. See below for a discussion of this word, which is commonly supposed to be of African origin. [40] *Cf.* Shakespeare: "Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear."

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*n(g)*. [ha*ng*, morni*ng*][41] This sound, when final and unstressed, as in *evening*, *running*, etc., is always *n* in the dialect. This is so thoroughly in accord with uncultivated white usage in this country that I mention it only to illustrate the point that the Negro pronunciation is not the cause of the white pronunciation. Both are of English origin. Wright says, "Final unstressed *ng* has generally become *n* in all the dialects, *evenin*(g), *farthin*(g), *mornin*(g), *sendin*(g), and similarly in all present participles and verbal nouns in *ing*."[42] Wright lists eleven pronunciations of *morning*, all ending in *n*; thirteen of *evening*, all ending in *n*; etc.

*p*, *q*. These consonants are the same in Gullah as in the standard language.[43]

*r*. No consonant shows better the effect of English dialect speech upon the Negro than *r*. In the Gullah country, as in many other parts of this nation, the general rule is that *r* is seen and not heard. Initially, or following initial consonants, it is pronounced, of course, as in *race*, *rice*, *rock*, *crane*, *grain*, *scratch*, etc.; it is admitted to some extent in words where it is surrounded by vowels and cannot very well be ignored, as in *very*, *weary*, etc.; it crops out as an excrescence here and there in some individual's speech, as in *calicro*, calico, *grano*, guano; otherwise it is heard only occasionally.[44]

[41] This sound is not merely *n* + *g*, but is an elemental sound. When one says *evenin'*, he has not "dropped a final g" but has substituted one sound for another: *n* for *ng*.

[42] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 224.

[43] An exception for *p* is *Babtist* for Baptist, but this is common Southern pronunciation derived from English dialects. I recall that when I first saw the word *Baptist* printed, I was surprised to see a *p* in it.

[44] We usually think of *r* as being omitted by Southern whites and Negroes in words like *part*, *hurt*, *bird*, etc., but it would probably be more accurate to say that

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•194 The use of *r* in the dialect correlates remarkably well with its use in southern English dialects. It is interesting to note here that, after speaking of the trilled *r* of Scotland, Ireland and Northumberland, Wright goes on to say:

> In south Pembroke, Gloucester, and parts of Hereford, Oxford, and in all the south and south-western dialects it is a reverted or retracted *r* formed by the under surface of the tip of the tongue being turned to the hard palate, and the trill being indistinct and less sharp than for the Scotch *r*. This *r* exercises a great influence upon a preceding vowel and causes a following *t, d, l, n* to become reverted, especially in the southwestern dialects. . . . With the exception of [Shetland and Orkney Islands, Scotland, Ireland, Northumberland, and small parts of Durham, Cumberland, and Westmoreland], medial *r* has entirely disappeared before a following consonant, generally with lengthening or diphthongization of the preceding vowel. . . . In the south midland, eastern, southern, and south-western dialects [final *r*] has become a mere voice-glide.[45]

*s.* A few words beginning with a consonant occasionally have an *s* prefixed, e. g., *squestion, squizzit* (*quizzit*, to question), *strance*. These forms were undoubtedly taken over from the English settlers, for this excrescent *s* was very common in England, according to Wright.[46]

Gonzales[47] reported several words (presumably from Edisto Island) in which initial *s* followed by a hard con-

the *r* is formed in a different way from the trilled or burred *r*, for a little reflection will show any one who is familiar with the suppressed *r* that there is enough of the sound left to have a strong influence on the preceding vowel. For example, *bi(r)d* is not simply *bud*, *bu(r)t* is not simply *but*. The difference is subtle and can hardly be represented without recourse to some phonetic scheme.

[45] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 218-19.

[46] See *E. D. G.*, p. 242. *Squeach*, *squench*, *squizzit*, and others are listed in the *E. D. D. (English Dialect Dictionary)*.

[47] See glossary in *The Black Border*, also Reed Smith, *Gullah*, p. 29.

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sonant is dropped, as in (s)cratch, (s)corch, (s)tan', (s)tretch, (s)plash, etc. Such pronunciations are rare on St. Helena. There seems to be some tendency in English dialect to omit *s* in such words.[48] It might have been intensified, however, by the "baby talk" used by the English settlers in addressing slaves. The omission of *s* in words of this kind does not make them unintelligible, and, finding it unnecessary to pronounce the *s*, the Negro would tend to omit it.

In other positions *s* is the same as in standard English.[49] *Shr* in words like *shrimp*, *shrivel*, *shrub*, becomes *sr* (sometimes *sw*: *swimp*), but this is too common among whites to need comment.

*t*. Initial and medial *t* are generally the same as in standard English, although, in common with rustic white speech in England and America, the *t* in a few words, as *tune*, *Tuesday*, becomes *ch*: *chune*, *Chuesday*; the *tt* in *little* sometimes disappears; in a few other words, such as *bottle*, *bottom*, etc., it is sometimes heard as *d*; and the *tch* sound in creature is *t*: *critter* or *creatter*.

Final *t* after voiceless consonants is never heard. Thus *fas'*, *las'*, *trus'*, *fac'*, *temp'*, *kep'*, *nex'*, etc.[50] An excrescent *t* is sometimes heard,[51] e. g., *suhmunt*, sermon, *suddent*, sudden, *giraft*, giraffe, *varmint*, vermin.[52]

[48] See, e.g., *cramble*, scramble, *plash*, splash, etc., in *E. D. D. Cf.* Longfellow: "Far below him plashed the water."

[49] Exceptions: the final *s* sound in *chemise* is omitted *(shimmy)*, but this is characteristic of nine-tenths of Americans; the final *s* in *shoes* is sometimes *sh*, likewise *licorish* for *licorice*, both of these being of direct English descent; the *s* in *mouse* is often softened to *z* *(mowz)*, of southwestern English dialect descent. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 245.

[50] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 230, mentions this identical tendency in English dialects. Most of these are still found in rustic white speech.

[51] Same true in English dialects. *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 231.

[52] This is a very common corruption in both England and America.

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•194 *th*. Voiced *th* [*th*en, *th*ere, ra*th*er], whether initial, medial, or final, is always *d* in the dialect. Thus *den*, then, *dere*, there, *dem*, them, *odduh*, other, *wid*, with.

Voiceless *th* [*th*in, *th*under, pa*th*] *becomes t*. Thus *t'under*, thunder, *paht*, path, *t'ick*, thick, *t'ief*, thief, *trute*, truth. While there is a possible African influence[53] in this refusal of the Negro to pronounce the English *th* sounds, it is not at all impossible that he took over this habit from the Englishmen with whom he came in contact in America. Wright records that *this*, *that*, *them*, etc., were called *dis*, *dat*, *dem*, in Shetland and Orkney Islands, Pembroke, Kent, and Sussex.[54] *Bother* was pronounced *bodder* in Cumberland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Sussex; *three* was either *dree* or *t'ree* in parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Hereford, Gloucester, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wright, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Shetland and Orkney Islands; and so on for various other words.

*v*. This consonant is rarely heard where it belongs. Jones listed only two words[55] with initial *v* in his glossary, Whaley listed two,[56] and Gonzales none. In most words *v* becomes *w*: *wine*, vine, *woice*, voice, *wisitor*, visitor, *puhwide*, provide, etc. In certain other words, it becomes *b*: *fibe*, *grabe*, *hebben*, for five, grave, heaven. In some cases, both the *b* and *w* forms exist: *bery* and *wery*, very, *Benus* and *Wenus*, Venus, *billage* and *willage*, village, etc. The change of *v* to *w* was common in England.

[53] This will be discussed further in the section, "African Influence."

[54] *E. D. G.*, p. 237. These pronunciations are obsolescent now in Pembroke and Kent; two hundred years ago they probably had a wider diffusion than at present.

[55] *Vise*, advise; *vive*, revive.

[56] *Vestment*, vest, clothes; *vibration*, vibration.

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Wright says, "Initial and medial *v* has become *w* in middle Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, east Sussex. . . ."[57] The low-country Negro, therefore, probably rarely heard a *v* sound, and he adopted the *w* as he heard it used by the white people.

As for the change of *v* to *b*, it may appear at first glance that there is some African influence operating, or some psychological law of language working. The explanation is simple, however. In a few words, the English did not change *v* to *w*, but changed *v* to *b* "through the influence of a following *l* or *n*."[58] The chief words of this kind were *navel*, *eleven*, *seven*, *even*, *evening*, *heaven*, *oven*.[59] This change was common throughout the midland, southern, and southwestern dialects.

*w*. As in the English dialects, initial *w* is omitted in a few words, e. g., *'oman*, woman, *'ood*, wood, etc. In a few instances I heard a distinct *v* for initial *w* or *wh*: *Villie*, Willie, *vink*, wink, *v'eel*, wheel,[60] and in other cases there was a sort of hybrid *v-w* sound.[61] Medial and final *w* are the same as in standard English, except that medial *w* is

[57] *E. D. G.*, p. 227.

[58] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 226.

[59] *Rebel*, revel, *ribbit*, rivet, and other examples may be found in the *E. D. D.*

[60] Bennett recorded *vax* for *wax*. Mrs. Parsons recorded several instances of *v* for *w*. This brings up the question as to whether *v* for *w* ever occurred in England. Was Dickens merely using literary license when he wrote "Sam Veller," etc? Wright says, "There are no examples in the dialect of initial *w* being changed to *v* before a following vowel." *E. D. G.*, p. 207. Halliwell (*Provincial Dialects*, p. 66) says of Middlesex, however, "The language of the lower orders of the metropolis is pictured very faithfully in the works of Mr. Dickens. The interchange of *v* and *w* is a leading characteristic." Of Kent: "The interchange of *v* and *w* is common here as well as in the metropolis." P. 53. Such an interchange probably did exist in the London district.

[61] This sound may be produced by attempting to say *v* with the lips and tongue in the *w* position. The upper teeth must not quite touch the lower lip. The sound is practically a bi-labial *v*. It is relatively rare, and when it occurs it probably represents a transition from the *v* to the *w* form.

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missing in such words as *backwards*, *always*, *towards*.[63] A *w* has been inserted in a few words, e. g., *gwine*, going, *quile*, coil, *swinge*, singe, sometimes *bwile*, boil, etc. This evidently was taken over from English dialect, as this tendency was found in the south midland, south, and southwest dialects.[63]

Initial *wh* [voiceless, as in *wh*ether, *wh*ite] is *w* in the Gullah, as it is in English dialect and in some parts of the United States among whites. Thus *w'ile*, while, *w'ite*, white, *w'eat*, wheat, etc.[64]

*x*. This consonant does not differ from *x* in the standard language.

*y*. [German and Old English *j*]. An initial *y* occurs in the dialect pronunciation of many words beginning with a vowel, as *yahm* for arm, *yeah* for ear, *yeye* for eve, *yent* for ent or ain't, etc.[65]

A medial *y* occurs after a consonant in many words: *cyaa't*, cart, *gyaa'den*, garden, *gyap*, gap, etc. This tendency was, and still is, very strong in England,[66] and is one of the ear-marks of the Charleston and other South Carolina low-country aristocratic speech today.

*z*. This consonant is the same as in standard English, except that in words like *measure* and *pleasure*, the *z* sound is sometimes pronounced like the *dg* in bridge.

[63] Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 211. [64] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 210-11.

[65] *Cf.* Wright, *E. D. G.*, p. 209, also index under various *wh* words.

[66] The same tendency was very common in England. See Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 212-13, also index. For example, *arm* had an initial *y* in Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset; *ear* in Lancashire, Oxford, Sussex, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, etc.

[67] For example, Wright (*E. D. G.*, p. 214), records *cart* with *y* in Lancashire, Stafford, Derby, Gloucester, Oxford, and Hertford; *care* with *y* in Caithness, Westmoreland, Lancashire, Cheshire, Stafford, Derby, Lincoln, Oxford, Norfolk, etc.

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Thus *medguh, pledguh, treadguh,* etc., pronunciations which are not uncommon among illiterate white people. 194.

*Loss of Syllables*

As Professor Smith says, "Most one-syllable prefixes are dropped as *at-, o-, ap-, re-, op-, ad-, ex-, dis-, as-, con-,* etc." Thus *'ten'* (attend, intend), *'pinion* (opinion), *'spose* (suppose, expose), *'spise* (despise), *'stonish* (astonish), and so on through dozens of words. In addition, medial syllables are often lost, as in *diffunce* (difference), *eb'ry* (every), *gen'ly* (generally), etc.[67] Now it is easy to assume that the Negro dropped such syllables because of some natural tendency toward economy of vocalization, but it is doubtful whether this is the true explanation. According to Wright, such pronunciations as *'bout* (about), *'quaint* (acquaint), *'gree* (agree), *'low* (allow), *'cause* (because), *'sturb* (disturb), *'lev'n, 'leb'm* (eleven), *'cept* (except), *'casion* (occasion), *'tice* (entice), *comp'ny* (company), *diff'ent* (different), *gen'ral* (general), etc., were very frequent in the English dialects.[68] The Negro probably omits little that was not omitted in the patterns set by his English associates in the early days in the South Carolina low-country. 194 193

*Combinations*

The phonology of the dialect is further affected by the combinational process, by which the Negro utters several words as a single vocable, thus making it inevitable 194

[67] There are of course many vocalic *m's* and *n's*, as in *bott'm* (bottom), *heav'n* (heaven), *bac'n* (bacon), *happ'n* (happen), etc., but these are so common among white people that I do not mention them as Gullah characteristics.

[68] Wright, *E. D. G.*, pp. 204-5. Such pronunciations as *monsist* (monstrous), *sartnly* (certainly), *sum'dy* (somebody) etc., will be found in specimens of English dialect in the works of Halliwell, Wright, Barnes, Skeat, and others.

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194 that many syllables do not receive their proper stress. A few examples are: *deseyuh* (these here), *disyuh* (this here), *debbilubuh* (devil of a), *dunkyuh* (don't care), *sump'n'nurruh* (something or other), *swaytogawd* (swear to God), *tummuch* (too much), *wuffuh* (what for), *wus'n ebbuh* (worse than ever), *sukka* (such a), *lukka* (like a), etc. It may be put down as a general rule that any short vocable, especially a pronoun or a preposition, in an unemphatic position, will be slurred over and connected with the preceding or the following word. Thus *here* is often *yuh*, *too* or *to* is *tuh*, *of* is *uh* or *ub*, *them* is *'um*. The latter, being used for *them*, *him*, *her*, *it*, etc., is glued to the verb of which it is the object. Thus *do-um* (do it, etc.), *see-um* or *shum* (see it, them, etc.), *gittum*, (get them, etc.), *t'ief-um* (thieve them, etc.).

This tendency is of course not peculiar to Gullah, but it is more pronounced in that dialect than in any other American dialect. It is found in the speech of uneducated white people and to some extent among well educated people. It is likely that two hundred years ago the English peasantry in the low-country ran their words together to about the same extent as the Gullah speakers do now. Such forms as *wunna* (was not), *nammit* (noon meat), *adunnamany* (I don't know how many), etc., were and still are used in southern England.[69]

### *Other Phonological Deviations*

In addition to the more or less regular deviations from the standard phonology which have been pointed out, there are instances of pronunciations which might be called corruptions or mutilations. Such pronunciations

[69] See Skeat, *English Dialects*, pp. 128, 130, 131, etc.

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as the following will be heard occasionally: *adswocate* (advocate), *bactize* (baptize), *bidout* (without), *cumposhashum* (conversation), *dimmycrack* (Democrat), *disgustuss* (disgusting), *fench* (fence), *muskick* (musket) *ruggidge* (rugged), *shoesh* (shoes), *stustifficate* (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

### GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case, and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to understand English. The significant points of the Gullah grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the standard language will be mentioned. 193 [191] [177] [128]

#### *Nouns*

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound*, a year has twelve *mont'*. However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies*, while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox*, *t'ree*

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pronounced *to't*. In Northampton *toddy* meant heavy or weighty. It seems likely that in some part of England *tote* was acquiring the sense of hefting or carrying a weighty object about the time of the settlement of America, and that Negroes and others not familiar with the restricted meaning of the word, enlarged its meaning to its present American form.

*Touch*, small amount, "a little bit." "Leave me a leetle tetch o' dat pie." "'E got a tetch o' de fevuh." Not exclusively Gullah.

*To that*, to that extent, so much that, etc. "If you want it to dat," if you want it that much.

*Uncle*, a term of respect for old men.

*Use*, to frequent or roam over a certain area, used especially of game, cattle, etc. Used by Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, and others. Heard occasionally among whites in the South Atlantic States.

*Yowe*, ewe.

Two other words might be mentioned here, one derived from French, the other from the West Indian by way of Spanish. *Bateau*, a flat-bottomed row-boat, is much used in the Gullah. This word was introduced by the French Huguenots, who were an important factor in the settlement of South Carolina and Georgia. It also survives in other parts of this continent, especially in Louisiana and in the French portion of Canada. Another type of boat, the dug-out, is called *piragua*, pronounced *pattyauguh* by the Negroes. This came from a West Indian word,[100] which the Spanish have adopted in the form of *piragua* or *pirogue*.[101] The dialect pronunciation no doubt arises from an attempt to imitate the Spanish trill on the *r*, which gives it a slight *t* sound.

[194]

[113]

[100] Rochefort, in his *Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Iles de l'Amerique*, Rotterdam, 1658, mentioned vessels used by the Caribs, "qu'ils nomment *Canos où Pirauguers*," p. 347.

[101] Still used in Florida.

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## THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

### *Pronunciation and Syntax*

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140. [104] *Ibid.*, p. 32. [105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 177 178 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . . and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [b*ite*][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [m*eet*] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

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tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

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In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, Preface*, p. xx.
[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
178 would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

### *Speed and Pitch Inflection*

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

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alect speech is a debatable question, but it is more probably from the former. It is difficult to find anything specific on the musical intonations of eighteenth century English dialect speech. There are occasional references to the "Welsh cadence," the "Suffolk whine," the sing-song speech of East Anglia, etc., but probably none of these is quite the same as the Gullah intonations. 194.

In English we use a stress accent to indicate the meaning of words, and speech melody is secondary. We indicate different shades of meaning or types of emotion by changes in pitch, but the definitions of our words are the same regardless of pitch. In West Africa, on the other hand, there is no such thing as stress accent. There is musical or pitch accent.[114] The same word may mean two entirely different things, depending on whether the vowel is pitched high or low. Thus in Ewe "fu" with the *u* pitched low means *sea*, with the *u* pitched high means *bone*.[115] The combination "ele afi" may mean, "he is here," "he rubbed himself with ashes" or "he caught a mouse," depending on the pitch accent of the vowels.[116] Since musical accent was the very life of the West African languages it is quite possible that the Negro carried over this language habit to some extent and that this accounts for the presence of the unusual pitch fluctuations heard among the old-time Gullah speakers. The survival of such a habit did not interfere with the Negro's efficiency as a speaker of English, for English accents are of the stress type, and any musical qualities remaining in his speech

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[114] For a discussion of these accents see Carl Meinhof, *An Introduction to the Study of African Languages* (tr. by A. Werner), p. 70 et. seq. See also *Les Langues du Monde* (ed. by Meillet and Cohen), part entitled, "Langues du Soudan et de la Guinée." (113)

[115] Meinhof, p. 77.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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•194 [191] would be looked upon by the plantation owners as interesting embellishments.

The following graph is offered as an illustration of the differences in pitch range and speed between Gullah and ordinary Southern white English speech. It is merely suggestive. The pitch differences are only relative, since it would require the use of phonophotography to discover the absolute ranges. The left-hand graph represents white speech, the right-hand, Negro speech.

1 SEC.
I don't know, mam.

0.6 SEC.
I ent know, mum.

*African Words*

174 192 Tracing the etymologies of words supposed to be of African origin is anything but an easy task. Perhaps this is why some of the English dictionaries refrain from giving specific etymologies, merely saying that a certain word is "African," or "of African origin," or even omitting these remarks. On the other hand, some writers have been too quick to attribute certain words to Africa. The mere discovery that a word is used in Africa and is different from any known modern English word is not always sufficient evidence that the word is African or that it was brought into English by Negroes. One must not forget that for more than a hundred years before the American slave trade began, European explorers and traders, especially the Portuguese and the Dutch, had contact with various parts of the African coast, and that this made pos-

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## *Notes to the Reader*

128 PRONUNCIATION OF INDIVIDUAL WORDS, ELISION, and emphasis play almost equal roles in the Negro speech of this section. Except for the spelling of surnames, dialect in the interviews has been faithfully transcribed. Great care has been taken to try to represent the pronunciation, but to have represented literally the elision and emphasis would have made the text unintelligible to the average non-scientific reader. Therefore the elision has been moderated and the emphasis left to the reader. Diacritical marks have not been used because it was thought it would give the text too foreign an appearance, and apostrophes commonly used in dialect have been discarded for simplification. Many variations in pronunciation occur even in a small area; younger
128 members of a community speak differently from older, the
194 better educated differently from the less well educated. Ex-
citement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a
195 type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses. Almost universally *uh* is substituted for *er* and *d* for *th*, though there are more exceptions to the latter than to the former. An *h* is nearly always substituted for an *r* following a vowel and *ah* is substituted for the terminal *re;* thus *here* becomes *heah*. This latter spelling is as near as can be achieved, and though the diphthong is present the *e* is very short. In certain cases persons have learned to pronounce certain words correctly while other words of the same type will still be spoken in dialect. *Mother* is a common example of this. The *th* in this word has often been deliberately learned

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128 though the final *er* will still be pronounced *uh*. Initial
194 syllables are often pronounced differently from the same
syllable occurring in the middle of a sentence. The pronoun
•195 *I* at the beginning of a sentence is almost always pronounced correctly, whereas *I* in the middle of the sentence is usually pronounced *uh*. Thus the same word often varies according to its importance and the need of the speaker for emphasis, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Some of the above mentioned points may not seem worthy of mention to the student familiar with white speech of the same section. But because the white speech has many similarities of pronunciation, it does not make the recorded speech of these studies any less of a dialect nor any less of a variation from standard speech.

128 African parallels will be found in the appendix. These have been grouped according to subjects and the subjects arranged alphabetically and numbered consecutively. Text reference numbers (Arabic) refer to the appendix numbers where pertinent parallels may be found. Where an appendix number is followed by a letter, the parallel under this heading is especially noteworthy. Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns, the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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123 People in general are often insecure about their particular varieties of speech, and collecting spontaneous speech data can be a problem for anyone conducting a linguistic survey. It is even more of a problem on the Sea Islands because the native speakers of Gullah can and do adjust [195] their speech to produce the closest possible approximations of standard English when they are addressing strangers. To eliminate pressure on the speakers to avoid the creole speech (and to help validate my presence), I explained that one of my objectives for being on the islands was to learn as much as possible about folk medicine "roots," folktales, "lies," and "the old-time talk." I explained, for example, that my grandmother had taught me to identify and collect herbs or roots which were helpful in alleviating certain ailments or even in effecting certain cures. These topics generated much interest and humor; consequently, I was able to assemble a wide store of knowledge concerning medicinal cures, complete with folktales, as well as to collect several varieties of speech data.

123 Something I learned by sitting through one market day in Charleston illustrates a final point. As I observed an islander selling tomatoes, I 437 realized that she felt much more satisfaction when she sold her goods to a person with whom she had haggled assiduously over the price than when she sold the same amount for a higher price to a well-intentioned but clearly patronizing customer. She had been robbed of the satisfaction of arriving at an "agreed" price. Feelings about the inequality of human beings had been transmitted along with the unequal prices of the tomatoes.

123 Achieving and maintaining equality in relationships is crucial when striving to establish rapport with informants. Kenneth Goldstein cites a 124 statement to this effect made by Alan Lomax in 1950 during a symposium on data collecting at the Mid-century International Folklore Conference held at Indiana University:

> People say to me that they would like to help me along with my work, that I look as if I need help. And I tell them that I am taking up their time and that I would like to make it up to them. There was never any question of dignity being involved; none of us in our situation was more dignified than anyone else. If the informant liked to drink, I drank, and if he liked to acquire a salary, I haggled with him very hard and very seriously, but we fought over it as equals.[6]

[p. xxiv is blank]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) . 1987
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782 IV. Appeals

A. Father, we down here this evening
Heavenly Father
Asking for your mercy

B. We want you to come in this building
One more time

C. We ask you to please strengthen us
Where we are weak
And build us where we are tearing down

D. We ask you to look at the leaders
From one to another, Jesus
Make them ushers of sound judgment
Then truly devoted to God

E. I want you to bless each and every usher
Jesus
Help them to please hold out and hold on

F. Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time

G. Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus

H. Want you to look at Jerusalem one more time

I. [Look at] me too

V. Peroration

Somewhere, Lord, Job declare
The wicked must cease in trouble
And my soul have rest
'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

782 The social setting in which a prayer of this sort is delivered con-
• 195 tributes to the development of bilingual skills for many Gullah speak-
ers. This prayer, like most others, contains few features characteristic
[193] of contemporary Gullah speech, such as the use of the preverbal mark-
ers *de, ben, bina,* and *don* and the omission of inflectional markers.
There is a good reason for the absence of these and other features in
[537] this text. A prayer of this type is composed in a tradition of rhetorical

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[539] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
[533] of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and
782 stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
539 are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary
[782]

Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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are among those names whose roots are traceable to West African languages. Some older island residents are named after the day of the week or month of the year when they were born. While it is very European to ask, with Shakespeare, "What's in a name?" it is very African to answer, "Everything is in a name." For example, the name Ada given to a girl child in Igbo means that the girl is the firstborn daughter. It is customary for Igbo children to be named after days of the week or given names that express sentiment: a woman who has long been unable to conceive might name a child finally born to her Ngozi, for instance, meaning "blessing" in Igbo. Some linguists have challenged Turner's work, claiming that most of the four thousand Africanisms that he listed were nicknames, or what the islanders call "basket" names.[11] Yet as DeCamp so aptly states, "Names are also a part of language and are no less capable of preserving an African heritage than are common nouns."[12]

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S 114 551

Many of the "old words"—Africanisms—known to the older island residents are, with the "new talk," fading from use. A number of idioms are still very much apparent in daily communication, however. Consider the following list:

S 195

dark the light: the sun was set
out the light: turn the light out
hot the water: bring the water to a boil
ugly too much: very ugly
the old man bury: the old man is dead
this side: this island
do the fect to you: cause harm to come to you
can't bring the word right now: I can't remember at the moment, or I will not speak of it at this time
pull off my hat: I had to run
de fix for you: lie in wait for you
watchitsir!: watch your step!
day clean: daybreak
clean skin: a person with light skin color
one day mong all!: finally!
nothing for dead: nothing dying
the sun de red for down: sunset
knock em: hit
sweetmouth: flatter

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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195 rest you mouth!: shut up!
long eye: envy

192 Most linguists agree that lexicon is perhaps one of the most arbitrary features that languages borrow from one another, and it is in this area that they tend to borrow most extensively. As Talmy Givón has explained, when different linguistic groups come in contact, it is natural that the area of most acute linguistic conflict will be the lexicon; by borrowing words from each other, speakers resolve the communication conflict. But languages seldom borrow grammar.[13] Thus, in areas [193] where Gullah is spoken, it is well to understand that while the lexicon is primarily English, much of the underlying grammar is rooted in West African languages.

121 In detailed analysis of Gullah I have used Walt Wolfram's "matrix of cruciality," selecting for discussion those features still persistent in Gullah speech.[14] Every effort has been made to present very technical material as nontechnically as possible, in order to assist readers in understanding peculiarities of Gullah speech, not only to help them appreciate the language but to suggest something of the rhythm and flow of the narratives and tales, a quality which, as I have noted, cannot be captured on paper.

## Features of Grammar

193

Many characteristic features of grammar and syntax set Gullah apart from other varieties of African-American speech.[15] Unlike standard English, which relies heavily on subordination to convey relationships between ideas, contemporary Gullah relies on coordination, or the combination of sentences that are short, abrupt, and loosely strung together. Gullah thus dispenses with many of the prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives, adverbs, and participles that tie together complex standard English sentences. In addition, the relationships between sentences are not necessarily specified through grammatical operations but may be left to be inferred from the usage or context.

The verb and pronoun systems are particularly distinctive in Gullah. Some distinguishing features of the verb structure include the uninflected verb, verb serialization, the introductory verb *say* [se], the complementizer *for* [fə], and verb reduplication.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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193 well as some others involving Gullah and other creole languages) has theoretical import for the study of etiology in pidgin and creole languages. The form may be English or may be African, but most probably it resulted from both, since the occurrence of a similar word with similar functions is characteristic of both parent language groups.

## 193 Verb Reduplication

•195 Reduplication is very common in Gullah. It is used to intensify; to indicate degree, magnitude, quality, or duration; and to express great excitement. Variation in repetition is often the key to the rhythm of Sea Island speech. Words or phrases are not repeated monotonously. Rather, each word or phrase starts with a low tone, rises to a mid tone with the first repetition, and reaches a very high pitch with the second repetition. The addition of repetitions usually modifies the meaning, as in the following:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gullah: | small small | English: | very small |
| | small small small | | extremely small |
| | clean clean | | very clean |
| | wrap up wrap up | | wrap up very tightly |
| | hungry hungry | | very hungry |

Some words may be preceded or followed by *too much*, to emphasize the meaning or alter it slightly: *small too much*, for example, means "very small" or "too small." Depending on intonation, *too much* can have a positive or negative connotation; for instance, *clean too much* signifies either "very clean" or "obsessed with cleanliness."

Reduplication forms are similarly widespread and are used to express a variety of meanings in African languages belonging to the Kwa group. Creole languages in general tend to follow the structure of the substrate language (in this case African), and it seems logical to conclude that the persistence of reduplication in Gullah is indeed an African carry-over.

193 English does utilize verbs as nominal modifiers such as *cry baby*, *go car* and *dance man*. However the creole does not have the treasury of synonyms that its parent languages possess. While *cry baby* is generally used in English to [195] refer to one who cries easily or constantly, *cry man* is often the only reference that the creole language has for a complainer, one who whines and one who cries easily or constantly.

The unmarked verb has a high frequency of occurrence in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. But, its appearance alone or in conjunction with certain preverbs is restricted. Non-stative verb stems do occur with /dɔ/, /bɪn/, /bɪnɔ/ and /dɔŋ/. However, /bɪn/ seems to occur most often with stative verbs indicating simple past. The preverb /dɔ/ does not appear in this corpus with stative verbs to produce a construction such as */i dɔ no/ *'he is knowing'; or */i dɔ ɓan/ *'he is wanting'. The seeming selectivity of the preverbal markers helps to account for the fewer tokens of /dɔ/ and /bɪn/ as compared with the higher count of unmarked verbs.

Table 2.4 shows stem verb useage for basilectal speakers exceeding that of pre-mesolectal ones by a factor of approximately two. An explanation for this pattern is 193 that the pre-mesolectal speakers show a rise in the use of 177 verbs ending in *-ing* and in the use of English 'be' verbs while at the same time they show a considerable decline in

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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•195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News*[39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) A and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races,"[40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and (533) belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms.

538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A. [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

7: Jackson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For text illustrating various manifestations of Gullah phonological and grammatical constructions, see Categories 538 and 539.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



538 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in
517 kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa),
[264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a
[213] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo,
[171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than
• [196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island story-
462 telling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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193

| PRONOUNS | PERCENT USAGE OF FORMS | | | | | | | | Total No. of Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Person Gender Case | BASILECT | | PRENESOLECT | | MESOLECT | | ACROLECT | | |
| | form | % | form | % | form | % | form | % | |
| 3 ♀ N | im | 0 | i | 55.2 | hi | 16.4 | ji | 28.4 | 67 |
| 3 ♂ O | em | 71.5 | i | 4.5 | im | 21.0 | him | 3.0 | 61 |
| 3 ♀ O | em | 74.2 | i | 3.2 | ji | 12.9 | hər | 9.7 | 31 |
| 3 ♂ P | im | 13.8 | i | 62.1 | iz | 20.7 | hiz | 3.4 | 29 |
| 3 ♀ P | im | 0 | i | 83.8 | ji | 16.2 | hər | 0 | 6 |
| TABLE 3.2. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH FOUR VARIANTS | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 ♂ N | im | 3.6 | | | i | 77.6 | hi | 18.8 | 165 |
| 3 ϕ N | im | 13.2 | | | i | 84.2 | it | 2.6 | 38 |
| 3 ϕ O | em | 96.0 | | | i | 2.0 | it | 2.0 | 51 |
| TABLE 3.3. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH THREE VARIANTS | | | | | | | | | |

♀ = Feminine
♂ = Masculine
ϕ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Two tables are required to show a systematic distribution of third person singular pronouns in Gullah. One table contains pronouns with four variants while a second table contains pronouns with three variants. On the surface, the system seems more elaborate and complicated than that of its English superstrate. But the variants represent levels of Creole speakers and possibly stages in the acquisition of standard English. For example, to produce a semantic equivalent of *her* in the sentence *I know her*, a speaker will select a pronoun from his repertoire of rules governing third person objective forms. The one that

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193 is selected will depend on the speaker's knowledge of
•196 Gullah and standard English, as well as social factors such
[197] as audience, age and education. According to the data, there are four forms from which a speaker may select:

1) If the speaker is basilectal or wishes to appear as such, he will select /ɔm/ and produce /ɔɪ nuo ɔm/ 'I know her';

2) If the speaker has acquired a rule for the use of /i/, then he will say /ɔɪ nuo i/ 'I know her';

3) If the speaker has a grammatical rule for the use of a form distinguishing male from female, then he will probably say /ɔɪ nuo ʃi/ 'I know her';

4) Finally, if a speaker has acquired the acrolectal feminine, he will say /ɔɪ nuo hɜz/ 'I know her'.

193 Few speakers use all four variants, offering some credibility to DeCamp's theory that each creole speaker masters a span of a language acquisition continuum, and that no speaker masters both extremes unless he masters the intermediate varieties as well (DeCamp 1971).

But data in this study support the hypothesis that it is possible for a child growing up in a Creole-speaking community to learn to use the pronouns /ɔm/ and /hɜz/ (both polar forms) to mark third person feminine objective case without having acquired a rule for the use of /hi/ to mark feminine object.

The third person singular pronouns in Gullah are discussed according to case and frequency of occurrence. It will be shown that the status of a form may vary

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

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[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[794] [507]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

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[For additional information on linguistic change, see Category 178.]

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[For additional information on linguistic change, see Category 178.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



121 Sterling Brown insisted that "half truth is not enough, however picturesque." He urged fieldworkers to avoid taking white southern opinion as the arbiter of authenticity in black southern folklore. If, on the other hand, the accounts were genuine, if they went beyond a simplistic and misleading treatment of serious sociological issues, then as a result both blacks and whites could lay down the burden that stereotypes had put upon them. That, he believed, could ultimately bring about a revitalization of American culture.[41]

Perhaps neither the consultants nor the national officials were completely happy with *Drums and Shadows*. Like many pioneering efforts, it picked its way cautiously through underbrush and thickets that obscured what lay ahead. The Savannah fieldworkers could see where they had come from more clearly than where they were going. Unlike Herskovits's
121 *Myth of the Negro Past*, which propounded theories of reten-
128 tion, reinterpretation, and syncretism, *Drums and Shadows* eschews analysis. Seventy African parallels are cited and documented in the appendix, but the book ignores European parallels and the influence of culture contact. "Though European parallels could be cited for many of the cultural patterns," Mary Granger acknowledges, "the citations in the appendix have been limited to African material both because the European material is better known and because the African parallels suggest interesting lines of investigation." In his foreword Guy B. Johnson emphasizes that *Drums and Shadows* "wisely refrained from attempting to include an investigation of subjects like folk music and dialect, which require special training and technical analysis." Perhaps because of having eschewed such analysis, *Drums and Shadows* seems fresher nearly half a century later than the theoretical works of the period. Scholars now recognize that coastal
[192] blacks of Georgia and South Carolina developed a creole lan-
[126] guage that played a crucial role in shaping a creole culture. If the Savannah fieldworkers mistakenly considered their infor-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



•197 121 128 (126) mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking "correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accurately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Furthermore, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to note generational and educational differences in speech and to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching ("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the (177) pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits."

128 (126) LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

121 128 Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



178 Perhaps most important, Gullah—the creole language developed by the slaves on the Sea Islands and in the South Carolina and Georgia low-
• [197] country—continued to be the language in which their folk culture was passed down to posterity. Proverbs, metaphors of social experience, continued to reflect the African preference for speaking by indirection; and African naming patterns persisted on the Sea Islands. For generations, folktales of the audacious animal trickster Ber Rabbit and of the no less audacious slave trickster John blended elements of African folk narrative with elements of the Sea Islanders' historical experience. For generations talented Sea Island artisans created traditional arts and crafts such as coiled sweetgrass baskets and strip quilts. Out of this tradition one Sea Islander, Philip Simmons of Daniel Island, became Charleston's preeminent artist in wrought-iron gates. For generations folk medicine of both the pharmaceutical and the psychological varieties continued to heal the sick on the Sea Islands, and natural phenomena continued to serve as signs foretelling the future, whether changing weather or impending death. Ghosts or haunts—the spirits of the dead—returned from time to time to trouble the living, although local conjurers (assisted by various substances held to be magical) helped to ward off their unwelcome visits. For generations Sea Islanders entertained their children with play songs after the day's work was done. At night they sang the children to sleep with lullabies. On Saturday nights they held dances and frolics. Their folk version of Christianity retained the earliest "shouting" styles of singing spirituals, in which the African religious phenomenon of spirit possession remained vividly linked with prayer, music, and bodily movement. No one thought this way of life would change. The life of the land and the people seemed fixed in an invisible circle, enclosed by the waters and the passage of time.

177 And then something happened. It did not seem revolutionary at the time. In 1950 Georgia timber magnate General Joseph B. Fraser and his associates bought large tracts of land on the southern end of Hilton Head Island. At first they simply cut down the ancient stands of timber. But soon his son Charles, a young Yale law school graduate, launched the development of a series of lavish resort "plantations"—Sea Pines, Hilton Head, and Honey Horn—pioneering the "resort island" concept. In 1956 the first bridge to Hilton Head Island was constructed. Feverish land speculation ensued as other developers scurried onto Hilton Head and other Sea Islands to exploit the boom, buying up land from black islanders and building more resorts.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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## Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

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I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

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The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•197 guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah
193 still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pro-
197 nouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ǫ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [dɔ], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

171 In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

538 As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have par-
171 allels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# 4

# The Language

The old-time talk we still de talkem here!

*We still speak Gullah here!*

## History

•197

The factors which nurtured the Sea Island culture also nurtured the development and perpetuation of the unusual Sea Island language called Gullah or Geechee. The geographical isolation, the marginal contact with speakers outside the Sea Island communities, and the social and economic independence contributed to creating an environment where a mixed language could thrive. Gullah is defined as a creole, the language that results when a pidgin, which has no native speakers but comes into existence as the product of communication among speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, takes over as the only language of the community.

197 178

The Sea Island language, like the culture, is undergoing transformations. Several varieties of contemporary Gullah can be heard in day-to-day conversation on topics ranging from who is running for president to the best bogging place in the creek. With the exception of the unusual accent, some speakers show little deviation from standard English at all. The degree of standard English acquisition is a reflection of such factors as the level of education, the accessibility or inaccessibility of a given island to outside forces, and the extent of inside social mobility. Just as one hears a form of standard English, one also hears the "real Gullah" spoken by children and adults in all aspects of community life.

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The history of Gullah is complicated. It is called a creole language

[p. 132]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation
178 of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with
177 achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo-
829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make
823 attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 135]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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823

> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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## Present-Day Gullah

• 197 Since the early 1920s Gullah has been known to vary regionally; recent studies by Irma Cunningham, Patricia Nichols, Charles Joyner, Salikoko Mufwene, Ian Hancock, and me, conducted in different areas of the Sea Islands and the adjacent coast indicate that there are still distinct varieties.[8] Minor details such as consistent use of the pronoun *e*, which is applied to both sexes, and a distinctive fricative "fizzing" sound on words beginning with *w* would go unnoticed by casual observers. However, they permit the islanders to detect when one is from a different island, when one is a total outsider, and when one is trying to talk "proper," in the negative sense of the word. In fact, during my first few years on the islands, I learned that I should not (123) try to pass myself off as an islander by an attempt to imitate the Sea Island language. While I may have had the syntax right, I was never able to perfect the accent, and it is the stress and intonation that give one away. When I asked the islanders how they were able to detect such small differences, I was often told, "I ain't know how I de know, but I de know." And they did know.

197 The outside pressures now exerted on the Gullah-speaking com-
197 munities in the coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina have cre-
197 ated the general conditions that David DeCamp describes for post-creole speech communities (i.e., communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with a standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and new educational programs and other infusions from the outside have broken down the formerly rigid social structure enough to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of Gullah speakers to modify their speech in the direction of standard English.[9] Given this sociolinguistic situation, the Sea Islands offer an ideal opportunity to investigate linguistic convergence and change.

197 Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify several facts about Gullah in order to distinguish it from the speech of other black Americans. First, whereas Gullah is a creole, inland black speech is defined as a dialect of English, that is, as a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. A dialect of any given language is similar to that language in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax; such differences as may exist often result from regional or social variations, and most dialectal variations present few

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•197 major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

197 Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers
177 of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter
178 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

197 The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah
192 and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

*gula*, "pig": Kongo
*goober*, "peanut": Kimbundu
*gumbo*, "okra": Tshiluba
*gumbi*, "medicinal weed": Bambara
*heh*, "yes": Vai
*hoodoo*, "bad luck": Hausa
*yambi*, "yam": Vai
*chigger*, "small flea": Wolof
*juk, juky*, "disorderly": Wolof
*cush*, "bread," "cake": Hausa
*nana*, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
*nansi*, "spider": Twi
*tote*, "to carry": Kikongo
*chicabod*, "seesaw": Mandingo
*unu*, "you": Igbo
*yent*, "to lie": Umbundu
*pinto, bento*, "coffin": Temne
*biddy*, "small chicken": Kongo
*buckra*, "white man": Ibebio
*de*, "to be": Igbo
*eh*, "yes": Igbo
*ashantie*, "house": Ga[10]

551 Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 139

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
[823] banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.
[868]

The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
• 197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
[551] days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
[192] older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
slanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

[p. 150 is blank]

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# Appendix 2

## Buh Rabbit en' de Lawd

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197
[178]

What follows is the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" from Chapter 3, reconstructed in the Gullah of a century ago. A comparison of the two versions will show how the language has changed in the interim.

128

I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Mixon Geraty, who suggested and prepared the transcription, for her time, willingness, and patience.

539

One time Buh Rabbit gone tuh de Lawd fuh git mo' ecknowledge, mo' wisdum. En' de Lawd tell Buh Rabbit, "Awright! Uh wan' you fuh fetch me ennyt'ing wuh w'ite. Ennyt'ing w'ite."

Rabbit gone een de fiel', en' 'e gone en' meet Buh Paa'tridge dey dey, 'e hab uh bag, en' 'e tell Buh Paa'tridge: "Uh betchuh all ub you, all ub you ent able fuh full'up dishyuh bag."

Paa'tridge say, "How you mean?"

Run een de bag en' see kin you full'um up."

De paa'tridge 'pread 'e wing, run een de bag en' full'um up. Buh Rabbit pit'um 'cross 'e shoulduh en' cya'um tuh de Lawd. "Awright!" 'E gone sen'um back. Buh Rabbit sen' Buh Paa'tridge back.

"Well, now, Buh Rabbit. Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—uh rattlesnake!" Dainjus!!! 'E pit Buh Rabbit weh 'e dainjus, fuh true!

Buh Rabbit tell'um, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit gone een de fiel' en' fin' uh rattlesnake, en' 'e hab uh cane en' 'e tell Buh Rattlesnake: "Buh Snake, oonuh ent—oonuh ent long ez dis cane." Buh Rattlesnake run 'long 'side de cane.

Buh Rabbit say, "No! Uh yent mean fuh do'um so. Uh wan' oonuh fuh run een'um."

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

[829]

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

823

3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

•197 113

4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

[114]

7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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197 192 10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

114 551 11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

177 192 13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

121 14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

193 15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

[113] 17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

[113] 20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

194 113 1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

128 126 1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

000 2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

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slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification retained by BaKongo peoples. 101

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter 1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One 114
early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote ex- 174
tensively about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the 101
Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from 175
the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas, and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have 174
obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah" Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech. "The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' " Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the 197
Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" 174
trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with 174
Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances 114
the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6] Turner includes in his list of African words *gala (gola, gula)* which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola (. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

175 567 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more [197] than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary: 175 527 197

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena: 175 533 [197]

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the 114

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it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends pr[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[38] 17 197.

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[39] 175

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication: 175 197 175 197 539

| *BUDDY QUOW* | A Key to Buddy Quow |
|---|---|
| Was matter Buddy Quow? | What is the matter Brother Quow? |
| I ble Obesha bang you, | I believe the overseer has beaten you, |
| You tan no sabby how, | You look I don't know how, |
| Dah Backrow Man go wrong you, | That White Man has wronged you, |
| Buddy Quow, | Brother Quow, |
| Dah Backrow & | That White Man & |

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17 ilar to that of the enthusiastic evangelist.[36] Hence it was primarily a small acculturated group of blacks who took in the Great Awakening, while the countryside swelled with new Africans. Within this sociocultural tug-of-war, Africans and American slaves formed their communal outlook and clung to those features of life which provided a sense of identity, personhood, and autonomy.

## *Old Ways Die Slowly*

The steady stream of Africans pouring into the Carolina Lowcountry, and the lack of a meaningful imparting of the Christian religion could not help but reinforce an African cultural and spiritual presence. In the country and island parishes especially, whites lived among a foreign-born servile labor force. Ministers were not only exasperated by the resistance of planters to having their slaves converted, but even more frustrated by the problem of communicating with Africans. First was the challenge of language. "Those brought up among us," wrote one early Society missionary, "are both civilized and speak good English . . . whereas those that are brought hither from their own country, except a few that come very young, seldom or never speak good English."[37]

17 •197 African slaves lived, worked, and socialized among each other. Their lack of exposure to English and concentration on developing a mode of communication among themselves undoubtedly slowed the process of learning a totally foreign tongue. Gullah language was being created during the colonial decades and the lengthy period of African slave trading. This was also happening elsewhere, such as in the Savannah region, where Africans imported mainly through Charleston were laboring in the country and island reaches of Georgia. As long as Africans remained isolated and their numbers greatly reinforced, language was a problem. Bray Associate missionary Joseph Ottolenghe (an Italian Jew converted to Christianity), provides some insight into the problems and difficulties encountered in the seacoast region. In a letter to the Associates, he reminded them of the impediments faced by "primitive Christians" in olden times, but added that they faced no "Hindrancies. & great Diffioulties" which compared to the instruction of African slaves:

> The formers understood ye language of ye instructos, & if not persons were appointed skill'd in ye language of ye novices, whereas our Negroes are so ignorant of ye English Language, and none can be found to talk in their own, yt

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2

175 No hawte bun morrowgo,
•197 Nusso grandy hungry do you,
539 I hab some Barbaracco,
I bring dem all for you morrowgo

I bring dem all &

Don't let your heart be troubled Country Man,
Nor great hunger distress you,
I have some Barbaracco's*
I will bring them all for you Country Man.

I will bring &

*Horse Beans

3

No hungry nor so dry
For true now no me yerry
Make vawter for me yie
I cry so, tell me vary vipe me yie

I cry so tell &

I am not hungry nor dry,
Indeed now only hear me,
It makes my eyes water,
I have cried so, until I am tired wiping my eyes.

I have cried so &

. . .

5

Dah time Quasheba tell,
De Pickney he bin coming
I gow go for to sell

De hog me mommo gibe me, berry well

Dah hog &

When Quasheba said,
She was with child,
I went immediately and sold very well,
The hog my mother gave me.

The hog &

6

Von coat I buy um new,
Von ropper I bin bring come
Von new hankisha too
I nebo bin go tink um nusso true.

I nebo bin &

I bought a new coat,
A wrapper I bought also,
And a new handkerchief too,
I thought of nothing but that it was true.

I thought &

7

When Unco Quaco say,
De Pickney he was come now,
I no go morrow stay
My harete bin knock pum pum on true grangie

My harete &

When Uncle Quaco said,
The child was just born,
I did not stay till the morrow,
My heart beat pum, pum for great joy.

My heart &

8

Gor Mighty da nah Buf
See how Quasheba do me
Dah Backrow Man he luf
He bring molatto for me Gor nah Buf

He bring &

God Almighty above!
See how Quasheba has used me!
She loved the White Man,
And has brought a Mulatto for me,
God above!

And has brought &

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175
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9

He yie, he nose, he mout,
(I bin good mine for hit um)
Tun ebery mossel bout
Lak Obesha bin pit um out he mout.

Lak Obesha &

Its eyes, its nose, its mouth,
(I had a great inclination to strike it.)
Take every part of it together,
'Tis as if the overseer had spit it out of his mouth.

'Tis as if &

The poem, "Buddy Quow," is a fascinating example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect and demonstrates the contribution of various ethnic groups in the formation of pidgin. The names Quow, Quasheba, and Quaco are derived from the Tshi language (Ashanti and Fanti), Africans of the Gold Coast region. Gold Coast Africans, as noted previously, were the first black Carolinians. They were not imported in as large numbers as other groups, but were preferred by South Carolinians, and represent a continuous contribution throughout much of the slave-trade era. Hence their early presence and reinforcement made a strong base. The word "pickney" is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish "pequeno nino" (small child), and barbaracco means horse bean in both languages. This may be a Kongo-Angolan influence since Portuguese ports were in Kongo-Angola and many Africans from that region were imported to South Carolina. The masculine pronoun used to refer to both genders may indicate Upper Guinea influence, where such usage was common among Africans learning English on their native coasts from Methodist missionaries or traders, as previously discussed. Since Gullah is a spoken rather than written dialect, the interpreter of the poem may have lost some of the meaning. Yet most of the interpretations correspond to what is known of Gullah dialect and offer a sense of what Gullah was like when it was a true dialect. Writers who believe that there is no sharp break between Gullah and general black vernacular may not fully consider the historical Gullahs and their creative means of communication in an isolated setting. While there are obvious similarities between twentieth-century black vernacular and Gullah as recorded in the twentieth century, the geographical isolation in which Gullah was originally created points to a dialect peculiar to the Sea Island region, where Africans made their own language adjustments with minimal acculturative influences.[40] In any case, the adoption of a means of communication common to all the slaves in the area was a significant community-building mechanism, and previous African language orientations played an important role.

In addition to a language barrier, ministers realized that the black pop-

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175 oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was
561 one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840,
175 "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccus-
561 tomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar
• 197 creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan*'?" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

175 Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or
793 as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own
797 religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), 46–59.
567
113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

## *Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling
567 represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the Uni-*
113 *versity of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
113 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, *15–16*; *SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

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20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

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21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 17[illegible]–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

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23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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36. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 164–65, 195; "Early Negro Churches," 77–78, 83–86; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 177, 182–84; William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785). 175 113

37. Thomas Hassell to SPG, December 2, 1731 and March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series A, vol. 4 (2); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); Peter H. Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee at Last," *Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (November, 1979): 2–5.

38. Quoted from James B. Lawrence, "Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 14 (March, 1930): 46–47.

39. Ibid.

40. Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–85, 87–88. For a discussion which denies, incorrectly I think, that there is a distinction between Gullah and "generalized Black English vernacular," see J. L. Dillard, *Lexicon of Black English* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 103–4. An interesting discussion of Gullah as a Creole language is found in Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Chapter 7: see also Wood, *Black Majority*, 172–90. For a discussion of cultural unity joining Gullahs with blacks of the Caribbean, see Velma Pollard. "Cultural Connections in Paule Marshall's *Praise Song for the Widow*," *World Literature Written in English* 25, no. 2 (1985): 285–98. For a fascinating, informative debate over the formulation of Creole and the impact of Upper Guinea versus Gold Coast and Angolan influences see Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," 3–16, and Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 17–35. 175 113

41. See Chapter 2. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1971). Thomas discusses systems of beliefs current in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and retention of some beliefs after that time. As Thomas states, almost every "primitive" religion was for the adherents a means of gaining supernatural power. Yet this does not preclude religion as a means of explanation, decreeing of moral imperatives, or representation of social order. 175 113

42. Benjamin Pownall to SPG, October 24, 1723, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4(2); Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; J. Ottolenghe to SPG, July 12, 1758, November 18, 1754, SPG London Mss of Dr. Bray's Associates.

43. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, and, Francis Le Jau to SPG, October 20, 1709, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5.

44. Ibid.; Thomas Hassell to SPG, March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

45. Whitefield, *Journals*, 382–83, Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 246–47.

46. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 14; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1).

47. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 56, 57, 63, 72, 90, passim; Hutson, "Register of Stoney Creek Church," 22–26; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," passim.

48. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 70–91.

49. Ibid., 63; *Journal of the Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505.

50. Whitefield, *Journals*, 419, 422, 444, 446; Seward, *Journal*, 6–7; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*.

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Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Eddings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6; ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Missions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who argues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

(197) (113)

533 128 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 216 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the 186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth 178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191] The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African [197] and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of [536] Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing [883] her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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Georgetown

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Purpose of Dissertation

121 In recent years linguists have recognized that historical change can be observed in children's acquisition of a first language, in the sign language of the deaf, and in newly developing languages like pidgins and creoles. The immediate aim of the present study is to provide evidence from a rapidly changing creole that language change can be observed in the present, across age and social groups, within a cohesive speech community. As a contribution to an emerging theory of linguistic variation, it will provide evidence that linguistic variation is systematic both for individuals and for the speech community, is inherent to language change, and can be activated by social factors which may be different for each community.

This study is also seen as a contribution to the growing documentation of the history of Black Americans in the United States. Gullah, as the language spoken by the 121 •197 vast majority of those slaves imported to the coastal rice plantations of colonial South Carolina, is in some senses a more native American language than those dialects of English

spoken by early settlers from the British Isles. Gullah in its earliest stages developed from the needs of speakers of many West African languages for a language of mutual intelligibility. The subsequent changes in this creole have come about as the functions for which the language was used increased and as its speakers began to interact on a more socially equal level with speakers of standard English. Because of the historical patterns of migration by blacks from the coastal plantations to fields in the Mississippi delta and then to urban ghettos of the north, Gullah probably serves as the source for those dialects of English which are unique to Black Americans. As such, Gullah and the changes it has undergone serve as an important base for discussions of the language varieties used by much of the black population in the United States.

## 1.1 Change and the Post-creole Continuum

For purposes of the discussion which follows, certain central terms will be defined. Pidgin is used here in the sense of a language variety which develops in a contact situation between speakers of different native languages. As such, a pidgin is no one's first language, it is relatively unstable, and it is used for a limited range of communicative functions. As the pidgin becomes used for a wider range of functions and as its structure becomes more stabilized, it sometimes acquires native speakers who use it as a first language. At this stage, the language variety

12 is said to be a creole. Some creoles exist in contact with
• 197 the official standard variety of the language with which they correspond. When social conditions are favorable, such a creole merges with the standard. During the period of merger, a post-creole continuum exists which ranges from speech showing highly creolized structures, similar to those of the pidgin stage and very different from those of the standard, to speech which is nearly that of the official standard in grammatical structure. The post-creole stage of Gullah is the subject of the present study.

In his discussion of the general phenomenon of a post-creole speech continuum, DeCamp (1971) proposes that two conditions are necessary for the development of the post-creole stage of a creole:

1) a correspondence between the official communicative standard and the creole

2) a recent breakdown of formerly rigid social stratification, with differing degrees of acculturation for sub-groups.

Communities in which Gullah is spoken now meet these two conditions. The official standard for the region is English, although the spoken variety of this standard is a low-prestige dialect of the standard. The social conditions are also met. Formerly rigid social and economic segregation along racial lines has broken down to a significant extent in schools, businesses, and politics within the region. Economic conditions for many members of Gullah-speaking communities have changed for the better over the

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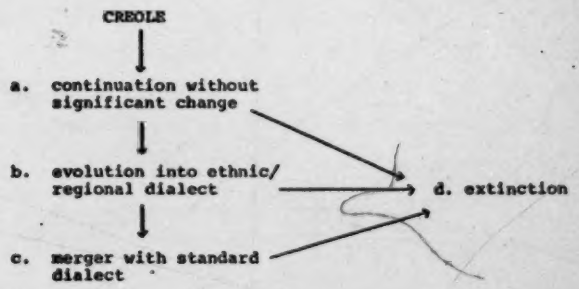
past four decades. Geographic mobility and opportunities for participation in portions of mainstream culture have increased both the motivation and the chances to use the standard variety of English.

DeCamp describes four alternative final stages for the creole life-cycle as follows: continuation without change, extinction, evolution into a 'normal language,' and merger with the corresponding standard. I would like to propose a slightly different schema, in which four alternatives are seen as potential stages in the life of a creole, which can be stopped at any point by relevant social and geographic factors. Two of the four alternatives are different from those of DeCamp in important ways. Instead of 'continuation without change,' I suggest that 'continuation without significant change' is more accurate, since no language used by living speakers exists without exhibiting some change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language,' I suggest rather 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' is a preferred characterization, since creoles are 'normal' languages in every structural sense although they may have a more limited range of functions than an official standard. At this stage the language variety is often associated with a particular social group or geographic region and is viewed as a low-prestige dialect of the standard language. The standard dialect with which it can merge at the final stage of its life-cycle is that dialect which has been standardized,

121 often through writing, and is the high-prestige dialect of
•197 the standard language. The following diagram shows these possible stages in the post-creole life cycle:




According to such a schema, a creole would go through stages (a) and (b) before reaching (c), but could go directly to (d) at any point in its history, given the relevant social circumstances. The stage of 'extinction' can mean both that the creole has no more living speakers as well as that attitudes toward the language variety are such that it is no longer considered a separate entity, distinct in some degree from all other languages. In his discussion of creoles, DeCamp considers Gullah to be an extinct creole. As the analysis of linguistic variables in Chapter 4 will show, for certain grammatical categories some speakers have systematic

121 differences from other varieties of English which would
• 197 indicate the continuing life of the creole. DeCamp's theory of a language continuum at the post-creole stage makes it possible to understand stages (a) through (c) as co-existing synchronically for a given speech community, thereby mitigating the problem of determining precisely the stage which characterizes a particular community at a given point in time. In the speech community studied here, individuals can be found whose speech reflects all three stages. Certain speakers are moving faster than others toward merger with the standard, and selected social factors appear to influence their rate of change. The continuum theory legitimizes the variation which has become increasingly evident in all modern studies of the language used in such communities.

The notion of a linguistic continuum allows us to better understand why different linguists might look at the same speech community and describe the language variety used variously as a 'creole' or as a 'dialect.' At the stage in which a post-creole community is moving toward a non-standard dialect of the standard language, valid comparisons can be made both with the creole grammar and with the standard grammar--forward and backward, as it were. Thus Labov (1969) has described verb forms used in an urban language variety spoken mainly by speakers of West African descent in terms of a dialect of the standard, whose differences from standard English are the result of relatively low-level

121 phonological rules. Stewart (1969), on the other hand, has
•197 maintained that the same surface differences result from underlying structural differences, having their origin in a creole variety of English which preceded the nonstandard dialect used by many blacks. Placing the language variety under discussion within a broader continuum, it becomes easier to see how both Stewart and Labov could find equally valid correspondences on either end of this continuum.

| creole | nonstandard dialects | standard |
|---|---|---|
| GULLAH | BLACK ENGLISH VERNACULAR | NETWORK ENGLISH |
| | | [WHITE SOUTHERN ENGLISH] |

Figure 1. Language Varieties in the Gullah Post-Creole Continuum

121 The place of the White Southern English dialect in this continuum is problematic and outside the scope of the present discussion, but its place as part of such a continuum should be noted (see Wolfram 1974 for a discussion of the relationship of white Southern speech to Vernacular Black English in rural Mississippi).

The view which such a continuum permits of the

12 of which the individual is a part. This model is sometimes labeled the 'Quantitative Paradigm.' The model developed by DeCamp (1971, 1973), Bailey (1973), and Bickerton (1975), in contrast, has allowed variability in the communal grammar and has permitted an analysis of the speech community in terms of individuals having different grammars, who nevertheless communicate with each other. The grammar of the individual speaker in this model, variously called the Wave Model or Dynamic Analysis, has been viewed in categorical terms. Bickerton, in particular, views grammatical rules in terms of categorical shifts from one rule to another, with possible variation only in the transition stage between an old and a new rule. DeCamp (1973) has come closest to combining the process-oriented features of both models in his suggestion that an implicational model of the type proposed in DeCamp (1971) and utilized as the basis for the Dynamic Paradigm proposed by Bickerton (1975) might incorporate certain features of the frequency analysis used by Labov and Sankoff.

12 In the study of linguistic change in Gullah, both
• 197 models have been useful in analysis of the data. Implicational scales which include information on relations of 'more or less,' rather than merely 'presence or absence,' have revealed relationships not readily apparent from frequency counts alone in some cases. Frequency data on the use of creole features by speakers carefully matched for

12 age, sex, and social group reveals relationships between
• 197 language use and social factors which are difficult to perceive from an implicational ranking of linguistic features alone. Both models have been found inadequate in that neither allows for both the individual variation and the communal variation which the data indicate exists in the Gullah-speaking community.

1.3 Overview

121 Chapter 2 will describe the speech community studied
128 in coastal South Carolina, while Chapter 3 will discuss the field methods used in this research. In Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of three linguistic variables now undergoing change in Gullah will be presented. These variables are the pre-infinitival complementizer fE, a static-locative preposition (to), and the third person singular pronouns ee and En. Chapter 5 discusses the social factors influencing change in these grammatical categories and concludes with an evaluation of the competing models for linguistic variation.

128 In the Gullah examples cited in the discussion which follows, the orthography is that which is conventional for written English except for the following symbol:

E = the sound of the vowel in bus
and the sound of the unstressed
vowel in Cuba

121 serving as sources of both shame and group unity for their speakers. One portion of these speech patterns is the subject
121 of the present investigation: that language variety described
• 197 by linguists as a creole, now in the post-creole stage of development, spoken primarily by descendants of the original African immigrants. Labeled Gullah or Sea Island Creole by linguists, and known as Gullah, Geechee, or country-talk by its speakers, this language variety has speakers along the coastal strip between northern Florida and southern North Carolina. Its home base, however, is a smaller area within South Carolina which follows the boundaries of the earliest plantation system between what is now Georgetown County (the county just north of Charleston) and Jasper County on the Georgia border. Both Georgia and North Carolina lie outside the home base of the creole originally, since Georgia was a nonslave settlement until 1750 (Wood, 1974:260), and what is now North Carolina was sparsely settled during the early years of colonization. During the period in which the area's distinctive cultural patterns were being set, a relatively small area of South Carolina formed the central location of the African immigrant population.

The choice of Gullah as the language variety spoken by the majority of the African group and its descendants was not a foregone conclusion. It was a choice related to the subservient position of the slaves from West Africa in the colonial society. As Reinecke (1969) observes, three general

121 types of immigration may be distinguished from the linguistic
197 point of view. The first type, settlement in enclaves which preserve ethnic individuality and language even though cut off from their parent groups, was characteristic of parts of central Europe prior to the nineteenth century. The second type, assimilation into the established society with total or almost total loss of ethnic identity and language, has been typical of highly industrialized and newly established countries like Canada, the United States, Australia, South Africa, and certain countries in South America. Assimilation is easier if the immigrants are of the same skin color as the established group and share important cultural traditions. In colonial coastal South Carolina, European settlers from England, France, Scotland, and Wales followed this pattern of assimilation. The third type of immigrant adaptation has been characteristic of plantation laborers who are of a different race, culture, and language from their colonial masters. Brought into the colony as either slaves or contract laborers, these immigrants have not been able to maintain their own languages or to assimilate fully into the established group. For laborers whose contact with the homeland has been effectively cut off, who are thrown into daily contact with fellow laborers speaking different languages and of different cultural traditions, and who are permitted little or no chance of participation in the social life of their masters, development of an interlanguage can be seen a

121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
• 197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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South Carolina
Georgetown

# CHAPTER 5

## SOCIAL FACTORS

### 5.0 Overview

121 •197 The present chapter deals with the social factors of sex, age, and mobility which appear to influence the activation of linguistic change for individual speakers. The variables of sex and age were chosen prior to the field work done for the study, on the basis that these social factors have been shown repeatedly to influence language usage. Mobility, i.e., living or working inside or outside the community, was chosen as a third variable after some time in the field. Observation of children's language use in the [123] classroom and on the playground and conversations about their travels and visits with relatives indicated that the range of language at their command was closely related to the extent of their geographic mobility. Interviews with adult [124] speakers subsequently elicited information about their geographic mobility, after it became apparent that its effect on language use could be even greater than that of economic 128 status for the population being studied. Section 5.1 will discuss the relationship between sex of speaker and language use; 5.2 will consider the factor of age; and 5.3 will discuss

562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
[197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
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463

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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464 562 •197 463 no use of standard English and which entail little interaction with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by black men in the region are blue collar and require few language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
•197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
[121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

829 there so that he could teach them the things he had learned,
186 and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved
562 away would return in later years. A daughter in her late teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she would not ask her future husband to live there. Another brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on the island. One young mother in another family spoke with feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the island with three pre-school children, when most other adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities than did the women. To the outside observer, island life seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was some indication that identification with island life increased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another older man and his wife had spent some years living and working in New York City, returning to the island when his aged parents needed them. They were both leaders in community and church life on the island; their speech reflected their
• [197] wide range of experience. In formal church speech events, both spoke and read language very close to standard; in their conversations with each other at home many creole features were used. At the close of the field work for the

167 ages 25 and 35 migrated out of the region (Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, 1972). Many of these young people send their children back to the area to be reared by older relatives in a safer environment than the cities can provide, and many return themselves in later life. But the fact remains that the region is losing its young black men and women in great numbers. These migration pat-
[197] terns are no doubt an important contributing factor to the rapid language changes now underway for much of the black population in the region.

5.4 Relationship Between Social Factors and Linguistic Variation

121 By noting which individual speakers are most ad-
193 vanced in the language change discussed in Chapter 4, it is
178 possible to show an association between social factors discussed in this chapter and the pattern of variation described in the previous chapter. The progression of change for the three linguistic variables was found to be: first, the complementizer; next, the pronouns; and last, the preposition. The language use of the sixteen speakers described in the present chapter is reflected in Table 5 of Chapter 4. (See page 108.) Along the implicational scale shown there, only a younger and a middle aged island woman (Speakers 14 and 9) are shown to use exclusively standard at in the prepositional category, the one most resistant to change. For the third person pronouns, all four young and middle aged

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crus rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121 •197 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the [576] [177] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gullah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

121 197 [576] [177] become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The conflicting feature of these two notions is evident. Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks. That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable 121 197 174 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela- 174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands 178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina

## CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

197 ment for a creole language to survive.
177

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, [191] many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure 178 592 of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder 855 member is usually the established household spokesman, 887 and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language 197 of the younger generations. While many do not purport to [177] actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

121
197 The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

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•197

rigid social stratification brought on by educational programs and other acculturative forces to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of creole speakers to modify their speech in the direction of the standard.

The dynamics involved in this modification process have received little attention from either scholars in creole studies or variation theorists. DeCamp begins this investigation by proposing four alternative stages in the life cycle of a creole language: (1) continuation without change, (2) evolution into a 'normal' language, (3) merger with the superstrate, and (4) extinction. Nichols modifies two of these stages, suggesting instead of 'continuing without change', 'continuing without significant change' because all languages used by living speakers change over a period of time. Instead of 'evolution into a normal language' she recommends 'evolution into an ethnic or regional dialect' because creoles ARE already normal languages, though given the relevant social circumstances they may become extinct at any point (Nichols 1976:4)

Extinction is an obscure term for languages. It can mean that the creole has no living speakers or that it is no longer considered a separate language. Of the four alternatives, DeCamp (1971:17) says that 'Gullah, once widely spoken in Georgia, South Carolina, and the nearby Sea Islands, is now nearly extinct on the mainland and becoming rare on the islands...' Yet he offers no evidence

121 to support his claim. Rickford's analysis of the language
• 197 situation on the Sea Islands is less dramatic than DeCamp's, though similarly pessimistic about the vitality of Gullah as a distinct variety:

> What is most widely spoken on the Sea Islands today is best described as a 'decreolized' or mesolectal variety of Gullah. In fact, I would prefer to abandon the term 'Gullah' entirely because its associations with some purely basilectal variety are already too firmly entrenched. (Rickford 1974:94)

Impressionistic statements of this kind are often misleading or incorrect, and DeCamp and Rickford suggest that Gullah has drifted farther along the post-creole continuum than this study shows. The only safe method of determining linguistic change in Gullah is to count features and their variants. A computation will help to determine the degree, if any, to which present day Gullah is evolving from the creole pattern described by Turner in 1949. This dissertation addresses itself to a quantitative investigation of evolutionary patterns of retention and movement in Gullah and to a demonstration of the dynamics involved in this variation and movement process.

The measurement of fluctuation between features necessarily involves counting. Therefore it is important to choose variables suitable for quantitative analysis. In selecting linguistic variables, I chose ones which met the principal criteria that Labov (1964:166) outlines for quantitative sociolinguistic investigations. These criteria are as follows:

1. The variable should be high in frequency.

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121 2. The variable should have a certain immunity from conscious suppression.
197 3. The variable should be an integral unit of a larger structure.
4. The variable should be easily quantified on a linear scale.

121 My aim is to investigate features that the discipline
197 accepts as characteristic of creole language, and then to
193 contrast frequency counts of these features with those of English. The features selected for this investigation are the preverbal markers and the unmarked third person pronominal forms. These are grammatical categories that will likely appear in any consultant's speech without suppression and with a certain regularity of frequency if they are a part of the speaker's natural grammar, and if the speaker speaks long enough. These variables are an integral part of the grammar of Gullah, and they are easily quantifiable. In addition, Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970) provide descriptions of these categories for that variety of Gullah most distinct from English. The investigation of these specific categories will help to determine the degree to which Gullah remains distinct or is evolving toward English. Bailey (1966:146) distinguishes the Creole system from the English system through the use of preverbs and third person pronouns in the following manner:

1. The tense system of the Creole is limited to the unmarked verb for general purposes, and a particle specifying 'past'; English has a more elaborate tense system.

2. There is no subject-verb concord in the Creole; the

121 English verb must agree in number with its subject.

•197 3 There is no matching of gender and sex in third person
193 pronouns in the Creole; English makes such distinctions.

1.1. Studies of Gullah

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197 Early twentieth-century studies on Gullah were linguis-
114 tically prejudiced. The language was treated as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English. Without regard to the linguistic mechanics of West African languages, A. E. Gonzales attributed the linguistic peculiarities of Gullah to such physical features as full lips and thick tongues. John Bennett, Reed Smith, Guy Johnson and others shared views similar to those of George Krapp of Columbia University who asserted that Gullah was either a close relative of certain British dialects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries acquired by the African servants from English-speaking supervisors, or that it was only an outgrowth of 'baby talk' that the Europeans used while addressing their servants. In either case, Krapp contended that Gullah was nothing more than an 'intrinsically inferior and simplified form of English with cases, number, gender, and tenses reduced to the vanishing point.' He asserted that 'very little of the dialect or perhaps none of it was derived from sources other than English' (Krapp 1924:192-3).

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121 In 1949, Turner settled the controversy of African
•197 influence with the publication of *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*. To date, his work remains the most authoritative source on Gullah. His aim was not to prove that this language had no remnants of British English, but to prove that African elements also existed in and interfered with the linguistic system to such an extent that the language was creolized.[1]

1.2. Problems in Creole Studies

Creolists no longer attempt to argue for ONLY European or ONLY African ancestry for Gullah and other Atlantic creoles. They now concern themselves with the genetic classification of the elements of these languages. But they do not agree on any typological criterion which defines the various mixtures resulting from the merger of genetically unrelated languages. Schuchardt, an early scholar in the area of creole studies, referred to a language resulting from such unions as a 'Mischsprache', a language composed of elements derived from both parent languages but possessing the genetic classification of neither.

121 The Atlantic creoles could be classified as branches of Indo-European language families, or branches of Niger-Congo language families. The French creoles, for example, could be added as a branch of the North Gallo-Romance

121 inflected languages tend to lose their inflections in time before developing new ones, and that languages which borrow in great quantity from the lexicon of another often erode the borrowed inflection without becoming a creole (Givón 1973:21). An example of this erosion process is seen in the change from old to modern English, though what caused the inflections to vanish is unclear. It may be argued that inflections are useful for helping to minimize errors in comprehension. Yet Chinese gets along well without them. Inflections seemingly complicate the grammar and make languages more difficult to learn. Yet all children learn language at about the same rate regardless of structure. Consequently, language effectiveness cannot be measured by morphology alone.

A second feature attributed to creole languages is borrowed vocabulary. It is in this area that all languages tend to borrow most extensively. While they do borrow lexicon, Givón (1973:26-7) enumerates some reasons why languages seldom borrow grammar:

> 1. The most idiosyncratic and unsystematic feature of human languages is the pairing of actual sound sequences to actual meanings in the lexicon. This is, happily, the most arbitrary thing about language and thus also the area where languages diverge the most.
> 2. It is only natural that when different linguistic groups come in contact, the area of most acute linguistic conflict is the lexicon. Thus given no universality in this area of total arbitrariness, this is also the area where languages are likely to borrow most from each other—in order to resolve the conflict.

[197] Some dialectologists classify Gullah as a dialect of English rather than as a creole language because its lexicon

121 is predominantly English. As exemplified in the previous
•197 discussion, lexicon alone does not constitute a dialect of a language. A dialect of English is a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. In the United States dialectal variations present virtually no comprehension barrier to other speakers of American English outside of a particular region. Gullah does lack the structural intercomprehensibility afforded by dialects of American English, and consequently it can not be properly defined within the boundaries of the English language in the same manner as many English dialects.

121 Creole languages are no longer regarded as 'bastard' dialects disowned and held in low repute by linguists. Rather, they are now studied as independent language systems with inherent peculiarities resulting from their own course of development. Creoles studied in this manner allow linguists not only to examine subtleties in phonological, syntactical and morphological elements as they contrast with their superstrate and substrate sources, but also to make judgments about creole systems as they compare and relate to each other.

12 The massive studies undertaken recently on languages throughout the world have revealed striking similarities among pidgin and creole languages which could not have had any prior genetic affiliation. For example, both Atlantic and Pacific creoles have a number of reduplicated

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American Blacks NK4



AS 193 [177]

tense marker adds more support to the hypothesis that the sporadic occurrence of *-ed* in Black dialect is a stage in language acquisition. The occurrence of the lone mesolectal speaker who said /ɔ: god oβə dɛ/ 'I went over there' is not dissimilar from the constructions occurring in the speech of some Black dialect speakers who say *I knowed that already*. Furthermore, many of the same social and geographical factors which nurtured the growth and development of Gullah on the islands also nurtured Black dialect on the mainland. But historically the islands were closed communities with little in migration. The speech patterns were therefore much more stable than those of other inland Black people who had more interaction with English-speaking Europeans. Today, linguists continue to classify the people who speak Gullah as different from those who speak Black dialect. While it is possible to separate Gullah from Black dialect linguistically, it is no longer as easily done socially. With improved transportation to and from the islands, many Gullah speakers interact daily with inland Black speakers through economic and social activities. It is through this interaction that some language changes are occurring in Gullah. It is very likely that certain features associated with Gullah are being reinforced in inland Black dialect speakers through this same process.

AS 193 197 177

193 da ~ *a* being retained for continuative aspect, and dɔz introduced to signal habitual aspect alone. (Rickford 1974: 102)

According to Rickford, invariant *be* is introduced in Gullah and becomes obligatory before VERB + *ing* to express habitual and continuative aspect at once (e.g. *He does be working*). Later, /dɔz/ is deleted and *be* is left to mark habitual aspect as it does in Black dialect. The data for my study seem to support a more mesolectal existence for the /dɔz/ form. The proportionate usage of /dɔz/ in the pre-mesolect is more than three times that of its occurrence in the basilect. When the form appears in the sampling, it appears in constructions very similar to those in Rickford's study, e.g. /ɔɪ dɔz bi tɔɪd/ 'I am tired (habitually)'.

## 2.9. Conclusions

[197] The analysis of preverbs is based on the assumption that there are levels of Creole spoken on the island ranging from present-day basiloct to pre-acrolectal Gullah. The conclusions emerging from an analysis of English verb markers and Creole preverb markers are:

(1) The data on suffixal -*s* clearly show that none of the consultants in this corpus have acquired conventional English rules for concord. The -*s* suffix is absent, and

193 i it on 'He hit it' (2)

Variant forms and their frequency of occurrence offer a clue to the stages of pronominal acquisition in Gullah. Following the model that Bickerton outlined for Guyanese (128) Creole, I divided each stage of development into three groups consisting of forms representing, in each case,

1) masculine, feminine, and neuter subject /
2) masculine and feminine possessive /
3) masculine, feminine, neuter objects,

respectively. The data for third person singular pronouns suggest on the whole that the language is decreolizing but not as rapidly as some have predicted. There is a 193 progression from the system first noted by Turner (1949: •197 227):

im im im / im im / on on on

While each speaker displays variation in the choice of pronouns, a compilation of the MOST dominant forms reveals that the consultants in this study maintain a genderless pronominal system:

i i i / i i / on on on

A similar study of linguistic change in Gullah was undertaken recently quite independent of my own. The study reveals identical findings:

> On the basis of both distribution across categories and frequency of occurrence, the two basic creole forms for Gullah third person pronouns of singular number are here identified as oo for both nominative and possessive cases and oo for objective case. (Nichols 1976:101)

### 3.4. Stages in Language Acquisition

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A diachronic look at Gullah indicates that Turner (1949:227) cites the appearance of the creole pronoun /i/ in nominative position co-occurring with /ɪm/. The co-occurrence of these forms suggests that a rule conflict was in progress and /i/ would eventually replace /ɪm/ as the general marker of gender in nominative position. The pronoun /i/ is said to make the replacement because historically there are fewer occurrences of /ɪm/ as nominative marker in the basilect than there are occurrences of /i/, and because /ɪm/ has been recorded to mark or co-occur with /i/ in nominative position for all genders in Jamaican Creole (im)(Bailey 1966), and Guyanese Creole (am)(Bickerton 1975). The evidence indicates that unlike Bickerton's model for Guyanese Creole, the diachronic model for Gullah is more conservative in Stage I:

*Stage I.* i i i / i i / am am am
(Model for Guayanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

Stage I for Gullah:

ɪm ɪm ɪm / ɪm ɪm / am am am

The difference in the stage I pattern for Gullah and Guyanese Creole may be accounted for by different origins, different developmental stages, or different source languages. Both models are reminiscent of certain West African languages such as Yoruba, for example, which uses one form /ɔ; ɔ̃;/ for 'he', 'she', and 'it' in subject

193 position (Turner 1949:228). It is characteristic of
•197 Atlantic creole languages to display a reduced distinction of third person singular pronouns.

Contact between language systems caused a change in the Stage I pattern, and Turner's data indicates that discrimination of gender occurred first in the neuter subject before taking place in the human subjects.

Stage II: im im i / im im / om om om

One theory that can be proposed is that neuter /i/ was linearly transferred intra-categorically to the masculine and feminine forms before making other changes in the objective categories. Stage III is essentially the same undifferentiated gender as Stage I:

Stage III: i i i / im im / om om om

I attribute this change to partial selection, where Gullah speakers approximated the contact language's pre-aspirated /(h)i/ and incorporated it intra-categorically into their genderless mold, to make minimal adjustments to accommodate the new form.

i ɛ̃ bene kom bɛk til die klɪn (3)
'She didn't come back until morning.'

Only in Stage IV does Gullah reveal a system identifiable with Bickerton's Stage I:

Stage IV: i i i / i i / om om om (Gullah)

As exemplified by the survey, the consultants involved in this study use the Stage IV system.

[194) /i/ marking feminine subject is being replaced by

193 some Gullah speakers who now add the palato-alveolar frica-
•197 tive /ʃi/ while /i/ as masculine and neuter marker is
[194] still used.

Stage V: i ʃi i / im im / om om om

000 At this stage in Guyanese Creole, Bickerton says that gender differentiation is interrupted as the change process recognizes the salience of /am/ in the object. He considers it salient because it is the only basilectal form in the system which is not perceived to be present in the acrolect. His claim seems inconsistent with the data for creoles. He argues that the principle of least effort ASSURES that replacement of a form will PRECEDE rather than ACCOMPANY a form differentiating gender; and that a form already in the system will constitute the replacement. He concludes that gender differentiation takes place next in the neuter subject:

*Stage IV:* i shi it / i i / i shi i
(Model for Guyanese Creole, Bickerton 1973)

This claim seems inconsistent with the data for some creole
193 languages. It does not parallel the developmental process for pronouns in Gullah because *it* as object pronoun seldom, if ever, occurs in the speech of the consultants in this study.

Stage VI: i ʃi i / im im / om ʃi om

19 Gender is distinguished in the object by the transference of the existing form /ʃi/ from the nominative to the object slot. Then, /om/ is replaced by /ʃi/, A FORM

000 easy relexification.

193 •197 In the last stages of decreolization, if one can assume that total decreolization will occur, a point on the continuum is reached where non-standard use of pronouns is more perceivable, and final replacement occurs:

**Stage IX:** i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm ʃi ɪt

**Stage X:** i ʃi ɪt / ɪm ʃi / ɪm hɔɪ ɪt

Stage IX is a pre-acrolectal or very advanced stage for Gullah. Few speakers of Gullah use standard English *her*. The final stage involving replacement of possessive items is omitted by Bickerton. I include this stage for Gullah because of its widespread occurrence. The masculine and feminine possessive are often marked in Gullah by the definite article *the* + *own* which may account for the infrequent use of pronouns to mark the possessive.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i kat de uon hied | 'He cut his own head' | (2) |
| ʃi kɔk de uon fud | 'She cooks her own food.' | (4) |

This change is difficult to account for in the evolution of pronouns in Gullah. One would not expect it to occur as a pre-acrolectal stage because *the* is not present in the superstrate language indicating possession in any way, even allowing for phonetic alternations. I believe that this change was occurring with other basilectal changes before the introduction of *she* marking possessive when we get forms like:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ʃi du ʃi uon hɛ | 'She does her own hair.' | (9) |
| i kan ʃok im uon baʔt | 'He can suck his bottle.' | (1) |

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This theory of possessive placement would then be in accord with Bickerton's concept that the completion of the possessive category is the final stage, with *her* occurring by transference to possessive position and finally *his* being the last form introduced to replace /ɪm/.

Stage XI: hi ʃi ɪt / iz ɔz / ɔm ɔr ɪt

Stage XII: hi ʃi ɪt / hiz hɔz / him hɔz ɪt

It is difficult to say exactly where the last four stages (IX, X, XI and XII) occur in relation to each other. The data have too few occurrences of *his* or *her* to really be able to point to a change sequence. However, it is apparent that pronominal forms show up very early in Guyanese Creole which are just beginning to appear in Gullah. Yet the Guyanese distribution seems less systematic, which is not to say that speakers are necessarily systematic in acquiring another language; but it appears that in the system that Bickerton proposes, the speakers zig-zag across categories in their acquisition of pronominal forms. The consultants in the pronominal study for Gullah seem to show SOME system. Correlation of the data shows that they acquire a form, and use this one form to saturate each case before selecting another form. Other forms are acquired simultaneously but not distributed until the process is well underway with the first selection. The stages are theoretical but do not necessarily represent an idealized model for linguistic change in Gullah. These stages can be shown on a grid developed from raw data.

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| CONSULTANTS | PRONOUNS | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3 ϕ O | 3 ♀ O | 3 ♂ O | 3 ϕ N | 3 ♂ P | 3 ♂ N | 3 ♀ P | 3 ♀ N |
| 2 | 1 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | 2 | 2 | (1) 2 3 | 2 | (2) 3 |
| 8 | (1) 2 3 | 1 | (1) 2 | 2 | - | (2) 3 | - | (2) 3 |
| 5 | 1 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | 1 | (2) 3 4 | 1 2 3 | 2 | - |
| 23 | 1 | (1) 2 3 | (1) 4 | 2 3 | (1) 2 | (1) 2 | 2 3 | (2) 4 |
| 3 | 1 | (1) 3 | 1 | 2 | - | (2) 3 | - | (2) 3 4 |
| 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 |
| 6 | 1 | (1) 4 | (1) 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - | (2) 3 |
| 24 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 (2) 3 | 2 | - | (2) 3 |
| 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 2 | 1 2 | 1 (2) 3 | - | (2) 4 |
| KEY | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=it | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=ʃi<br>4=hoɪ | 1=am<br>2=i<br>3=ɪm<br>4=hɪm | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=it | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=ɪz<br>4=hɪz | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=hi | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=ʃi<br>4=hoɪ | 1=ɪm<br>2=i<br>3=hi<br>4=ʃi |

TABLE 3.4.
IMPLICATIONAL SCALE FOR THIRD PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUNS IN GULLAH

♂ = Masculine
♀ = Feminine
ϕ = Neuter
N = Nominative
O = Objective
P = Possessive

Circled numbers indicate the form used most frequently..

193 Bickerton's data and charts differ substantially from mine because his are based on groups of speakers, whereas I limited myself to showing pronoun distribution for nine

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193 Unlike the feminine, there are high numbers in the cells for the column marked THIRD PERSON MASCULINE POSSESSIVE. One speaker shows usage of /i/, /iz/ and /hiz/, though most speakers have marked this category with /i/. It is significant that speakers 8 and 3 leave both masculine and feminine possessive case unmarked. It is significant because it adds more credibility to possessive cases being unmarked by pronouns in the basilect.

[197] The pronominal system shows the least amount of change in the masculine, feminine and neuter objective case. All the consultants continue to use /əm/ regardless of gender on sex-reference. It is my belief that the objective slot is the only one still marked for case.

193 197 The greatest degree of change has occurred in the nominative case. Five of the nine consultants have acquired a rule for aspirating /i/ to produce English *he*, but the rule is not stable. Of the 165 times that the masculine subject appears in the data, 78% were marked with /i/ and only 19% were marked with aspiration (/hi/). The fluctuation and variability between /i/ and /hi/ where there has been no variation historically is indicative of linguistic change within a creole configuration. Turner 193 records /him/ 'him' as the only pronominal form appearing 194 with aspiration in Gullah. Five of the consultants in 197 this study are moving toward aspiration of other forms, particularly /hi/. The change, however, is only a phonological manifestation of an underlying Creole grammar

193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.
197

The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance
(177) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
(177) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

194 'mother'. Dillard (1972) claims that there is a stylistic alternation among Black speakers in the use of [v] and [d], with [v] as the more elegant usage. Though I have not observed the elegant and inelegant alternation, I have noticed that most words with intervocalic voiced *th* are pronounced [d] in the South, while many northern Black dialect speakers pronounce intervocalic voiced *th* as [v]. In his 1949 study, Turner recorded intervocallic voiced *th* as [v] in Gullah. The speech is known to differ on each island, which may account for the /d/ ~ /v/ variation.

[197]

/k/ [k] is a voiceless velar stop which is palatalized before high front vowels in Gullah. This process sometimes results in words such as *cake* and *kick* becoming homophones for some speakers. Consultants 2, 3 and 23 often substitute the voiceless affricate /tʃ/ for /k/ before front vowels and words beginning with *c* as in [tʃies] 'case' and [tʃies] 'chase', words which are homophones in Krio and for some Gullah speakers. Speakers 3 and 24 often interchange the /k/ and /tʃ/ sounds in the words [tʃɛkɪn] 'catching' and [klɔtʃ] 'church'. Like /p/ and /t/, a slightly glottalized /k/ appears in some words, e.g. [kʔɛbɪdʒ] 'cabbage'.

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NOTES

121 1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to
197 fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among
198 people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was ample linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

121 2. No consensus has been reached on what features
193 the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

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538 1. *snake* [sinick] $\emptyset \rightarrow V / C __ C$
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] $r \rightarrow \emptyset / C __$
[pogɛm] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

[197]

22. /nə/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /nɔ/ and /də/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm də lɔɪ/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nə lɔɪ/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /unə/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

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## FOREWORD

121 Gullah, that quaint linguistic mongrel of the black folk
•197 of the Carolina-Georgia coast and sea-islands, an English dialect molded by the lips and genius of African slaves, was lifted into the rank of literary languages by Ambrose E. Gonzales by his masterpiece, "The Black Border." Some of the myths and lore of these Negroes had been set down before, but it was left to Gonzales to shape these tales and philosophy into artistic form and contribute them as a positive endowment to our literature. "The Black Border," with its Gullah Vocabulary, has placed this treasure within the easy enjoyment of all readers of English.

128 It was my pleasure and privilege to assist in the preparation of this Vocabulary and in the unification of Gullah words, which, up to that time, existed almost entirely as spoken and unordered vocables. It is now possible for any one, with these Gullah Stories and Vocabulary, to write any English word in a true Gullah form.

121 Dr. Reed Smith has added to these labors the true contribution of the scientist. He has worked out the laws and analogies that unconsciously wrought this quaintly beautiful transformation of English through the mentality and spirit of the slaves in Southern homes. He has placed Gullah upon the plane with our great dialects,—Irish, Scottish, and some of the English idioms.

An examination and reading of Gullah will convince any sincere mind that, in allurement, in sheer beauty of word and phrase, and in a certain winsomeness of its own, it is a permanent enrichment of our language and literature.

STANHOPE SAMS.

Asst. Editor *The State*.

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# GULLAH

## Historical Background

101 Even to those familiar with the American Negro through the medium of either life or literature, the term Gullah is a little-known word for a less-known people. It is applied to a special group-type of Negroes, limited historically and geographically to the sea-islands and the narrow tidewater strip bordering the coast counties of South Carolina and Georgia and a small section of north-east Florida. The
.197 language spoken by these Negroes constitutes a patois unique among the dialects of the United States, and differs from the more familiar upland Negro dialects as written by Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page, as markedly as those dialects differ from the French Creole of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta.

174 Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came
101 from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River.[1] A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year 1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly

[1]This was the opinion of Mr. Ambrose E. Gonzales, a high authority on Gullah and author of the Black Border Series of Gullah stories. This was also the view of the Rev. John G. Williams. In the Preface to his *De Old Plantation*, Allendale, 1896, he wrote: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and a part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger'. In Appleton's 'New American Cyclopaedia' the Guinea negroes are described as 'black and having thick lips and flat noses', and the Angola, or 'Gulla' negroes as having 'few of the negro peculiarities of form and feature. They are brown in color'. These differences between negroes in the country have been often noticed and remarked upon frequently, the explanation of which differences is that the 'thick lips' and 'flat noses' point to Ashantee and Dahomey as the places from which their ancestors were brought and the 'brown color' and features more like the European in some negroes, very different from the Guineas, point to Angola or 'Gulla' as the country from which their ancestors came. So deeply fixed are the race and even tribal characteristics. There is history in the word 'Gullah', as it is improperly spelt."

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174 [10] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [10] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

174 567 Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing [197] their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1]Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present [127] paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the *sources* of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its *name* came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Cagmal or Comi Negroes called Gwalla.

[2]Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

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175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- [248] tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[1]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who [197] grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

'If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

175 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special 567 quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[4]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[4] in the broom-sedge

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[197] [4]Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[567] [4]How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

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.197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[10] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[11] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[12] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[13]

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533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[14] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[10]This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[11]In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[12]The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[13]Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[14]See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 138.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[11]Boston, 1879, Chapter IX.

[12]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[13]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the
(197) negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk
of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely
a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and
African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
171 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech
(171) recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on
(178) the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[9]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the
(567) source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my tarsk for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C.[113] This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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"*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, Review of *The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: ''E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe; it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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## THE DIALECT

•197 What the Gullahs seem to have done was to take a sizeable part of the English vocabulary as spoken on the coast by the white inhabitants from about 1700 on, wrap their tongues around it, and reproduce it changed in tonality, pronunciation, cadence, and grammar to suit their native phonetic tendencies, and their existing needs of expression and communication. The result has been called by one writer "the worst English in the world". It would certainly seem to have a fair claim to that distinction. To understand it requires a trained ear, and at first blush it is equally unintelligible to white people and colored people alike.

[194] [193] "The ordinary reader," says Mr. Bennett, "may not always catch the meaning; the shapes of the words are strange; they are the residuum of language literally worn away by use; the phonology is archaic; the engaged grammar a mystery; to the wit and to the acute phonetic sense of the reader much must inevitably be left."[11]

It is easy to understand the bewilderment of a northern visitor to the South just after the war who fell in with a crowd of Negro refugees on the wharves in Charleston. "I tried to converse with others," he writes, "who spoke a wild jargon peculiar to the plantations, of which I understood hardly one word in ten."[12] White housekeepers in Georgetown, Charleston, and Beaufort have been heard at the present day to lament the fact that they could not understand their own cooks, which is but one way of confessing that they are not native, but have moved in from the up-country.

One of the funniest things I ever saw was a fashionable colored nurse-maid from the up-country listening for the first time to a Gullah cook and a Gullah fisherman on Pawley's Island arguing over the price of a string of fish. As the flood of Gullah vocables burst around her ears the up-country negro's expression was a study in mingled amazement and incredulity: she couldn't believe her own ears!

[11] I, 377.

[12] J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866, p. 538.

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695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account" of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

695 "That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

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The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

•197 "You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; *too* long buffo' me shum, me yerre um."[]

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh."[]

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah."[]

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?'"

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

[] Bennett I, 340, 341.

[] "I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); too long before I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

[] "I heard them; they (were) oblige to hear us; ears hear yonder same as hear here."

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191 on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[a]

197 212 To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[b] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

197 Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[c] Furthermore, when it was 19 first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[a] Bennett I, 340.

[b] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah: some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean, man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainter* (South Carolina *ainty*), *peye* (eye), *tilla*, (sister), and *ooouh* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[c] "Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

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192 538 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

*Words*

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.[a] The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam, oona, swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du, goober, pinder, cooter, okra, geechy, cymbi, bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer, penepne, da, da-da. Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.[b] Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.[c] Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye. Stepney* is

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[a]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.

[b]Bennett, I, 338.

[c]George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 183.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *reedoo, hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[197] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

[d]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] "Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted in conclusion Mr. Gonzales' record of a colored husband's description of the way the woman manages the man. It is a fable in lighter vein. The devil acts as interlocutor.

"One time, Debble meet 'Ooman duh paat'. Debble is uh berry mannussuble man wid 'Ooman, so, w'en 'e shum 'e t'row 'e tail obuh 'e na'm, same lukkuh 'e bin cloak, en' mek'um uh berry stylish bow. De 'Ooman toss 'e head, 'e grin, 'e ketch 'e frock by de bottom wid alltwo 'e han', 'e hice'um up to 'e knee, en' 'e drap'um uh low cutchy, 'cause him en' Debble git 'long berry well, *berry* well!

"Attuh de time uh day done pass, de Debble ax de 'Ooman how 'e mek'out 'long de man; w'edduh 'e done l'aa'n how fuh manage de man, en' fetch'um to 'e han'. De 'Ooman laugh. 'Budduh,' 'e say. 'Hukkuh you kin ax me dat? Enty you l'aa'n me how fuh 'seitful? Enty you show me how fuh do 'um? Enty Uh folluh yo' exwice? Uh got de man gwine! 'E dunno w'ich way 'e duh gwine—but 'e gwine my way, enty?"

" 'Tell me how you do'um,' de Debble say.

" 'Uh got good ecknowledge how fuh fool de man. Uh got 'tring tie 'pun de man, en' w'en we git to de fawk uh de road, weh one de road lean one side, en' t'odduh road lean t'odduh side—w'en Uh git to da' place, ef Uh gwine one road, Uh pull de 'tring fuh lead de man een de t'odduh road. W'ichebbuh road Uh want, Uh pull de man een de road wuh Uh *yent* want, 'cause de stubbunt creetuh so çuntrady en' haa'dhead, ef him see me foot lean fuh one road, him foot fuh lean to de t'odduh one, 'cause him t'ink man fuh hab 'e own way. Him eegnunt to dat! So dat how Uh gitt-um fuh trabble my road, en' de man nebbuh know weh 'e duh gwine, but 'e ben' 'e neck en' pull de load, jiz' ez sattify ez ox wuh done bruk!' "[11]

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[11] *The Captain*, pp. 380, 381.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a conjurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

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# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197•

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers (101) 101 175 567

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113)

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1822, in which reference is made to "Gullah Jack" and his company of "Gullah or Angola Negroes." This indicates that, rightly or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola. 101 174

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as the Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia.

Mr. John Bennett, who made the first serious study of the history and characteristics of Gullah, held this view. He says:[4] 197• 101

> The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the "quaquas, because they gabbled like geese."

Which of these theories is the more plausible is difficult to say. The derivation of the word Gullah is one thing and its usage another. Regardless of its true derivation, it came to be applied, not exclusively to one type of Negro, but to the Negroes of the sea-island and coastal region in general. Any ethnological significance that the word may have had at first was soon lost, and it seems likely that the entry of the Charleston City Council of 1822 represented the prevailing idea as to the derivation of the word. If the Golas were really important, would not the difference between them and the Angolas have become common knowledge after more than a hundred years 101

[4] "Gullah: A Negro Patois." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908. There is room for difference of opinion as to whether the Gullah speech is harsh or quacking. It did not strike me that way at all. (113)

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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

•197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[8]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (567) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field- (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[8] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
567 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified
• 197 tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was
left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro
heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than
the English dialect which the white servants and laborers
around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes
remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they
were now more isolated than before, because many of the
white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505] water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484] towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197 in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178 the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

175 567 191 •197 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
797 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
152 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural"
786 means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
797 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices. The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
175 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
177 anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
178 Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state. In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
• [198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to tradi-
175 tions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
797 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



NOTES

121 1. A PIDGIN is a marginal language which arises to
197 fulfill certain restricted communicational needs among
198 people who have no common language. It is sharply reduced in structure and vocabulary as contrasted with the languages from which it is derived (Todd 1974a:1 and Hall 1966). Theoretically, the lingo which developed as a result of the heterogeneous grouping of West African languages and English was a pidgin language: a language which was the mother tongue of neither African nor European, reduced in structure and vocabulary and adequate only for minimal discourse between speakers. When this language became the mother tongue of children born into this language environment, its lexicon and grammatical machinery expanded until it was ample linguistically for effective cultural transmission, productivity and communication. Consequently, the pidgin became a CREOLE. In the case of Gullah, elements derived from different African languages caused different creole varieties and as a result, Gullah still varies linguistically from island to island.

121 2. No consensus has been reached on what features
193 the terms BASILECT, MESOLECT, and ACROLECT describe. On a gradum ranging from 1 to 10 (with basilect being represented by 1 and acrolect represented by 10), Stewart 1965

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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000 excitement that may lead to such exaltation as few white people ever see. It is an unforgettable experience, rare in these days of practical religion when all miracles are scientifically explained.

533 I notice that men are particularly partial to the work songs, of which the shanties [16] of the black stevedores are the most amusing. When a plantation is near a navigable river or salt water, songs like "Stevedore's in trouble, Carry 'im to the Aly-mo," and "Sandyanna" may possibly be heard. Both carry in their titles the date of their inception, and obviously hark back to the period of the Mexican War. Others bring in Australia and Rio along with "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla Gal—Go 'round the Horn" and suggest the period of the windjammer.

At The Mills on the west side of St. Simon's—in the eighteen-eighties—the Inland Waterway was filled with sailing vessels from all parts of the world.[17] These were loaded with lumber that had been floated down the Altamaha; but, as Cap'n Joe, the crew leader, says, so little lumber moves these days that the songs that helped the stevedores to handle the great "sticks" are well-nigh forgotten. A pity to let one of them be lost.

[184] Then there are the "rags," the "fiddle" or "sinful" songs. These may be plentiful in the interior; but on the coast, where the Negroes are apparently more religious, they have been the most difficult to locate.

533 Where there are wide fields, musical half-yodeled calls often bring "'aponies" from laborers a mile away. When a field needs to be burned over, a sail is flapping idly, or rice is to be fanned, you may hear a Negro "calling the wind": "Co' win'! Co' win'! Co'! Co'!" A prolonged whistle follows:

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—in the African manner of calling the rain.[18]

533 534 If a plantation is sufficiently remote, and the owner is ultra-modern in his taste, such a jazz band may be organized as has not been heard in many a year. It is only necessary to call for the services of those who can still "rap the bones" (real bones, of a thickness and length suitable for manipulation between the middle fingers,

[16] Or chanteys—as some prefer to call them.
[17] Julia Armstrong tells me they were lined up "like sardines in a box."
[18] A gramophone record of a Togoland rain invocation is astonishingly similar.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

CHAPTER SIX

## Work Songs

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and—during the heat of the day—calling to each other across wide fields. The call was peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

533 198 (461) 533 198 171

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood—southern New Jersey—began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that, in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now." [1] However, there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large numbers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me My Money Down!"

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[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 prepared to create and perform his entire tale within a reasonably short period of time.[3] He does not and cannot perform effectively in isolation. He is influenced immediately by the occasion of the tale, and the atmosphere in which and the audience for whom he is performing. His tale is designed not to be read but to be performed and heard. In written transcriptions of oral literature the words are captured on the page, while the real flavor of the tales and the real artistry of the teller—the actual narration, the actual "telling of the tale" by a gifted and skillful performer—are lost.

Because the many communicative techniques used in storytelling, both verbal and nonverbal, are outside the realm of written literature, until fairly recently they were not felt to be important in written interpretations of Sea Island or other oral traditions. Collections by Par-
538 sons and others are indeed excellent in the depiction of characteristic
•201 features of plot, but they are devoid of the many kinesic communicative techniques that a teller uses to engage his listeners' attention and actually mesmerize them with gestures—hand movements, a turning of the head, a long pause, a shifting of the eyes, a long knowing stare. Yet kinesics are a part of the oral performance, and much that is communicated through gesture has not been accounted for in written transcriptions of Sea Island oral literature. Even obvious verbal techniques like mimicry, repetition, ideophones (words which convey images and meaning through their sound), and rhetorical questions often fail to be taken into consideration, an omission that subtracts substantially from the beauty of the tales even as it obscures cultural methods of communication and expression.[4]

121 While it is too much to expect one discipline to teach us to be linguists, ethnologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, the common element among these and other disciplines is the commitment to interpreting and understanding the human interaction in language and culture. The need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior is becoming increasingly more apparent. David DeCamp, for example, drew attention to this need for exchange of information and ideas between linguists and scholars in related fields as a result of his efforts to scale sequential language data to form what he calls a linguistic continuum. Though he was the first to apply the technique to linguistic data, DeCamp found that as a general procedure it has been known to psychologists and sociologists as the Guttman Scalogram Analysis for over twenty years.[5]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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121 Dell Hymes also asserts that "a certain kind of information slips away" because of the lack of interdisciplinary approaches. To take an example, linguists, folklorists, and anthropologists rely on language samplings primarily for content, which provides an excellent means of delineating and analyzing elements of various cultures. Though folklorists and anthropologists may extract enough linguistic information to specify verbal genres—tales, prayers, myths, orations—they seldom specify features that one must know if one is actually to recognize instances of these genres in performance. On the other hand, linguists abstract grammar, for example, from speech data and tell us which utterances in sequences are grammatical and which are ungrammatical but they tell us little, if anything, about the various styles, modes, or contexts in which a given utterance may occur. Thus, while anthropologists acquire knowledge of social behavior and linguists acquire knowledge of language behavior, valuable information about cultures and language escapes when neither linguists nor anthropologists provide us with what Hymes calls the actual function of language within a society. We cannot assume, he goes on to say, that language has a homogenous function in every community, because ethnographic records suggest, for example, that "talk for talk's sake" is far from universal. Among the Gbaya of Central Africa, no one is regarded as skilled in narration; among the Wishram Chinook of the Columbia River, one does not talk when one has nothing that needs to be said; among the Paliyans of South India, by the age of forty men are reported as seldom speaking at all, and a talkative person is regarded with suspicion.[6]

121 In the area of nonverbal communication, Ray Birdwhistell discovered that body gestures in context had meaning "astonishingly like
• 201 words in language." In the English, American, and German kinesic systems that he studied, he discovered that "there are body behaviors which function like significant sounds, that combine into simple or relatively complex units like words, which are combined into much longer stretches of structured behavior like sentences or even paragraphs." Gestures are culturally linked, and no one body position or motion can be said to be universal; no facial expression or body stance will convey the same meaning in every society.[7] Alfred Hayes summarizes Birdwhistell's basic assumptions underlying the systematic study of bodily movement and motions as follows:

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without meaning in the context in which it appears.
2. Like other aspects of human behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned and thus, subject to systematic analysis.
3. While recognizing the possible limitations imposed by particular biological substrata, until otherwise demonstrated, the systematic body motion of the members of a community is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs.
4. Visible body activity like audible acoustic activity systematically influences the behavior of other members of any particular group.
5. Until otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an investigable communicational function.
6. The meanings derived therefrom are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is investigated.
7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesic system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part.[8]

Some familiarity with body movements is important to the discussion of Sea Island literature because the performances of the individual are related to the function of the community of which he is a member, and have meaning in that context. Body expressions otherwise unique to certain African ancestral patterns may remain in the Sea Island communities, just as there are parallels in the language itself and in styles of dance and worship.

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Included in this discussion are examples of individual performing styles which are variations on a larger system of community-expected and -accepted behavior patterns during a storytelling event. According to Richard Dorson, there is a "group repertoire." There are indeed patterns of movements characteristic of *inland* black storytellers which are directly related to the culture as a whole. It was once assumed that most people in a subculture told the same tales in the same way. There is a very definite repertoire of gestures common to southern black sto-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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121 rytellers; every storyteller has command of these particular gestures
•201 and every southern black storyteller has these features in common with
538 other members of the group. On closer observation of individual performers, however, we see that there is much variation and individuality of style. Once the group repertoire has been established, we can more clearly see the distinctions among performers.[9]

538 Beyond the area of kinesics, other nonverbal communicative interactions include such intrinsic components as the setting and atmosphere for storytelling and the degree to which audience participation influences and is actually a part of a Sea Island tale. Lacking these essential elements, most written versions of Sea Island, Caribbean, and some West African literatures appear as short, loosely strung-together episodic tales. The tales alone are barren and incomplete. They do not show the frequent words and phrases interjected by the listeners, nor do they indicate the subtle manner in which the speaker calls on them actually to help him along in telling his tale. Phillip Noss elaborates on this point: "When one reads tales that are meant to be presented orally, usually in a language other than the original, with little awareness of the cultural setting or the aesthetic principles and assumptions underlying the tale, it is not surprising if he concludes that the tales are merely action-packed episodes involving stock characters whose only dimension may be comic."[10]

The Western reader has been conditioned to judge language and literature through preconceived notions of the content of what an author writes, the organization and degree of development, and the style of the writing. The words are not heard, but a good writer's fervent hope is that the impact of the words will be felt, and consequently much of the writer's effort must be devoted to this task. In oral literature the performance, inclusive of audience participation, is as important as and in most cases more important than the actual content of the tale. For not only are the words heard, visualized, and felt, the whole narrative is actually experienced as one experiences a play. The characters that the performer creates are only as vivid and lifelike as the teller is able to make them. And how vivid they are made is often dependent on how enthusiastic the audience is. An excellent performer, when he
538 slaps his hands together and says "Bam! That one stuck!" can make
201 the audience experience the impact of the blow that Ber Rabbit delivers to the tar baby. As the speaker gradually raises his hand higher and higher in the air to indicate the height to which the buzzard takes the

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the
(201) Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

## The Setting

538 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by
179 the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social
517 event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place
(170) for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

[171] Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this person, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone 538 and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting 209 next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West [171] African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact, two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid storytellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell • [201] tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a 209 visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island communities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back
538 and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page
• [201] these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale.

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was con-
[192] temporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community.

*Mr. James Oree* is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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> [Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy*, you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

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538 The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

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Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 539 style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

159 538 During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point [201] with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

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159 present wife. He admits to directing appreciating glances at a fine-looking woman even today, but says that a look is the extent of his appreciation.

Mr. Mickell attended elementary school on Johns Island, but because he had to work to help support his family, he was forced to quit school during the elementary grades. Yet he has done well for himself. He was in the navy and has worked on various jobs from handyman to longshoreman. He now lives a rather tranquil but satisfying life, with a degree of comfort slightly more sumptuous than that of many islanders.

Mr. Mickell is a gifted storyteller. Many of the tales I heard him
159 tell have direct parallels with some told in Nigeria (see "Ber Rabbit
538 and the Lord"). His speaking style is as characteristic of Sea Island speech as the other informants'. He speaks very rapidly with a very high pitch and tone. In fact, I sometimes found it extremely difficult to understand him when he became engrossed in a narrative. The problem with interpretation was not with his vocabulary, though he knew many old words with African origins; the problem was primarily a phonological one. The rhythm, tempo, and stress with which he pronounced the English words is really one of the most outstanding characteristics of contemporary Gullah speech. Though I had difficulty adjusting to his delivery, the audience composed of speakers born and raised on the Sea Islands had no problem at all, as would be expected.

I found Mr. Mickell's most distinguishing feature to be his use of gestures and repetition. A rapid rate of speaking, sustained high pitch, and strong rhythm are characteristic of the community. Mr. Mickell, however, spoke more quickly than others. The rapid speaking style was enough in itself to create excitement, but the method by which Mr. Mickell used repetition, whether in words or phrases or in parallel structure, helped to intensify the excitement in his rapid series of action-packed episodes. In one tale, for example, he described how a king snake is able to kill other snakes. He conveyed the striking manner in which the king snake coils itself around its victim through a series of words repeated rapidly in succession, "Wrap up, wrap up,
159 wrap up." To illustrate this action, he made his hands into fists and rolled them rapidly over and over in front of him, completing the coil-
• 201 ing gesture with a "pssssup" to indicate that the victim is completely
538 immobile within the coils. To show how the king snake stretches its victim and shatters its spinal cord in one quick motion, Mr. Mickell

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159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
•20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from
524 him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest
123 link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still
342 standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
(365) of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no
(514) electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene
123 lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

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2. will usually respond overtly to a good storyteller by injecting words of praise or understanding such as "Yeah," "That's right," or "I know what you mean" during the entire course of a tale;
3. will usually expect the performer to end with a dynamic closing and express their appreciation of his tale by saying, "That's all right" or "You sure enough know how for tell good tale";
4. will usually harmonize the rate, rhythm, pitch, and loudness of their responses to accord with those of the performer;
5. will usually communicate with people nearby either nonverbally, through head nods, handshakes, approving or disapproving glances, or other communicative techniques, or verbally, through words and phrases like "You hear what he de say," "Yeah, man!" and others.

•[201]

The storyteller is only one of the ingredients necessary for seeing and hearing a good tale. The tradition dictates that the storyteller cannot perform alone. Not only must he be in a place conducive to telling a good tale, but he must have an interested and responsive audience in order to do his best performing. When all these ingredients are mixed in proportion, the performances of both the teller and the listeners are commensurate with traditional Sea Island social practices. The dependence of one on the other remains as apparent in everyday interactions on the Sea Islands as it does in the African cultures of the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibebio, and others from which the Sea Islanders are descended and from whose folktales their stories are said to have been derived.

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SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a]

791 794 783 [533] Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 202 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 [782] The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[57b] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[56b]

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533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
•202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
796 all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens
[533] an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
30 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning
789 by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,*] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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829 Did Uncle Robert remember any particular words that the African people had used?

"Ole man Pompey he say, 'skinskon' ebrytime he git mad. Wen he wuz bery mad he alluz say dat. But nobody know wut he mean. He call a watuhmelon a 'balonga.'

"I membuh duh African mens use tuh all duh time make lill clay images. Sometime dey lak mens an sometime lak animal. Once dey make a big un. Dey put a speah in he han an walk roun im an say he wuz duh chief. But dat clay got too much ribbuh mud in um an he ain las long. Sometime dey try tuh make duh image out uh wood, but seem lak duh tool ain right, so mos times dey's ub clay." 41g, 70c, e

We questioned the old man about any other recollections he might have concerning African people and he added, "Doze Africans alluz call one anudduh 'countryman.' Dey know ef dey come frum duh same tribe by duh mahk dey hab.[14] Some hab a long mahk an some hab a roun un. Udduhs weah eahring in duh eah. Some weahs it in duh lef eah an doze frum anudduh tribe weahs it in duh right eah.

829 764 "Deah's two Africans buried on duh ilun right now. Lonnie Green an his brudduh, dey buried right neah duh Indian mouns. Jack Pinckney yuh, he bury um."

At this point Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert engaged in an animated discussion of the types of funerals which had been held in those early days.

• [202] Uncle Jack said, "Wen a pusson die, we beat duh drum tuh let ebrybody know bout duh det.[26] Den dey come tuh duh wake an sit up wid duh body."

Uncle Robert added, "Wen one uh doze Africans die, it wuz bery sad. Wen a man's countryman die, he sit right wid um all night. Den in duh mawnin he go out an pray tuh duh sun. Yuh know, missus, doze Africans ain got no Christianity. Dey ain hab no regluh religion. Dey jis pray tuh duh sun an moon an sometime tuh a big stah. Attuh dey

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told

115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any

262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[23] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [12a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[24]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke. [761] Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

(789) This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away." [8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too," [69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[12a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah." [26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on (534) trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [20, 21]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom.
534 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic,
202 dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [292] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237 skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned
534 and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as
• [202] we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

[195] [21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

[191] [22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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252 256 [402] the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 461 539 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 533 [202] [199] Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spalding's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the afternoons and evenings. 206 Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat 504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 (438) (574) Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 796 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or three miles to the major church at the center of the island. (493) 491 A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
[173] be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[793] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
285 have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the patterns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
226 though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
[82] ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[823] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some continue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
[538] banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[461] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[867] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
[207] tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television because the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants, ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an audience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
[551] days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
[192] older generations are not being passed on to the children because the islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 178 867 869 829

I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn, it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 829 [791] 178 829 207

The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is very different now.

There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

178 829 571 594

'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
•207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

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(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

[171] Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this person, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone 538 and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting • 209 next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West [171] African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact, two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid storytellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell [201] tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a 209 visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island communities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expectations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions, perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12] 771

For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time, but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future. 567 771 175 [212]

The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization, there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails," but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But 175 701 177

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81. (779) [795]

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 175 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. [701]

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# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and la-
• 212 borers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression,
114 that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived
[101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

(P. Xi-A)

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

159 641 66 212 185

On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em—dum-de-dum-dum-dum—right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
(212) students was on that first night.

The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
871 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
872 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything
185 but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



464 no use of standard English and which entail little inter-
562 action with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by
197 black men in the region are blue collar and require few
463 language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
484 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off
464 the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older genera-
• [212] tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



on their part just as much interested in and amused by up-country talkers, white or black. Plantation Negroes delight, though not appearing to do so, to watch a visiting stranger: "Dey use dem mout' so funny!"[9]

To come to the dialect itself, and to single out some of its most interesting features,[10] be it always kept in mind that Gullah is uniformly a spoken not a written speech. It lacks entirely any of the influences associated with writing or printing. It is untouched by the scratch of a pen save as it was recorded in transit, so to speak, by Mrs. Christensen, Colonel Jones, Mr. Gonzales, and others.

Both on this account and also because it has had to muddle along without the standardizing effects of education, in it all the leveling and simplifying processes possible to language have had free sway.[11] Furthermore, when it was first formulated as a medium of communication between master and slave, it was almost certainly a highly simpli-

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[9] Bennett I, 340.

[10] In this connection two important preliminary comments should be made.

(1) It is not meant that these features are unique in Gullah; some are, but many are not. Many of the grammatical usages, pronunciations, popular etymologies, proverbs, etc., are found in similar dialects elsewhere, and occasionally in general Negro usage or even in white usage in the South. For example F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, E. P. Dutton, N. Y., 1903, gives the Sierra Leone Negro dialect wherein may be found many interesting parallels with Gullah. Compare also the remarks of Professor Krapp below, Note 46. Parsons, also, (Preface XVII) gives several Bahaman parallels such as *day-clean*, *man* as a form of address, *do* as a supplicatory exclamation, and in Note 5 mentions further Sierra Leone parallels, *um* (them), *too* (very), *ainter* (South Carolina *entg*), *nyar* (eye), *titty*, (sister), and *oomah* (you).

Likewise Mr. Bennett throughout his two articles (especially I, pp. 346, 347) calls attention to various parallels in Middle and Elizabethan English and in the peasant usage of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Sussex and Kent.

(2) Again, there was (and is) no standard Gullah in the sense that there is a standard literary English. As Mr. Bennett explains: "Gullah has its variants, as naturally followed from the constrained remoteness of distant plantations and absence of intercourse; phrases heard on the Altamaha are unknown upon the Santee; words in use in the Georgetown District vanish at Edisto; John's Island is not St. Helena's; Silk Hope was not Toogoodoo." (I, 341). Moreover, the particular method of reducing the dialect to writing, especially the degree to which phonetic spelling is carried, causes many variations among the different writers of the dialect. It is interesting to compare, for example, the Beaufort Gullah of Mrs. Christensen and John G. Williams, the Georgetown Gullah of J. Jenkins Hucks, the Combahee Gullah of Gonzales, the St. Helena dialect of Parsons, and the Edisto dialect of Marcellus S. Whaley.

An interesting example of the differences in Negro dialects is contained in Addison Hibbard's "Æsop in Negro Dialect," *American Speech*, June, 1926.

[11] Writing in 1867, W. F. Allen, one of the compilers of *Slave Songs in the United States*, says: "With these people the process of 'phonetic decay' appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



181 marked by countenances of a more European cast than those of ordinary negroes,
569 have exchanged the Koran for the Bible. . . . During the last war [1812] when Ad-
175 miral Cockburn was off this coast with his fleet, he made an offer of freedom to all the slaves belonging to the father [John Couper] of my present host, and a safe convoy to Canada.[13] Nearly all would have gone, had not African Tom, to whom they looked up with great respect, declined the proposal. He told them he had first known what slavery was in the West Indies, and had made up his mind that the English were worse masters than the Americans. About half of them, therefore, determined to stay on St. Simon's Island, and not a few of the others who accepted the offer and emigrated had their lives shortened by the severity of the climate in Canada."

Z. Kingsley, in his *Treatise on the Patriarchal Form of Society*, published some time before 1829, cites "two instances to the southward [of Charleston], where gangs of negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers . . . and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Africans, and professors of the Mohammedan religion." It is clear that Kingsley had
(212) John Couper's "Old Tom" in mind, and that the other Mohammedan was Spalding's Bilali,[14] whose so-called *Diary*, written in Arabic, on Sapelo Island, is now in the possession of the Georgia State Library in Atlanta. Pages from the *Diary* have been incorporated in the end-paper designs of this book.

212 This manuscript has aroused keen interest among anthropologists, and the
569 photostatic copy I sent to Melville J. Herskovits has been translated by Joseph Greenberg.[15] During the summer of 1939 Mr. Greenberg visited Northern Nigeria, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, and through his fluent knowledge of Arabic won the confidence of educated Malams in the city of Kano. They assisted him in deciphering certain parts of the "diary" and in locating the places in an important Mohammedan legal work [16] from which most of the manuscript derives. It is amusing that the first result of Mr. Greenberg's study was to

[13] Admiral Cockburn harried our coast during the War of 1812, and as late as January, 1815, destroyed the orange orchards on Cumberland Island.

[14] Charles S. Wylly, in Seed Sown in Georgia, tells us how, in 1813, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding, relied upon Bilali to aid in the protection of his property on Sapelo with its "five hundred slaves, many fresh from . . . Africa."

[15] A résumé of the results of his work has been published in the Journal of Negro History, July, 1940.

[16] The Risala of 'abu Muhammad 'abdullah b. 'abi Zaid 'alquairawani.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



212 567 show that the "diary" was in reality not a record of Old Bilali's life. Disappointing as this discovery may be to those who are primarily interested in his history, it is still possible, according to Mr. Greenberg, to draw certain conclusions about him from the character of the manuscript.

He was apparently a fanatical Mohammedan, for the "diary" consists mainly of descriptions of "ablutions and the call to prayer." Mistakes in the Arabic script,[17] along with "repetitions, incorrect word divisions, and incorrect arrangement of the excerpts," indicate that he was trying to reproduce what he had learned orally. Since "books are first taught by oral memorization," Mr. Greenberg conjectures that "at the time of his departure from Africa the writer was still a young student."

175 567 It was reassuring to find that Mr. Greenberg's deductions tallied with what Katie Brown, Bilali's great-granddaughter, had told me about him years before. According to her, he was captured when not fully grown, and went to Sapelo from Nassau with his wife and children. Where he spent the intervening years no one knows. Both Katie and her cousin, Shadrach Hall, tell me that the three oldest children were named Margaret, Hester, and Charlotte (Cotty). The others bore African names:[18] Fatima (Shad says she was named for her mother), Nyrrabuh or

[55] [171]

[17] Concerning the possibility "of discovering the origin and status of the writer" through the character of the script he used, Mr. Greenberg says: "The fact that the Arabic script was of the Maghrebine, or Western variety, and that the Risala is a legal work of the Malekite school, which is dominant in appproximtely the same regions as the Western style of writing, would seem to indicate that the writer came from some part of northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis) or from the Western Sudan. The confusion of 'd' and 'f' in several cases points strongly to the Sudan, since this pronunciation is unknown elsewhere. It is doubtful whether local varieties of the Maghrebine script in the Sudan can be distinguished at the present state of our knowledge; at any rate, no attempt has hitherto been made to do this, and therefore, this approach would seem to be closed to us pending further research."

In Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan, by W. B. Hodgson, the birthplace of Bul-ali is established in a letter from James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton plantation, Georgia. This letter is given in full, and states that his "driver Tom" and Mr. Spalding's Bul-ali were intimate friends. Both spoke the Foulah language, and were from the Kingdom of Bambara. Tom was born on the Niger River in Kianah, between Jenne and Timbuctoo, but Bul-ali was from Timboo.

[18] Lyell mentions the singular taste displayed by Negro parents in naming their children: January, April, Monday, and Hard Times. He did not know what Dr. Turner has discovered: the slaves followed a West African custom in naming their children according to the time of birth, conditions surrounding it, or the temperament of the child. Bad Boy, Peanut, Blossom, and July are names found on the Georgia coast. In West African Studies Miss Kingsley tells us that soon after a child is born it is given "the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born."

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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567 ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C.
795 Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island
and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to
793 place true religion in *profession, in forms and ordinances,*
567 and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in
795 dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect
or striking resemblance to some form or type which has
787 been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 They were also quick to follow the custom of the
795 whites in "churching" offending members. "The dis-
688 cipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

567 The church was not only responsible for giving Chris-
794 tianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teach-
212 ing a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals. 533

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression. [214]

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later. (177)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. *In putting it together we tried to use the strongest* photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) (113) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

533 128 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, complex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 •216 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

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The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

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My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. A. C. Jenkins*

## ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 533 869 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(P. XVi-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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178 887 fewer and fewer places to collectively express their wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

887 86 Even more important, what these elders know must be readily accessible to the children and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

•217 One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

(7 XV-B)

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

262 Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily [538] available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave 225 regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the 567 use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly. [262] The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

000 This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

262 The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large • 223 ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds. 224 Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 273 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 585

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo balik.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.' "

[226] [224] [533]

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, c, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

[845]

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large
252 sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse.
The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels,
224 skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

224
136

> Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

825 The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

463 In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family
[178] members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuh-day.' "

(226) (224) (533)

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

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"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *White Bluff*

HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff, eight miles southeast of Savannah.

Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate in the various sections which form the settlement and which are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the inhabitants make their living by catching crab and fish which they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the narrow roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty. Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon, contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors and trimmings of some of the houses.

The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main street of the community, passes the houses of other residents set well back from the road. Most of them are small and unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger church.

The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the
461 river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb)[A] carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, 241 peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

• 226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare 262 expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

> [136] The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A, [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 one of her friends, who accused her of taking some tobacco which Miss Myma clearly could not have taken. Her friend attacked her viciously and called her some scandalous names. With each insult Miss Myma replied, "You de right, darlin," or "Sho will, honey," or "I know you ben tell truth for sho, baby." Finally, the friend looked rather foolish, throwing out insults and having them accepted so calmly. So, clearly feeling unfulfilled because she had not had the satisfaction of arousing Miss Myma to any angry word play, she left kicking up dust and looking back over her shoulder as she stalked down the sandy lane from Miss Myma's house. I had seen Miss Myma at her best in heated arguments over far smaller issues before; thus I asked her in amazement why she had not retaliated and defended herself forcefully. She took her pipe from her mouth, shook it in the direction her friend had taken, and replied thoughtfully that that particular woman was a fool, and she left fools in the hands of the Lord.

159 Miss Myma was apparently in her mid to late seventies when I met
123 her. She told me that she "forget" how old she really was, but she could come close if I could tell her how old some of her childhood friends were. In spite of her age, she remains one of the most active people on the island. She taught me to crab, net, and fish. In fact, I caught my first dogfish while fishing on the banks of an island stream. The thing actually had feet and barked like a dog when I caught it on the hook. When I asked if the fish were edible, the children standing on the bank laughed at my ignorance before they said no.

Every day was an exciting day with Miss Myma. We got up around six o'clock and drove the fifteen or more miles to James Island to get a cup of coffee. Miss Myma liked to ride, and I loved the invigorating smell of the Sea Island morning air. If we were going to the creek that day, we would gather our gear beforehand. If we were going "bog-
159 ging" for crabs, which was Miss Myma's preferred way to catch them, we would get our sticks and go to the creek after the tide had gone out.
123 Bogging for crabs is hard work; one even needs specific shoes for this venture. When the tide goes out, many crabs are left in the various
• 226 nooks and crannies of the creek bank and bed. The stick is used not only for support but to prod into holes to scare out the crabs. When one is found, it is provoked into clamping onto the stick and then pulled up and dropped into a large bucket. If the crab is ornery and refuses to clamp onto the stick, the stick is used to hold him down. He is picked up from the back and his two front claws are quickly clamped together;

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few
•226 "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually
I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
226 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving
133 because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
538

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
• 226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.
[868]

The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# Appendix 1

# An Interview: Catching Fish

226 171 The ancient fishing methods explained in this interview are reminiscent of those found in Nigeria and other African countries near large bodies of water. I actually observed the drumming and spearing technique among the Igbo and Ibebio of northern Nigeria. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake also write of this continuing fishing practice on the Sea Islands.[1]

[115] The informant was a retired tradesman and a very important member in the church community. He said that he learned these practices from his father, and his father had learned them from the "old people" before him.

The interview has been edited slightly for clarity.

Mr. Daniel Dent
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
1983

226 124 INFORMANT: To catch mullet fish, we goes in the river. Everything still. The water still. Make a few throw with the cast net, and you haven't catch anything. So you get up on the side of boat and you beat on side with you oars, or paddle. And you just keep beating—[you] call em dolphin, we call em horsemen—then beat until the porpoise come around. After the porpoise come around, then the mullet fish will come to the shallow water. [Then] you cast for catch em. You don't catch much fish without the horseman. The porpoise have to be around. The only way to get the porpoise, man—[you] don't see them—you beat some, on the side of the boat, and they'll hear you miles for miles under the water.

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•226
501

Fishermen often travel among the islands in rowboats. These two men are preparing to row from Yonges Island to Wadmalaw.

[p. 152]

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226
124

INTERVIEWER: How does the sound go?

INFORMANT: (Tapping out a steady beat on his chair) You can't hear the sound.

LISTENER: You can't get the right sound. Under water de different sound.

INFORMANT: (Taps again) Something like that. (Taps again) Here's the beat. This the way it sound. But a little bit lighter because e not on the water. You on the boat with a paddle. So that the way you get your fish when you fishes in deep water. You call the dolphin to the shore by paddle beating on the boat. So many time I done that for a living—until I can't number em.

INTERVIEWER: You called the dolphin three things?

INFORMANT: I call em a horseman or a porpoise. The way I learn, I learn from the old people.

INTERVIEWER: You call him a horseman?

INFORMANT: Uh hum. In fact, e *is* a horseman for a workman. See? You understand what I'm talk about now?

INTERVIEWER: A horseman?

INFORMANT: A horseman, yeah. Someting that most people call [a thing with] four feet. But the man [part] is a man. All right?

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any other fishing methods?

INFORMANT: I knows gig [gill] net [smoke fishing]. The way I use to, when I come up [was growing up], I was too poor to buy a lantern. So we just [went] out [in the] winter time, and those who had tires on they car, [if the tires were] no good, we use that for a light. And we goes in river. Sometimes the wind blows, e blind you with the smoke. But we had manage to catch many bushel of trouts and many bushel of fish with four-prong or three-prong gig. Caught many bushel fish that way. Just use a little tar for light by night, and we gelds [stick] fish in the water.

LISTENER: Catch em by stick em with that fork.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know any other ways?

INFORMANT: Yeah, I had did this back in Hoover time when tings was bad. We didn't had, couldn't get a cast hook the way I want em. I had takes someting we call hog wire and put em cross the river. When the tide comes up, you goes and cut muckle mish [bush] and drop em behind the wire to hold the fish on that side when e [the tide] goes down because we didn't had a gill net to put over

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 155

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[226]
[868]

Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

[p. 154]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•226 124 river. Time was for tight, we couldn't buy a gill net. So what I be do, take hog wire and put em across em when tide low. When the tide get high, we take the bush and put em in the front of the wire. When the water start for go back, the fish can't get through, de stop on that side.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

• [226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

825 538 35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 (775)

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery. [226]

*Truss Gawd*

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle swampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: 'Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

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My wife and I've been here since '38. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

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The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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[262]
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Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[redacted]

[5.97]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

735 432 236 434 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a living. Anything they could do to make a living.

They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had 735 824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 342 (354) The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 342 354 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 493 492 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all over the island. They used carts and that little tacky--pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 722 WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
[435] got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

[443] Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
[438] miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
[231] your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

[251] Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it, And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
[438] corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice.
[388] And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

[252] Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
[251] Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
[226] cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

[294] For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

159 •226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] [222] [324] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around [432] [434] and sell 'em to different people—make a living I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.46]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23, Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

**I DO MY OWN WORK NOW**

159

The first work I used to do was work on our own farm. I worked to help my father because they really had a hard time to raise us, and we just had to get out and do what we could to help in them days. We had to plant a garden.

Then my daddy was a fisherman, and I began to go in the river along with him and he teach me how to throw net, so I finally learn how to. And (226)

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[p.47]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did
226 the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for
[335] myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now
[484] I'm working at a block and pipe company—making door lintels and window lintels, all different kinds of stone.

[434] The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and mechanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting
[241] season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 210]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 218]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 231]

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices
[226] on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
567 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to culti-
241 vate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[28]

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The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[28] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XI. Lewis McIver, fisherman at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-k]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

[227] [286]

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 567 "Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh granddaddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

115 "Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use

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* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 42]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

159 226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] [227] [824] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around [432] [434] and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.46]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

**I DO MY OWN WORK NOW**

159

The first work I used to do was work on our own farm. I worked to help my father because they really had a hard time to raise us, and we just had to get out and do what we could to help in them days. We had to plant a garden.

Then my daddy was a fisherman, and I began to go in the river along with him and he teach me how to throw net, so I finally learn how to. And (226)

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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIII. Alec Anderson at Possum Point

[Following p. xxxii-M]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

142
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•231
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XVa. Katie Brown with Flint

[following p. xxxii-Q]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 789 472 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs. On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

115 759 [463] A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Edwards* who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use [757] of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly. "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef [231] dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 825 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
975 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
• (231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(757) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young
• [231] puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning them-
461 selves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three
123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished
[115] to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt
[291] hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

[361] Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and wondering how far from the main road this little settlement
[829]

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
• [231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue
[416] overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings." [65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
[737] satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
[593] so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
[343] house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231 * *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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•231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.'[30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people 534 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. 202 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [792] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *Ali Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
[552] There were several white chickens wandering about the
•231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up con-
jure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Afri-
cans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
829 the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
782 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an
829 bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange
252 cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-
764 ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a
795 wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way.
789 She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd.[55]
• 231 Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b, c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
784 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

•231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

ST. MARYS

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(23) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger genera-
tion.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, over-
grown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl[70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They
533 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats
764 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up[27a] an have a suppuh too.[27b,c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
825 than in the ole days."[15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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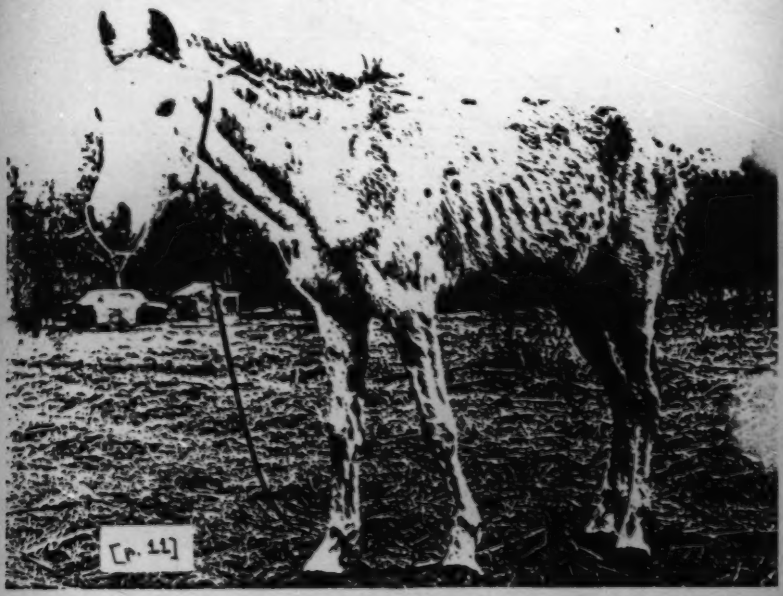
722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[179] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

231



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
[435] got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

[443] Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
[438] miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
[231] cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

[251] Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
[438] corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
[388] hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

[252] Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
[251] Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
[226] cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
[294] mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE

464 The people on Johns Island, those that are not working in the city or as domestics, most of them make their living off truck farms on the island. Especially the women. They work on the farms of plantation owners. They pick snap beans, they dig white potatoes, they pick tomatoes, pack cabbages, spinach and whatnot. Those are the things that they depend on for a living.

During the winter months they go into a hardship because most of the farms don't have anything to do. That's the hardest time that they have to face.

Sometimes we underestimate these people and forget they have something we really need. These are people who haven't gotten a college education, or even a high school education. But anyone able to raise twelve children—and raise 'em healthy too—must know something good. They were smart enough to plant and to raise the kind of thing the children need. They raised their own hogs, they raised their cows, they had the milk with vitamin D what they need.

18 891 855 23

Some of these older people thought very deeply. Mother-wit and faith in God helped them to do a lot, and some achieved more than some of the young people who have been able to go to college.

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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] *Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.*
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analysis]

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159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. T' e singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
[493] a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[562] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[481] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[793] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months. In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] *After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was*
[23] *left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty*
[136] *of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.*

[23] *It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.*

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567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
567 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to culti-
241 vate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St.
•231 Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St. Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family
432 was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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567 huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with
252 their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After
(412) the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large
(285) hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared
252 supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the
262 corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from
• (23) the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate
(264) to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

567 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten
264 just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[28] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[28] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed [illegible] nine o'clock for breakfast.

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## MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me (296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

[234] [539] She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

*Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long*
*Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.*

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567 342 William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

[361] (235) [364]

> The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

• [237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

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754 he had tuh linguh on till finally it reached his haht an he died."

Jackson scratched his bristly chin and smiled sheepishly. "I do belieb in some rootn," he said, "but uh didn wannuh talk too fas. I seen a root man tak is bag an in it wuz needles an pins an grabeyahd dut an sulphuh an rusty nails, an he made it *crawl*.[48a]

"But nuttn evuh done me hahm," he went on in his gentle voice. "I alluz got wut I want all deze yeahs. Cuz yuh [789] know wy? I hab a black cat bone."

789 We had heard of the potency of the black cat bone. Other Negroes had told us that it could ward off conjure, •237 cure sickness, or even give its possessor the power to fly. Thus far, however, we had met no one who had acquired so miraculous a charm.

"How did you get the bone?" we excitedly queried. We summoned up visions of Jackson creeping in the dead of night to some lonely spot near a cemetery and shooting a black cat between its glowing green eyes. The actual facts proved far different.

"Wen I wuz a young man," said Jackson, "I ketched a big black cat. Den I made a big fyuh in duh yahd an put on a pot uh watuh an let it come tuh a bile. Den I tied duh black cat up an put im in duh watuh alibe an put a weight obuh duh pot tuh keep im in and uh let im bile tuh pieces. Den I strain duh stoo an separate duh bones an I shut muh eyes an pull duh bones tru muh mouf till uh got duh right one. All deze yeahs I kep dat bone an nuttn ebuh do me no ebil."

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

(825) (789)

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

484 789 777

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 534 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-gedduh.[25] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

(535)

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

(281) (237)

534 824 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

535 (533)

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533 534 764 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh way." [24]

We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of 534 drums.

[237] "We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

567 We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that were real Africans.

829 "Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 829 789 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduhstan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue, he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

** A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237] skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh
567 sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159
757 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine—herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsey weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour
752 some water in the basin—put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dangerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and it [illegible]
● [237] Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you burn them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that—draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole—fiddler crab? We
757 use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something else—I can't 'call the name—and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that
825 for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People
757 couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

137
●237

[p 234]

11: Johnson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

● 241
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423

[For information on the size of various St. Helena plantations under White ownership, see Category 116, pp. 41-45; for information on the historical background of the planters themselves, see Category 116, pp. 103-123.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



789 say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muh-sef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

115 During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby, seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that she was too young to remember much of the old times, she gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and African customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls Murray house."

(241) (761)

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the oldest men living on the island.

361 From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of houses and sheds.

115 A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan," * he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 •241 [178] [464] In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

464 177

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient agriculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly in-
•241 digo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple com-
[243] modities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing
171 of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans-
243 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice
171 was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, •241 peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare 262 expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136] > The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum,. bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A, [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(668) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea
islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston
County Democratic party. He ran for state senate
and received support in both the black and white
communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital
radio station in Charleston that consistently ad-
dresses social issues as well as responds to the mu-
sical tastes of the community. He was the principal
mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the
Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in
the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has im-
proved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who
finished high school left the area to find work.
(489) Now, with improved transportation, it is possible
for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
island. The resort developments and the new small
(241) businesses offer some employment, but farming,
(198) long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live
in their traditional community, and many of their
hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
along the coastal islands south of Washington,
D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on
Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible
only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged
resort communities with condominiums, hotels
and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private
homes. Both are entered by passing through a se-
curity checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some
economic and social benefits to island residents,
both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy
visitors from outside the region and offering only
menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Is-
land, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge
from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for de-
velopment. An island committee made up of black
and white landowners has been meeting regularly
to design their own development plan that may

(P XIII, B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

**THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS**

159
735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the
735 days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project.
659 That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on
[465] the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they
659 didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped
462 them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give
241 pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The
[262] most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the
[243] grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived
432 out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the
296 wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times
434 a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

735
291

[redacted]

[p.97]

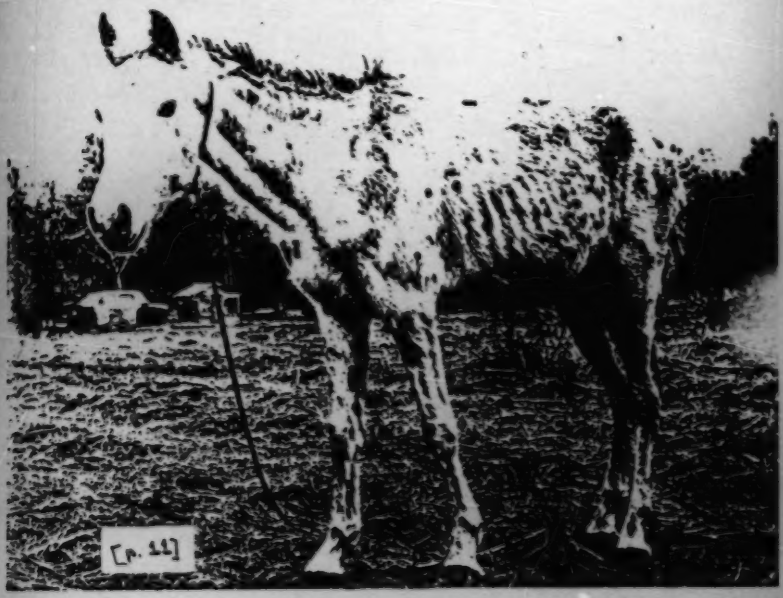
4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[177] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

231



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
435 got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
443 miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
438 your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
231 cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And
251 they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
438 corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
388 hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

252 Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
251 Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
226 cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
294 mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

735 252

Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley—in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

735 292

In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

735 178

Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

735 159 262 (241)

My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground.
46 Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the
• 24 cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the
Devil! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for
(492) that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road
and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax,
(412) some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise
57 up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home
and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

159 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did
226 the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for
(335) myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now. I'm working at a block and pipe company--making door lintels and window
(464) lintels, all different kinds of stone.

The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and
(434) chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four
(241) weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[-49]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 873 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army, one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 159 185 873 ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING

[465] [241] I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together. It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start
(241) with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I
432 could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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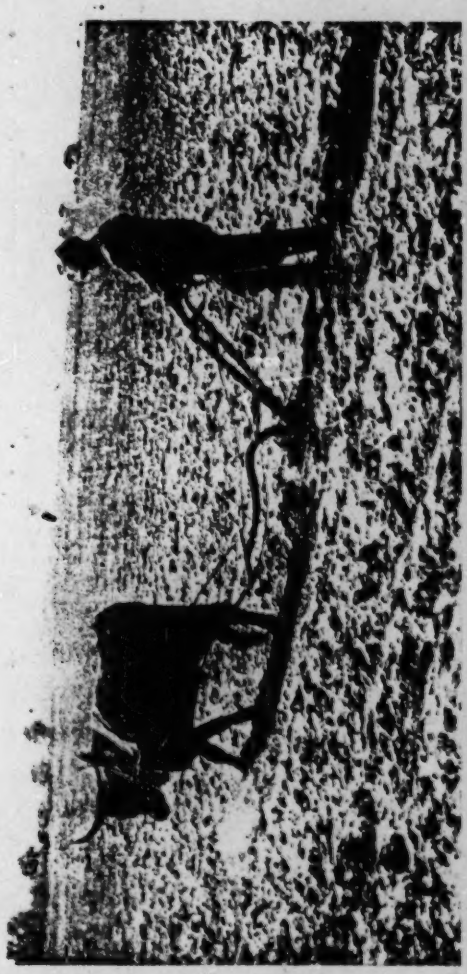

SPRING PLOWING

[facing p. iii]

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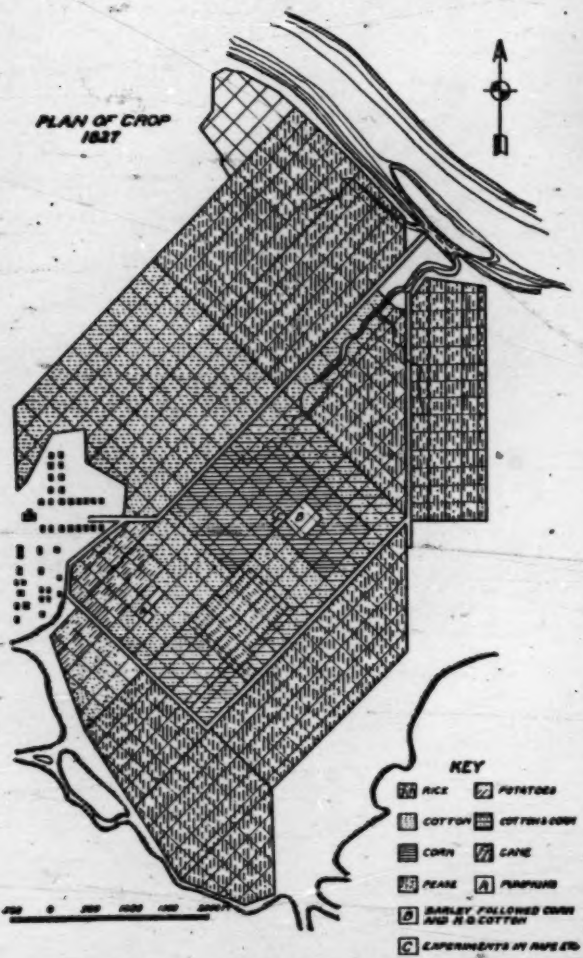


HOPETON PLANTATION ON THE ALTAMAHA

[b.63]

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The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 461 248 (804) [407]

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

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for Weehaw plantation near Georgetown, which were also observed on St. Helena plantations, were as follows:[21]

Corn: Sowing done in gang. Covering done in gang.
Hoeing ¼ acre Hauling up ½ acre.
Plowing corn 2½ to 3 acres; a man & mule will tend 30 acres. Stripping fodder ¾ acre on first day—after that strip 1 acre & carry home that of the previous day.

Potatoes & Slips:
Planting—3 [hands] in a ¼ acre, who also bed it up.
Hoeing—2 in a ¼ acre. Hauling up 20 Compass.[22]
Digging slips—men, 5 rows—Women, 4 rows & carry home.
Digging roots for allowance—5 to 7 rows, as they bear.
Weeding is usually done by the shufflers.[23]

Peas: 3 hands to 3 acres when planted between corn.
Harvesting—2 large blankets.

Ditching . . . 6 to 8 tasks. Spreading straw[24]—if wet ½ acre. if dry ¾ acre. Listing in straw—½ acre.

Getting task stakes, 500 to a hand[25]

Splitting Rails—100 Rails 12 ft long & heavy

Cutting Wood—1 cord. . . .

Splitting garden railings—500 to 3 men. . . .

Cutting down & piling up corn stalks, 1 to 1¼ to 1½ acres.

Digging ditches . . . —600 cubic feet.

The tasks at cutting marsh grass and digging marsh mud for fertilizing the fields were estimated by the cart load and varied with the weather and the distance of the marsh from the field.

[21] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book.
[22] A compass was five feet as measured by a wooden triangle called a compass.
[23] Children or superannuated men and women.
[24] On St. Helena plantations marsh grass was used instead of the rice straw spread on the Weehaw fields.
[25] Each hand's task was staked off.

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567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
[263] gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
[276] two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

[226] In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
[435] groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

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175 657 673 702
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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
.241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government 423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 423 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily rou- tine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it [434] had come the responsibility of earning their own living, [241] and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 370.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

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175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change
175 was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza
249 Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experi-
[247] ments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and
[386] from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government.
[556] Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and
175 indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy
567 African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

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ROTATION OF CROPS

242 Planters came much later to realize the importance of soil analysis as a means of determining what fertilizers were necessary to make their fields yield the maximum quantity of cotton. The first public organization to stress the importance of soil analysis was the Agricultural Society of St. John's, Colleton. In 1840 the Society asked Professor Shepard to analyze ten specimens of the soils of Edisto Island.[29] His report received considerable attention and helped to stimulate interest in improved methods of agriculture. Edmund Ruffin's geological survey and analysis of the mineral deposits of the state and Professor Tuomey's geological survey further contributed to the planters' increasing desire to know the exact nature of their soil so that they might succeed better in cultivating their plantations.

A few enterprising planters learned at an early date that a rotation of crops improved the quality of the land. For instance, John Couper, of Cannon's Point plantation, St. Simon's Island, a native of Scotland, practised rotation of crops before 1800, and his son, James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, carried his father's work still further.

James Hamilton Couper, an honor graduate of Yale, later visited his uncle in Glasgow and from there went to

[29] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxxviii-xliii. The soils analyzed were as follows: (1) virgin wet mud, (2) deposit wet mud, (3) close sandy soil from high land, (4) dark gray soil from land rather flat for cotton, (5) very light sandy soil (very high land), (6) dark gray soil from land rather low, (7) close yellow sandy soil (high land), (8) close yellow soil from the most productive part of Professor Shepard's tract, (9) mud that had been exposed to the sun for nearly two months, (10) mud taken from the cotton field in which it was buried the previous year.

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Holland to study reclamation so that he might drain the fertile swamps and deltas of the Georgia coast. With slave labor he cleared the cypress brakes of the Altamaha delta, grubbing, diking, and ditching the land, sometimes at a cost of a thousand dollars an acre, until in 1826, when he bought a half interest in Hopeton plantation, he was cultivating at a profit 641 acres of improved swamp land. In 1832 J. D. Legare, editor of the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, said of Hopeton plantation:

> We hesitate not to say Hopeton is decidedly the best plantation we have ever visited, and we doubt whether it can be equalled in the Southern states. And when we consider the extent of the crops, the variety of the same, and the number of operatives who have to be directed and managed, it will not be presumptive to say that it may fairly challenge comparison with any establishment of the United States, for the systematic arrangement of the whole, the regularity and precision with which each and all of the operations are carried out, and the perfect and daily accountability established in every department.
>
> The proportions of the crop, at the time of my visit, were 500 acres in rice, 170 in cotton, and 333 in cane.[30]

Mr. Couper attracted attention as a scientific planter not only on the seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina, but in Europe as well. Sir Charles Lyell, Miss Frederika Bremer, and the Honorable Amelia M. Murray, distinguished European visitors who spent several days at Hopeton at different times during the late plantation regime,[31] also praised his plantation management and experimentation with crops.

[30] MS in Couper-Wylly Papers.

[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 261-273; Hon. Amelia M. Murray, *Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada*, pp. 220-225; Frederika Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, pp. 485-491.

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Mr. Couper seldom allowed any of his fields to rest, a method of improving the fertility of the land followed by most sea-island planters. Instead, he fertilized the land and rotated the crops in order to replace the minerals extracted by growing plants. The following table, made from Couper's Hopeton Plantation Book, indicates for ten years the crops planted on West Old Field of eighty-five and a half acres, one of the most fertile of the seventeen fields which he annually cultivated, and at the same time illustrates his experimentation with crops:

ROTATION OF CROPS ON HOPETON PLANTATION, 1820-1829[22]

| | Crops In Acres | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Cotton | Corn | Cotton and corn mixed | Potatoes | Sugar cane | Pumpkins |
| 1820 | 79½ | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 1821 | 55 | 23¼ | 0 | 7¼ | 0 | 0 |
| 1822 | 78½ | 7 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| 1823 | 78½ | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1824 | 36¾ | 4 | 33 | 4¾ | 0 | 0 |
| 1825 | 81 | 0 | 0 | 3½ | 1 | 0 |
| 1826 | 66 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 3½ | 0 |
| 1827 | 26¼ | 33 | 14½ | 8½ | 0 | 1¼ |
| 1828 | 75¾ | 0 | 0 | 8½ | 0 | 1¾ |
| 1829 | 36¼ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 0 |

On other fields Couper rotated peas, cotton, corn, cotton and corn mixed, potatoes, and occasionally pumpkins.

Although Couper had mixed cotton with corn as early as 1824, in 1844 Seabrook spoke of this method of rotation as having been lately adopted by a few planters in Georgia.[23] They planted cotton on alternate ridges with corn, and the next year substituted the cotton rows for the corn.

[22] MS, Hopeton Plantation Book, 1818-1831. In possession of Mrs. W. S. Lovell, Birmingham, Ala. Hopeton Plantation, on the Altamaha River, in Glynn County, Ga., contained about eleven thousand acres and in 1826 was valued at $80,412. The map on page 63 was reproduced from a map in colors in Hopeton Plantation Book.

[23] Seabrook, *Memoir on Cotton*, p. 28.

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Seabrook, however, thought this rotation unfitted for the South Carolina Sea Islands "where the high lands, which are limited in quantity, and unfit for corn, are alone considered safe for cotton." Instead, he recommended as a good rotation to be followed " in a small way," potatoes, or spring peas, rest, and cotton.[34]

"Rest" was the common practice of "rotation" on the Sea Islands. When the land had become exhausted by repeated cropping, its fertility was restored not only by the application of manures, but by resting the field for a certain length of time. The time necessary for restoration was dependent, of course, upon the nature of the subsoil. Enterprising planters hastened the process by thoroughly breaking up the soil, thereby exposing fresh surfaces to the atmosphere and turning the grass and weeds under to enrich the soil.

### THE AGRICULTURAL LOTTERY

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Despite these efforts at scientific farming, which resulted in methods that are generally considered as belonging to present day agricultural development, sea-island cotton was an uncertain crop. In 1808 David Ramsay, writing the history of South Carolina, spoke of planting as an annual lottery, in which on an average of several years there were many blanks and many prizes. "A few of the latter," he wrote, "are very large, but the greatest number do not much exceed the price of the ticket."[35] In successful seasons, profits were large. One crop might purchase the land which raised it; two or three more, the Negroes who cultivated it. But in unsuccessful years,

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[35] David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina*, II, 396.

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The leaf worm, although nearly always present, became destructive only when the conditions for its development were favorable, such as, a warm winter followed by a wet spring. Planters constantly attempted to fight the insect by seeking to raise a plant which would mature its pods sufficiently early to produce a paying crop before the worm reached its most destructive stage. Once the caterpillars appeared in great numbers, however, the average planter of the ante-bellum period knew little to do but curse the fate which sent them. By turning large flocks of turkeys into the fields, they could save many acres of cotton, but no plantation kept a drove large enough to protect all the fields in a bad year, for, when the caterpillars reached the final stage of development, they usually destroyed a crop within forty-eight hours. In 1846-1847, caterpillars reduced the estimated crop of the South from 2,400,000 bales to 1,779,000.[38] J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, recalls that caterpillars so greatly damaged three hundred acres of his father's cotton in 1867 that he saved only seven bags of cotton.[39] On this occasion, while driving along the main road to his summer home on the opposite side of the island, a distance of twelve miles, his father crushed caterpillars under his wheels the entire way. Having finished the fields, they were then in possession of the road. Doubtless some planters learned before 1860 that they could successfully [242] combat the leaf worm by dusting their plants with Paris Green,[40] but this method was not common knowledge until much later.

[38] *DeBow's Review*, VI, 126.

[39] Whaley, "History of Sea-Island Cotton." Unpublished MS.

[40] Allston, in his *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15, advises, "Destroy the enemy

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The weather not only abetted the insects in their destruction of the cotton crops, but sometimes itself brought ruin. In 1819 James Hamilton Couper was found recording in his plantation book, "In the Spring, the Cotton was very generally destroyed by Frost," and "On the night of the 14th Oct^r. a sharp white frost destroyed about 70 acres of cotton at Hopeton."[41] In 1823 he wrote: 248 132 (136)

> The crop was set in good time; and was unusually promising until the excessive rains which commenced about the middle of July. These rains continued nearly two months, and occasioned the cotton to drop nearly the whole of the middle & under crop. The upper crop in quantity and maturity promised well, but from the diseased habit which the plant had acquired never opened.[42]

In 1826 he wrote, "This is the only cotton crop since 1818 which has not been cut off by spring freshes, early fall frosts, or gales of wind," and the following year he again recorded, "A very high fresh which occurred about the end of May nearly destroyed the Cotton in Carr's Is." There were heavy rains again in 1828 and 1829, and in 1830 "a very severe Hail Storm was so destructive to the cotton crop, that the failure . . . was nearly entire." With this year, Couper left off recording his observations on crops, but in a letter to his son in 1855 he wrote, "We have had a glut of rain during the week; and as was to be expected the cotton is shedding freely. Three fourths of the Cotton crops are destroyed by the August rains."[43]

in embryo, as the energetic planter . . . has already done." He doubtless refers to dusting the plants with a mixture of Paris Green, rosin, and damaged wheat flour. (242)

[41] Hopeton Plantation Book. [42] *Ibid.*

[43] Couper-Wylly Letters, August 23, 1855, James Hamilton Couper to Hamilton Couper.

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423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient ag-
241 riculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly indigo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple com-
• [243] modities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing
171 of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans
171 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

•243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by 241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, 262 clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136] The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

825 538

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

159 735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 735 657 [465] The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735 657 462 241 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 [262] [243] Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 432 226 434 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

735 291

[redacted]

[p.9]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN27
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

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I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

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I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

[243]
[857]

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Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

[529]

That's the way I come up in this world.

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
179 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

Historically, the economy of the island was based
• 243 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
433 there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
[464] Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[422] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

243 of the county's economy, it was still cultivated on the river
433 island for the consumption of its inhabitants, with some surplus sold for cash. Two men in their eighties could describe in detail each phase of the long growing season, and the utensils used in processing the ripened grain. During the
[464] lifetimes of these men, however, the island made the transition from a subsistence farming economy to one based on
464 laboring jobs held in mainland communities. Typically, young men went to live in nearby towns for periods ranging from two weeks to several years, working at jobs in lumber mills, in shipyards, on ocean-going vessels, and even in New York factories. Other men and women took laboring jobs on farms
243 and plantations closer to the island. The rice crop was still cultivated during this transition period, but by the thirties the cultivation was essentially under the supervision of one older man, a preacher and permanent resident of
243 the island. At times when intensive heavy labor was needed
464 for the crop, many of those who were working off the island returned to help in the harvest. With increasing job opportunities associated with World War II and the availability of motorized transportation, making the boat trip across the water a matter of minutes rather than hours, rice cultivation came to an end. Three successive years of disastrous flood tides in the forties finished the transition period.

464 Today most families have at least two members who
484 commute daily to jobs on the mainland. Many of the middle-

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- [248] tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

'If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require the aid of rhythmic songs.

(243) (412) (171)

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

535 533 (177)

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

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In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

535 533 534

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

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535 171

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



## RICE SONGS

•243 461 553 Growing rice was a thriving industry along the Ogeechee, Altamaha, and Satilla rivers a century ago, but today it is difficult to find even a handful of grain to demonstrate how it was beaten. At Hofwyl Plantation, the last in Glynn County to grow rice to any extent, I asked Jerry Rutledge about the songs that were used for planting rice, and getting it ready to eat. He gave me these appropriate lines:

[539]

John say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
John say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
If you sow it in the rain, you got to reap it jus' the same
You got to reap in the harvest what you sow.

He explained how the rice sheaves, about a foot through, and tied with a twist of straw, were whipped with "frails"; they were laid in parallel rows on a large sheet on the floor with the butt ends out. When two Negroes "t'rashed" together, they always sang as they faced each other. The short part of the flail which flew in the air in a seemingly reckless fashion was called a "bob," and it was rather important to have its gyrations rhythmically controlled. As soon as one side of a sheaf was clear of rice it was turned over and the other side whipped. By the time the string was broken the grain was in a long row in the middle.

Julia Walker, born near Riceboro in Liberty County, gave me precisely the same description of the work, and sang the following song as she demonstrated how the "frail" was used. Frankly, I was skeptical of the strength of the rawhide that attached the bob to the stick, and kept well out of range:

[539]

Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
My Lord call you—wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late I know, sinner, too late.
Church bell ring—you wouldn't come
Preacher preach—an' you wouldn't come
My Lord call you—an' you wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late, sinner, too late.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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243 Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quick and effective dance step, the outer husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work was done to a similar step, with these words:

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Peas an' the rice done done
Higho—Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho—Higho!
How do you know—done heard it blow
Higho—Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okra—Nana—Nana! [18]
Eat some an' leave some—Nana—Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright worl'
Poo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me—Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'—Do Lord remember me.

A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indicate how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a preliminary scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

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[17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

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## PEAS AN' THE RICE

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(243)

In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

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[18] *James A. Grant in a Walk across Africa tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!" To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest;[19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were 243 "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about 533 Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

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Summer comin' again
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she set me free
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
  Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821] [19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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A. B. A. B. A.

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The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

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Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Cally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

[20] Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.

[21] The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion.

[171]

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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
561 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
[342] their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
[114] with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
• [243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
[243] particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
561 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
[164] for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" enabled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the minimum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the activity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced." The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina. The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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St. Helena Island



101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

## THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[8]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[243] [248] [567] 175 567 [178]

[8] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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While thus exploiting the natural resources of the Island, the settlers raised only provision crops and hogs.

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Although rice culture[4] was begun in South Carolina before 1690 and had become one of the staple commodities by 1724, rice was never raised to any extent on St. Helena Island. Rice culture during the colonial period was confined for the most part to the inland swamps which could be flooded from fresh-water ponds and rivers, as, for example, Combahee River. Salt water is poisonous to the rice plant,[5] and St. Helena Island has only a few small fresh-water ponds. In these few ponds some rice was raised of a different variety from the famous Madagascar rice, but the amount was necessarily small.

### INDIGO CULTURE

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Almost from the first settlement of South Carolina, indigo was grown in the province and at intervals a bounty was allowed for its production, but it was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century that it became an important article for exportation.[6] In it St. Helena Island found a staple which supplemented and to some extent supplanted the provision crops and the export of naval stores. As early as 1748 the dye was exported to Eng-

[4] See A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Introduction of Rice Culture into South Carolina," *Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South Carolina*, no. 6. For a discussion of rice culture during the ante-bellum period see Edmund Ruffin, *Report of the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina for 1843*, and R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, which appears also in *De-Bow's Review*, XVI, 589-615.

[5] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 469.

[6] In a letter written by Elizabeth (usually abbreviated to Eliza:) Lucas in 1739 she refers to her efforts to produce indigo on her father's plantation in South Carolina. This has led some writers to assert that she first planted indigo in South Carolina and that from her experiments the great indigo industry in the province developed. The records of the province show that some indigo was produced in South Carolina before Miss Lucas was born.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues. 491 248 175

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 361 175 248 423 175 (137) 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old 248 (243) (244)

[p. 191]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
• [244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 51]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient ag-
241 riculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly indigo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple com-
[243] modities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing
171 of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans-
171 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

•248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by 241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare 262 expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136]

> The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# *Prologue*

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long 248 staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who 249 also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African- 567 American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to 177 mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of sig- 178 nificant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

101 The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peo- 175 ples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial 567 history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
(533)
(539)

> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton-ex-
• 248 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed
a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when
461 the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

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that cotton did not lie around or be stored after picking since too much exposure injured the product. Some overseers worked the slaves at night and on Sundays. The rawness and wetness of the weather did not deter managers and planters from ordering all "available" hands out to the fields. Though work in the gin house was considered "light" work, this "cotton barn" offered little relief from cold and dampness. The air inside was so unhealthy that slaves preferred the openness of the fields. Workers breathed flying lint and dust during the long hours as they labored in standing positions.[43]

The labor had a telling effect on the slave women's physical health. A callous attitude developed toward needs of pregnant women, postpartum illnesses, infant care, exhaustion and exposure to inclement weather. Bondswoman Susannah, in relating to Laura Towne, the tragedy of having all three of her living sons sold away, mentioned that she had actually had twenty-two pregnancies. Another defiant Gullah woman who worked in the house was beaten frequently by order of the mistress and retaliated by bringing "not one nigger" to Maussa. Another woman was buried up to her neck in earth as punishment, a few days after she had given birth to a stillborn child. Laura Towne, who saw signs of illtreatment, recorded various accounts:

> On this place, the Oaks, Loretta showed me her back, arms and breasts today. In many places there were ridges as high and long as my little finger and everywhere marks of the whip. She said that her children had been killed in her by whipping. She says it was because when "heavy with child," she could not do the full task of a field hand. I suspect also being rather apt to resist and rather smart in speaking her mind, poor thing. She has suffered terribly and it is no wonder that she is more indifferent about her clothes and house. . . . She says this was "de cruelest place."

Loretta lived on the plantation of Daniel Pope, a member of the Sea Island Baptist "aristocracy" who "gave no shoes, salt, molasses, nor Sunday clothes . . . neither would he allow the field hands any meat, nor permit them to raise pigs." In the year before the Civil War Pope determined to make the people work as much as possible, "so he kept them in the field from morning till night and lashed them every day."[44]

Francis Kemble noted on her visit to the Georgia Sea Islands that the principal hardships fell to the lot of the women. She wrote of her first visit to the "Infirmary":

> Women lay prostrate on the floor, without bed, mattress or pillow, buried in tattered and filthy blankets. . . . I stood in the midst of them, perfectly unable

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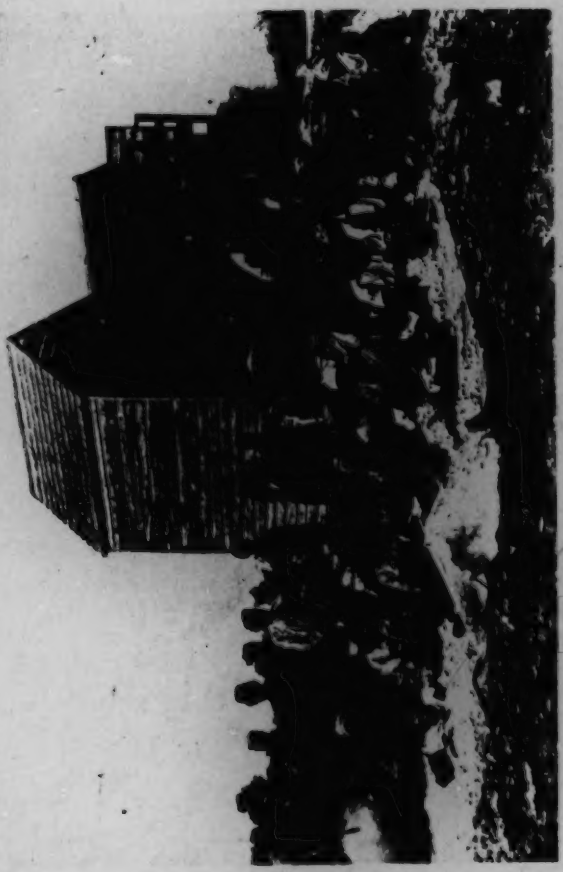

*Gullah: and Sea Island Cotton. (Personal collection.)*

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88.

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21.

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchman Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21.

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal*, 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27.

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together. It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start
(241) with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I
432 could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea- [248] island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

[4]If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts—exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [191] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

(539)

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 561 461 [412] On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

(533)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



533 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was tell-
567 ing tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge
533 used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she ex-
533 plained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

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Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud[20] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433] [248] [20] *Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

### THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large (248) plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the (567) wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field- (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

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### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

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The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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the Bahamas. The plant was tall; the seed black; and the fiber, long, strong, and silky. Richard Leake, one of those who had first received the seed, at once began production on a large scale. In 1788 he wrote, "I shall raise about 5,000 pounds in the seed from about eighty acres of land and the next year I expect to plant from fifty to one hundred acres."[19]

Seed of the new product was soon obtained in South Carolina, where William Elliott, of Hilton Head Island, near Beaufort and St. Helena, seems in 1790 to have been the first to raise a successful crop.[20] He had bought five and a half bushels of seed at 14 shillings a bushel in Charleston, and he sold his crop at 10½ pence a pound. The following year John Screven, of St. Luke's Parish, planted thirty or forty acres on his plantation on May River and sold the cotton in Georgia at from 1 shilling, 2 pence to 1 shilling, 6 pence sterling a pound. The next year John Rose planted a small field on Oakatee Creek and sold the 600 pounds which he raised at 2 shillings a pound. By this time many other planters on the Sea Islands and the mainland were experimenting with the long staple cotton, and in 1793 such prominent planters as James King, of St. Paul's Parish, Colonel Edward Barnwell and Captain John Joyner, of St. Helena's Parish, and General William Moultrie, of St. John's Parish, Berkeley,

[19] E. J. Donnell, *Chronological and Statistical History of Cotton*, p. 451 Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 152.

[20] The best account of the history of the introduction of sea-island cotton and its culture is to be found in Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*. The account in *DeBow's Review*, I, 304-315, is based upon Seabrook's history. J. A. Turner (ed.), *The Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 280-286, also contains some information concerning the development of the culture of sea-island cotton.

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were growing the cotton. The struggle between indigo and sea-island cotton had already begun. By 1798 the latter had clearly won.

The spread of sea-island cotton planting was largely hastened by the excellent prices which the long-staple brought. The English market welcomed the new staple. In 1799 the cotton sold readily in Liverpool at 5 shillings a pound. In South Carolina, the price ranged from 9 pence to 1 shilling during the early days of the production; then it rose to 2 shillings and upwards and there remained until 1806 when the Franco-English hostilities caused the price to slump. But large fortunes had already been made. Captain James Sinkler received 3 shillings a pound for a crop of 300 acres which produced 216 pounds to the acre. Peter Gaillard, of St. John's, Berkeley, made an average of $340 a hand, and William Brisbane, of St. Paul's, was so wealthy after two years of growing sea-island cotton that he retired and sold his plantation to William Seabrook at an exorbitant price, but Seabrook paid for it in two years.

Not all, however, who planted sea-island cotton realized so great profits as these planters. The longest and silkiest fibers commanded the highest prices. For many years Kinsey Burden, Sr., of St. John's Parish, Colleton, occupied first place in the production of a fine staple, and for many years he carefully guarded the secret of his success. In 1805 he produced cotton worth 25 cents a pound more than that of his neighbors. William Elliott was among the first to guess that the secret of Burden's success lay in the quality of the seed used, and soon sea-island cotton planters everywhere were experimenting

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with seed in the attempt to obtain a silky staple. In 1828 Hugh Wilson sold two bags of extra fine cotton at $2 a pound, probably the highest price ever obtained for sea-island cotton.

The growth of sea-island cotton was limited to a small area along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, for the plant would prosper only in a light, sandy soil, known as the salt-water lands. The sea-island cotton area in the ante-bellum period was a belt of coastal land from twenty to thirty miles wide, extending from Santee River, including St. John's Parish, Berkeley, to the everglades of Florida.[21] Eutaw Springs in St. John's, Berkeley, was the extreme northern point at which the plant was cultivated.

### EARLY METHOD OF CULTIVATION

The planters of the crop quickly systematized the method of cultivation so that, by 1802, the general routine in South Carolina and Georgia was about the same. The seed was planted in early spring as soon as the weather would permit. At first it was planted in separate holes, but soon came to be drilled and the plants grown at intervals of two or three feet on ridges five or six feet apart. Instead of being hoed only four times with the last hoeing about the middle of July, the crop was now hoed at more frequent intervals, all work ceasing when the plant began freely to put out fruit, which was usually early in July. The crop was harvested from September until December. The fiber was quickly damaged by bad weather and the fields, accordingly, had to be picked frequently to save the staple. The bolls opened but slightly and picking was dif-

[21] R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, reprinted in *DeBow's Review*, XVI, 593; Seabrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.

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ficult so that a hand seldom averaged more than seventy-five or a hundred pounds a day, whereas on the upland cotton fields a hand often picked two hundred pounds or more in a day.

The method of culture in practice in St. Helena's Parish in 1828 has been described by William Elliot[1], the son of the first planter to raise a successful crop of sea-island cotton in South Carolina:

The judicious Planter, whose plantation affords him the opportunity of choice, will select for his Cotton field, such high lands of a light brown or yellow complexion, as were covered by an original growth of hickory, laurel, red bay, interspersed with the live and white oaks, and the towering palmetto. He lays out his field into squares, of one-fourth of an acre, (105 feet,) and in the winter months, proceeds to list in the sward, with its cover of fennel or grass. On this *list*, the *bed* is subsequently raised; and, if the ground has lain fallow for some years, or if the soil be naturally close, the plough is sometimes run through the intervals, to pulverize it, and facilitate the process of bedding which is always performed by the hoe and usually commences about the middle of March. The beds are commonly five feet apart from centre to centre. The planting begins about the 20th of March, and extends to the 20th of April, and is thus performed:—A number of holes, four inches deep and twelve inches long, are cut by the hoe on the top of the bed, leaving the space of one foot between each hole. The seed which is changed every second year, is . . . carefully cleansed of such as are *coated* or *tufted with green* (that being considered *an indication of degeneracy*,) and then plentifully dropped and carefully covered. When the plant has attained its fourth or sixth leaf, if no grass should threaten it sooner, it is *hoed down*, which is effected by cutting the bed nicely down, and drawing the earth into the centre of the alley, in the shape of a small list. A fortnight before, or sooner, if the plants show the want of it, the earth is drawn to their roots, and they are slightly thinned.

At every subsequent working, which after the first, is invaria-

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bly a nauling or drawing up the earth to the plants, they are gradually thinned until June, when careful hands are selected to give the final thinning. This is a nice point, on which nothing like uniformity of practice prevails. In high lands, whose fertility has been impaired by frequent cropping, as many as one hundred and twenty stalks may be left in a task row, (105 feet). In newer, stronger or lower lands, where the growth of the plants is increased, the number must be proportionably diminished.

The plants are hauled, whenever the growth is checked by drought or threatened by grass, *until the middle of July*, beyond which period, it is unsafe to haul the earth to any fields but such as have been planted late in the season. . . .

We gather it as soon as possible after it has burst the pods, that it may avoid injury as well from dirt, as from too much exposure to the sun. Women and boys prove the most efficient pickers. The greatest care is used by them to separate the Cotton, all dried leaves or other substances may impair or discolour the staple. It is then spread, if wet, on a scaffold and exposed to the sun; but, if gathered in dry weather, *on the floor in the house*, to suffer whatever moisture it has imbided to escape, before it is stowed away in bulk. It is then passed once through a patent whipper, (M'Birnie's,) and sorted in the seed, at the rate of one to two hundred pounds to the hand. It is now ready for the gin. Eave's was formerly in successful use; but that, as well as the barrel gin, has been superseded by the common foot or crank gin, whose extreme simplicity of structure has given it an advantage over others more efficient, but more complicated . . . thirty pounds of clean Cotton as a day's labour, are easily turned out to each gin. It is then moted, often, but not always, on frames of wire or latticed wood, at a rate varying from fifteen to thirty pounds to the hand, and is then packed and ready for market.[22]

The preparation of the staple for market was the most tedious part of the growth of sea-island cotton. Before 1820, however, this was not considered to be the case.

[22] William Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 152-154.

[113]

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The pickers made no effort to remove the dead leaves from the lint; the ginners allowed stained and unstained cotton to go alike into the gin; moting was accomplished by women who sat upon the floor and beat the cotton with twigs; many planters ginned, moted, and packed the cotton in the same room; and the spinner frequently on opening a bag of cotton would find, in addition to the staple, crushed seeds, potato skins, and parts of old clothing. 175 248•

Sea-island cotton prepared in this manner was suited only for coarse fabrics. As the demand for the long staple became greater for making fine laces and muslins and as the high prices went to those who carefully handled their cotton, planters were forced to use more painstaking methods. The gin house, although only a simple barn, had separate rooms for the different processes. The cotton on being gathered was never exposed to the sun as formerly, but dried on a scaffold inside. Upon being dried, it was taken to the whipper which extracted the sand and imperfect fibers, and then sent to the assorters each of whom, provided with boxes for clean cotton, worked before a long table covered with wire or wooden slats, sorting the cotton according to color and fineness. From the sorters the staple went to the gins, and from there to the moting tables where women picked out the broken seeds and stained fibres. The lint was then packed into round bags of about three hundred pounds each, 1,500 pounds of seed cotton being required for a bale of this size.

Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, of Edisto Island, estimated in 1844 that fifty-four laborers[22] were required to prepare [464]

[22] This estimate was based upon the use of the foot-gin which was ordinarily employed in 1860 as well as in 1844. When a steam gin was used the number of ginners was reduced to six; when an Eave's improved steam gin, to three.

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175 the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one
464 turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters,
grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing
•248 twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at
forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector.
Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day,
Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a
bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it
required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and
gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

175 In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of
indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters
464 soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger
labor supply than the sparsely settled province could
(567) afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave
market.

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

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SIZE OF SLAVEHOLDINGS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[11]

| Number of Slaves | Slaveowners Number 1790 | Number 1860 | Per Cent 1790 | Per Cent 1860 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 slave | 73 | 78 | 12.5 | 7.3 |
| 2 and under 5 | 88 | 173 | 15.1 | 16.1 |
| 5 and under 10 | 95 | 204 | 16.2 | 19.0 |
| 10 and under 20 | 86 | 188 | 14.7 | 17.6 |
| 20 and under 50 | 150 | 216 | 25.6 | 20.2 |
| 50 and under 100 | 69 | 142 | 11.8 | 13.2 |
| 100 and under 200 | 20 | 51 | 3.4 | 4.8 |
| 200 and under 300 | 3 | 13 | 0.5 | 1.3 |
| 300 and under 500 | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| 500 and under 1,000 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Total | 585 | 1,070 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Although the number of slaveholders in 1860 had increased 83.9 per cent over that of 1790, the distribution in the two periods, according to the size of holdings, did not vary appreciably. In 1790 some 58.5 per cent of the slaveowners had less than twenty slaves and in 1860 only 60 per cent had less than that number, a difference of less than two per cent. In 1790 those owning more than one hundred slaves were 4.1 per cent of the total, while in 1860 they were 6.6 per cent, a difference of 2.5 per cent. The only significant change in the distribution of the size of holdings occurred in the class possessing from twenty to fifty slaves. In 1790 this group was a fourth of the total, but in 1860 it had been reduced to a fifth.

While the general average for the district in 1860 would place every owner in the rank of a planter, it is significant that three-fifths of the slaveholders in the district owned less than twenty slaves. With less than this number a man engaged in the cultivation of sea-island

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[11] *Agricultural Census, 1860*, p. 237; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, 1790: State of South Carolina*, pp. 10-13.

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cotton, the staple crop in 1860, could not hope to engage in large scale production. Only 19.8 per cent owned more than fifty slaves and only one planter owned more than five hundred. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the majority of those engaged in agriculture in this district, one of the most densely populated slave counties in the entire South, belonged to the small planter class.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of slaves owned by St. Helena planters at any given time.[18] The first census of the United States shows that only four men in Beaufort District, none of whom lived on St. Helena Island, owned more than two hundred slaves in 1790. Frederick Witsell had 607; Thomas Heyward, 265; General Stephen Bull, 233; and John Rutledge (who lived in Charleston), 217. Of those living on St. Helena, the plantation of William Fripp with 153 slaves had the largest number; that of John Jenkins with 136 slaves, the next largest. The other holdings were considerably less. Thomas Chaplin had 65 slaves; William Chaplin, 50; John Chaplin, 30; Paul Fripp, 37; Thomas Fripp, 33; John Fripp, 38; Charles Capers, 45; William Capers, 15; John Cowen, 13; Peter Perry, 45; George Pope, 39.

Early in 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Treasury Department, estimated that there was an average of forty slaves to a plantation on St.

[18] The courthouse at Gillisonville, the seat of Beaufort District, was destroyed by Sherman's Army in 1864. Later the county seat was changed to Beaufort, and in 1883 the courthouse there was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the antebellum county records have, therefore, been destroyed. The MS, "Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860" (in possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.), does not contain a list of slaves. This MS is a duplicate of the original which Congressman William Elliott said in a written statement that he deposited in the Court of Claims. A search through some of the files of the Court has failed to reveal the original.

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CHAPTER IV

# SEA-ISLAND COTTON CULTURE

## THE PLANTING ROUTINE

248 THE CULTIVATION of sea-island cotton produced a characteristic system of agriculture. The average sea-island planter cultivated a little less than six acres to the hand. Had the plough been substituted for the hoe, the acreage per hand would have been twice as much. In addition to cotton, the planter raised corn and sweet potatoes as provision crops in the proportion of about seven-twelfths cotton, three-twelfths corn, and two-twelfths sweet potatoes. The average yield of cotton was about 135 pounds to the acre; of corn, fifteen to twenty-five bushels of the southern white-flint variety; and of potatoes, about 150 bushels to the acre.[1]

Since cotton was the main crop of the sea-island planter, he tended to consider that acres planted in provision crops were somewhat of a loss. It was seldom, therefore, that a planter raised enough corn and potatoes to furnish his plantation throughout the year, for the acreage in provision crops was determined not so much by the amount of provisions required as by the number of acres which the hands could attend while working the cotton crop. Factors' statements and the plantation books available indicate that sea-island cotton planters made frequent purchases of corn, rice, and bacon for provisions.

The planting season began about the middle of March, although the preparation of the soil started much earlier in

[1] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 133. With reference to the crops of St. Helena see Pierce, "Report of the Government Agent," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 306.

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the year. Cotton was planted from about March 20 to April 10; corn about April 1; and sweet potatoes the latter part of March. The routine of labor on a sea-island cotton plantation from planting time until the crops were laid by is illustrated by that on John Fripp's Bluff plantation of 560 acres as recorded in his plantation book for 1856. The spring of this year was cold and wet so that Fripp was late in putting in his crops. 248.

He did his first planting on March 20 and 21 when he banked and planted four acres of potatoes. The weather prevented his planting again until April 7 when he put in the rest of his potatoes, two more acres. On the tenth he commenced banking and planting cotton, and by the sixteenth he had put in thirty-eight acres which he recorded were doing "fine." Three days later he began putting in the corn crop and planted that day eighteen acres in the "Savannah swamp field." On the twenty-second he planted twenty-three acres of cotton in the "Marsh field." A week later he commenced the regular corn crop and by the first of May had planted in all sixty-three acres. The next day he planted twelve more acres of cotton in the swamp field and on May 3 put in three-fourths of an acre of rice in the small fresh water ponds by "Point field." On the twelfth and thirteenth he finished planting cotton, making a total of 121 acres.

The hands were busy hoeing cotton from that time until the twenty-second of May when they stopped to put in fifteen acres of "Shinney Peas." Two days later Fripp detailed a few hands to put in an acre of rice near the swamp field. All hands resumed cotton hoeing until July 5 when Fripp began to plant the first of his potato slips. 248 464 567

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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when
he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of
[412] the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
175 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
248 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six
taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS. John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

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used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

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Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

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These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

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248 407 a small turning lathe, the operator standing at one end of the gin, feeding the cotton very slowly through the rollers, leaving the smooth black seeds behind. . . . Twenty or thirty of these little machines stand in one room; and, strange to say, none of those who have attempted to propel them by other power have succeeded. One very intelligent gentleman told me that he had spent $5,000 in trying experiments in machinery to gin this kind of cotton.[7]

### BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENTAL AGRICULTURE

248 Although sea-island cotton in the early days of its introduction was one of the most profitable crops ever raised in the South, the increase of its production and the varying fineness of the fiber caused a wide fluctuation in the price. Thus while some planters ~~realized considerable~~ profits, others were hard put to make expenses. As early as 1826 the most progressive planters in nearly every parish which grew "sea-islands" began to inquire into the causes of this condition. They organized agricultural societies[8] in the attempt to improve the general methods of culture and to standardize the prices; they subscribed to agricultural magazines; they wrote articles; they sent out questionnaires.

[175] In 1828 William Elliott, of St. Helena's Parish, writing in the *Southern Agriculturist*, expressed the general sentiment of sea-island planters on this important subject. He said:

I shall turn to the consideration of a question, which it is of a paramount importance that a Sea-Island Planter should examine and

[7] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 135.

[8] The St. Helena Agricultural Society was organized prior to February, 1843. *The Southern Agriculturist* of that date contains a letter from Daniel Jenkins, the secretary, on the unsuccessful experiment of some St. Helena planters in packing sea-island cotton in square bales.

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understand; viz. "What is the cause of the difference of price given for Cotton, grown even on adjoining plantations?" . . . latterly, the range of price has baffled all calculation, and has extended to such a pitch, that a favoured Planter has been known to obtain for his crop, *five times the price* obtained by his immediate neighbour. . . . Yet it must be confessed, that this unsettled state of things accompanied by its apparent system of favoritism, has a most discouraging effect on Planters. When they who enjoy equal advantages, as to salt exposure, practice equal assiduity in the application of salt manures, bestow equal care on the preparation of their staple, find that all these advantages and this care go for nothing—that the extra expense incurred by their superior preparation was equal to ten or twelve cents per pound—while one or two cents advance on the average price, was all their compensation; that the money thus profitably expended by the majority of growers, went to the exclusive profit of the foreign agent or manufacturer; while here and there some solitary, envied Planter, received a disproportionate reward for his labours. When these things are considered, it is not to be wondered at, that they are discouraged, and that they are ready to substitute any other culture which may offer to industry and skill, a competent and an equal remuneration. For, if the high rate of valuation, at which their lands and negroes have been acquired, whether inherited or purchased, be taken into the account, it will be confessed, that few investments of capital have yielded for the last ten years so trifling a return, as that of the Sea-Island Planters. The prices have never been high, and, whenever a full crop has crowned the wishes of the Planter, the price was sure to fall by anticipation.

. . . To the Vanderhorsts', the Seabrooks', Matthews', Coffins', and Popes', and others of that fortunate class, whose names give title to the highest prices in the agricultural lottery, I offer no advice. But, to the majority of Planters cultivating the Sea-Islands, or points of the mainland, inclosed by the arms of the sea, the debatable lands, as it were, of the culture, I would say, persevere yet a while in your efforts to approach the standard of these favoured names;—if that be, from physical causes impossible, hope

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yet longer, that, what happens in all other pursuits, will eventually happen in yours; viz. that a *gradation of prices may be established*, and that your cotton may meet the common justice, to be rated according to its fineness and cleanness, and not continue to be classed, as heretofore, with cotton the meanest, if it did not happen to equal the best.[9]

The Coffins and Popes, whose cotton Elliott mentioned as invariably receiving the top prices in market, were St. Helena Island planters.[10] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, another successful planter, was one of the first to spread knowledge of the improved methods of cultivation. In 1826 he sent a questionnaire to several planters who were considered the most efficient growers of the staple. Thomas Aston Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, St. Helena Island, received one of these questionnaires.[11]

[9] Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 154-161.

[10] The Coffin trademark was a "pinch-toe" coffin.

[11] W. B. Seabrook, *A Report Accompanied with Sundry Letters*, pp. 25-27; Coffin's letter dated Dec. 26, 1826. His reply was as follows:

"1. Is all your cotton equally fine?

I think not, but I have never heard purchasers remark any difference . . .

"2. What manure do you esteem best?

I have generally used the marsh mud taken from the creeks; sometimes green marsh.

"3. Is your cotton so distinguished for one quality, remarkable for others, &c?

My cotton derives its character from its silkiness, strength and evenness of fibre.

"4. What has been your average crop for the last seven years? and what quantity do you plant to the hand?

Caterpillars and storms have destroyed some of my most promising crops; but I think 450 lbs. per hand are about the average. I generally plant nearly three and a half acres to the hand.

"5. Are you particular in the selection of your seed? . . .

I have generally preserved the seed from my earliest pickings; sometimes I have planted seed, exchanged with my friends, both North and South. I think the cotton produced from the seed, with a green tuft, the finest and most silky, though not the most productive.

"6. . . .

"7. Do you preserve your seed, &c?

I am not particular, so that it is kept dry.

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The result of the wide differences in prices paid for sea-island cotton and the planters' subsequent attempt to remedy this situation led to improvements in the methods of agriculture, such as, the careful selection of seed, fertilization of the soil, soil analysis, and the rotation of crops. Instead of planting seed without regard to its origin, planters sought to obtain improved and tested strains. From 1826 to 1830 the Kinsey Burden seed was considered the most superior on the market; in 1854 "Owen's Selection," named for George C. Owens, was in highest favor.[12] At least three St. Helena Island planters gave their names to seed which was of high repute: Coffin, Pope, and Fripp. In 1868, when good sea-island cotton seed was extremely difficult to obtain, James Gregorie's factor in Charleston wrote to him, "I understand from

"8. Do you in gathering your crop pick those pods, which, from their immaturity, are imperfectly open, &c?

My orders are to pass over defective pods, to save the trouble of selecting them, when assorting; but, from the difficulty of seeing these executed, I presume they are much neglected, especially after frost.

"9. Do you dry your cotton in the sun or shade, and how long?

Generally one day on a scaffold, unless the cotton has been wet.

"10. What is your mode of preparation?

. . . I handle it as little as possible after it comes from the gin.

"11. Are you in the habit of using the whipper?

Before cotton goes to the gin, but not after.

"12. What is the character of your soil and situation?

High and low; mostly high; a yellow mixed sand on the hills, and black or grey in the narrow vallies which run N.E. and S.W. through the extent of the Island. I am on a neck of land, two sides are bounded by creeks, and one side by the ocean.

"I have *once* used a *machine gin* from St. Simons' Island, to the rollers of which, made of hickory, I gave as many as six hundred revolutions in a minute. I ginned about twenty bales of cotton with this gin, and heard no complaint about the staple being injured; but my negroes were continually putting it out of order, and my impelling power proving defective, I laid it aside. I introduced this remark, hoping the want of a gin, as well adapted to the Sea-Island Cotton as Whitney's saw gin is to the upland, may stimulate some of our planters, in this exertion, to produce one."

[12] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 13.

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Isaac his seed is the genuine old Fripp seed, if so take care & don't get it mixed with other seed so that you can furnish your friends with it next year."[13]

In the attempt to raise a staple with a fine, long fiber, sea-island cotton planters, while achieving this goal through a careful selection of seed, at the same time acquired a plant of small fruitage and consequently of slender yield, sacrificing quantity for the quality of the product. By force of circumstances, therefore, they were compelled to resort to every possible means of keeping the yield up to the maximum.

In the early days of the plantation regime when planters used any fertilizer at all it was for their potato fields, for they used only virgin land for their cotton. When the fields first selected for cotton became exhausted, as they invariably did in a few years, they again resorted to virgin land, clearing the land by girdling the trees, without taking the trouble to remove them, so that a cotton field was often a cemetery of dead oaks and palmettos which made the use of the plow impossible. In 1826 Robert Mills wrote, "The bulk of the planters, relying on the fertility of the soil, seldom plant any land but what is good, and change the same when it begins to fail for what is fresh, giving themselves little trouble to keep their fields in heart."[14] Even late in the ante-bellum period this expedient was still the most popular one.[15]

In some cases necessity forced the planter to drain the swamps and marshes and convert them into cotton fields.

[13] MS, John Colcock to James Gregorie, Charleston, April 9, 1861. In possession of Dr. M. G. Elliott, Beaufort, S. C.

[14] *Statistics of South Carolina*, pp. 155, 156.

[15] Seabrook, *Memoir on Cotton*, p. 24.

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These reclaimed tracts often proved very fertile so that in the later ante-bellum period, a few sea-coast planters quite generally engaged in draining and embanking marshes and swamps. In 1844 Mr. Seabrook, of Edisto, thought that the immense tracts of unreclaimed swamps "which lie along the line where the salt and fresh water meet . . . are capable of yielding an amount of cotton wool equal to the yearly exports of the State."[16] 248.

### MARSH MUD AND SEA-ISLAND COTTON

A few planters fertilized their cotton fields soon after the introduction of the new staple; in fact, all the materials used as manure in the later ante-bellum period were employed as early as 1805 in a limited way by some sea-island planters, but it was not until 1825 that the methods of manuring became generally known.

Planters found that salt-marsh[17] mud which was within easy reach of most of the cotton fields, was the cheapest and one of the most profitable manures that they could obtain. It was usually applied to the soil at the rate of about forty-one cart loads to the acre. Planters employed various methods of adding it to their fields. On Edisto Island most of them preferred to use it as soon as dug. The Whaley plantation on Little Edisto was divided into halves, each half being planted in alternate years. Slaves went out in boats on the creeks and rivers to the nearby marshes, loaded their boats with the mud, and returned to empty it in ox-carts or hand-woven baskets [567]

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[17] The term "saltmarsh" was used on the coast to apply to the mud and other matters of which the marsh is composed.

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to be "toted" to the fields by other slaves.[18] The mud was then listed in. On the John F. Townsend plantation it was plowed in, but Mr. Townsend was the only man on the island who used plows to any extent.

Some planters dried the mud before spreading it upon the land. Tuomey's *Geological Survey of South Carolina* of 1848 recommends charring the mud to diminish its weight so that it might be transported profitably some distance up the rivers and so that it would fix the volatile products of decomposition on being added to a barn-yard manure heap.[19] Other planters made a compost[20] of the mud. R. F. W. Allston, writing in 1854 on the sea-coast crops, stated that the usual compost was prepared in summer "by mixing with farm-yard, cowpen and stable litter, salt marsh, marsh mud, and even salt."[21] It was applied to the land in winter at the rate of forty, fifty, and seventy cart loads. He considered that the best method of using this compost was, first, to prepare the land in the autumn by listing in the remaining growth as soon as the crop had been picked, even before the cotton had been prepared for market, and then in the spring to make a bed on the autumn listing by drawing up with a hoe the earth which had been well manured in the winter with the marsh-mud compost.

The proportion of marsh mud to barnyard manure used in this compost was based upon the character of the

[18] J. Swinton Whaley, "The History of Sea-Island Cotton." Unpublished manuscript.

[19] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, p. 232.

[20] For a discussion of composts see F. A. Procher, "Report on Manures," in *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. I, 1-13; Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 70-80, 85-93.

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[21] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 13.

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land and the experience of the planter. Colonel Edward Barnwell, of St. Helena's Parish, considered his success in sea-island cotton planting to be due entirely to his method of preparing compost. He descanted so much on compost that one of his friends once remarked that Edward Barnwell would put compost into his will. He did. He left a certain Negro to a son who intended to be a planter "because he knows all about making compost, without which a plantation is of no value."

While some planters brought the marsh mud to the manure heaps, still others mixed the mud and the manure on the fields themselves by "running a cowpen." The plantation cattle, which numbered as many as could be pastured upon the "field at rest" and the woodland, usually twenty to every five hands,[22] were penned on succeeding nights in movable yards on the resting field, which was littered with fine straw and marsh grass. The tramping of the cattle excellently prepared the field for a top dressing of marsh mud. Sometimes marsh grass was laid between the old rows after running the cowpen but before the mud was applied. Then, the sod of one year's growth was hoed down into the alleys and the bed formed upon it.[23]

Some planters used as a fertilizer only the marsh grass, often called simply "saltmarsh." "St. Helena," writing in 1837 for the *Southern Agriculturist* on the cultivation of sea-island cotton, explained his method of applying marsh grass as follows:

It may . . . be gathered in the summer, and put up in heaps, for use in the following spring. Where the planter alternates his

[22] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 87.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

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fields, the marsh may be spread out in the alleys of the vacant field, and immediately listed in. This mode is decidedly preferable; because, putting in the marsh at so early a period, gives it abundant time to rot, by the ensuing spring. But where the same field is planted for any number of consecutive years, the marsh must be put up in heaps to rot during the summer; for the field is then occupied with the cotton. With a good scythe, it may be fairly estimated, that one fellow will do six times as much at cutting marsh, as in digging mud: and when it is considered that six cart-loads of marsh, will manure a task better than 21 loads of mud, the balance is greatly in favor of marsh. Rushes do as well as marsh, where the land does not require salt. . . . Some planters object to marsh, and say that it produces "blue" in cotton; but no one need apprehend this, if the marsh has been put into the land so as to give it sufficient time to rot, before the cotton-plant reaches it.[24]

The value of the marsh mud as a manure for sea-island cotton land depended not only upon its effect in promoting retention of moisture but also upon the saline, organic, and calcareous matter which it contained. Most of the marsh mud, however, has a very low content of carbonate of lime and is not a sufficient fertilizer for soils deficient in calcareous matter. Some planters met this deficiency by the addition of crushed oyster shells which everywhere appear in great abundance along the banks of the rivers and creeks of the Sea Islands. John Couper, even before 1800, spread crushed oyster shells on his cotton lands on St. Simon's Island every other year and in the alternate years gave them a top dressing of marsh mud.[25] Yet the benefits of shells, or marl, to sea-island cotton land was so little known in the late ante-bellum period that Professor

[24] *Southern Agriculturist*, X, 175.
[25] MS in Couper-Wylly Papers.

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Charles U. Shepard, in reporting on the nature of the soils of Edisto Island to St. John's, Colleton, Agricultural Society, suggested that "the peculiar fertility of new sea-island cotton land" may be "owing to the proportion of comminuted shells natural to such soils, and the deterioration of these lands under long cultivation, ascribable to the exhaustion of carbonate of lime."[26] He strongly urged, therefore, that planters add pulverized oyster shells to their cotton fields or be careful to use a marsh mud which abounded in a gravel of feldspar and hornblende.[27] The old indigo heaps, the refuse of the vats, offered the planter another source of lime for his cotton fields. The lime used in the preparation of the dye had become mixed with earthy matters and was especially beneficial to the cotton fields.

A few planters experimented with the commercial fertilizers, especially guano and its substitutes. The *American Agriculturist*, writing in the late ante-bellum period on the crops of Edisto Island, earnestly recommended planters to use guano, which contains "the same fertilizing properties of muck, in an hundredfold degree," and suggested that they apply about 200 pounds to the acre, plowed in deep, or buried in the bottom of the cotton beds, making sure, however, to use "none but the best Peruvian, and purchase it from a reliable merchant, so as to be sure it is genuine."[28] By the close of the ante-bellum period planters in the sea-island cotton belt quite generally used some kind of fertilizer.

[26] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, p. xlii.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 234. Edmund Ruffin examined a specimen from a shell bank on Distant Island near Beaufort and found it contained 47 per cent of carbonate of lime.

[28] Printed in Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 132-133.

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242 Seabrook, however, thought this rotation unfitted for the South Carolina Sea Islands "where the high lands, which are limited in quantity, and unfit for corn, are alone considered safe for cotton." Instead, he recommended as a good rotation to be followed " in a small way," potatoes, or spring peas, rest, and cotton.[34]

"Rest" was the common practice of "rotation" on the Sea Islands. When the land had become exhausted by repeated cropping, its fertility was restored not only by the application of manures, but by resting the field for a certain length of time. The time necessary for restoration was dependent, of course, upon the nature of the subsoil. Enterprising planters hastened the process by thoroughly breaking up the soil, thereby exposing fresh surfaces to the atmosphere and turning the grass and weeds under to enrich the soil.

### THE AGRICULTURAL LOTTERY

248 Despite these efforts at scientific farming, which resulted in methods that are generally considered as belonging to present day agricultural development, sea-island cotton was an uncertain crop. In 1808 David Ramsay, writing the history of South Carolina, spoke of planting as an annual lottery, in which on an average of several years there were many blanks and many prizes. "A few of the latter," he wrote, "are very large, but the greatest number do not much exceed the price of the ticket."[35] In successful seasons, profits were large. One crop might purchase the land which raised it; two or three more, the Negroes who cultivated it. But in unsuccessful years,

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[35] David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina*, II, 396.

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planters felt the pinch of hard times. A late, wet spring 248 might defer planting until there could be no hope of maturing an average yield before frost. Had the spring been propitious, an unseasonable frost might blight the plant and decrease the crop. Excess of rain or drought might retard the crop or the plant might develop a disease. When the crop was made and ready to be gathered, a storm or hurricane might blast the labor of a year. When the crop was gathered and baled ready for market, economic conditions at home or abroad might reduce the price so low as to plunge the planter into debt.

The diseases to which sea-island cotton were subject, blight, rust, and "blue," were generally considered as arising from some defect in the soil.[36] They could be removed, or at least considerably remedied, by thoroughly draining the land and applying the proper fertilizer at the proper season. But the plant louse, cut worm, and the 248 leaf worm, or caterpillar, as it was commonly known, could 136 not be so easily combated. The plant louse was practically a yearly pest which planters fought by cultivation, attempting to raise a plant hardy enough to withstand the attacks of the insect. The cut worm often appeared in wet seasons and on low lands insufficiently drained. James Hamilton Couper recorded in his plantation book when commenting on the crop for 1818:

> The cut-worm was so destructive, until the 18th. of May, as to have killed the cotton, as soon up, with the exception of the high parts of the old & new fields. They were universally found in the East River Field. It is believed that the Fresh, which covered the fields from the 5th. to the 21st. of March was the cause of their appearance in such numbers.[37]

[36] Allston, *Sea Coast Crops*, pp. 14, 15.
[37] Hopeton Plantation Book.

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The weather not only abetted the insects in their destruction of the cotton crops, but sometimes itself brought ruin. In 1819 James Hamilton Couper was found recording in his plantation book, "In the Spring, the Cotton was very generally destroyed by Frost," and "On the night of the 14th Octr. a sharp white frost destroyed about 70 acres of cotton at Hopeton."[41] In 1823 he wrote: 248 132 (136)

> The crop was set in good time; and was unusually promising until the excessive rains which commenced about the middle of July. These rains continued nearly two months, and occasioned the cotton to drop nearly the whole of the middle & under crop. The upper crop in quantity and maturity promised well, but from the diseased habit which the plant had acquired never opened.[42]

In 1826 he wrote, "This is the only cotton crop since 1818 which has not been cut off by spring freshes, early fall frosts, or gales of wind," and the following year he again recorded, "A very high fresh which occurred about the end of May nearly destroyed the Cotton in Carr's Is." There were heavy rains again in 1828 and 1829, and in 1830 "a very severe Hail Storm was so destructive to the cotton crop, that the failure . . . was nearly entire." With this year, Couper left off recording his observations on crops, but in a letter to his son in 1855 he wrote, "We have had a glut of rain during the week; and as was to be expected the cotton is shedding freely. Three fourths of the Cotton crops are destroyed by the August rains."[43]

in embryo, as the energetic planter . . . has already done." He doubtless refers to dusting the plants with a mixture of Paris Green, resin, and damaged wheat flour. (242)

[41] Hopeton Plantation Book. [42] *Ibid.*

[43] Couper-Wylly Letters, August 23, 1855, James Hamilton Couper to Hamilton Couper.

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248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir
133 Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island, Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un
248 usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of
132 some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by
[730] caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the antebellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which have caused great suffering and loss of life.

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## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

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he had made it, and it was the factor who enabled him to do so.[47] He sold the planter's cotton on commission. He

[47] See factors' statements and letters in the McPherson and Gregorie Papers, and the John E. Fripp Papers. The following statement is John E. Fripp's account with his factor from September, 1856, to May, 1857:

Cr.——John E. Fripp, Esqr.——In Account——Current with——
Coffin & Pringle

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1856 | | | | | |
| July 22 | By Balance at your credit as pr. account rendered | | | | 86.77 |
| November 20 | By Nett Sales of 3 Bags sold in Liverpool | | | | |
| | say £50. 13.10 | | | | |
| | £39.19.01 @ 9¼% | 194 | | | |
| | £10.14.09 @ 8½ % | 57.77 | 245.77 | | |
| | £50.13.10 | | | | |
| | Less advance recd. 17th June last | 194 | | | |
| | " 127 days Interest on advance from 5th September last to maturity of Sales 10th January 1857 @ 6% | 4.01 | | | |
| | " our commission @ 2½% on balance say on $51.77 | 1.29 | 199.30 | | 46.47 |
| 1857 | | | | | |
| January 5 | By received for T. M. Hanckel's order upon Legare & Colcock | | | | 135.75 |
| February 20 | By received for 3 Hides | | | | 11.10 |
| April 13 | By Nett Proceeds of 11 Bags Cotton as pr. Sales rendered | | | | 1,718.85 |
| | | | | | $1,998.94 |

"Dr.——John E. Fripp, Esqr.——In Account——Current with——
Coffin & Pringle

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1856 | | |
| September 30 | To Sundry Postages paid to date | .28 |
| November 26 | " remitted him | 50.00 |
| | " 94 yds California Kersey @ 40c | 37.60 |
| | " 124½ yds Brown Plains @ 34c | 42.33 |
| | " 44½ yds Union Plains @ 25c | 11.12 |
| | " 56 Blankets | 129.20 |
| | " 20 yds Satinet @ 62½c | 12.50 |
| | " 1 ps Red Flannel 35 yds @ 25c | 8.75 |
| | " 1 ps Long Cloth 40½ yds @ 15c | 6.07 |

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248 sold him on credit the provisions on which his plantation operated: his Negro cloth, his farm implements, frequently his cotton seed, and much of his corn and bacon. He paid the planter's taxes and cashed his drafts.

Frequently the planter and his factor were related by blood ties so that the agent had an additional incentive to treat him as a preferred creditor. While the relation between individual planter and factor was often friendly, there was in general a feeling of resentment between the two. When the planter's crop failed, his factor might consider that the failure was due, in part at least, to mismanagement; while the planter constantly regarded his factor's commissions as too high. An Edisto planter who once raised large crops of sea-island cotton still speaks with bitterness of the more than hundred years of bondage in which Charleston factors held sea-island planters.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | " 1 ps Bleached Homespun 47 yds @ 12½c | 5.88 |
| | | " 48 pair Shoes @ $1.10 | 52.80 |
| | | " Freight $2.72 Drayage 19c | 2.91 |
| 1857 | | | |
| January | 1 | " paid his order to B. S. Screven | 50.00 |
| March | 3 | " paid him | 500.00 |
| | 4 | " paid 8 Months & 13 days Interest on his Bond for $3415 to John Webb to date | 154.60 |
| | | & on account of the Principal of said Bond | 1,345.00 |
| | | & one year & 1 Month Interest on his Bond for $4000 to same to date | 303.33 |
| | 10 | " paid his order to Wm. C. Danner & Co. | 104.26 |
| May | 5 | " paid his order to O. P. Law, Tax Collector | 95.56 |
| | | | $2,902.40 |
| | | To Balance brought down at your debit this day | $ 903.55 |

E. E.

Charleston 10th June 1857
Coffin & Pringle
for John P. Matheson

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Without his factor, however, the planter would have been hard put to it to operate his plantation. The factor often held the planter's cotton in storage waiting higher prices, paying storage and insurance, which, of course, were deducted from the sale of the cotton. Sea-island cotton was usually later in reaching the market than the short-staple cotton because of the longer time required in ginning it. It did not begin to move freely into market until the first of the year, but some planters had their factors hold their cotton as late as July and August.

It usually cost the planter about 4 per cent of the value of the bale to market his cotton after it had been ginned. For instance, in June, 1835, Miss Mary B. Elliott, daughter of William Elliott, the first successful planter of sea-island cotton in South Carolina, sold ten bales of prime cotton from her plantation "The Battery"[48] for $1,258.65, the freight, storage and factor's commission of which were $48.64, or 4 per cent of the receipts.[49] In July it cost her 4.6 per cent of the receipts to market five bales of stained cotton and two bales "a shade better." In June, 1840, she was paying 4.1 per cent for freight, storage, and commission. In 1859 John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island and Bluff plantation on the Oakatee, was paying 4.1 per cent.[50] Freight ordinarily cost $1 a bale; landing, weighing, and storage about 26 cents a bale; insurance, about 37 cents a bale, and the factor's commission 2½ per cent of the sale price.[51] Planters on St. Helena Island ordinarily

[48] The town of Port Royal was built on this plantation during the Civil War.
[49] Miss Mary B. Elliott Account Book, 1835-1849.
[50] John E. Fripp Papers.
[51] Based upon statements which Coffin & Pringle, factors, made to John E. Fripp, in Fripp Papers.

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sent their cotton to Beaufort by their own sail boats which were loaded at the plantation docks. At Beaufort they put the cotton, which they billed to their factor, on a boat for Charleston, paying the usual $1 a bale for freight.

The price paid for sea-island cotton varied with the yield and demand for the staple throughout the antebellum period, as did that of upland cotton. Between 1806 and 1816 the price varied from 25 cents to 47 cents a pound.[53] At this time, sea-island cotton was not graded, as William Elliott pointed out in 1828,[54] but sold generally as either fine or inferior. The account book of Miss Mary B. Elliott, his sister, in which she recorded her sales between 1830 and 1849 indicates that she sold during this time four grades of cotton: extra fine, prime, inferior white, and stained or yellow.[55] The price which she received for prime cotton varied from 21 cents in 1843 to 62½ cents in 1836. The inferior white brought 4 or 5 cents a pound less than the prime cotton and the extra fine about that much more. The stained cotton sold usually from 7 to 9 cents a pound.

A sea-island cotton planter of Liberty County, Georgia, analyzed his cotton crops from 1830 to 1847 and found that the average price he received a pound in the eighteen years varied from 13½ cents in 1842 to 41 cents in 1838.[56] At the same time his yield per acre varied from 68 pounds in 1846, when he received net proceeds of $41 a hand, to 223 pounds an acre in 1842, when he

[53] *DeBow's Review*, IV, 412.

[54] *Supra*, p. 51.

[55] The classes of long staple cotton on the market were: Floridas, Santees, Mainas, and Sea Islands. Each of these was usually classified as common, medium and fine.

[56] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 128-129.

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realized $80 a hand. The net proceeds per hand were highest in 1835 at $137 a hand and lowest in 1846 at $41, with an average of $83 for the eighteen years. 248

Miss Mary B. Elliott received over a period of eleven years an average of $87.54 a bale for her sea-island cotton, receiving as high as an average of $183.57 a bale in 1836 and as low as $54.61 in 1848.[56] If it cost an average of $27 a bale to gin the cotton, as Seabrook of Edisto Island estimated,[57] and 4 per cent of the receipts to market it, then the planter had $57.04 a bale out of which to care for his slaves, pay the general overhead on his plantation, and realize interest on the investment of his capital.

[56] Elliott Account Book, 1835-1849.
[57] *Supra*, p. 30.

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The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 461 248 (804) [407]

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

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S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve without remuneration in this social experiment, contributing himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St. Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

(248)
(433)

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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175 657 658 427

tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 outlined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of planting under the system arising out of the sale of plantations:

175 658 657 248

> I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this, most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and employ some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more. The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules, carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the ensuing year.[35]

175 657

The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of government-operated plantations and was content until the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, permitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

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CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues. 491 248 175

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 361 175 248 423 175 (137) 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old 248 (243) (244)

[p. 191]

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248 175 [657] men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded [492] the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on [493] foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy [292] calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

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[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
466 the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
[427] acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a
[465] money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war,
• 248 sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[112] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[113]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[112] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [113] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
• 248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

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# Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African-American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of significant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

248 249 567 177 178

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The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peoples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

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175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change 175 was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza 249 Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experi- [247] ments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and [386] from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government. Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the [556] province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy 175 African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, 567 South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

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175 While thus exploiting the natural resources of the Island, the settlers raised only provision crops and hogs.

175 243 Although rice culture[4] was begun in South Carolina before 1690 and had become one of the staple commodities by 1724, rice was never raised to any extent on St. Helena Island. Rice culture during the colonial period was confined for the most part to the inland swamps which could be flooded from fresh-water ponds and rivers, as, for example, Combahee River. Salt water is poisonous to the rice plant,[5] and St. Helena Island has only a few small fresh-water ponds. In these few ponds some rice was raised of a different variety from the famous Madagascar rice, but the amount was necessarily small.

### INDIGO CULTURE

175 249 Almost from the first settlement of South Carolina, indigo was grown in the province and at intervals a bounty was allowed for its production, but it was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century that it became an important article for exportation.[6] In it St. Helena Island found a staple which supplemented and to some extent supplanted the provision crops and the export of naval stores. As early as 1748 the dye was exported to Eng-

[4] See A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Introduction of Rice Culture into South Carolina," *Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South Carolina*, no. 6. For a discussion of rice culture during the ante-bellum period see Edmund Ruffin, *Report of the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina for 1843*, and R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, which appears also in *De Bow's Review*, XVI, 589-615.

[5] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 469.

[6] In a letter written by Elizabeth (usually abbreviated to Eliza:) Lucas in 1739 she refers to her efforts to produce indigo on her father's plantation in South Carolina. This has led some writers to assert that she first planted indigo in South Carolina and that from her experiments the great indigo industry in the province developed. The records of the province show that some indigo was produced in South Carolina before Miss Lucas was born.

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land and attracted immediate attention, for Great Britain was at that time importing annually 600,000 pounds of indigo from France at the rate of about £150,000 sterling. The following year Parliament allowed a bounty of 6 pence a pound on indigo from the British colonies, and indigo culture at once grew in the favor of South Carolina planters. By 1754 the export from Charles Town had reached 216,924 pounds, and on the eve of the Revolution it had mounted to more than a million and a half pounds.[7]

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Indigo had become, next to rice, the most important source of wealth in the province. Moses Lindo, a London Jew and expert indigo sorter, had done more to stimulate the growth and the excellence of the dye than any other man in South Carolina.[8] As surveyor and inspector-general of indigo for South Carolina, he taught the planters to distinguish the grades and to improve the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the dye. The prices were usually excellent, ranging generally from 4 to 6 shillings a pound.

A light, dry soil was best suited to indigo culture; hence it was cultivated in considerable quantities on the Sea Islands. During the colonial period both the annual and perennial plants were grown. About 1760 Governor Glen wrote that the plant most frequently used in South Carolina was the annual, the sort generally cultivated in the West Indies.[9] The perennial, however, was less trouble

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[7] *Year Book*, City of Charleston, 1883, pp. 402-403.

[8] B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, chap. III.

[9] "A Description of South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 203. George Milligan, writing in 1763, quotes "an ingenious planter" as saying that there was in the province a great variety of seed, "and from every sort good indigo may be made but none answers so well in this colony as the true Guatimala." Carroll, *op. cit.*, II, 533.

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to grow and thrived on poorer land, provided the soil was dry and loose.

Planting began about the first of April. The soil, after having been well prepared, was furrowed with a drill-plough, or more often with a hoe, two inches deep, and the seed sown thinly in these trenches. A South Carolina planter estimated in 1763 that a bushel of seed would sow four acres.[10] In ten or fifteen days the young plants appeared and were immediately hoed to loosen the earth about them. When the plant was in full bloom, in June or July,[11] it was cut regardless of its height, for at that time the leaves were thick and full of juice.

With the cutting of the weed, the planter was ready to begin the process of manufacturing the dye. The plants were cut off near the ground and placed under water to ferment in a shallow vat, or steeper, as it was called. This process, which usually required some twelve hours, took the dye stuff out of the leaves. The fermenting solution was then drawn from the steeper into another vat, known as the battery, where it was violently agitated with paddles for fifteen or twenty minutes to complete the fermentation and to collect the particles of dye.

As soon as the solution acquired a blue tinge, lime water from the lime vat was carefully stirred into it until a cloudy hue appeared. The indigo water was then beaten again until granulation began and the dye stuff left to precipitate to the bottom of the vat for four or five hours. The water was drawn off and the paste which had settled in the bottom carefully strained through a horse-hair sieve

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

[11] Milligan's authority states that the blooms usually appeared four months from the time of planting.

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to clean it and then hung up in bags for several hours to drain out the water. Afterwards the bags were put through a press to free the indigo from any remaining water and the stiff paste spread on a plank, cut into small pieces about two inches square, and placed in a drying-house so that it might have a free circulation of air without being exposed to the sun which might burn it to a cinder in a few hours. While in the drying-house, the indigo had to be turned carefully three or four times a day until it was sufficiently dried to prevent its being spoiled, and it had to be kept as much as possible from flies. When thoroughly dry, the dye was packed in barrels for market.

The indigo raised in Beaufort District commanded the top price in market,[12] and it was still grown in large quantities even after the Revolution. In 1791, Mrs. Charles Capers, the wife of a St. Helena planter, stated that the planters of the Island were "wholly attentive to the Cultivation of Indigo."[13]

In some sections of the coastal region, especially in Orangeburgh District, indigo was grown throughout the ante-bellum period, and small quantities even after the Civil War. In 1828 William Elliott, of Beaufort District, wrote to the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, to encourage a more widespread growth of the plant.[14] In defense of his position, he cited the case of Donald B. Jones, of Orangeburgh, a member of the House of Representatives, who, in 1827, employed five hands in the production of cotton and five hands in the production of

[12] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 368.

[13] Mrs. Capers to Mrs. Russell, March 25, 1791. Copy of original in possession of Penn School, St. Helena Island, S. C.

[14] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828, pp. 64-66.

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indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton. In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[15] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions besides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and be otherwise employed in."[16] Thus the production of

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[15] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[16] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

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### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

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The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you never used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(443) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
(438) your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

• (251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice.
(388) And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
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* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![44] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(231) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh
(845) mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

218 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

•252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(115) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(759) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
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* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh
[252] beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

"I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout
115 muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said, her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been
[757] familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[48b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of
304 which her eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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829 Hestuh she Shad's gran. Yuh knows Shad? Bentoo she duh younges. Magret she my gran."

We asked if Belali Mohomet had been related to Belali Sullivan on St. Simons.

"I ain know bout St. Simon but Cotto use tuh talk bout cousin Belali Sullivan.

"Yes'm, I membuh muh gran too. Belali he frum Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds
829 we didn know. She say 'mosojo' an sometime 'sojo' wen she
192 mean pot. Fuh watuh she say 'deloe' an fuh fyuh she say 'diffy.' She tell us, 'Tak sojo off diffy.'

"Wen sumpm done she say, 'Bim-boga-rum.' Yuh tell uh sumpm wut is a suhprise lak somebody die, den she say, 'Ma-foo-bey, ma-foo-bey.'

829 "She ain tie uh head up lak I does, but she weah a loose wite clawt da she trow obuh uh head lak veil an it hang loose on uh shoulduh. I ain know wy she weah it dataway, but I tink she ain lak a tight ting roun uh head.

829 "She make funny flat cake she call 'saraka.' She make
829 um same day ebry yeah, an it big day. Wen dey finish, she
252 call us in, all duh chillun, an put in hans lill flat cake an we eats it. Yes'm, I membuh how she make it. She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tak dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. 'Saraka' she call um."

412 Before the cabin stood a crudely constructed wooden mortar made many years before by Katie's husband and used originally for the pounding of rice. A deep basin-like aperture had been hewn out of the center of a log which was about three feet long and from eighteen to twenty inches wide.[43]

115 Across the dusty road from Katie Brown's another nar-

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829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it 252 out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-
764 ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a
765 wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way.
789 She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh
231 spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd.[55] Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b, c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [79] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz hollowed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

• 252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[34] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked 115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large
252 sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse.
The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels,
224 skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

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> Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

825 The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

463 In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family
(178) members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) - 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

• 252
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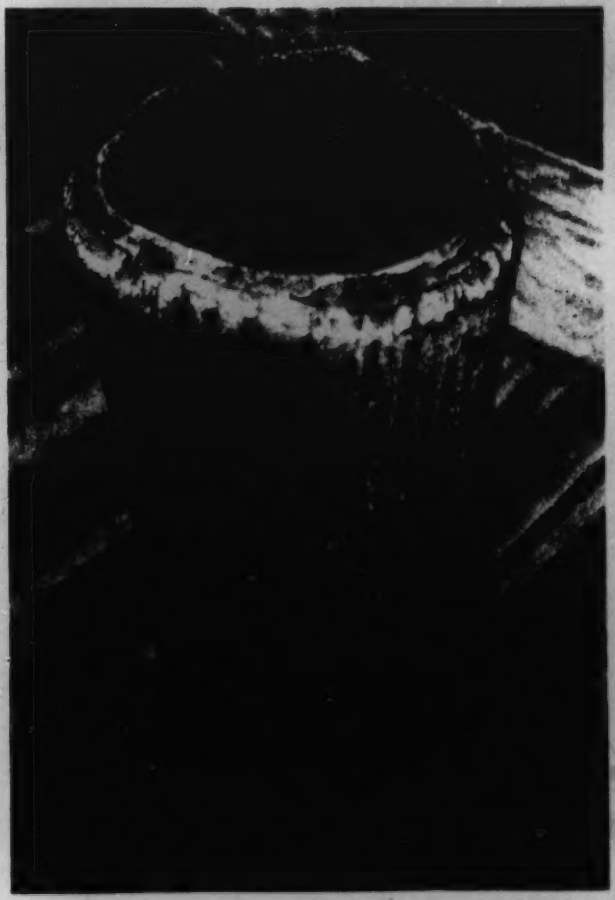

[171] Mortars made from palm trees are traditionally used to pound rice and corn. Similar mortars are still used throughout Africa.

[p·112]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton

(435)
(465)

bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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'We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533)
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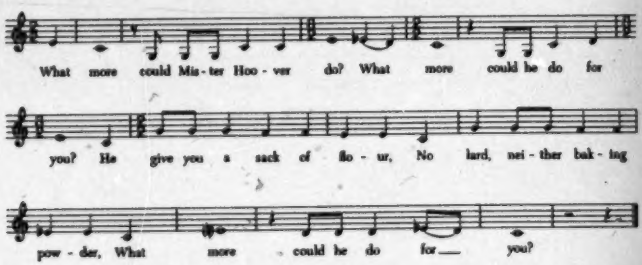


•(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
935 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
[435] got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

[443] Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
[438] miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
[231] your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

[251] Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
935 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
438 corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
388 hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

252 Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
251 Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
226 cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
[294] mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

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Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley—in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

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In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

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Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

735 151 262 (241)

My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
550 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
174 This fact raises still another interesting question.
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Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were appar-
175 ently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers
567 and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when
252 the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

175 Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
567 came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
782 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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550 She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy
170 born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as *gumbo* or okra (famous in New
• 252 Orleans), *benne*[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
561 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
[192] whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
[824] Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and
[761] give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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8. *Beating Rice in Darien*

[facing p. 49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [191] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 567 461 [412] [533] On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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What y'u gwine t' do fo' June month? Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
June month's a ha'd month—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Jersualem in de mornin'—Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Floyd sang several variations of the central theme, but as he said himself, "This is enough!" Janey's song was practically the same except that she substituted "Zion" for "Jerusalem."

You mus' pray ha'd—June a ha'd month
June month a sailin'—Oh, Zion O Zion.
What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

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In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rats-tat-tat!

Next door:
Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rats-tat-tat!

And the next:
I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rats-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[199] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24]

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FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women.

567 581 562 (831) (837)

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of

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[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with
•252 their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After
(412) the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large
(285) hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared
252 supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the
262 corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from
(23) the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate
(264) to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

567 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten
264 just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
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What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

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256
402

In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
(402) into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
(202) note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
(199) ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

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## *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
(342) ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
(363) streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

• 262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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•262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[411] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
[115] nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July." [20]

•262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne
[252] an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

115 "I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said,
[757] her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[48b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of
304 which her eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em' [15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den." [10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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## SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, •]

791 794 783 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We [533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 • 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 202 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[87b, •] [782] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[58b, •]

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759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

•262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

After much persuasion we gained the older woman's con-
[123] fidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told
115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

•262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any
262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

"We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said.
[533] "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

"Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah
[202] it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[55]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[21]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[24] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe."[25]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs."[26]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope,"[27] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away."[62]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. •262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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•262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings." [65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
(737) satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
(593) so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
(343) house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231 * *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
567 the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

•262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(23) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX)[A], whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [38] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
•262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous 248 floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by 241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels, clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare • 262 expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136] > The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that [868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and
•262 the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily
[538] available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave
225 regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the
561 use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly.
[262] The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

000 This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

262 The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea
223 Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds.
224 Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this
[264] home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and
[262] other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

538 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her [789] face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not priv- 115 leged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 789 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 757 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analysis]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

• 262 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on 264 the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

000 33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an 825 avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks 538 drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

**THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS**

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My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

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The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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[262]
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Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[p.97]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain—climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and (262) grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things—automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with (493) oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 735 178 262 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 178 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

735 252 Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley--in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

735 272 In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

735 178 Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

735 159 262 (241) My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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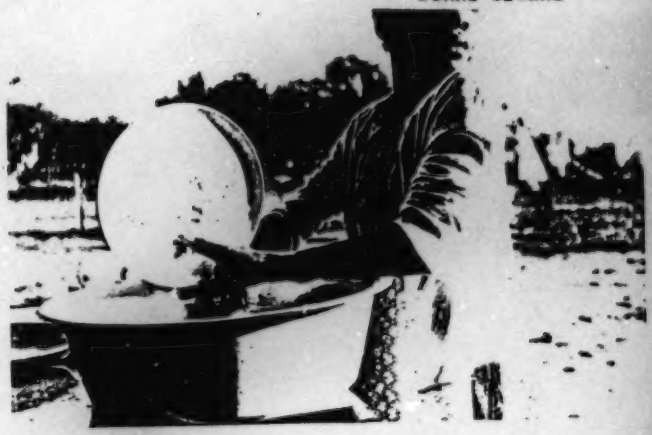

*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

**ALL US WORKS**

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I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

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(513)

Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



SLAVE RATIONS

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The amount and type of rations which were issued to the hands varied with the plantation. For instance, four different plantations on Edisto Island observed the following practices.[26] One plantation master issued to each hand one bushel of potatoes a week from about October 1 to February 1, and then one peck of corn, ground or unground as preferred, or one peck of broken rice. The owner gave out meat occasionally. On another plantation the rations were: one bushel of potatoes, or ten quarts of corn meal, or eight quarts of rice and four quarts of peas. In addition to this, the slaves, numbering 170, were allowed during the year twenty barrels of salt fish, two barrels of molasses, and fresh meat occasionally. On a third plantation the diet was varied by a weekly ration of a half bushel of potatoes, six quarts of meal, and twenty-one pounds of fresh meat, or ten quarts of meal or rice. A fourth plantation gave out, in addition to the usual half bushel of potatoes, a quart of vegetable soup once a day during hard labor and twice a week at all other times.

In 1862 Edward L. Pierce reported that the customary rations issued by St. Helena planters were a peck of corn a week to each hand and meat at Christmas and in June when work was hardest.[27] While a few plantations allowed meat only at Christmas, a few others dealt it out as often as once a month or once a fortnight. Some plantations also gave molasses and sugar occasionally. Children were allowed from two to six quarts of corn a week, the amount varying with the age of the child. Edward S. Philbrick, one of the Government's superintendents of

[26] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 134.
[27] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
•262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
567 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to culti-
241 vate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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567 252 [412] [285] huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 252 •262 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25] [231] [264]

567 264 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have
advised the people to set the women in their proper place
—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.;
and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is
just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing
degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be
more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain
Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour
of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at
their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three
dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near
the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for
the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking
party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children
were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant
tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [787] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 787 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 757 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



538 517 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa), (264) yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a (273) result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo, (171) Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than (196) one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 462 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island storytelling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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She is fifty or more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 so that it will participate in the event by responding to certain cues given by the teller.

The teller's call and the audience's reply are often simultaneous. Clearly they must be distinguished on the printed page, and separating them formally as is done here helps clarify the degree to which the speaker and the audience rely on back-and-forth interplay to develop and perpetuate a rhythmic flow once the tale begins.[24]

128 The following notational conventions have been used to provide more information concerning the context in which these tales were told. Double exclamation marks indicate loudness, and triple exclamation marks, extreme loudness. Parentheses enclose indications of nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as long pauses, laughter, eye or hand movements, or meditations. Dashes indicate interruptions or pauses in thought or speech. Ellipsis dots show omissions. A series of hyphens indicates phonological lengthening, as in O-o-o-kay! Italics are used for responses and for emphasis on words or phrases. Square brackets enclose translations or interpolations of words or letters.

538 [264] These tales were told around a fire site at a local store just after nightfall on Wadmalaw Island. Approximately twenty or thirty people gathered, eating crabs and roasting hot dogs while they waited for the storytelling session to begin. The order here does not necessarily reflect the order in which tales were told. Further, some tellers were better performers than others and thus were asked to tell several tales before the session ended.

"The Man and the Skita [Mosquito]" is an extension of the Clever Slave Motif J1114.01 (more commonly known in the United States as an "old marster and John" tale) and Motif H961, Task Performed by Cleverness. It falls vaguely within Tale Type 920 III, Impossible Task.[25] In this tale the philosophical outlook of Ber Rabbit prevails: even when faced with almost insurmountable odds, one can survive not through physical strength but through one's own wit and intelligence.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on
• 264 the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an
825 avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks
538 drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

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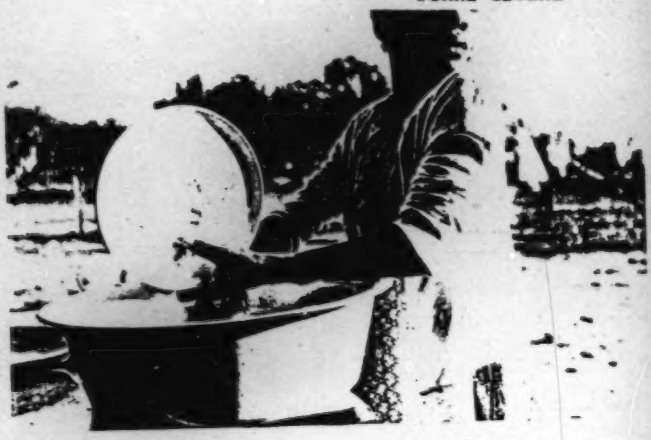

*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

**ALL US WORKS**

159
872

I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

159
872
262

For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

159
(513)

Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [264] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up." [191]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



533
539

After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [171]

Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354

Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 567 461 [412] [533]

On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with
252 their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After
[412] the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large
[285] hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared
252 supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the
262 corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from
[23] the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate
[264] to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

567 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten
264 just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 452 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already bern pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
•264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
592 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[82] Some observers of slave life thought
593 also that there was little family affection among them. Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[83]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
461 within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
461 in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[84] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[82] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[83] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[84] *Supra*, p. 86.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told

115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a

262 settin-up."

"We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

• 272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any

262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[66] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [789] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 789 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious 757 or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island [538] folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

735 252 Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley—in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

735 272 In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

735 178 Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

735 159 262 (241) My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda [272] [264] crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[171] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July." [20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

• 273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

•273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[48]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[49] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



538 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in
517 kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa),
[264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a
[213] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo,
[171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than
[196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island story-
462 telling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



X

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Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
They give me this jolly red nose.

XI[22]

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

[22] This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

### TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538 (539)

> My pretty pink, I really think
> That you and I should marry.

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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III

Thou art my love, and I am thine,
I drew thee for my valentine.

IV

The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

*Other Verses*

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de veek I vear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
*Did he preach it!*

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

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*Play Rhymes and Games*[23]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

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II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest, and [except by] those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.[44] 567 527

Most of their holidays the slaves spent "pleasuring themselves." Christmas was the great event of the year, for it was at this time that the master distributed rewards to his people as well as extra provisions of beef and molasses and "hands of tobacco." The master of at least one sea-island plantation also provided his slaves with "plenty of whiskey." At the end of the three-day orgy the Negroes were often "completely done up with eating, drinking, and dancing."[45] [273]

A holiday was also the occasion for many requests to visit the island stores and neighboring plantations, but most planters discouraged inter-plantation visits and required the overseer and the drivers to check up frequently on the activities in the "street." An overseer was supposed to see that all was well in the quarters before he went to bed, and the drivers were also responsible for keeping the street quiet. It was by this means rather than by the patrol system that sea-island planters kept peace on their plantations at night, although occasionally the planters or their overseers joined in "riding a patrol." No slave was permitted either by law or by plantation regulation to be absent from home without a ticket. While some planters permitted every well behaved slave to have one whenever he requested it, others issued tickets more [574] 567

[44] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 117.
[45] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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872 [175] grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 [46] [567] As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have 527 parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are [273] all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[82]

594 527 175 Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[82] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Richard Linen reminisces about the past and about how "thing change up now."

[p. 134]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
291
302
276

[p. 19]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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293
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[p. 39]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[P. 119]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

[p. 127]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142
•216

2. Old Polly Goodwine

[facing p. ii]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

(752) "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

(237) (825) "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[49a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 [15] (278) Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

(787) "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 757 West 34th Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![44] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

• 278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
789 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(759) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



192 *Hippo* for ipecac, probably from the dialect of the cockney English sailors who fetched it home from the Brazils. [278] The British pharmacopoeia of 1725 calls it "hippocachuana, hippechachuana, hippo for short."

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to daub or smear with spilled victuals and grease; similarly *gaumandize* (*gormandize*) not to eat greedily, but to daub or to spatter oneself with food.

*Proper Names (Onomatopeia)*

192 *Bloody noun*, the big swamp bull-frog.
825 *Fry-bakin' frog*, the small pond-frog, supposed to say "fry bacon," "tea-table."

*Higguhri-hee* and *Cuckatoo*, both being terms for the great horned owl.

192 *Nickuhdemus*, *Buhrabbus*, and *Polydo'*, all favorite, mouth-filling names, common in sermons and religious arguments: "Ent de Scriptuh say een de fo'teen chaptuh een Nickuhdemus, dat de lab'ruth wut' 'e hire?"

*Rebus* is of unknown origin, being coupled only with Revelation, meaning from Alpha to Omega: "Uh bin t'ru da' t'ing frum Rebus spang to Rebelashun."

(825) *Po'Jo*, the long-legged, long-necked Blue Heron.

*Popular Etymologies*

*Consecrate lye (concentrated);*[a] *middle-night, middle-day, middle-blouse*, for mid-night, mid-day, middy-blouse; *inflummashun*, for information; *sparruhgrass* for asparagus;[a] *Sawlketchum* for Salkahatchie, a tide-water river of South Carolina, for which the commoner corruption among the whites is "Saltcatcher"; *preecher on de sukkus* (circuit); *locus preechuh* (local preacher); *patty-* or *patty-auguh* for piragua, pirogue; *Saa'bint Day* (Servant's day) confused with Sabbath Day; *muffle-dice* for hermaphrodite; *grin' salt*, said of a hawk or vulture circling aloft; *carryin'* for carrion; *peach omelet* for peach marmalade; *curly flower* for cauliflower;[a] *Florida lime* for chloride of lime; *sweet religion* for sweet alyssum;[a] *nutten-aigs* for nut-megs.

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[a]Not exclusively Gullah; commonly found elsewhere.

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
(789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone." [50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[23] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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GRIMBALL'S POINT

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

754 "But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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Georgia

322
532
[412]
←
[481]
→

IIa. Carved wooden spoon

IIb. Carved wooden stick with figure

• [285]
←
[412]
→

IIc. Coil basket and carved wooden objects

[following p. xxxii-B]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

142
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302
285
115

XVc. Cuffy Wilson and granddaughter at Sapelo

[following p. xxxli-S]

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*285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak [824] and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this 412 district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 532 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst].

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

• 285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. [567] Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 754 [789] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69a] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



•285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[33] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[34] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

•285 178 463 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets [531] have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African [177] utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

285 171 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans [178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 868 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina

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868

Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

[p. 19]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•285
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Miss Mary practices her ancient craft.

[p. 20]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina .



•285 rials—pine needles, bulrushes, sweet grass, and palmetto leaves—for
868 the girls and women to weave. The children learn to make baskets at around six years of age, and by the time they are in their teens, each has mastered a certain style and design that generally carries his or her
285 trademark in the weave. Most of the baskets follow a simple coiling technique with a knot used as a base. The free ends of the sweet grass bundle are folded and then wound around the knot to begin a coil. Then an opening is pierced in the center knot and a strip of palm leaf is pulled through the opening, wrapped around the grass coil, and pulled back through a second opening made in the knot to anchor or station the coil. As this process is repeated, the coil begins to circle out from the center knot to create a basket base that is circular or oval. From this base, the basket is constructed by changing the angle at which one circular row is fastened to another. The palm stitch in the Mt. Pleasant baskets does not interlock with the stitches in previous rows of the coil. Consequently, the stitches appear to radiate out from the center knot in a linear way, much like the spokes of a wheel.[41]

The baskets, like the islanders' other crafts, are displayed along
439 U.S. Highway 17, north of Charleston, or sold in the open markets
439 near downtown Charleston where tourists crowd in daily to haggle over the prices of vegetables, hand-woven clothing, jewelry, and other wares, including items of brass, silver, and gold. Everything has a bargain price, and the basket sellers, like the other marketeers, are professionals in the art of bargaining. Baskets are priced according to size and difficulty of design, and it is a bad reflection on one's selling skills to be pressured into parting with a basket at a price lower than that established by the community; such an act may bring censure from one's family and from members of the community. The basket weavers, although seemingly unsophisticated and some of them certainly poor, are quite shrewd bargainers. I watched an exchange that took place when a very impressive car stopped in front of a basket stand along Highway 17. The driver, smoking a large cigar and accompanied by three elegantly dressed women, strolled over to look at the baskets. He picked up a tray of coasters and asked the basket weaver how much she would charge him to make coasters with specific dimensions for his beer cans. She hesitated, looked down at the basket that she was weaving, and said, "About twenty dollars." He then asked how long it would take for her to make them. She replied with some reservation that it would take her at least a week. He quickly took a

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
197 days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 228]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 252 (412) (285)

huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 252 262

With the aid of her children, the mother prepared supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

(23) (264)

567 264

The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

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* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A. [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[27] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa
789 and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
(322) attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the
• (286) women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
(356) an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

[227] [286]

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 567 "Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh grandaddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

115 "Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use

533 534

* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 42]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

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Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286]
[222]
[824]

I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

[432]
[434]

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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V. Julian Linder at Brownville

[following p. xxxii-E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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VII. Tony Delegal at Ogeechee Town

[following p. xxxii-G]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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VIII. Woman and baby at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii -H]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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IX. Girl at Pin Point

[following p xxxii-I]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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X. Boy at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii - J]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XI. Lewis McIver, fisherman at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-K]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIII. Alec Anderson at Possum Point

[Following p xxxii-M]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVa. Rachel Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii-N]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVb. The Andersons' granddaughter at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-0]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVc. Woods worker at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-P]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVa. Katie Brown with Flint

[Following p. xxxii-Q]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVb. Katie Brown with pestle and mortar

[following p. xxxii-R]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVc. Cuffy Wilson and granddaughter at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-5]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVd. Nero Jones at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-T]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIa. Shad Hall at Hog Hammock, Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-V]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIb. John Bryan at Raccoon Bluff, Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-W]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIIb. Ryna Johnson, her daughter and son-in-law at Harrington, St. Simons Island

[Following p. xxxii-Y]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIIc. Ben Sullivan at St. Simons Island

[following p. xxxii-Z]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIX. Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii- AA]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

XXI. Artie and Enoch Jones at St. Marys

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[following p. xxxii-cc]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XXII. Robert Lucas at St. Marys

[following p. xxxii-DD]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XXIV. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[Following p. xxxii - FF]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. 775 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um 776 till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 good luck han tuh weah [6, 12a, c, d] so no udduh root wukuh could
789 hahm uh. Attuh dis duh ebil spell went away an duh woman wuz cuod."

115 One of the interesting characters of the section is Ellen Jones,* better known as "Pipe Ellen" because of a very evident liking for tobacco. The old woman, an ex-slave, claims to be almost one hundred and twenty-two years old and walks almost daily from Springfield to Savannah. Winter and summer, her frail figure is snugly buttoned into a
• [291] heavy top coat, so long that the hem trails on the ground. On her white head she wears a dark wool skull cap.

754 "Pipe Ellen" told us that she firmly believed in conjure and in proof of this she related the following instance: "Right yuh in Savannah a uhmun wut claim tuh be muh frien root-mahk me.[15] I ain fraid tuh tell uh name, cuz she dead now. It wuz Flossie Hopkins.

"She fix me wid tuhbaccuh. Yuh see she knowed I lub tuhbaccuh. She wuk a root on me so strong dat she put a big snake in muh bed, an uh could feel tings moobin all tru muh body. I could feel duh snake runnin all tru me.[5, 50] Den I heah a noise an it keep on, so uh say tuh muhsef, 'A snake is in yuh.' I git up an set duh lamp in duh middle uh duh room. Duh snake show up. I close all duh cracks roun duh house, so nuttn couldn git out.

"Nex ting I know dat uhmun wuz knockin at muh doe. Wen I let uh in, she grab dat snake, tro it cross uh shoulduh an walk out.

754 "Ef uh hadduh kill dat snake, a man tole me, it sho would
755 uh bin Flossie Hopkins. He tole me tuh git a box uh Debil
789 Lye. Denne dug unduh muh doe step an took a bunle uh roots. Deah wuz red peppuh, an sulphuh, an salt, an some udduh kine uh powduh. He sprinkle dis all roun duh place an say I need nebuh be fraid cuz dis would kill any cunjuh put down fuh me." [6]

754 During the course of an interview, which was held later

* *Ellen Jones, rear 1304 Stiles Avenue.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



124 114 When we arrived, it was just getting dark. Black masses of trees were outlined against the sky. To the south a shining river curved into shadows. A little wind blowing up from the marsh tasted of salt.

The party was in full swing. Small groups clustered about the open fire, chatting amiably and tending the juicy pork which was slowly roasting on a grill. The light of the fire lit up the shiny black faces and touched here and there on a bright blouse or turban.

115 Uncle Jack, tall, bony-framed and lanky, had worn his usual workaday clothes to the party. His kindly, near-sighted eyes shone with excitement. Uncle Robert, small and spry, had dressed up in honor of the occasion. He was conspicuously proud of his derby hat, neatly brushed and [291] cleaned. It was about two sizes too large and came down to Uncle Robert's ears at the sides and to his eyebrows in front, but, almost new, it gave the old man a certain air of assurance and seemed to make him forget that his brown suit was faded and well worn.

When the opening merriment had somewhat subsided, the crackling of pork fat and the smell of hot yams drew the party around the fire where Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert were exchanging reminiscences of old times. For the most part the others listened, occasionally interjecting a sentence or two.

We asked how long the old men had lived on the island and Uncle Jack answered, "All muh life I lib right yuh on Wilmington Ilun. Bawn yuh an nebuh want tuh lib no place else. I got ebryting I want right yuh."

Uncle Robert, who was eighty-one, about ten years older than Uncle Jack, said that he had come to the island from Clinch County just before the War between the States.

The long journey undertaken so many years ago had made a vivid impression on him. With a far-away expression in his eyes, the old man told us about that trip.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII)[A] set on graves
322 that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
532 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41a] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
(342) leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

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759 aw sizzuhs tuh cut the pain. Once wen I wuz in pain a mid-
755 wife put a peah of sizzuhs unduh muh pilluh. All of a sudden the pain stop right quick. The pain wuz cut right off." 125

115 Josephine Stephens,* one of the older residents of the island, lived a short distance from Liza Basden. Her house was set back several hundred yards from the highway in the midst of a large field. There was no pathway and in order to get to the house we had to cut directly through the field. As we neared the gate at the front of the house a tall gaunt woman, who we learned was Josephine's daughter, ran to meet us. It appeared that the mother had been ill for some time past and the younger woman had been caring for her.

As we talked with Josephine, the daughter stood in an adjoining room, ironing clothes. She stopped every now and then to take part in the conversation. The two women were utterly different types. Josephine, dressed becomingly in
• (291) a blue and white checked gingham outfit, was the antebellum type of Negro. The daughter, tall, thin and dashing, and probably in her forties, represented a more modern era. She had on a blue checked sport shirt, a white skirt upon the surface of which was the dim outline of the trade name of a flour mill, and a pair of shiny black satin bedroom slippers. Her two front teeth were gold and shone and sparkled as she talked. Two large gold hoop earrings dangled beneath her
(301) close cropped straightened hair.

"I bin wukin ovuh at St. Simon," she explained to us. "Befo that I had a good job up Nawth. My mothuh git sick tho, an she need me tuh take keah of huh. That's why I come heah an stay. She gittin tuh be long in yeahs an caahn do so well by uhsef."

The mother did not know exactly how old she was but said she had been about fourteen at the close of the War between the States. We questioned her about her recollections of

* *Josephine Stephens, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young
[231] puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from
461 the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three
123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished
[115] to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt
[291] hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and
[361] wondering how far from the main road this little settlement
[829]

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
• [291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue
[416] overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[p. ii]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

[p. 19]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Mary practices her ancient craft.

[p. 20]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Josephine is an avid storyteller. She, like most Sea Island women, continues to wear a headwrap.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted Williams is known for his ability to tell a good story.

[p. 48]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Myma, who has lived her entire life on Wadmalaw Island, befriended the author and introduced her to the ways of the island and its people.

[p. 61]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Richard Linen reminisces about the past and about how "thing change up now."

[p. 134]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[226]
[868]

Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

[p. 154]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*Sam Polite, the Praise House elder. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

[p. 252]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Susannah of the Oaks Plantation. From the Penn School Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

[p. 253]

*Gullahs and Sea Island Cotton.*

[P 256]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*(Personal collection.)*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullahs working for themselves. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. 305]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Laura M. Towne, Dick, Maria, and "seeker" Amoretta, February 1866. From the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library.)*

[p. 306]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullah and the Carolina Lowcountry. (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 327]

[p. 328 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 2]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## MY FATHER WAS BORN A SLAVE

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My father was born a slave. He was fourteen years old before he had a shoe on his foot. And across the hills of South Carolina you could track him. They had big snows in the winter, and he wrapped his feet in gunny sacks. He said you could track him through his blood in the snow as he went out to bring the cows home during those snowy nights. In the morning he'd get up and run the cow up from where he slept all night to warm his feet, warm his hand with the warmth of their bodies. He was fourteen years old before he had his first pair of shoes.

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(563)

My grandmother was half Indian. 'Course the Indians are stubborn, supposed to be. And being a half Indian and then being a slave also, she was very stubborn. She said that her master was a very cruel man. Since she was stubborn, he'd take her by the ears to the corner of a house, and just bang her head against the corner until she'd bleed. Come out covered in blood.

She died in the insane hospital in Columbia. You couldn't find three square inches on her head where there wasn't a scar when she died. And well, you find naked places all through her head where she was beaten until she be beaten into unconsciousness. Sometime she come to herself under a tree; Master had knocked her out. In her latter years it was discovered that during one of those forays the skull was crushed into her brain. The older she got, the worse it got. So she died at the age of seventy-seven, right there in Columbia Hospital. I knew her. I went to her funeral.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

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735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

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[465] The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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241 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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[242]
[243] Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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434 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[redacted]

[5.97]

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of
527 July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of
535 all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that
534 we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side,
535 two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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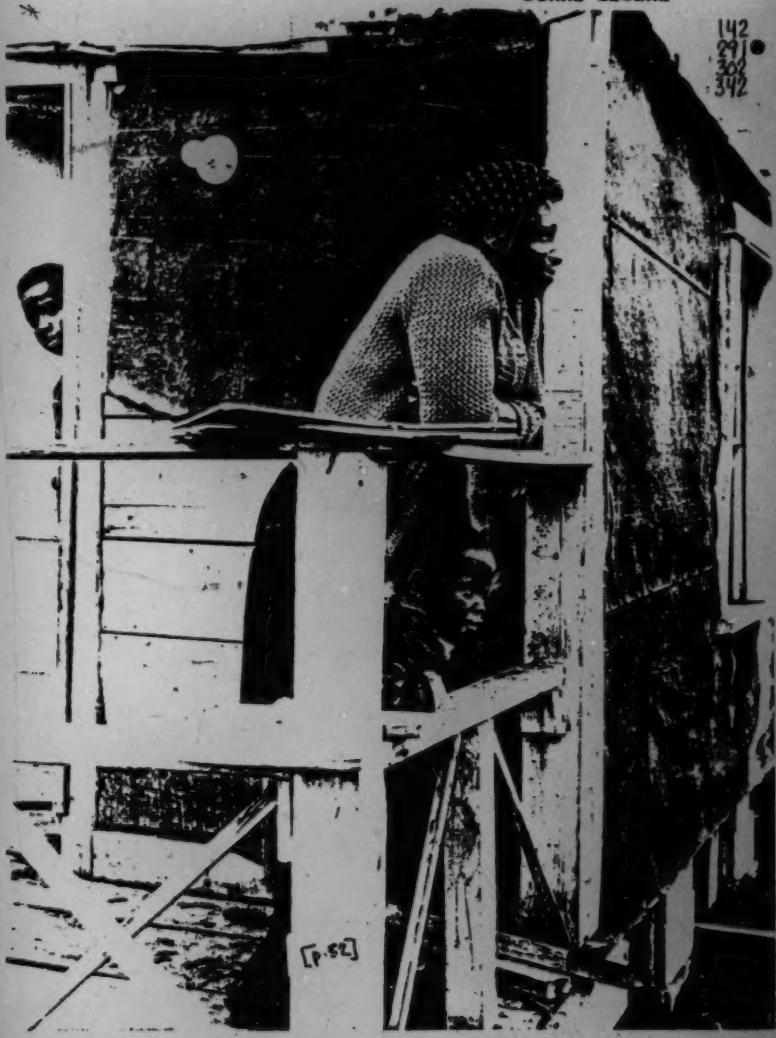

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Σ-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159 511 434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159 [511] But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up—hard time and good time—all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

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[p.52]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## IT'S TOUGH TO RAISE FIVE CHILDREN—SURE IS

I get married to the church. And I had the reception in Robbie Fields' store. They had wine and piccolo playing, and dancing. I danced once. But I couldn't dance 'cause my dress was too long. Long white dress, white shoes and white veil 'cross my hair. Lot of people came to the church and lot of people at the store. They had as much in the yard as was in the store, couldn't come in. I guess 'round about three hundred head. Big wedding.

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We was young children, growing up together. I met him long time ago, but I didn't realize that was to be my husband today. I remember he was picking the potato on the farm and I had to go work that morning and he

157 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
584 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
401 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of
(855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## ALL US WORKS

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I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

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(513)

Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

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159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.
159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job—wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

**ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL**

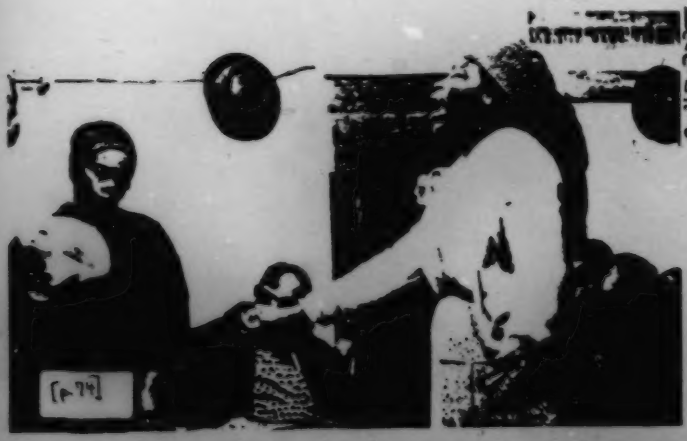
The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we gat out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. John Smalls*

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## GOOD MORNING WARRIORS

Good morning Warriors!
How y'all feel?
I'm feeling special alive.

I just rise to tell you all my aim
And whole heart's desire.
My desire is to go the whole way.
I give thanks for being brought
Not from just last December
But from an infant birth.

I can say, "Are we yet alive
To see each other's face."
Thank God for His redeeming grace.

Since last January
Rocky was my road,
Tedious was my journey.
What troubles have I seen,
What conflicts have I passed.

If I had ten thousand tongues
It wouldn't be enough
To give thanks to Thee
Who took my feet out of the miry clay
And put them on a solid rock.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG**

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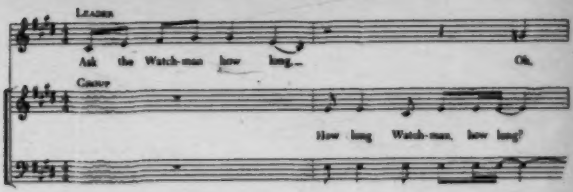


Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.

Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more rounds . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

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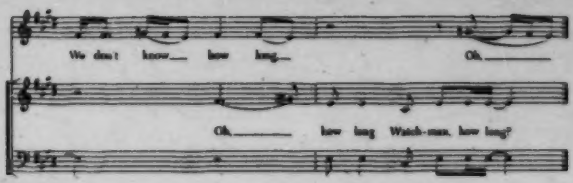


Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# 4. TALKIN' 'BOUT

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[p.94]

# JOKEY

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# A GOOD TIME

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# TIMES

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Hunter*

**WHAT YOU GONNA DO?**

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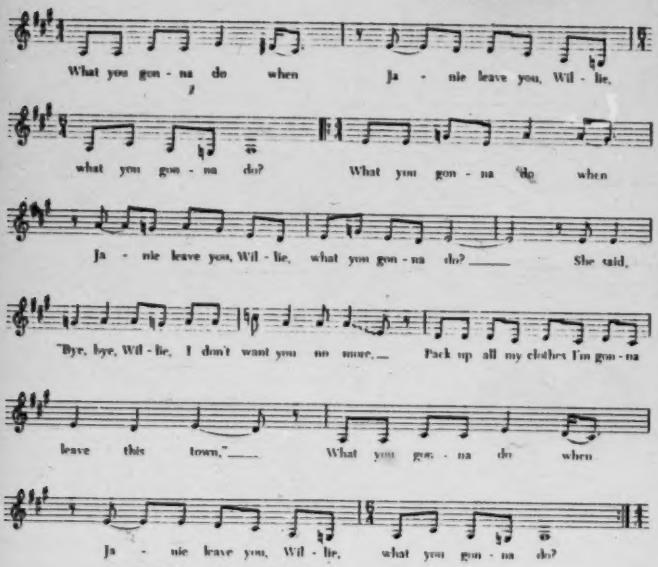


What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, baby, I don't want you no more",
Sitting here crying, Janie, please don't go,
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, Willie, I'm putting you down,
Pack up my clothes I'm gonna leave this town",
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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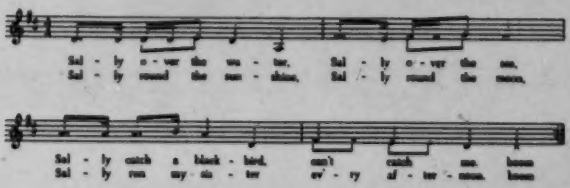
*The Hunter and Pinckney children*

**SALLY ROUND THE SUNSHINE**



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[589]

SOLO: Annie?
GROUP: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get my cake?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
GROUP: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get my wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When MAMA teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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829 871 177 when it come right down to it, it's gonna be accepted. Actually Johns Island is real poor and I don't think nobody could afford for money to be cut off from the schools. The superintendent of the schools told me that if the schools were closed, the Negroes would suffer more than the whites. I don't believe this, and I don't believe that he believes it, because actually to me then we all would be getting equal education—nobody gets none.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

**FREEDOM IS WORSE**

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Really to me, freedom is worse in New York than it is on Johns Island. Because on Johns Island the white people are honest in letting you know that they don't want you to associate with them. In New York, if we go to a hotel and want a room, there's no segregation, they just ain't got no rooms.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# 6. AIN'T YOU GOT A

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?

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# *PROGRESS ON JOHNS ISLAND*

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

(179) And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

159 873 641 666 185 We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 (666) Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school, plus transportation to take them to and from school."

The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm. Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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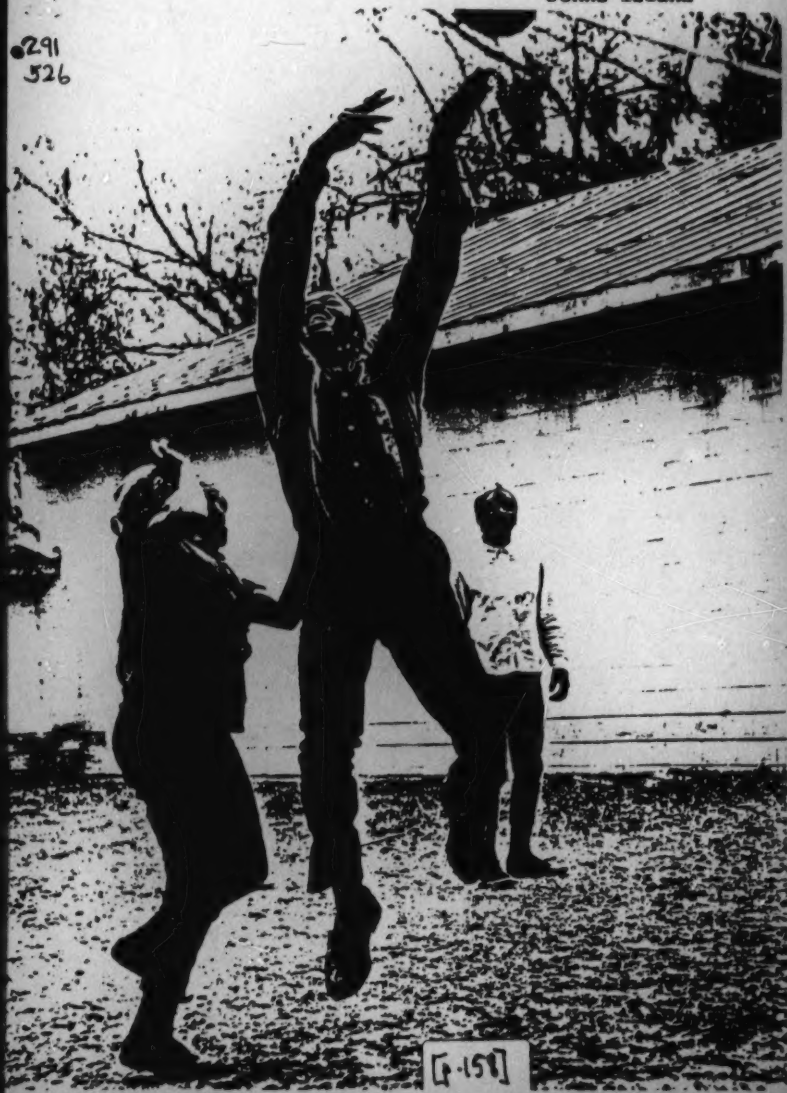

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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

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I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

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need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.

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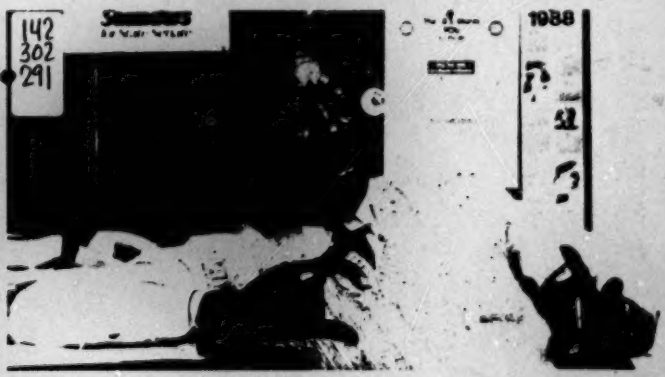

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 758 74 [452] [734] [739] Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

554 While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

554 191 Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

554 871 He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## I DON'T MIND TALKING ABOUT WHAT I SEE

893 The school situation is still one that really bothers me—especially St. Johns High School. The school has 660 students and seventy percent of those students are on free or reduced lunch. These are black children from Johns and Wadmalaw islands. Ten percent of the students go on to college and I'm not concerned about them, but I am concerned about the ninety percent of these black children who cannot go to college, who do not have skills to develop self-sufficiency, and who have to go through school for four years, finish high school, and then have to go right back and either do domestic work, go to Kiawah Island and make beds, go to Kiawah Island and clean yards, or go to Kiawah Island and wash dishes. It doesn't make sense.

I feel very frustrated by what's happening to our children on Johns Island today. They're saying they have to go to James Island if they want to learn a trade. I'm against that. And so that's my fight with the school system. If you have a curriculum that's not meeting the needs of these students, something is wrong.

I would like to get on the school board, but they won't put me on there. They think I'm radical. I'm not radical. I'm just very candid about what I see and I don't mind talking about what I see.

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the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns. Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide leadership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teachers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recognition. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

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*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

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## I STARTED TO TEACH THEM WHAT THEY WANTED TO LEARN

When they asked me to teach the course, I said I would help but I wouldn't teach because I wasn't a teacher. But Myles and Septima both said that if I didn't do it, it wouldn't be done. They wanted someone who was familiar with the philosophy of Highlander. They did not want a professional teacher to do it because they adhere to too strict a curriculum and they wouldn't listen to what the people were saying. So I accepted the challenge.

I had this material from my sister-in-law and she taught from the first to the third grade. That's all the material I had, plus the voter registration material and the Declaration of Human Rights. As soon as I walked in there and started talking with the people, I realized that her material was too juvenile. They were adults and I had to teach them on their level the things that they needed to know.

I had each one of them come up that first night and talk with me about some of the things they would like to learn. I had a little article for them to

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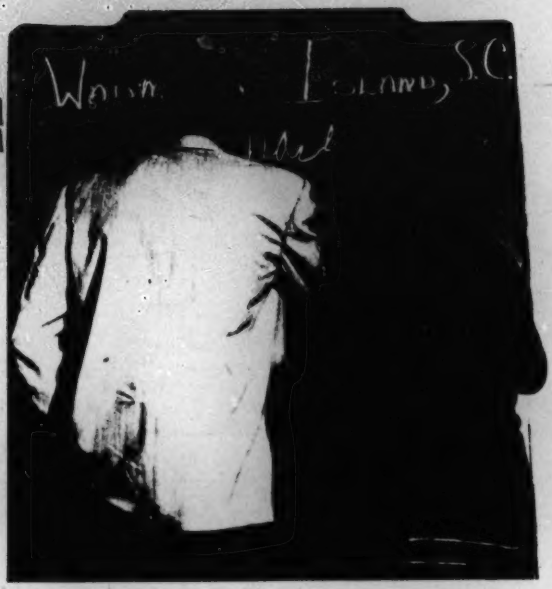


*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ON JOHNS ISLAND KNOW WHAT AN IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAD

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There were tens of thousands of teachers and students who went through that program. It lasted until 1970, and I think that what happened is that foundations thought that we had achieved what we were working for. We had the Voting Rights Bill and we had accomplished desegregation and we had gotten blacks elected to office in all these different states, so the money started drying up for the program.

The curriculum we developed on Johns Island became the curriculum that went all across the South. It was all the things the people had said they wanted to know and learn. I don't think the people on Johns Island know what an impact the program they were involved in had—how it went so far and so wide.

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYTHING IS CHANGED NOW

I still vote. I want to vote for right, but I don't get it. My mother always told me, "You see somebody that jump, you jump too. Cause you, one, can't do nothing. Among the majority, your word just go for nothing." But the people gave us our right, seems like they take our right from us. But it don't stop me from vote. I still vote for the President.

And everything is changed now. The world so tough today.

The older people sang "I Will Overcome" because they had a hard time. They had to row boat to go to the city and carry their peas and corn and potatoes, rice and things. They had a hard time, living and raising their children. Them people had to work with their children on their back. Rebeltime people were mean. But God changed those people. That's a just God. He don't walk knock-kneed. Those oldtime foreparents was something else, I tell you. And one of these days they were able to overcome. They were able to buy the land. Money was scarce, but they had a chance to pay a dollar or two dollars for a piece of ground.

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The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

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The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

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My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

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*Mrs. Janie Hamer*

## I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

177 484 When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## CULTURE IS AN INBRED THING, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE FED

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I think the culture has a better chance to survive if you have some control over it. That has been my dream to try to make sure people have an economic base, and then you can go back, then you can sit around and talk about parents and grandparents. But if somebody is sitting around hungry and you're gonna tell them about some damn culture, it don't make any American sense.

So what it is that some of us have been about is you can upgrade peoples' health care, you can upgrade their housing, if you can upgrade their education, then they themselves begin to look at their own history, because they have some leisure time to look at it.

Culture is an inbred thing, it's in there, but it needs to be fed. The best way to feed it is to make sure you got some of the basic necessities to survive.

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(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, gst to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gst to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking 'long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, gst to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gst to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

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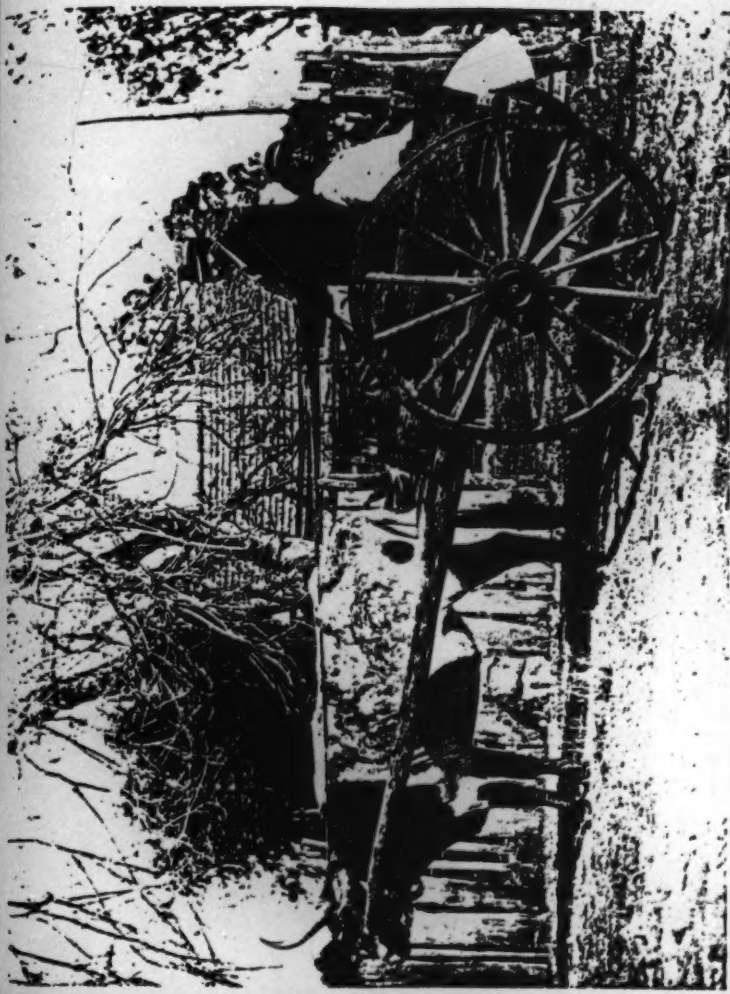

4. Liverpool and His Ox-Cart (Born, St. Simon's, 1858—Died, Darien, 1938)

[facing p. 32]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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5. Bessie Cuyler

6. Oscar Massie, an African-born Slave

[Facing p. 33]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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•241
412

8. *Beating Rice in Darien*

[facing p. 49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

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13. *The Author and Sunyama in Front of the School-House*

[facing p. 81]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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9. Snooks

[facing p. 64]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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10. Susy

[535]

11. Snooks Doing "Juba Dis, Juba Dat"

[facing p. 65]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

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15. *Joe Singing: "Good-Bye Everybody," with Ben in the Background*

16. *Bessie, Deeply Absorbed in the Singing*

[facing p. 97]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

Hog-Shoot in the Cabin

[facing p. 128]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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794
796 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

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159
[533] This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of
[291] the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States
[829] began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

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I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
  Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
  Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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291.
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24. Margaret, on the Left, Demonstrates the Correct Position of Arms and Feet in Shouting

[facing p. 144]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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25. *The Younger Generation Doing the Ring-Shout at the Cabin*

[facing p. 145]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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535

26. *Julia—Who Does the Buzzard Lope*

[facing p. 160]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

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27. Gertrude

[facing p. 161]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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29. Susyanna

[facing p. 199]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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868

30. Julia Teaching the St Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

[facing p. 192]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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31. "Cap'n" Joe

[facing p. 193]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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291

32 St. Simon's Shanty Singers

[facing p 224]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

33. Janey Jackson, Born at Kelvin Grove, St. Simon's, in 1826—Died in 1936

34. Milly Polecat, the Witch Doctor

[facing p. 225]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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the money thus obtained they bought extra clothing, coffee, sugar, and what was with them the chief necessity of life, tobacco.[31] 567 432

R. W. Roper estimated in 1844, in an address delivered in Columbia, S. C., before the State Agricultural Society, that it cost a planter $11.52 annually to feed a slave.[32] His estimate was based upon the following rations: twelve bushels of corn at 50 cents a bushel, twelve quarts of salt at 1 cent a quart, two pounds of bacon a week at 4½ cents a pound, and twelve pounds of tobacco a year at 6 cents a pound. While the prices quoted in 1844 were, of course, not the same for each year of the ante-bellum period, they approximated fairly closely the general average. 567 435

Clothing cost the planter considerably less. St. Helena planters ordinarily allowed each slave two suits a year, one for summer and another for winter. Thomas A. Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, gave out in April for every 200 hands 500 yards of men's blue cotton cloth, like the material used in workmen's clothes in the North, 600 yards of coarse unbleached cotton shirting for the men, 600 yards of the same material for women's underclothes, 600 yards of calico in gay colors for frocks, 100 handkerchief pieces, and 100 straw hats for men. In November he issued 550 yards of stout woolen cloth for men's clothes and 600 yards of thinner woolen for women, 1,200 yards of unbleached cloth for shirts and underclothes, 100 turban handkerchiefs for the women, 100 warm caps for the men; 200 pairs of shoes, and 67 blankets of assorted sizes. The house servants got hose and flannels in addition to 567 291

[31] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.
[32] R. W. Roper, "Address," *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. 3, p. 89.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead
•291 of the usual two suits received by field hands.

Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of clothing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55
567 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a
291 yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handker-
435 chief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing
567 a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the
435 cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day
465 laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that
567 slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated
433 only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

567 The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with
342 the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[59]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[60] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[61]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[59] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[60] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[61] Weehaw Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

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Georgia

## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though (342) on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teach- (368) ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits 794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16] (793) returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular members and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy (352) lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly contrasting military costumes of members of the church or- • 292 ganizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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Georgia



794 (292) congregation don their newest and most colorful garments. Preparation has been made for all emergencies. In attendance are burly guards whose duty it is to see that nothing occurs to disturb the smooth performance of the ceremonies. The floor has been thickly sprinkled with sawdust and the stout posts at the front of the church are padded to prevent injury to overzealous worshipers.

794 793 796 At the sudden sharp sound of a whistle all activity ceases; there is silence in the church. The Armor Bearers leave the building to escort the Bishop to his seat of honor. Soon they return, followed by the Queen who is arrayed in a pale green satin evening dress over which is worn a black velvet cape lined with scarlet. A double line of uniformed guards follows, and marching proudly between the lines is the Bishop. According to his own statement, the Holy Prophet, as his followers call him, is of Portuguese birth. His long dark hair which falls to his shoulders, his piercing eyes, his pointed beard, and sideburns all combine to give him a distinguished and unusual appearance.*

The procession continues to the front of the church, where, with much ceremony, the Bishop seats himself upon a lofty throne set far back on the spacious platform. The

** Details of the early life of "Daddy Grace" are clothed in obscurity and little can be learned of the real origin of the House of Prayer. Some claim that he is of West Indian birth, others that he was born Marcilino Manuel Garcia in Portugal, and still others interpret his references to " a land beyond the sea" as indication that he hails from Egypt. All members of the cult must be baptized and during a four-week session in 1936 1,789 candidates were ministered to at a charge of $1.00 each. The Bishop advocates that members give generously of their material goods to the church and he has been known on occasions to go about among his congregation seizing purses and demanding that worshipers sacrifice treasured jewelry. It is a well known fact that his profession of "spiritual leader" has proved a vastly profitable one, and in the course of the last several years he has amassed a huge fortune. Many of "Daddy's" enterprises are looked upon with disfavor and suspicion by the police department. His frequent clashes with the law over various matters of an extremely worldly nature serve only to increase the attendance and the collections at the church and also give the Bishop much desired publicity. Followers are unimpressed by his occasional arrests, secure in the knowledge that no earthly force can ever conquer "Daddy." See* Time *(New York), March 7, 1938, XXXI, No. 10, p. 30.*

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Georgia

# *Sunbury*

123 OUR CAR CAME TO AN ABRUPT STOP IN THE SANDY road before the board fence which enclosed a small group of weather-beaten clapboard houses. We called to a young Negro girl who lounged in a doorway and she came forward to see what we wanted. Almost simultaneously there appeared from the other houses scattered about the clearing a number of other persons.

Two women about thirty-five years old and nine or ten small children all approached the fence. At first they were rather wary, but their attitude gradually turned to friendliness and they hung over the high board fence, talking and laughing in great good humor. Elizabeth Roberts,* the [115] young girl whom we had first seen, appeared to be the leader of the group.

795 We were interested to know if these people had river baptisms any more. "Duh Sunbury Baptis Church an duh Palmyra Baptis Church both hab baptizins," Elizabeth told us. "Cose it depend on how many folks wants tuh leab duh Presbyterian Church an jine duh Baptis. Mos ub us is already baptize."

"Where do they hold the baptisms?" we inquired.

The group all pointed in the direction of the river. "Right obuh deah in duh Sunbury Ribbuh," they chorused.

[796] Elizabeth again took the initiative. "All duh candidates is robed in wite," she explained. "Duh preachuh come frum

[292]

* *Elizabeth Roberts, Sunbury.*

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SUNBURY

795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
[783] tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[MM] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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Georgia



231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

[533] [202]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

[782] [795]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 534 202

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an say dey want tuh be save.

[792] [783]

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candidates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

795 796 [782] [783]

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SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh,
567 yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh
ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey
git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up
in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I
tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long
I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh
cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an
riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a
fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he
web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut
duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly
—An Nancy got um.' "

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp
and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).A The
little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps
shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the
darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the
women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church
and took our places on the second from the front middle
bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most
of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in.
The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over
his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin,
narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned
later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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793 from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were
794 afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to
[292] the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah
796 the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, where-
537 with shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and rea-
796 soning with his congregation. His voice would carry a
786 pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the
796 able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The
533

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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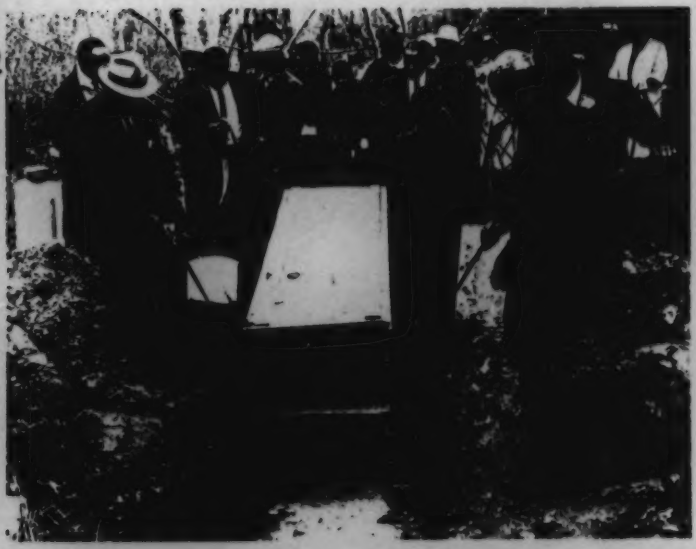

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Rev. James Grant

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

53
796

Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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[p. 221]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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248 175 (657) men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded (492) the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the (493) rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy (292) calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

794 576 175

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-• [292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

175 795 787 175 795 792 175 788 795

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

175 793 692

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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415
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[p. 39]

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you never used to buy nothing that
935 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(438) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
935 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice.
(388) And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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# *St. Simons Island*

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower [351] garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

[296]

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p. 55]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



## MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me (296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

(234) (539) She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

*Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long*
*Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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V. Julian Linder at Brownville

[Following p. xxxii-E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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XIVb. The Andersons' granddaughter at Possum Point

[following p. xxxii-0]

OLD FORT

787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, e]

•301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother
751 used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
(115) tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood. Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
(845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em
[789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people
774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long
787 ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see
[115] his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I
789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69e]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two
115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were
[301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms; * his
[789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

115 632 [30] per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

777 "I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place." [15]

754 "Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I [30] weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other [789] charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm." [8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. 775 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um 776 till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[27] When he laughed be bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, between chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

[30] [151] 115 754

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

[759]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

[758] [759]

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

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## DRUMS AND SHADOWS

533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
796 all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh
[533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
•301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the
789 wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,*] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gonuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn."*

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[8, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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775 tuh be plenty keahful bout duh spirits. Duh spirit is hungry jis lak duh pusson. Yuh hab tuh put food in duh ruhm fuh duh spirit tuh come eat."[58]

"Dat is duh truth," agreed young Elizabeth. "Ef duh spirit is hungry, it will sho come back an hant yuh."[58f]

This talk of spirits started us on a new train of thought and we were curious to learn of the local theories regarding ghosts and witches.

"Duh spirit nebuh go in duh groun wid duh body,"[56] volunteered Emma. "It jis wanduh roun. Dey come out wen duh moon is noo."

[115] Mary Stevens,* whose short, stocky figure was clad in bright pink and who wore a sailor hat perched rakishly on her head, stated, "Duh spirits is ebryweah. Dey peah mosly at duh fus dahk an in duh middle night."

Young Elizabeth, too, had something to say about spirits. "I sees em all duh time," she said. "Dey dohn hurt yuh none, jis walk long wid yuh an talk. Some hab duh head on an some hab duh head off."[59a]

754 From ghosts and shadows of the night the discussion followed its natural course to even darker powers, such as conjure, evil roots, and counter charms. The little group glanced slyly at one another. It was in lowered tones that they volunteered remarks on this subject.

"We do heah bout folks rootin each udduh all duh time.[15] Yuh sho hab tuh be keahful. Some folks weahs a dime aw a penny tied on duh ankle an wen it tun black, dey knows somebody is tryin tuh root em."[12a, c, d]

[789] [301] "What are the conjures made of?" we wanted to know.

"Dey make em uh haiah an nails an frum lots uh tings," we were told.[10]

Elizabeth said, "Duh heabiest root I ebuh heard bout wuz a cunjuh made uh some funny oily stuff in a bottle. Duh enemy ketch duh pusson's spirit in dat bottle an dat wuz a

* *Mary Stevens, Sunbury.*

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759 aw sizzuhs tuh cut the pain. Once wen I wuz in pain a mid-
755 wife put a peah of sizzuhs unduh muh pilluh. All of a sudden the pain stop right quick. The pain wuz cut right off." 12b

115 Josephine Stephens,* one of the older residents of the island, lived a short distance from Liza Basden. Her house was set back several hundred yards from the highway in the midst of a large field. There was no pathway and in order to get to the house we had to cut directly through the field. As we neared the gate at the front of the house a tall gaunt woman, who we learned was Josephine's daughter, ran to meet us. It appeared that the mother had been ill for some time past and the younger woman had been caring for her.

As we talked with Josephine, the daughter stood in an adjoining room, ironing clothes. She stopped every now and then to take part in the conversation. The two women were utterly different types. Josephine, dressed becomingly in
(291) a blue and white checked gingham outfit, was the antebellum type of Negro. The daughter, tall, thin and dashing, and probably in her forties, represented a more modern era. She had on a blue checked sport shirt, a white skirt upon the surface of which was the dim outline of the trade name of a flour mill, and a pair of shiny black satin bedroom slippers. Her two front teeth were gold and shone and sparkled as she talked. Two large gold hoop earrings dangled beneath her
• (301) close cropped straightened hair.

"I bin wukin ovuh at St. Simon," she explained to us. "Befo that I had a good job up Nawth. My mothuh git sick tho, an she need me tuh take keah of huh. That's why I come heah an stay. She gittin tuh be long in yeahs an caahn do so well by uhsef."

The mother did not know exactly how old she was but said she had been about fourteen at the close of the War between the States. We questioned her about her recollections of

* *Josephine Stephens, Harris Neck.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me.
123 Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field
behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed
759 it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

159 In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

142 Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had
nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that
159 glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that
[302] was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the
[732] reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first
[301] got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 44]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

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## IT'S TOUGH TO RAISE FIVE CHILDREN—SURE IS

I get married to the church. And I had the reception in Robbie Fields' store. They had wine and piccolo playing, and dancing. I danced once. But I couldn't dance 'cause my dress was too long. Long white dress, white shoes and white veil 'cross my hair. Lot of people came to the church and lot of people at the store. They had as much in the yard as was in the store, couldn't come in. I guess 'round about three hundred head. Big wedding.

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We was young children, growing up together. I met him long time ago, but I didn't realize that was to be my husband today. I remember he was picking the potato on the farm and I had to go work that morning and he

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 127]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Maggie Russell*

## ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

159 You see that house through the bushes? That's Jenkins Point, where I used to live. They had houses built on the plantation for black people to live in because that was the people that worked for them. Now there are no black people living over there on Seabrook.

I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-S (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 224]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## CULTURE IS AN INBRED THING, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE FED

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I think the culture has a better chance to survive if you have some control over it. That has been my dream to try to make sure people have an economic base, and then you can go back, then you can sit around and talk about parents and grandparents. But if somebody is sitting around hungry and you're gonna tell them about some damn culture, it don't make any American sense.

So what it is that some of us have been about is you can upgrade peoples' health care, you can upgrade their housing, if you can upgrade their education, then they themselves begin to look at their own history, because they have some leisure time to look at it.

Culture is an inbred thing, it's in there, but it needs to be fed. The best way to feed it is to make sure you got some of the basic necessities to survive.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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V. Julian Linder at Brownville

[Following p. xxxii-E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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VI. James Collier at Brownville

[following p. xxxii -E]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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VII. Tony Delegal at Ogeechee Town

[following p. xxxii-G]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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IX. Girl at Pin Point

[following p xxxii-I]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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X. Boy at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-J]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XI. Lewis McIver, fisherman at Pin Point

[following p. xxxii-k]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIII. Alec Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii-M]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIVa. Rachel Anderson at Possum Point

[following p xxxii - N]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVc. Cuffy Wilson and granddaughter at Sapelo

[following p. xxxli-S]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XVIIa. Shad Hall at Hog Hammock, Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-V]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XIX. Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii- AA]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

XXI. Artie and Enoch Jones at St. Marys

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•302
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[following p. xxxii-cc]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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•302
291
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XXII. Robert Lucas at St. Marys

[following p. xxxii-DD]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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291
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XXIII. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[following p. xxxii-EE]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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•302
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XXIV. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[Following p. xxxii - FF]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII) set on graves
that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
322 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the
532 third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41*] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven
(342) past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

[p. 19]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted Williams is known for his ability to tell a good story.

[A.48]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Miss Myma, who has lived her entire life on Wadmalaw Island, befriended the author and introduced her to the ways of the island and its people.

[p. 61]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me.
123 Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field
behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed
757 it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my
wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of
the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and
breathing peacefully on her lap.

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[302] perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called
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jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the
[132] reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first
[301] got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just
so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-
karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Hairwrapping is an ancient African tradition that survives on the islands.

[p. 115]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Richard Linen reminisces about the past and about how "thing change up now."

[p. 134]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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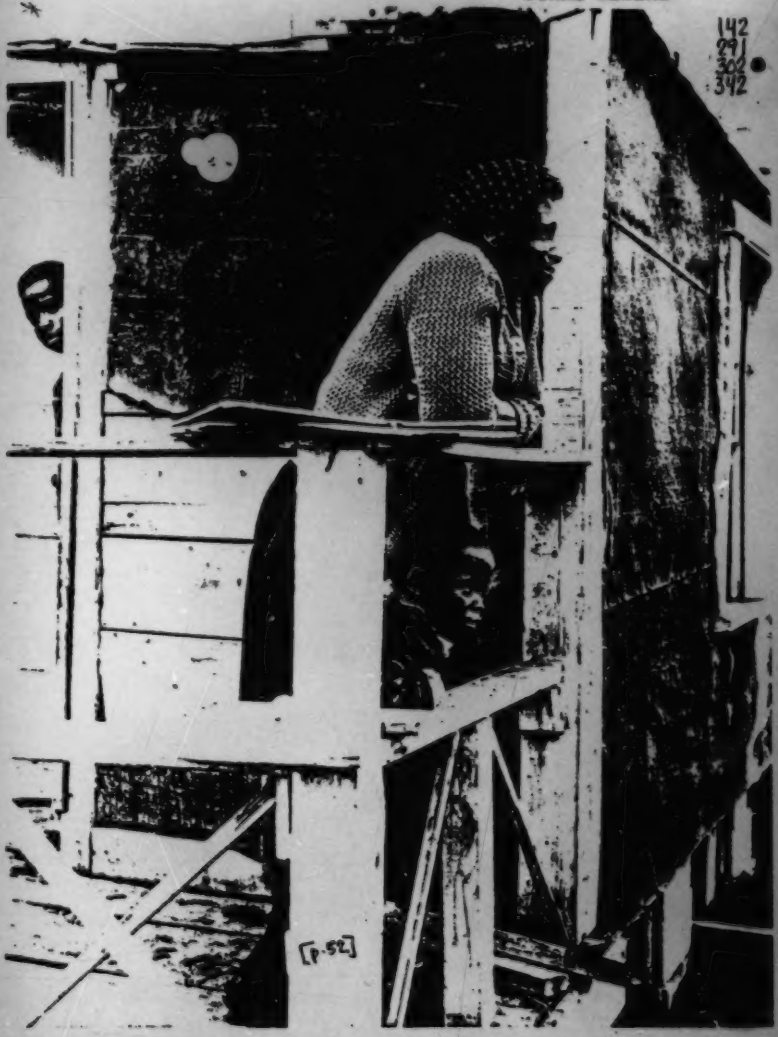
*Sam Polite, the Praise House elder. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

[p. 252]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

[p. 19]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
584 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
464 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening--five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children--sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of
(855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.58]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 60]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.

159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job—wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

159 873 641 666 185 We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

(666) Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

142 302 291

[p. 151]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

185
159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
87 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
[661] The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
159 when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
87 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
177 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
185 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
[875] outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to
make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing,
those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being
so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

[142]
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[p. 153]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 164]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 172]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Maggie Russell*

## ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

159

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I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

[651] [428]

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 182]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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•302
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need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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[668]

I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 758 74 [452] [734] [737]

Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

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While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

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Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

554 871

He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 192]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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871 641 666 185 the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns. Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide leadership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers. [875]

871 875 185 Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teachers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

641 871 185 [668] [875] The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recognition. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 212]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ME. I DON'T LIKE TO PRETEND

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At first I thought people won't want to hear this kind of song. But after I went to Atlanta, Georgia, I was very pleased. I was happy. Everybody was so nice. And I enjoyed myself. That's the first time I ever leave Johns Island to go sing.

Going off, it made me learn a lot. You see a lot of people. You enjoy yourself. People treat you so nice. They really make me feel like I'm something special. That time we went to Seabrook, my picture was in the paper. The lady I work for daughter, she get the picture. She call and say, "Tootsie, you're a celebrity. Your picture's in the paper."

You know, I like to be me. I don't like to pretend. If I go off, I'm not going to pretend that I'm somebody else. I'm going to be me! My children and grandchildren are happy. They're happy to know that their grandmommy go off and sing and picture been in the paper. So I'm happy, too. I didn't realize days past and gone that things was going to work out like that.

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The best trip I had was when a busload went to Washington from Wesley Church. Rev. Goodwin went and everyone was like one big family. The bus driver took us around and showed us different places. We had a good time. On Sunday morning, we did a church service at the festival.

I really wish we could get some more programs off from here. That's something I been looking forward to. If just once a year, you just get away on some kind of program. I like to see friends I've made in different places. And when I go, I don't want to rush off. After we sing, I want to sit around and listen to other people sing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Julie Hanner*

## I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

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When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 221]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 224]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142
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9. Snooks

[facing p. 64]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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10. Suzy

[535]

11. Snooks Doing "Juba Dis, Juba Dat"

[facing p. 65]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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Pain in m' leg
Shout! Shout!
Pain in the heel
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That sore toe
Shout! Shout!
That finger ring
Shout! Shout!
That water fall [4]
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That ribbon bow
Shout! Shout!
That air ring [5]
Shout! Shout!
That slipper shoe
Shout! Shout!
That shiny eye
Shout Josephine
Shout!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Shake the baby—Shake!

The song is closed off with:

A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet!
A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!

(302) [4] An old-time hair-do.
[5] Earring.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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•302
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31. "Cap'n" Joe

[facing p. 193]

# 304

304 MUTILATION--scarification and tattooing; cranial deformations; tooth filing and removal; piercing of ears, nose, and lips; genital mutilation (e.g., castration, circumcision, clitoridectomy); age, sex, and status differences; special techniques and apparatus; associated beliefs; etc. See also:


Masochism . . . . . 188
Mutilation of criminals . . . . . 681
Mayhem . . . . . 685
Mutilation of captives . . . . . 727
Self-torture . . . . . 788
Eunuchs . . . . . 839
Initiatory rites . . . . . 860, 881

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 759 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut (787) a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuhchuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns 115 roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud wuz a scah bout dis big." [14] She indicated the end of her • 304 forefinger.

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne
[252] an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometimr wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

115 "I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said,
[757] her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[49b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of
304 which her eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



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•304

"But did he tell you why he marked you?" we persisted.

"No'm, he ain say wy. He jis tell me he done it wen Ise lill. I dohn known wut he do it wid an Ise mos grown fo uh know wut it is an Ise duh onlies one he mahk. I duh tomboy uh duh fambly an folluh im roun askin wut duh ole country like."

"Rosanna," we ventured, "would you let us see the scar?"

She hesitated, then cautiously raised her hand to the fastening at the neck of her dress and, baring her chest, allowed us a glimpse of the scar. It appeared to be an irregular circle the size of a fifty-cent piece with faint lines which seemed to run toward the center.[14] Time, however, had obliterated any design or pattern which it might once have had.

11: Johnson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For information on the size of various St. Helena plantations under White ownership, see Category 116, pp. 41-45; for information on the historical background of the planters themselves, see Category 116, pp. 103-123.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

•311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the
461 river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb)[A] carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 123 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and developmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult
[491] in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
179 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limita-
•311 tions on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

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| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands
361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is
133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive
137 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more
373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



423 177 The original owner of the island, one of the major church denominations, sold it to a group of developers, who in turn sold it to a second group, from New York. No input from the community was requested, and a great deal of hostility resulted. When developers came to Kiawah to create a much larger resort area, they expressed readiness to meet community needs and asked for a list. The time available to come up with this list was brief, but island leaders working with Bill Jenkins, a long-time activist in land issues, did manage to set out six or seven mostly minor suggestions. "We did it in good faith," notes Jenkins. "I think we were more in good faith than they were, because some of those things we are still trying to get."

"I remember as a little boy," says Ed Brown, "that you could purchase perhaps an acre of land for two hundred dollars. Today that's just unheard of. So the very basic thing that gives the islands their wealth, namely, the property, is increasing in value, but we need to develop a methodology by which that can be properly managed and the profits therefrom, if there are to be profits, channeled back into the islands for their development." He adds, "I see good things. I'm an eternal optimist. I think that the future will prove to be very fruitful . . . if we can learn from the mistakes." Yet he does not deny that there have been mistakes, for instance, the absence of "a working rapport between the people who operate these resorts and the people who in fact live on these islands, and who have lived there for quite some time."

423 311 177 Land is being taken out of production. Acreage once used to grow food is now restricted and controlled by high taxes and county regulations implemented in response to development. Small livestock farmers located next to tracts under new ownership may be pressured to sell out if their activities seem incompatible with the projects of the developers. Lands are lost, too, when people unused to record keeping lose tax receipts and forget to pay yearly bills, or when land descends to heirs who have moved away and have no interest in it.

423 177 Bill Jenkins has provided an illustration of what can happen when developers are more interested in a piece of property than its legal owners:

> There's seventy-nine acres of land down at Johns Island airport. . . . Developers . . . did some research and found out who were some of the people who were involved in that property. [One of

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(168) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea
islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston
County Democratic party. He ran for state senate
and received support in both the black and white
communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital
radio station in Charleston that consistently ad-
dresses social issues as well as responds to the mu-
sical tastes of the community. He was the principal
mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the
Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in
the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has im-
proved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who
finished high school left the area to find work.
(489) Now, with improved transportation, it is possible
for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
(241) island. The resort developments and the new small
(178) businesses offer some employment, but farming,
long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
• 311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live
in their traditional community, and many of their
hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
along the coastal islands south of Washington,
D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on
Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible
only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged
resort communities with condominiums, hotels
and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private
homes. Both are entered by passing through a se-
curity checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some
economic and social benefits to island residents,
both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy
visitors from outside the region and offering only
menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Is-
land, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge
from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for de-
velopment. An island committee made up of black
and white landowners has been meeting regularly
to design their own development plan that may

(P xiii, B)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

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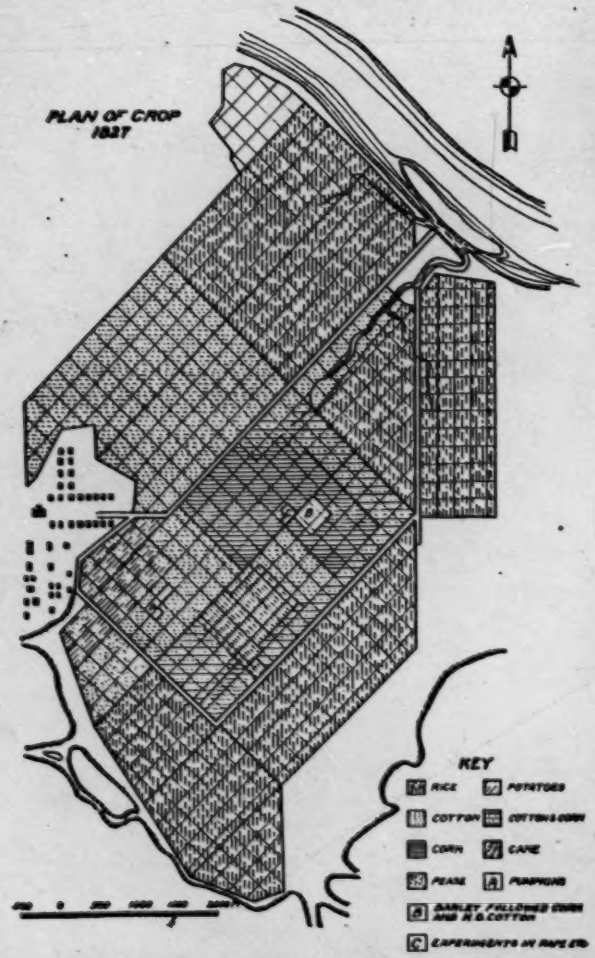


HOPETON PLANTATION ON THE ALTAMAHA

[p. 63]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.58]

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

•313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody."[54] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[775] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let
775 yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[55] he began. "We pray an
[534] sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance. We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog
[136] Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he
567 answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about
• 313 Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
782 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout
775 askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.39]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

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Ia. Carved masks and wooden chains

Ib. Carved wooden figures

[Following p. xxxii-A]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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[412]
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[481]
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IIa. Carved wooden spoon

*IIb. Carved wooden stick with figure

[285]
←
[412]
→

IIc. Coil basket and carved wooden objects

[following p. xxxii-B]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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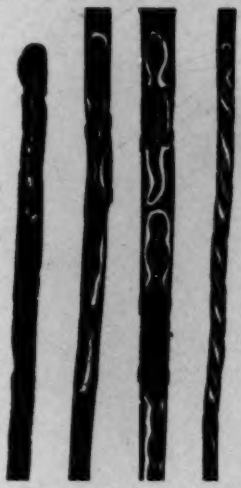
[534]

IIIa. Carved sticks and handmade banjo



IIIb. Carved sticks

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IIIc. Carved stone fig

[following p. xxxii-C]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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IVa. Carved head of man on stick

IVb. Painted wooden figure

[534]

IVc. Carved wooden frog

IVd. Goatskin-covered log drum made by James Collier

[following p. xxxii-D]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XII. Wooden grave markers at Sunbury

[following p. xxxii-L]

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this 412 district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 532 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*
** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*
† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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115 Refinery; he also cobbles shoes and repairs anything from broken pots to roller skates. Because of his skill as a wood (322) carver, particularly of walking sticks, he has become known in the vicinity as "Stick Daddy." A decidedly original technique is evident in his carving, but he smiled when this was mentioned.

322 "I nevuh bin taught," he said. "I took up cahvin as paht time jis fuh the fun of it. Muh granfathuh, Pharo Cooper, he used tuh make things frum wood an straw, sech as baskets an cheahs an tables an othuh things fuh the home. I guess I sawt of inherited it frum him."

322 532 One of "Stick Daddy's" canes is a slender, snake-encircled rod with a handle made from a large black and white die. Another, slightly thicker, is carved with a single crocodile. The third, a heavy stick topped with a flashlight handle in which the snapshot of a young Negro girl has been inserted, is artfully decorated with a turtle, a large crocodile, and a small, sinuous snake (Plate IIIb).[A] The chief characteristic of "Stick Daddy's" work is the boldness with which the carved figures, dark-stained and highly polished, stand out against their unfinished natural wood background. Very different is another stick that was found abandoned in an office building in the city. This has a man's head for a handle but the stick proper is so covered with minute, unpatterned crisscrosses that the little figure of a man upside down, a horned head also upside down, and an undetermined object which may be either man or animal, are noticed only when the cane is carefully studied.

757 "Stick Daddy," besides being a general repair man and carver, knows a few "sho cuos" for illnesses.

"I kin make a sho cuo fuh chills an fevuh. Yuh take some cawn fodduh an boil it an make a tea. Yuh drink some an bathe in some an yuh'll git well soon. Fuh a cold yuh git some life-evuh-lastin and make a tea tuh drink, aw git some Jack-O."

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]

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Georgia

## FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

• 322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest
775 shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed
[115] to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
•322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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•322 532 Walking sticks (Plate IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones [41c] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 412 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc) with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 532 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia). Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] Another man employed his spare time in the carving of small wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§ [524]

422 [428] An old Negro (Plate V) B living in very poor circumstances owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 36th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant (324) item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc). A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex- (789) ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[6, 32, 34c]

•322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in 532 contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv- B ing.[70a-e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb), A about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII), C well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on 115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did 533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the (539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
785 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
(551) Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
(101) "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
(192) edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25g] and a hog *gulluh*.

(322) To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [704]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [704] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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GRIMBALL'S POINT

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

•322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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Georgia

# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other
461 sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
• 322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb)A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] 322 We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the 764

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
•322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII) set on graves
that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
322 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the
532 third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41a] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven
(342) past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A, [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



567 829 789 gits tuhgedduh an stick duh hoe in duh fiel an den say 'quack, quack, quack,' an dey riz up in duh sky an tun hesef intuh buzzuds an fly right back tuh Africa." 68b, 69c

At this, we exclaimed and showed our astonishment.

"Wut, you ain heah bout um? Ebrybody know bout um. Dey sho lef duh hoe stannin in duh fiel an dey riz right up an fly right back tuh Africa."

Had Wallace actually seen this happen, we asked.

"No, ma'am, I ain seen um. I bin tuh Skidaway, but I knowd plenty wut did see um, plenty wut wuz right deah in duh fiel wid um an seen duh hoe wut dey lef stickin up attuh dey done fly way."

115 (789) (322) This story of the flying Africans seemed to be a familiar one, for it was later repeated to us by William Rogers,* who lived about a mile from Darien on the Cowhorn Road. We had been told that he had been a cabinet maker in his youth and still spent much of his spare time in the carving of a variety of objects. The old man was evidently well known in the vicinity, for upon inquiry neighbors quickly directed us to his house.

Because a short time ago a fire had destroyed Rogers' home and most of his possessions, we found him living in an unfinished cottage which was as yet unpainted except for the bluish-green trimming on all the window facings. In spite of the apparent newness of the house, there was a pleasant homelike atmosphere about it. Proof of Rogers' skill was (322) demonstrated in scroll-work which decorated the porch and in a cupboard and fine square chimney in the dining room which the old man and his wife were building.

Rogers, who was seventy-two years old, was small of stature with copper-colored skin and alert black eyes. His manner was affable and friendly despite the fact that a recently suffered paralytic stroke had partially deprived him of the use of his hands. He told us that his grandmother had been

* *William Rogers, Cowhorn Road, Darien.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 532 (412) We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us some of the wooden figures about which we had been told. One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[41e] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[41e] Another item was a frog [41i] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [70f, h] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

567 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who 322 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Inca- 567 chee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 322 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- 322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21) A Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the 517

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142

18. A Bronze Head Dug up at Ife in 1938

19. Its American Counterpart

326

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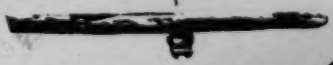
532

20. An Iron Gate Latch Made by Willy Rogers

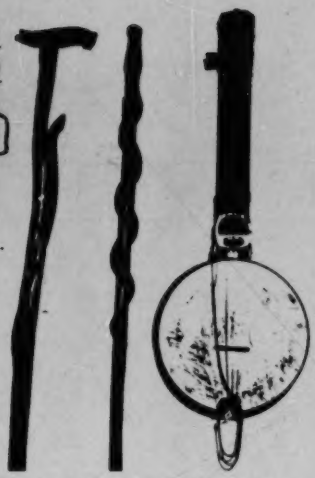


21. Alligator Carved by Lonnie Davis

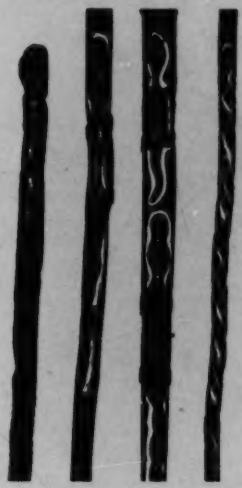
[facing p. 112]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

532
322
[534]

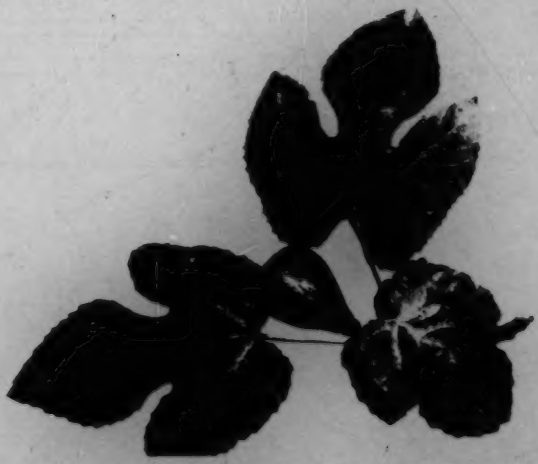


IIIa. Carved sticks and handmade banjo



IIIb. Carved sticks

•324
532



IIIc. Carved stone fig

[following p. xxxii-c]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
•[324] item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc).A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
(789) ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv-B
532 ing.[70a] * He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb),A about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII),C well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
(539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G- t]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [191] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves • 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

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A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142

18. A Bronze Head Dug up at Ife in 1938

19. Its American Counterpart

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326

327
532

20. An Iron Gate Latch Made by Willy Rogers

21. Alligator Carved by Lonnie Davis

[facing p. 112]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did
226 the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of
is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Ca
net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eigh
feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a
carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for
(335) myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now.
(464) I'm working at a block and pipe company--making door lintels and window
lintels, all different kinds of stone.

(434) The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and
chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting
(241) season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four
weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can mak
it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the
year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then
you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113. Analyst]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 463 335

ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

567 335

The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16] Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

[554] [797]

567 463 554

[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

137
493
●34

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

159
931

## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

(204)

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1888.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

142
291
•342
115

XVIIIb. Ryna Johnson, her daughter and son-in-law at Harrington, St. Simons Island

[Following p. xxxii-Y]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

142
302
291
.342
115

XIX. Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii- AA]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•342

XX. House of Henry Williams at St. Marys

[Following p. xxxii-BB]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
• 342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One, through natural ability, has held the office almost from the
115 founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but
she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came
and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a]
You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she
can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.

[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night
an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't
take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
Fraser, a root doctuh,[43] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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•342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story 775 bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh 787 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by 787 witches [69] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but (845) dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double caul [4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. (775) A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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# *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
•(342) ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
(363) streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
777 foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable (342) shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teachers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school (368) building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits 794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16] (793) returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular members and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy (352) lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly 292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

** Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
361 directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff, eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
491 in the various sections which form the settlement and which
103 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
361 Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
•342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
[491] street of the community, passes the houses of other residents set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
162

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# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. •342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advanta- 351 geous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant pri- 363 vacy. The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. The informal and haphazard [361] scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, 366 and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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# *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

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SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII) set on graves
322 that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
532 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41e] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven
(342) past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

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## *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season (132) and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the 137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

•342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo- 351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be 461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here (491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire 491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the 361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses
[416] did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um."[15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

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had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong udduh tings."[88]

Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daughter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old. A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large

* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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# *Darien*

361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

36 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from
[351] wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-
[415] gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[824] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
[535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membûh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the •342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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# St. Simons Island

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower [351] garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a [296] grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

• 342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
[164] very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
•342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 We went by to talk with Charity Lucas, a fine looking upstanding, middle-aged Negro woman. She told us she did not know much about her father's people,—they had come from around Carolina,—but her mother and her mother's people had come from around Waycross and she herself had been born in Waycross. She said that the coast Negroes were very different from the interior people. She had heard talk of conjure and spirits around St. Marys but she didn't believe much in it herself; she had not been brought up that way.

Her son Robert (Plate XXII), A a tall, lithe, powerful young Negro of about twenty-five, was rather taciturn. He had heard of these things but didn't care to speak of them and didn't believe in them much anyway.

Charity advised us to go to see old Jim Myers. "Now theah's one that's ole an'll be able tuh tell yuh plenty. He's neahly ninety and sho likes tuh talk."

We asked if his memory were good. "Yes'm, it's as good as mine. I guess it's bettuh."

We asked for directions and she told us how to go, ten miles deep into the woods off from the St. Marys-Kingsland highway.

491 Our road and what later turned out to be a pine needle wagon track carried us through Marianna, John Houstoun McIntosh's plantation, through Sweetwater Hammock and on through other settlements to Mush Bluff Island where old Jim Myers lived. The last mile we had to walk, owing 123 to some swampy patches in the wagon track. A Negro boy of about eleven sauntered around a bush, and his eyes popped open in frightened surprise at strangers appearing so suddenly in the woods.

"Does Jim Myers live near here?" we asked.

"Right theah roun the cawnuh of the path," he said, and • 342 we came suddenly upon the house, a three room unpainted, board cabin sitting about two feet off the ground on large,



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-DD--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



•342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[955] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[13b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

829 We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was a young man.

567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before 342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are [177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that [827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and or- [592] derly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is 171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from
524 him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest
123 link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the
• 342 site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
(365) of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no
(514) electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene
123 lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•342
461
567

*Women and children in the evening after "Maussa's" task is done. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron."[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

789 822 (776) (342) (775)

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

775 761

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex,

771 776 171

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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342

[p. xxi]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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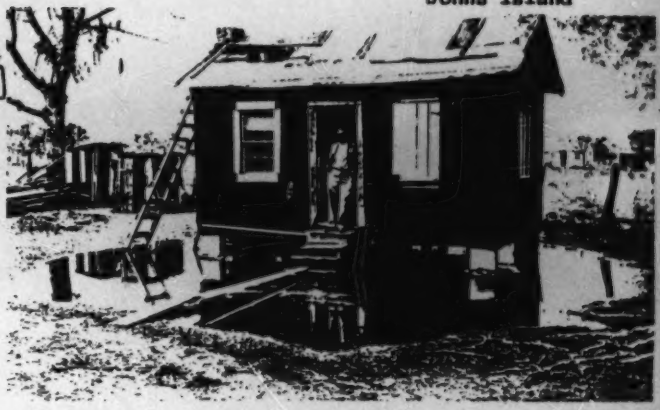

[404]

[p.xxii]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

735 433 226 434 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a living. Anything they could do to make a living.

They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had 735 824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 342 354 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 342 354 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 493 442 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 722 WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.24]

S: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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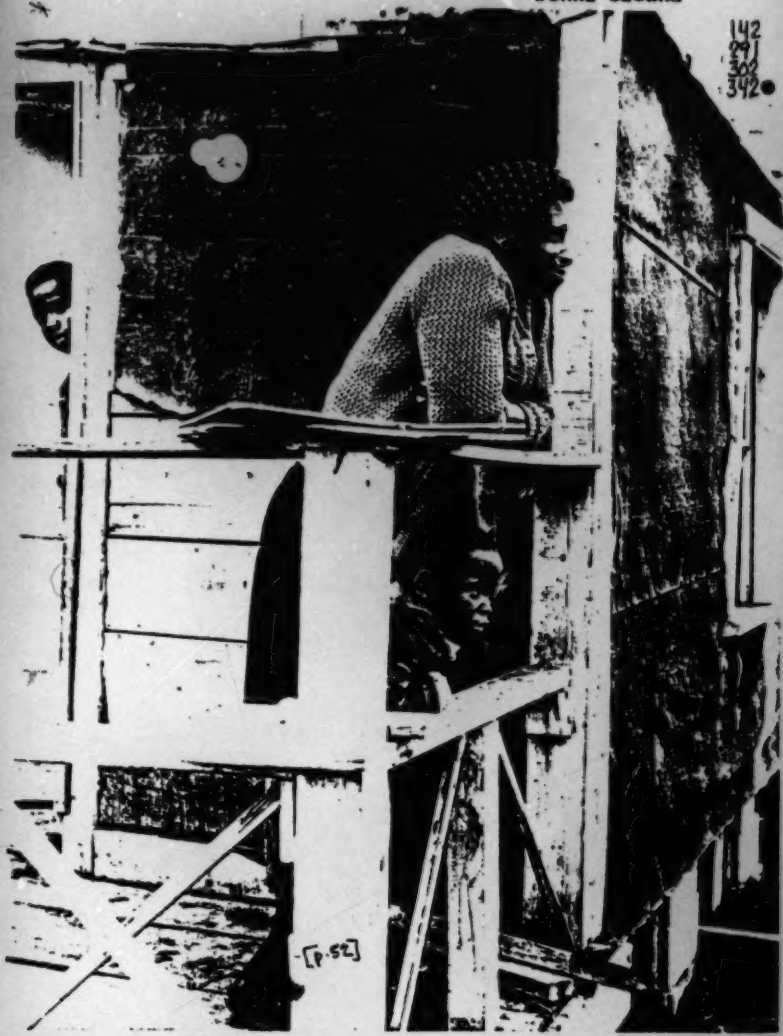
[p.37]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island



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[p.52]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

• 342

*Mr. William Saunders*

829 I COULD HAVE BEEN SOMEBODY

I apply for a job and you apply for a job, and I'm the better man, then I should get the job, not you because you're white. I believe to myself that the biggest mistake that I've made was not being born white. To me I could have been somebody if I was born white. I felt before that I had the intelligence to be somebody . . . now I'm nothing.

*Mrs. Belle Green*

WE'RE THEIR ONES HERE IN THE WORLD 'TIL GOD COME

We're their ones here in the world 'til God come, but they don't like we colored people. All these here want out you is work. And they can get 'em—give us our three dollar a week. You not going to feed yourself with that. Outside of that, you can go.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Structure and Content of Household Units

362
342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pillowed off the ground some twenty-two inches. Those units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-
[343] circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse."
[514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units
354 some families have both gas and stove cooking options.
362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island
362 there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty-odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12), Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of beune seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34) how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] *Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.*
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

569 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who 322 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 569 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Inca- 569 chee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 322 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

322 During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21)[A] Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the 519

A, [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

12. The Cabin

[facing p. 80]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

175 Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
567 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
342 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
114 their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
243 a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
243 particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
162 there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

175 I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
567 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
243 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
164 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead
291 of the usual two suits received by field hands.

Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of cloth-
567 ing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55
291 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a
435 yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handkerchief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing
567 a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the
435 cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day
465 laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that
567 slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated
433 only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

567 The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with
342 the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

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Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

567 342 567 342 361 567 342 [799] (113)

[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.

[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.

[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.

[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.

[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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.342

William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

(361)
(235)
(364)

> The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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175 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor
464 from the Island.

175 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them
511 through the year, there were some who prospered. At the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story
•[342] houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still
[492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in
[493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-
[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and
731 night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 358.

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262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings." [65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
[737] satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
[593] so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
seven years and during all this period there had been few
115 differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
[343] house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231

* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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# *Darien*

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

Structure and Content of Household Units

362 342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pillowed off the ground some twenty-two inches. Those units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-[343] circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse." [514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units 354 some families have both gas and stove cooking options. 362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island 362 there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
(505) gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
(491) til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
•344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
(796) could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
533 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night
• [344] watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[794] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
[795] pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
474 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[529] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[872] (p.xii-B) cation and voter registration.
[666]

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# 3. ALL THINGS ARE

•344

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# POSSIBLE IF YOU ONLY BELIEVE

344

# *MEETING AT MOVING STAR HALL*

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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

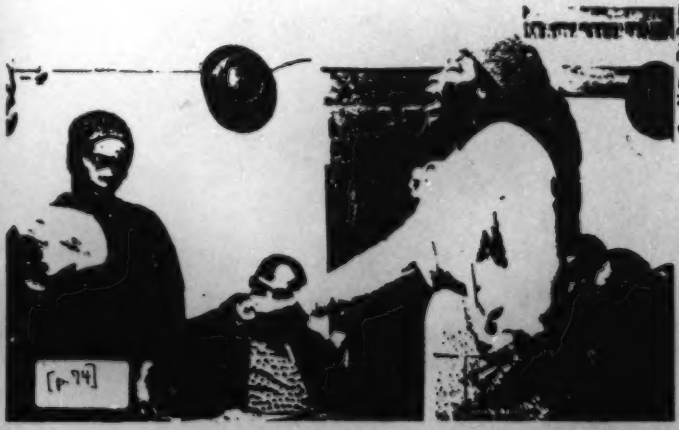
The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters, some neighbors.

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there.

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home.

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too.

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too.



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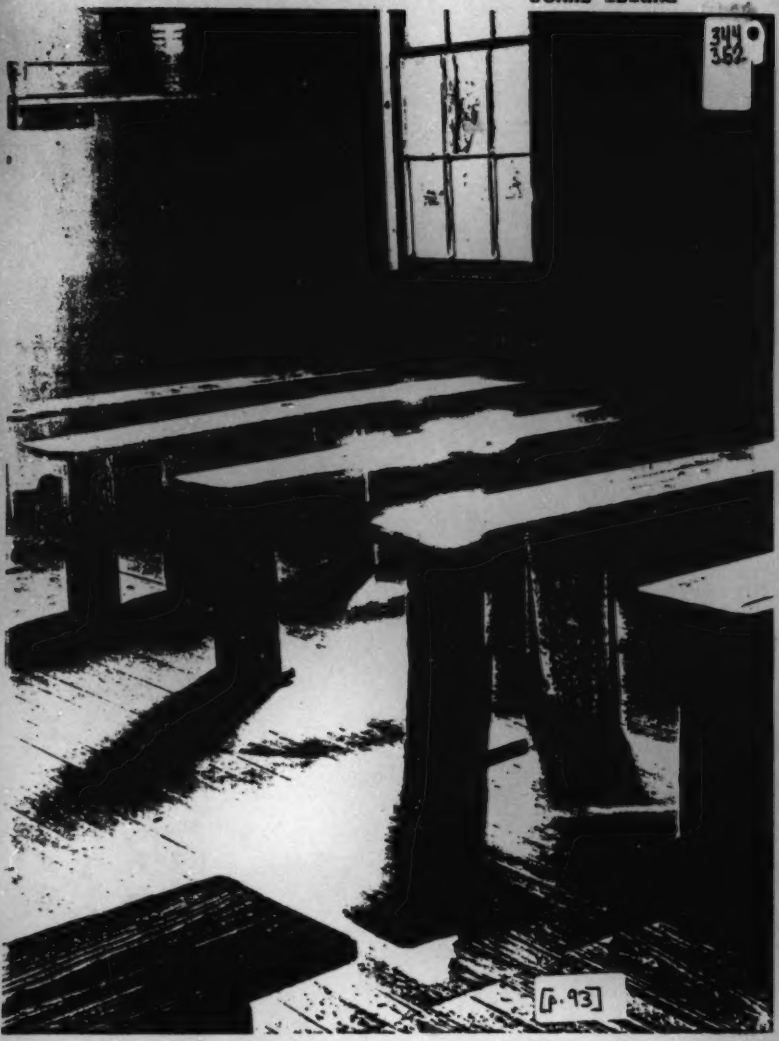

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
674 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no.
178 When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

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159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the
185 Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President.
So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't
578 had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will
divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out.
We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

159
443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was
twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was
some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting some-
thing back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be
serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
●345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas
what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested
to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work
heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like
that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we
wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated
that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up.
When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I
guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years
to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive
Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This
person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place.
The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together. 159 185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands. 159 345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive 526 893

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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
873 something to twenty.

Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

159 I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
185 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN
159 IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT
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873

We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

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XVIIIa. Praise House at Sapelo

[following p. xxxii-x]

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Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 412 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been 532 carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† • 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 123 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the f llowers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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bership of two million and a local membership of about fifty. There is nothing prepossessing about the small white building. The wooden floor is sprinkled with sawdust and except for the piano the only furniture is several roughly built wooden benches. The walls of the mission are hung with placards bearing inscriptions, of which the following are a few: "Peace—the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink, but joy, peace and good will," "Peace and Good Will to the World," "Peace, Father Divine is God, Salutation is Peace."

794

At about eight o'clock in the evening members begin straggling in, two or three at a time. They are dressed soberly, with a noticeable lack of bright colors and ornamentation of any description, as one of the precepts of the cult is the sacrifice of all worldly possessions. Upon joining the church they must surrender everything of material value to Father Divine. The old life is a thing of the past. The convert must accept new habits, new names, and an entirely new scheme of existence.

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(796)

The ardor of followers is not dampened by the fact that their leader has never been known to visit the Savannah branch. They claim that he is always present spiritually and can in this manner accomplish his miracles. At the meeting a major part of the service is given over to a number of testimonials, presented by many of those present. One by one the converts intone their devotion to Father Divine * and vividly recount what he has done for them.

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796

A stout Negro woman bearing the name of Sister Patience

*curately portrays the House as it was found in this community. For this reason it was thought well to include it.*

** Father Divine is said to have been born George Baker on a Hutchinson Island rice plantation near Savannah about sixty years ago. Sometime in the late 1890's it appears that he opened a meeting house in the Negro section of the Old Fort, calling himself "The Son of Righteousness." His activities in the community abruptly ceased when, after some trouble with the authorities, he fled from Savannah to escape a gang of whites who aimed to make him prove himself the reincarnation of Christ by walking on the Savannah River.*

*Arriving in Baltimore, Maryland, he joined a religious sect headed by*

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SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
567 wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh, yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly —An Nancy got um.' "[a]

• 346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin, narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A, [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•346

Brick Church on St. Helena Island was constructed by slaves. Some of the first classes for former slaves in South Carolina were held here.

[p. 29]

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*Gullahs worshiping in Goose Creek Church. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. ii]

[p. i is blank]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

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*Brick Baptist Church, St. Helena Island, S.C. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

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alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis.

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Litwack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?"

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, *140–58*; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, *48–49*; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerusalem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 233.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

### 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same people attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
•346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

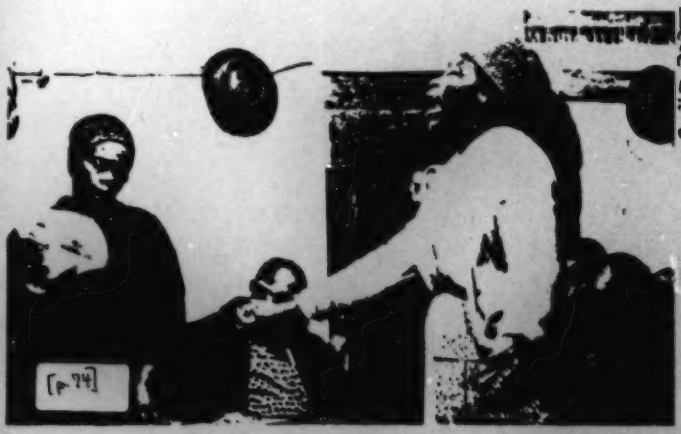
The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 342

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 342

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796




142 291 796 533 786 794

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 346 796 178 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church. What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 796 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 614 178 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

178 532 The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth. Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
•346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
511 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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192 but Mr. Gonzales sees in it an onomatopoetic origin, deriving it from the whispering frou-frou of silken petticoats."

*Gwinin' en' gwinin'*, goings-on and goings-on.

*Trus'-me-Gawd* (I trust my God), the appropriate name for the cranky, easily-overturned dugout canoe.

*Praise-meetin'*, prayer meeting."

*Fuh sowl*, a strong phrase, for true, for truth: "'Ee fat fuh sowl."

*'Ent wut'* (isn't, aren't worth), in the general sense of worthless, of no account: "Him ent wut'."

*Mo' bettuh, mo' longuh*, double comparative for better and longer.

*Mores'*, most.

*To cut de green calabash*, to exaggerate, to draw the long bow (calabash is a gourd).

*To pull wool*, to grasp the small twisted forelock and to bow.

*Bline Gawd*, blind God, personal idol or fetich.

*Fin'lly at las'*, a full phrase for at last.

*Juntleman* (gentleman), used for the regular and lawful husband, and similarly, *lawfully lady*, for a Negro's legally-married wife, in both cases "Withouten oother compaignye in youth," as Chaucer said.

*Tek um an' tanky*, (Take it [or them] and thank you), I took it gladly and was (am) grateful.

*Dat buckra* (or *nigguh*) *eye bigger dan 'e belly*, (i.e., he wants more than he should, is greedy).

*Fuh gone hook-han'*, To walk arm in arm.

*Lay down yo' mammy haa't* (heart) *an' tek up yo' daddy*, have courage, be a man.

*Clap-hat-bitch*, a woman sudden and hasty in speech and deed, a virago.

*A swinge* (singed) *cat, an ash cat*, of wretched, ill-seeming, unprepossessing appearance.

Concerning a safety-match, which would strike nowhere except on the box, a darkey was heard to remark, "Mas

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"*The Black Border*, p. 284.

"Mrs. Parsons notes that on St. Helena Island, the little cabin churches are called "praise-houses." *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands*, etc., p. 206.

[346]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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13. The Author and Sunyanna in Front of the School-House

[facing p. 81]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

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Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

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See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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*Colored Persons* was published in Savannah in 1837. These are only two of many such works published in the South. 567 797

The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist denomination collected for their missions to the Negroes between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars in 1837 and in 1840 reported nineteen missionaries, thirteen missions, 232 plantations administered unto, 5,482 members, and 3,811 children.[48] Very little data can be obtained concerning the activities of the Baptist denomination among the sea-island Negroes, although it is known that more of them adhered to the Baptist faith than to any other. In the summer of 1838 a revival of religion commenced among the Negroes of Liberty County, Georgia, and spread throughout the entire coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia, continuing for two years. During that time the Congregational Church in Liberty County and the Baptist churches throughout the region greatly added to their colored membership.[49]

In addition to the space reserved for slaves in the rear and in the gallery of "Brick Church" on St. Helena Island, practically every plantation had its own "praise house" where the people held their weekly services. In case the planter provided no separate building, services were held in the cabin of the religious leader. Miss Towne wrote to a friend shortly after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the praise house was "always the cabin of the oldest person in the village of negro houses."[50] She was 567 796 346 567 346

[48] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, pp. 82, 83.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[50] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 20.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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A ST. HELENA ISLAND PRAISE HOUSE

[facing p. 148]

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11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the plantation where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[81] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[82]

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Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing, pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members of a church.[83] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine one word 'ginst t'oder."[84] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

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[81] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[82] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[83] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[84] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
[848] the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
• 346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed [illegible]
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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775 duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh
783 cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

754 "Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt.
[775] Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

•347 Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits
[754] and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a
[775] small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Ne-
[115] gro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
775 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, •] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69a] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of
[777] this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[784] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; 22a, c, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
•347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
[352] of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the
185 Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President.
So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't
578 had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will
divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out.
We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

159
443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was
twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was
some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting some-
thing back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be
serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
341 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas
what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested
to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work
heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like
that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we
wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated
that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up.
When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I
guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years
to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive
Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This
person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place.
The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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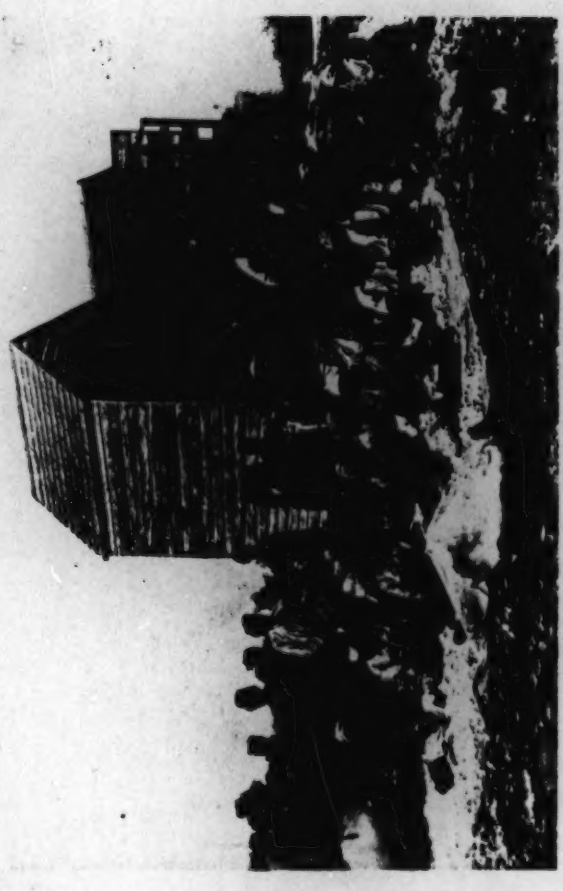

*Gullahs and Sea Island Cotton. (Personal collection.)*

[p. 256]

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347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
•351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

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361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
• 351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One, through natural ability, has held the office almost from the
115 founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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# *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
[342] ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
[363] streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
• (351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh
787 fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson,"[22a,*] he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl[4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

789 "I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
754 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub[10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's
791 aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A
[351] high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Rysa Bryant, Springfield.*

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Georgia

# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advanta- •351 geous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and 363 out and across the settlement. The informal and haphazard [361] scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work 366 as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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Georgia

# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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# *Grimball's Point*

36 GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads [133] grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen [136] rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year [226] round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

162 A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the 464 inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes 342 are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded •351 by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. 312 Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old 787 believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

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# *Harris Neck*

361 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR
49 Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through
361 the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence
• [351] protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

829 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remem-
193 bered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was
• 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At
406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an
415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast
133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-
137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned,
115 rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

"I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task
[845] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her
[787] lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

"Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz
[845] always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

"What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired.
775 A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face
787 and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

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Georgia

## *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and exposure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch
•351 out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the
461 porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these
(491) a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
• 351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses
[416] did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

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Georgia

# *Darien*

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in • [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time gojn tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1933.*

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361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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Georgia

# *St. Simons Island*

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been forgotten, we had little hope of good field work here. 124

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a grape arbor and spreading live oaks. [351] [296]

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

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Georgia



829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
567 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho changé. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle
533 em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope
535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way
789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
[351] been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
[165] til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
[764] hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
[783] long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
[753] Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He

[567] * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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Georgia

## *St. Marys*

361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few
115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a
• (351) packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz might lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz
527 young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance
(535) roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

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Georgia



342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees
•351 and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[955] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[12b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was
829 a young man.

567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina



491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before
342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are
[177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that
[827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has
[356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and or-
[592] derly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

• 351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is
171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; 22a, c, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
• [352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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Georgia

## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though (342) on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teach- (368) ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits 794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16] (793) returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular mem- • (352) bers and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly 292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



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* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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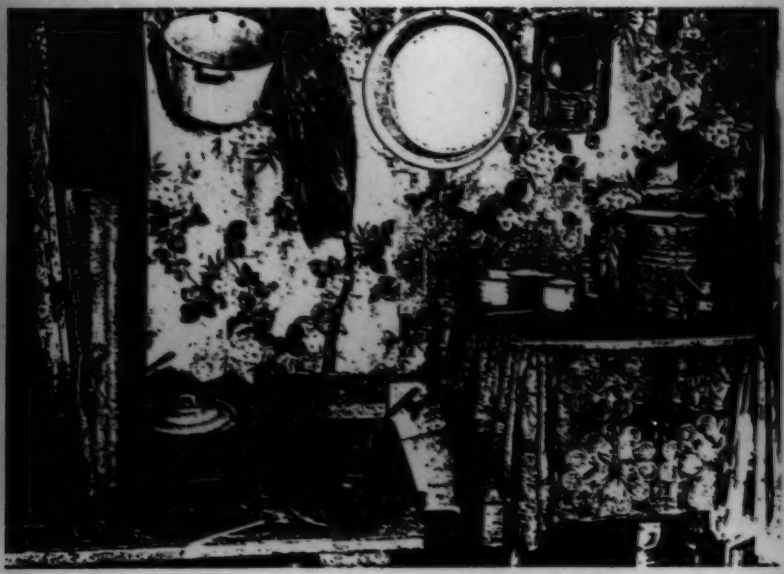

[p. xxiii]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.26]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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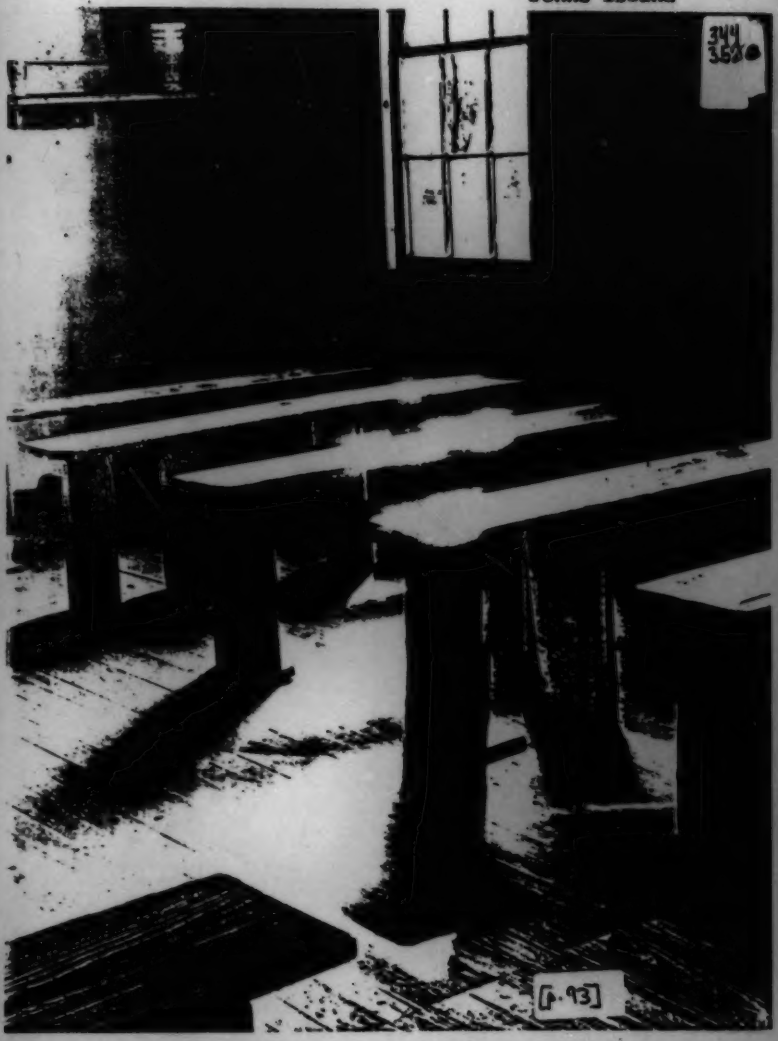
4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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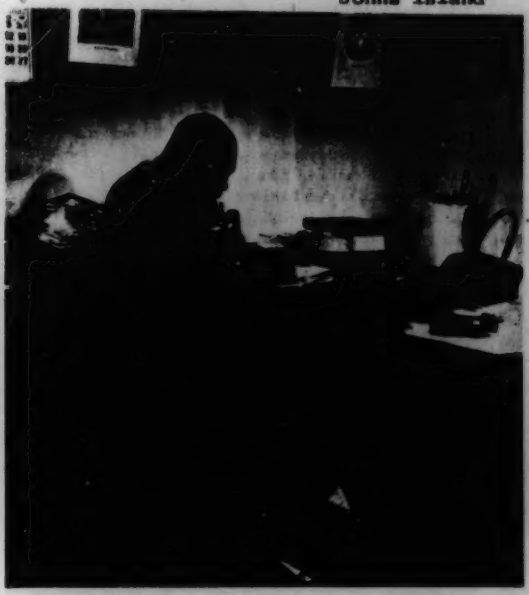

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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142 302 291 524 352 353

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

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Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

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See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
[352] of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
•353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



•353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh
787 fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson,"[22a,*] he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl[4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

"I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
789 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh
754 down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub[10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's
791 aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A
[351] high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

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* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullahs worshiping in Goose Creek Church. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. ii]

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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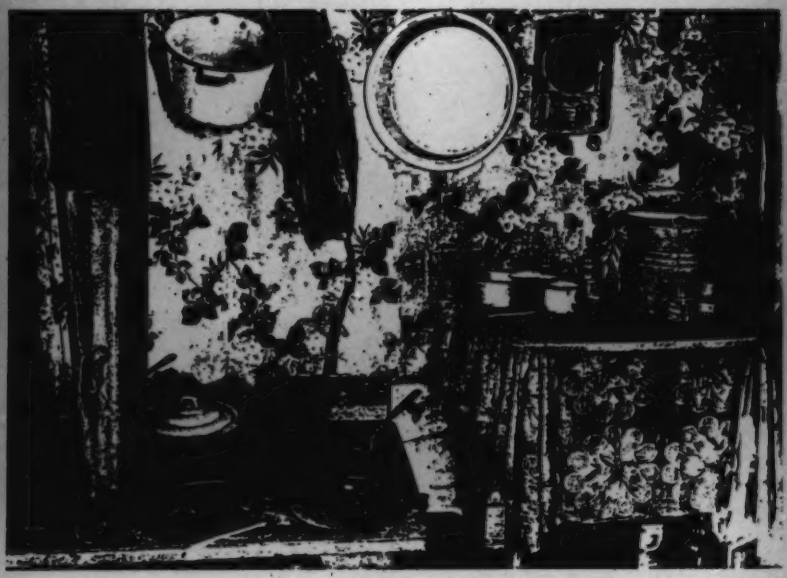

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.26]

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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142 302 291 524 352 353

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[777] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

•353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14)[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my
787 empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half.
763 The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



She is fifty or more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

4: Carawan & Carawan 3,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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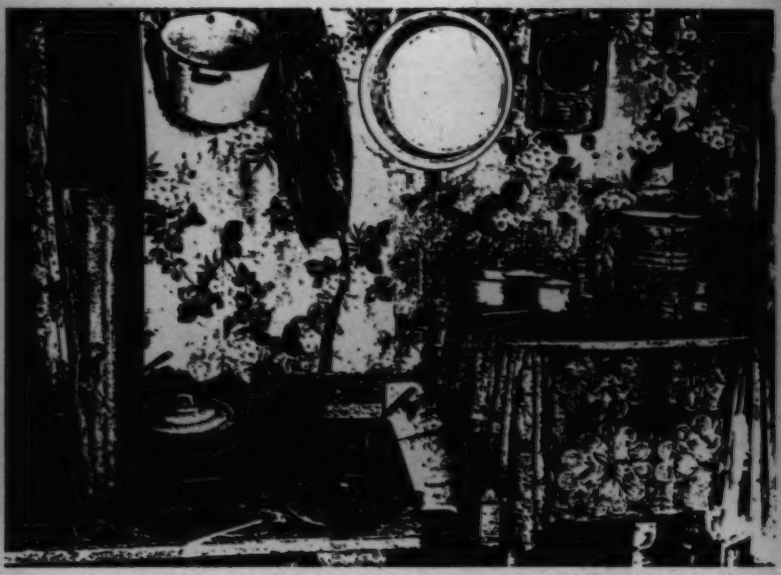

[p. xxiii]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
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They used to gather moss--this same moss. Every month a man came
735 along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
342 go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything--cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
[354 lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
342 the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
354 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape--outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
492 over the island. They used carts and that little tacky--pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors--didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.26]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
● 354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.

159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job--wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## IT'S A SMALL PLACE, BUT I RATHER HAVE ALL MY FAMILY TOGETHER

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[354]

I lost my house, a seven-room house, but I feel like it is the Lord's will. 'Cause I was burning oil stove from '41 up to now, and this have never happen to me before.

One day I went to work. I wash Tuesday night and leave a tubful of clothes for my daughter who always takes care of the house, and I told her to hang the clothes out. So she take my little battery radio in the yard under the tree, and she was hanging up the clothes, and when she look up, she saw smoke. She ran back to the house, but she couldn't even get in; the fire knock her back. She remember one of my little grand was sick in the house, and all she could do is run in the house and grab her. My son Johnny grab the rest of the children and take 'em over to my neighbor house and somebody call me.

One of my neighbor call me on my job, and my lady brought me home, must be about seventy mile an hour. I didn't feel so bad then, 'cause I thought fire engine would save at least some the furniture, but then I could see the housetop was falling in.

Then when everybody was together talking, I was sitting off by myself on Moving Star Hall, was thinking what would be best. I didn't feel like going anywhere far from the neighborhood. I have different friends offer me to come stay with them, and Mr. Jenkins, the place I raise on, he had a little empty house there, but I didn't want to go there either. I always want to be close to my meeting--Moving Star Hall.

So my neighbor, Nancy Field, she give me this little place she had built for the Florida people when they come. Those Florida people, they come 'round every year for season to pick tomatoes and thing, and she kept that little place for them. They just stays in it for a season--they'll stay any kind of where, you know.

It's a small place, but I rather have all my family together. If all of us have to sleep in one bed, I rather have all together. She kept manure and corn and all such of things in there, and all the rat been in there, but I was happy for it. I just get out and by my children, daughters, son, husband,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 97]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

Structure and Content of Household Units

362 342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pillowed off the ground some twenty-two inches. Those units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse." [343] [514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units 354 some families have both gas and stove cooking options. 362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island 362 there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty-odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

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[171]

Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

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Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

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On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [704]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [704] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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777 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh
•356 flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

[533] "'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm
777 on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh
825 sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

436 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it
789 seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she
[759] feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[54a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before
342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are
[177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that
[827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has
• [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and or-
[592] derly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is
171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
[882] did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
[354] or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
775 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
[782] were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
567 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master
764 as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
[171] to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY DON'T WANT TO GET OUT ON A LIMB

829 177 I believe, in my honest opinion, that there's a whole lot of white people on this island that's not bad at all. And I think they would like to see everybody happy, but they don't want to get out on a limb from their own people, be called "nigger-lovers" or any other stories that the people can dream up for them.

I knew a white guy and we sat around and was drinking beer and talking and he was saying that he was with the Negroes in most of the things that they wanted and he believed that most of the things they wanted was right. He said he has never done nothing to hurt the Negroes. I told him that I felt like he hadn't done anything to help the Negroes either because he just sat back and was sort of looking out for his personal self, instead of saying to his friends, when they have gatherings and the question comes up, "I don't believe that we are right in what we are doing. I believe that everybody should have a chance."

829 177 • 357 I think seriously that we got a whole lot of Negroes that are hurting us more than the whites, by acting content—like the maids in the house. Any time the madam would say something to them, they would smile even though within themselves they were unhappy. But this is what was expected of them and so this is what they're doing. They have been conditioned to this. They are not frank and not honest with themselves or the people they deal with. I believe this is one of the things that's hurting us because then the white man feel that he could always push you back, because you're just that way; you're not going to stand up to nothing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## 829 177 ALL WOULD BE GETTING EQUAL EDUCATION

As far as Johns Island is concerned, we got a long way to go. I believe sincerely that there will have to be something that happens real bad to change the situation here. We've coexisted all these years. We have accepted this, and the white man have accepted it. Very seldom do we have to come together on any major thing. So in this respect we could make it if we could keep on going like that, but we can't. Because we have gotten to the place now that my kids are not wanting what I wanted, or *thought* I wanted.

(871) Nobody has applied yet to go to the white high school. But I think

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18] 567 463 554 466

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862 found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants. 567 463

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house. 567 357.

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 267.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



THE TASK SYSTEM

464 567 Less than half of a planter's total number of laborers could usually be counted upon for a full day's work.

When Captain Basil Hall visited the United States in 1827 and 1828 he found on a sea-island plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 122 slaves. Of these, seventy were men and women between the ages of fourteen and fifty; forty-eight were children under the age of fourteen; and four were superannuated. The seventy workers were classified as follows: thirty-nine full hands, sixteen three-quarter hands, eleven half hands, and four quarter hands. Out of seventy persons, therefore, the planter had fifty-seven and a half "taskable hands," but those working in the fields were only forty-four taskables, while the other thirteen and a half were employed as cart drivers, nurses, cooks for the Negroes, carpenters, house servants, and stock minders.[20] [463] [359]

The number of taskable hands on a plantation varied from year to year. Children were not sent to the field until they were fourteen, but were put to work at minor jobs, pulling weeds, "minding child," picking up trash, washing dishes. Superannuated slaves were also given tasks calling for little physical exertion; such as, gardening, tending horses, nursing, sewing. *Enceinte* women did half tasks until confinement, and women with suckling babies also did half task until the child was eight months old. A slave who had been sick did a portion of a task until he had sufficiently recovered to resume his accustomed amount of work.

[20] Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828*, II, 229.

361 Sea Islanders NN23
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[For segregation policies imposed by White South Carolinians on the Sea Islanders, see Category 177.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

682 754

363 361 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

368 771 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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# *Tin City*

131 EASTWARD FROM SAVANNAH IN WEED-GROWN FIELDS lies Tin City, born of the depression and nurtured by the lean years that have followed. The little settlement, with its uncertain lanes winding through a maze of grass and tall shrubbery, stretches out over two hundred acres of land where long ago slaves labored in the black muck of rice fields.

To the west and south this land is touched by the ragged fringe of Savannah; to the north it sweeps away to the murky waters of the Savannah River. In 1819 the city of 133 Savannah condemned the wet-culture rice lands and attempted to build up the unhealthy, low-lying acres with leaves and trash. With the passing years the place has been marked with peculiar ridges and mounds, the result of this [137] building-up process. A wild growth of tall greenery covers the land.

• 361 About 1929 Louis Ellis, an old Negro who had been evicted from his home for non-payment of rent, secured permission from Savannah to settle on the land. His shack of discarded tin and his patch of a garden soon attracted other poverty stricken Negroes, and around him grew up a small community, self sufficient in its rent-free houses and its produce of garden and river. Although some of the settlers have abandoned the community and only about twenty remain, Tin City still leads its own independent existence. [137] Within its precincts the fresh atmosphere of a country district prevails, for here and there a clump of chinaberry trees or an oak tree spreads shade, rows of sugar cane and

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TIN CITY

•361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap
tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or
headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with
ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through
the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild
morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs
a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of
"greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One,
through natural ability, has held the office almost from the
115 founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply an-
nounced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following
of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
754 tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a] You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
(789) "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't take to salt."[69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
(759) don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
• 361 winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences, stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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## *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove
Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee"
342 to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
363 ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting
the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
351 but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green
with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is deco-
rated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in
other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found
at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small
children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth
on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older work-
ers had occupied the same cabins given to them before eman-
cipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
foods are considered to bring bad luck.

777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 101. Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
(368) near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
(787) spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
(791) ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
(759) is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
ily; 22a, c, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
(352) of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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## *Brownville*

•361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though [342] on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teach- [368] ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits 794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" *[16] [793] returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular mem- [352] bers and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly 292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

** Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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# *Tatemville*

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇

•361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[49a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[6]

[755] [789] 715 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

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# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff,
• 361 eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road
are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which
they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
361 Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and
built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with
blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors
and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491 set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342 unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368 whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at
the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger
church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. 363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, 366 and a crab cannery. The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

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# *Harris Neck*

•361 49 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of 361 two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence [351] protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

829 173 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remembered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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# *Pine Barren Near Eulonia*

122 [491] AFTER THE MUDDY RUTS THROUGH THE PINE clearing had ended, there was no road, and the car jerked and bounded about among the pine trees. The soft brown needles made better traveling than the boggy wagon tracks that were behind us, but our method of procedure was rather bewildering, for there was no mark by which to retrace our tracks. As we went deeper into the pine woods there was no sign of habitation.

(115) Our driver,* who had offered to help us when our car had stuck in the bog, was a six-foot, shiny black Negro, strong necked and lithe, with a twelve-inch hunting knife strapped to his hip. We had never seen him before, nor the smaller Negro beside him on the front seat. In the back seat we were concerned with our feet, which rested precariously among loose cartridge shells. We feared that a sudden jolt from a pine stump might make us stamp down on the shells and explode them.

•361 Suddenly we came upon a reed and paling fence higher than the head of a tall man. There was nothing to be seen over the top of it, no sign of occupation. We drove around to the side where, protected by some feathery bushes, a small opening hardly distinguishable from the palings led into an enclosure. Scattered without plan about a smooth sand clearing were three or four small unpainted wooden cabins, two connected by a narrow board walk just above the ground. Other smaller structures, sheds, and work tables were placed

* *Reuben Taylor, Eulonia.*

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•361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young [231] puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from 461 the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three 123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished [115] to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt [291] hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and [361] wondering how far from the main road this little settlement [829]

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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115 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town.
•361 He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh
829 road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

[759] "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[8]

[789] Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[8, 12a, c, d]

[789] The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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## *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here
(491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
•361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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## *Darien*

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•361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

36 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from
[351] wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-
[415] gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[824] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
[535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

• 361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1933.*

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115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 532 (412) We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us some of the wooden figures about which we had been told. One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[41a] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[41a] Another item was a frog [41i] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [70f, h] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

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•361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscel- [352] laneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such [343] a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

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Georgia

## SAPELO ISLAND

•361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI),[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),[B]* whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[28]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[22, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[50] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54]
come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves," [53] he began. "We pray an
[534] sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance. We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[53, 55]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

• 361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog
[136] Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

•361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
(164) very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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789 say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muh-sef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

115 During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby, seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that she was too young to remember much of the old times, she gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and African customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls Murray house."

(241) (761)

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the oldest men living on the island.

• 361 From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of houses and sheds.

115 A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan," * he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

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Georgia

## *St. Marys*

•361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few
115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a
(351) packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz
527 young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance
(535) roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
133 border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
179 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and visitors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
• 361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
569 Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story. They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
• 361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

182 For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun,
433 surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

182 It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

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Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

311
179

| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands • 361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is 133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive 137 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more 373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

[p. 276]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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361
363

*The Plantation "street." (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 303]

162 Wadmalaw has 2,024 people. There are 963 males and 1,061 females. The median age is 19.6 years. Forty-seven point three percent are under eighteen years and 6.8% of the island's people are 65 years old and over. Over 90% of Wadmalaw's population is Black.

Yonges (St. Pauls) Island has 9,235 residents; 6,314 of this total are Black. The median age is 19.9 years. Forty-six point five per cent of the population is under eighteen years and 6.7% 65 years old and older.

Edisto has 1,374 residents. There are 672 males and 702 females. The median age is 19.7 years. Nine per cent of this community is 65 years and over, 46.1% are under eighteen years old. One thousand one hundred and fifteen of Edisto's population is Black.

BLACK SEA ISLAND FAMILIES

361 Black islanders generally live on the inner acreage of the islands. This pattern exists and has been maintained for a number of reasons: (a) a strong agricultural history in which farmers built homes on or close to their planting acreage, (b) long term economic deprivation where Blacks could not afford new homes which in part contributed to (c) the generational building habit of constructing newer dwellings either close to or as extensions of existing houses.

[175] With the exception of (imported) Black city and military

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
•361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[551] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their residence since and before the turn of the century. While
484 many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
•361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

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[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.

[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.

[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.

[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.

[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

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> The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered 491
in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, 248
led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On 175
either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow 361
porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former 175
overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated 248
the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as 423
far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked 175
off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond [137]
was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four 248
weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. [243]
Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough [244]
for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old

[p. 191]

361 Sea Islanders NN23
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[For segregation policies imposed by White South Carolinians on the Sea Islanders, see Category 177.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
94 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[737] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[665] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[734] the nursing home and the housing.
[362]

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
[429] have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

464 794 114 their time and energy in interviewing the leadership personnel of each island, and consequently relied quite heavily on the estimations they provided. The error possibilities which accompany this procedure as the basis for later projection statements are well noted.

HOUSING ON THE SEA ISLANDS

362 There are 11,557 housing units on the five Sea Islands. The median number of persons per unit is 4.01; 3,743 of these units are occupied by Black families. The median number of persons per Black occupied unit is 4.65.

The by island breakdown shows a total of 6,642 units on James Island. One thousand one hundred and twenty-eight of the total are units occupied by Black families. There are 4.63 Blacks and 3.64 Whites per units.

Johns Island has a total of 1,875 units, with 4.01 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 678 of these units and there are 4.58 Blacks per unit.

Wadmalaw Island has 477 units and 4.24 persons per unit. Three hundred and seventy-two of these units are Black occupied, with 4.62 persons per unit.

Yonges Island has 2,224 units and 4.15 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 1,326 of these units; there are 4.78 Blacks per unit.

There are 329 units on Edisto Island, and 4.18 persons per unit. The persons per unit average for Black household

362 is 4.67. Edisto has 239 Black occupied units.

Precise data on the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island housing units were unavailable. The following figures are based on a total of 3,685 rural units and 613 rural farm units in Charleston County and can consequently serve only as a general indicator for the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island households. Only 1,547 of the rural units have all plumbing facilities. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six of these units are renter occupied. The overwhelming majority (3,381) of the units have no inside water facilities. One thousand six hundred and forty-five of the units were constructed before 1939 and 1,384 between 1940 and 1949. One thousand three hundred and twenty-seven of the units are valued at less than $5,000. The median size of rural units is 4.05 rooms.

362 365 [427] [435]

Of a total of 18,952 Black occupied units in the county, 8,142 units are owner occupied. Of the owner occupied units 2,988 were occupied in 1949 or earlier and 1,069 of the renters have a similar residency pattern. The median size of all Black occupied units is 4.7 rooms. The median size of owner occupied units is 5.7 and 4.0 for renter units. The median monthly rent paid is $41.00 for units without and $48.00 for units with all plumbing facilities.

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Structure and Content of Household Units

362 342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pillowed off the ground some twenty-two inches. Those units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse." More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units some families have both gas and stove cooking options. Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

[343] [514] 354 362 362

•362 There are also those units which are adequately furnished, and contain inside plumbing facilities. These homes tend to be new or recently improved. Built during the 1950's, more of the middle age islanders live in houses of this type.

Some sections contain new or recently built homes; these are more rarely seen and tend to be occupied by islanders in their late twenties and thirties who have been employed at an adequate wage over a period of years.

A SUMMATION STATEMENT

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178 The roots of exploitation are deep on the Sea Islands. That information and those program services which would help ease the yokes of oppression are but slowly being metered into the community. In the mist of this oppression, the islanders continue to show spirited strength in maintaining traditional family patterns and the unique customs. They are not diving foolishly into imitation of the suburban elements to which they are gaining greater exposure. Certainly features of the suburban life style are and will continue to be adopted into native family patterns. But these elements will be added with modification. It is too early to speculate on the forms these modifications will take. However, it is rather certain that these elements of suburbanization which would drastically effect the traditional functioning and design of island families if, ventured into

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

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363 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

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368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee" to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
[342] ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
• [363] streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
[351] but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain foods are considered to bring bad luck.

777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. •363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. 366 The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find employment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp [464] for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ventured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles [165] distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

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*The Plantation "street." (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 303]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 342 William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

> (361) (235) The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. (364) Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

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[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

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| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands
361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is
133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive
137 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more
373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from
524 him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest
123 link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the
342 site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no
• (365) electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate con-
(514) nections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene
123 lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
•365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white residents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approximately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed community. The vast majority of trips made off the island are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few people come onto the island without an express invitation from some island resident, because of the difficulty of access. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the skilled in bad weather.

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

362 is 4.67. Edisto has 239 Black occupied units.

Precise data on the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island housing units were unavailable. The following figures are based on a total of 3,685 rural units and 613 rural farm units in Charleston County and can consequently serve only as a general indicator for the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island households. Only 1,547 of the rural units have all plumbing facilities. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six of these units are renter occupied. The overwhelming majority (3,381) of the units have no inside water facilities. One thousand six hundred and forty-five of the units were constructed before 1939 and 1,384 between 1940 and 1949. One thousand three hundred and twenty-seven of the units are valued at less than $5,000. The median size of rural units is 4.05 rooms.

362 365 [427] [435]

Of a total of 18,952 Black occupied units in the county, 8,142 units are owner occupied. Of the owner occupied units 2,988 were occupied in 1949 or earlier and 1,069 of the renters have a similar residency pattern. The median size of all Black occupied units is 4.7 rooms. The median size of owner occupied units is 5.7 and 4.0 for renter units. The median monthly rent paid is $41.00 for units without and $48.00 for units with all plumbing facilities.

362 423 427

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# *Pin Point*

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621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[3] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

682 754

363 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

361

•368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
•[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; 22a, c, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
[352] of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though
(342) on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them, teach-
• (368) ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits
794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16]
(793) returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular mem-
(352) bers and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color
794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly
292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff,
361 eight miles southeast of Savannah.

Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
361 in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road
are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which
they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and
361 built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with
blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors
and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491] set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at
the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger
church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
162

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# *Pin Point*

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142

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# *Darien*

361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

361 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the
• [368] knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from
[351] wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-
[415] gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[824] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
[535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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# *Sapelo Island*

131 SAPELO ISLAND IS ONE OF THE CHAIN OF "GOLDEN Isles" lying along the Georgia Coast. The word Sapelo was
103 derived from "Zapala," the name used by the Indians when the island was a favorite hunting ground for the tribes that had given up much of the mainland to the Spaniards and
172 later to the English. Among the landmarks that recall colorful historical episodes are Indian mounds, tabby ruins of colonial days, and the remains of a house built by Jean Berard Mocquet, Marquis de Montalet, a French Royalist who immigrated to Georgia from Santo Domingo about 1797.

000 Plantation life flourished on Sapelo in the early nineteenth century. Here Thomas Spalding conducted one of the most extensive agricultural enterprises in the coastal section. The "big house" on the south end of the island was a spacious tabby mansion, so strongly constructed that the original walls are still standing and form the nucleus of the present dwelling. The island, with the exception of a number of Negro homesteads, is now the property of Richard Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but, although many improvements and changes have been made, much of the atmosphere of the early days has been preserved.

464 Industrial activity is concentrated in the central portion of Sapelo, where there is a sawmill that gives employment to many of the islanders. Nearby are the company houses, a
•368 post office, and a store. Several Negro churches and a dance hall are located elsewhere on the island.

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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

• 368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
[164] very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
(533) church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation
(795) and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
567 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
794 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
(674) the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
621 law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
(626) House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
(368) plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
175 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
567

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17 113 15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

[101] 16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

[122] 17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

[533] 18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

## 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

[794] [346] 1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

[795] 2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

[368] [533] 3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
346 and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
461 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
476 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
493 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
368 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
794 time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about
754 "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great
774 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who practices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag.
[828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have
•[369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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South Carolina
Georgetown



562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be com-
561 pared with the data from the longer adult conversations, but they give some indication that sex differences in language use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better in school than mainland boys in their group, but their language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar. These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' discussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972) operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the two social groups under discussion here, however, the pattern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in the island community.

121 5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropologist who has studied language and social relationships in a black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
•369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older gen-
(212) tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

311
179

| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands
361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is
133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive
137 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more
• 373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experiments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government. Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

175 249 [242] [386] [556] 175 567

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
135 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(438) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
135 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
(388) hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

What y'u gwine t' do fo' June month? Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
June month's a ha'd month—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Jerusalem in de momin'—Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Floyd sang several variations of the central theme, but as he said himself, "This is enough!" Janey's song was practically the same except that she substituted "Zion" for "Jerusalem."

You mus' pray ha'd—June a ha'd month
June month a sailin'—Oh, Zion O Zion.
What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

252
256
402

In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
(402) into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

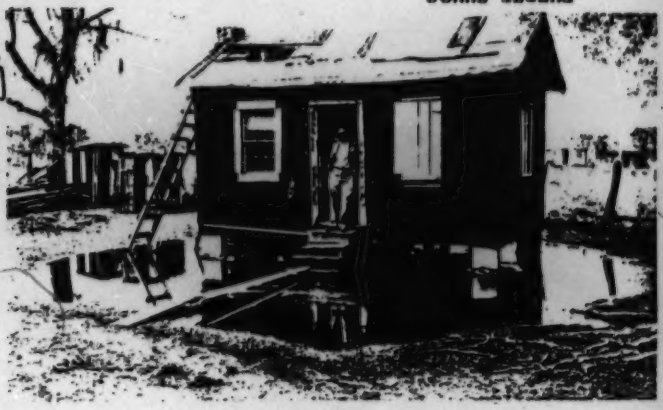
Next door:
Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next:
I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
(202) note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
(199) ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

342
[417]



[404]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At * 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss- 137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

115 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her [787] lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face 787 and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
• [406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses
[416] did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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492
241
407

142
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
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407

[p. 194]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

241
.407
492

SPRING PLOWING

[facing p. iii]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of
[412 the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
175 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
248 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
•407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



248 a small turning lathe, the operator standing at one end of the gin, feeding the cotton very slowly through the rollers, leaving the •407 smooth black seeds behind. . . . Twenty or thirty of these little machines stand in one room; and, strange to say, none of those who have attempted to propel them by other power have succeeded. One very intelligent gentleman told me that he had spent $5,000 in trying experiments in machinery to gin this kind of cotton.[7]

### BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENTAL AGRICULTURE

248 Although sea-island cotton in the early days of its introduction was one of the most profitable crops ever raised in the South, the increase of its production and the varying fineness of the fiber caused a wide fluctuation in the price. Thus while some planters ~~realized considerable~~ profits, ~~others were hard put to make~~ expenses. As early as 1826 the most progressive planters in nearly every parish which grew "sea-islands" began to inquire into the causes of this condition. They organized agricultural societies[8] in the attempt to improve the general methods of culture and to standardize the prices; they subscribed to agricultural magazines; they wrote articles; they sent out questionnaires.

[175] In 1828 William Elliott, of St. Helena's Parish, writing in the *Southern Agriculturist*, expressed the general sentiment of sea-island planters on this important subject. He said:

I shall turn to the consideration of a question, which it is of a paramount importance that a Sea-Island Planter should examine and

[7] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 135.

[8] The St. Helena Agricultural Society was organized prior to February, 1843. *The Southern Agriculturist* of that date contains a letter from Daniel Jenkins, the secretary, on the unsuccessful experiment of some St. Helena planters in packing sea-island cotton in square bales.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 467 248 (804) [407]

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

567 467 291

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

• 411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 223 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 535

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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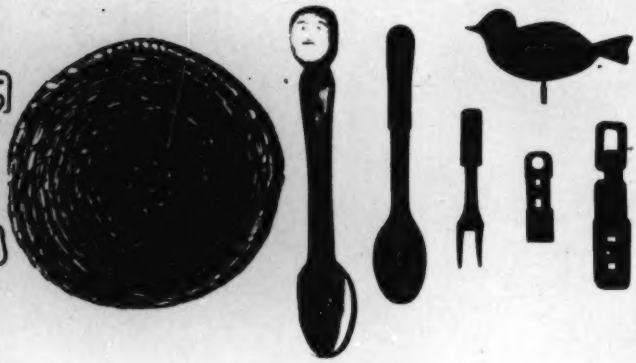
322
532
[412]
[481]

IIa. Carved wooden spoon

IIb. Carved wooden stick with figure

[285]
[412]



IIc. Coil basket and carved wooden objects

[Following p. xxxii-B]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

142
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XVb. Katie Brown with pestle and mortar

[following p. xxxii-R]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of •412 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the 532 dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A. [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

• 412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[48a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[411] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest
775 shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed
[115] to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



322 Walking sticks (Plate IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard
532 carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones[41c] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc)
• 412 with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia).
532 Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] An-
[524] other man employed his spare time in the carving of small wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§

B

422 An old Negro (Plate V) living in very poor circumstances owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he
[428] had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 38th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 532 (412) We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us some of the wooden figures about which we had been told. One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[41e] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[41e] Another item was a frog [41i] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [70f, h] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [59] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI),[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
• [412] we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[23]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 Hestuh she Shad's gran. Yuh knows Shad? Bentoo she duh younges. Magret she my gran."

We asked if Belali Mohomet had been related to Belali Sullivan on St. Simons.

"I ain know bout St. Simon but Cotto use tuh talk bout cousin Belali Sullivan.

"Yes'm, I membuh muh gran too. Belali he frum Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds
829 we didn know. She say 'mosojo' an sometime 'sojo' wen she
192 mean pot. Fuh watuh she say 'deloe' an fuh fyuh she say 'diffy.' She tell us, 'Tak sojo off diffy.'

"Wen sumpm done she say, 'Bim-boga-rum.' Yuh tell uh sumpm wut is a suhprise lak somebody die, den she say, 'Ma-foo-bey, ma-foo-bey.'

829 "She ain tie uh head up lak I does, but she weah a loose wite clawt da she trow obuh uh head lak veil an it hang loose on uh shoulduh. I ain know wy she weah it dataway, but I tink she ain lak a tight ting roun uh head.

829 "She make funny flat cake she call 'saraka.' She make
252 um same day ebry yeah, an it big day. Wen dey finish, she call us in, all duh chillun, an put in hans lill flat cake an we eats it. Yes'm, I membuh how she make it. She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tak dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. 'Saraka' she call um."

• 412 Before the cabin stood a crudely constructed wooden mortar made many years before by Katie's husband and used originally for the pounding of rice. A deep basin-like aperture had been hewn out of the center of a log which was about three feet long and from eighteen to twenty inches wide.[43]

115 Across the dusty road from Katie Brown's another nar-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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•412

[171] Mortars made from palm trees are traditionally used to pound rice and corn. Similar mortars are still used throughout Africa.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 46 24 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground. Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) (492) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the Devill Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 (412) In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 597 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.23]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 31]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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8. Beating Rice in Darien

[facing p. 49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require the aid of rhythmic songs.

[243] [412] [171]

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

535 533 [177]

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

533

In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

535 533 539

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

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535 171

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 232, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243 171 [17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [171] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

(539)

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 561 461 [412] (533) On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
567 on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July. Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
•[412] simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
248 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

 567

his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) (837)

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with
252 their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After
412 the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large
285 hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

567 With the aid of her children, the mother prepared
252 supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the
262 corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from
231 the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate
264 to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

567 The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten
264 just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne
[252] an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

"I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout
115 muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said, her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been
[757] familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[48b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of
304 which her eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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XXIV. Jim Myers at Mush Bluff Island

[Following p. xxxii - FF]

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Georgia



115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was
351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At
406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an
• 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast
133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-
137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned,
115 rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task
[787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired.
787 A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses
[416] did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Darien*

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

• 415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked 115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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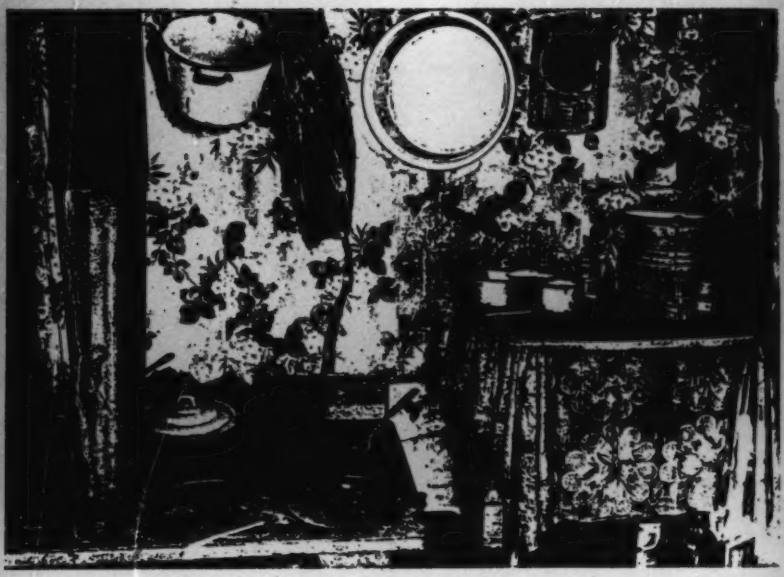

[p. xxiii]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 39]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.58]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

POSSUM POINT

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351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
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[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
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Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough * and the obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the 342 left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence [351] made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny [352] porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscellaneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung [343] at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was [353] so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

[416] Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* *Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Maggie Russell*

## ANYBODY WANTS TO GO BACK TO THEIR OLD HOMEPLACE

159 You see that house through the bushes? That's Jenkins Point, where I used to live. They had houses built on the plantation for black people to live in because that was the people that worked for them. Now there are no black people living over there on Seabrook.

I married Dan Russell in 1944 and moved out to Wadmalaw. My husband was a crabber. We worked in the creek thirteen years together. I loved it.

You're not going to get onto Seabrook now. We tried to go in a boat one time and a man was standing up on the bank and shoots. He shoot up in the air. I say, "Dan, it sounds like somebody shooting." He say, "Cut the motor off." We cut the motor off and he was shooting up in the air telling us not to come over there. Then we see the sign says "no trespassing at any time." You can't even go in the little creek we used to go in to catch fish. He closed that out.

It's too bad because anybody wants to go back to their old homeplace.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

[651]
[428]

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) - 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 192]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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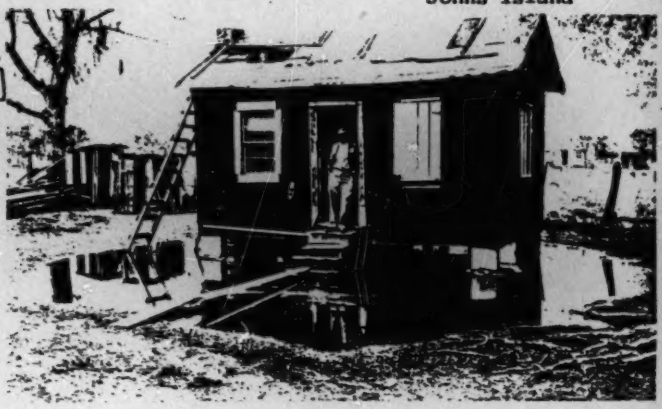

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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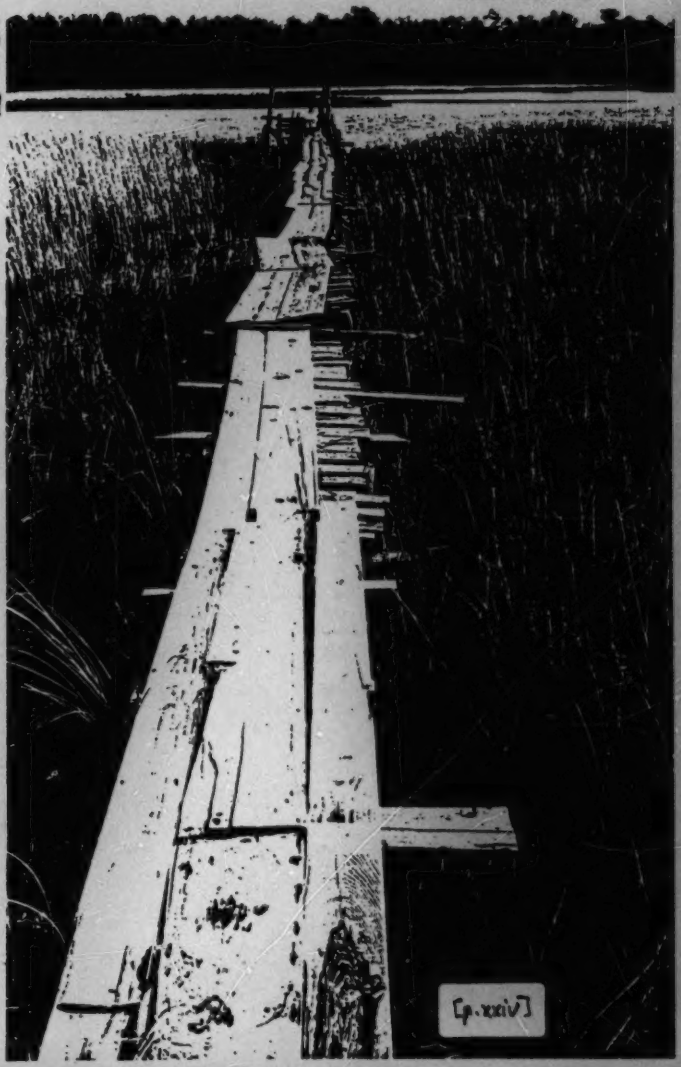

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 37]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p 125]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



322 Walking sticks (Plate IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard
532 carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones[41e] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc)
412 with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia).
532 Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] An-
[524] other man employed his spare time in the carving of small wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§

• 422 An old Negro (Plate V) B living in very poor circumstances owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he
[428] had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 36th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

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Georgia



422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
(324) item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc). The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
(789) ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[6, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in
532 contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carving.[70a,*] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb), about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII), well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
(539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

11: Johnson NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For information on the size of various St. Helena plantations under White ownership, see Category 116, pp. 41-45; for information on the historical background of the planters themselves, see Category 116, pp. 103-123.]

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Georgia



342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
• 423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[955] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[12b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was
829 a young man.

567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
•423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun,
182 surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that
433 isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

182 It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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177 Hilton Head Island became known as a resort for the affluent. But similar developments have taken place on other Sea Islands. Hilton Head appears in many ways to have forecast what the future would bring. Its recent course is worth closer examination. In 1950 nearly all of the residents of Hilton Head were black; by 1980 they were outnumbered five to one by whites. According to Fraser, development has been a good thing for black natives of the islands. Resort development 177 "caused black-owned land on Hilton Head Island to increase in value 423 from $100 an acre near the beach or near the marshes to $50,000 or 435 $100,000 an acre today. This flows into the pocket of the blacks who 432 elect to sell," he says.

> I sold lots at $7,000 which today sell for $350,000. Some blacks have done the same. Some of them, smarter than I was, held onto their land, as I and developers developed our land and pushed up the values. Now they are selling. I am jubilant, positively jubilant, when a black farm family that has held the land for five generations on Hilton Head Island, land that was worth $100 when we arrived here, sells it today for $50,000. I think that's wonderful.

177 Fraser contends that

> 423 it is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. 432 Every black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, and uses a part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment in the future of that family. I wish more of them would do it.

The emergence of Hilton Head Island as a playground for rich white northerners, in the opinion of Charles Fraser, has been beneficial for everyone.

But others are less sanguine. "We have witnessed some changes on Hilton Head over the last twenty-five years," suggests Emory Campbell, a native of the island, "and they have not all been good from the black perspective." Some contend that black landowners were induced to sell their land too cheaply—either through trickery or because they did not know the land's fair market value. Unquestionably some black families made money on the transactions, at least by comparison with the barterlike economy of the predevelopment decades. But even those who

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177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright. For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant •423 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no 432 longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

511 The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in 464 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state 177 average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricultural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

464 While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi- 871 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requisite education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that 177 seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

• 423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

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423 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15:
175 "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient ag-
241 riculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly in-
[243] digo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple commodities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were pri-
243 marily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice
171 crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the trans-
171 planted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

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439 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and
437 told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable
156 insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in
596 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family commu-
621 nities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to
596 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called
423 "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the
602 primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island commu-
(423) nities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# Appendix 4

# The Land Question

•423 [178] As the islanders often put it, "Everything change up now." One of the major areas of change in recent years has been in the use and ownership of land in the islands. "Primarily," comments Ed Brown, an attorney practicing in Charleston County who grew up on Wadmalaw,

> the land is changing hands because history has created a division between those people who own the land and those people who want to buy land. And if a developer comes in here with forty thousand dollars for ten acres of land, which might appear at first blush to be a lot of money, the landowner is perhaps inclined to take the forty thousand dollars and part with title to the land. That happens. I don't know that that is a bad thing. I think that what it does do is it creates a problem for the person who has sold the land, because if you are not sophisticated in terms of handling the forty thousand dollars, then you lose it rather quickly, whereas the land would be there forever.[1]

The relationship of black people to land in general has considerable significance. Various studies and reports trace the origins of many of the current domestic ills of the United States to the surge of southern blacks into urban areas as the rural southern economy found that under existing social arrangements, it could no longer employ large numbers of small farmers, sharecroppers, tenants, and unskilled farm laborers. In the 1960s alone, more than 1.3 million blacks left the South, and during the previous decade the number was even greater.[2]

423 179 The population that remains behind on the islands is having to adjust to the incoming population of resort residents, as well as resort development for tourism. Developers have not been responsive to local needs. Seabrook was the first of the islands to be opened up as a resort.

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423 177 The original owner of the island, one of the major church denominations, sold it to a group of developers, who in turn sold it to a second group, from New York. No input from the community was requested, and a great deal of hostility resulted. When developers came to Kiawah to create a much larger resort area, they expressed readiness to meet community needs and asked for a list. The time available to come up with this list was brief, but island leaders working with Bill Jenkins, a long-time activist in land issues, did manage to set out six or seven mostly minor suggestions. "We did it in good faith," notes Jenkins. "I think we were more in good faith than they were, because some of those things we are still trying to get."

"I remember as a little boy," says Ed Brown, "that you could purchase perhaps an acre of land for two hundred dollars. Today that's just unheard of. So the very basic thing that gives the islands their wealth, namely, the property, is increasing in value, but we need to develop a methodology by which that can be properly managed and the profits therefrom, if there are to be profits, channeled back into the islands for their development." He adds, "I see good things. I'm an eternal optimist. I think that the future will prove to be very fruitful . . . if we can learn from the mistakes." Yet he does not deny that there have been mistakes, for instance, the absence of "a working rapport between the people who operate these resorts and the people who in fact live on these islands, and who have lived there for quite some time."

423 311 177 Land is being taken out of production. Acreage once used to grow food is now restricted and controlled by high taxes and county regulations implemented in response to development. Small livestock farmers located next to tracts under new ownership may be pressured to sell out if their activities seem incompatible with the projects of the developers. Lands are lost, too, when people unused to record keeping lose tax receipts and forget to pay yearly bills, or when land descends to heirs who have moved away and have no interest in it.

423 177 Bill Jenkins has provided an illustration of what can happen when developers are more interested in a piece of property than its legal owners:

> There's seventy-nine acres of land down at Johns Island airport. . . . Developers . . . did some research and found out who were some of the people who were involved in that property. [One of

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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•423 177 them] found a wino in New York City and just walked up to him and said, "I heard you own some property on Johns Island." The guy thought he was kidding because he had never been to Johns Island. So he just started laughing. [The developer] said, "I'm serious. You get a witness and come with me and I will give you five hundred dollars for what you own." So this guy, you know, he thought Santa Claus. So he got one of his friends and they went downtown, and he had everything probated, signed it off, and the people came down here and created all kinds of problems for the rest of the family. Eventually, they had to end up selling that land . . . because with this property, when the families are so large, most of the time you can't even get all of the family together, so they could agree who's going to get the swampland, who's going to get the house, who's going to get the waterfront. . . . But the court could sell all of the land and divide the money equally. And so, when this land developer bought this land . . . , he came down here and he wanted his portion. . . . He is now one of the heirs. But [he and the family] cannot agree on which piece. . . . Then he goes back to the court and says, "We can't reach an agreement." And if you can't reach an agreement, then the court will come in and put it up for sale.

423 871 Obviously, the question of land retention is directly tied to the education of the landowners about the legal responsibilities involved. For more than twenty years, groups have been operating in that interest throughout the Sea Islands and the rural South. In 1970 Professor Robert Browne, who was then studying the loss of black land in the South for the Black Economic Research Center in New York (he is now at Howard University), was able to obtain a million dollars from a private donor to organize the National Emergency Land Fund. The fund has focused on educating black landowners about their responsibilities, helping them express themselves, putting land into production, and resisting aggressive development.

871 The fund has worked in conjunction with the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, one of the oldest institutions established for the education of blacks in the United States. Penn School [873] began by teaching newly freed slaves and continued as the only high school for black children on the island. In 1948 the bulk of its programs were transferred to the county public school system, but most of

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its community outreach activities were continued. The Penn Center, currently directed by Emory Campbell, acts as an information and referral source, provides such social services as visiting families to help them select food crops, and educates in matters including use of land and landownership.

Bill Jenkins was working for Penn Community Services in the early 1970s when he helped put together a program called Black Land Services, in response to a number of requests for help in retaining ownership of land. He is now active in the South Carolina Land Owners' Association, an offshoot of the National Association of Land Owners, which presently operates only in Mississippi and Alabama. Faced with serious cutbacks in funding and manpower, the South Carolina Land Owners' Association is not able to be as active as it once was, but Jenkins and co-worker Joe McDermott continue their educational activities in the islands on a reduced scale.

The desire of the dominant society to reclaim the Sea Islands, though shortsighted, nonetheless seems likely to prevail. As Ed Brown puts it, "The industry is there." The displacement that has already occurred will have long-term repercussions. "The social consequences of the pressures from development on the Sea Islands will be seen another five to ten to fifteen years," notes Emory Campbell. "It's subtle now but we at Penn Center see it as a very serious problem—serious today as it is going to be serious in another ten to fifteen years."

The islanders' ineffectiveness in resisting the often reckless advances of developers must be laid at the door of the very insularity that for so long protected their culture. Adherence to traditional ways has by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force. The price they are paying now is one more legacy of slavery.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

179 counter those of outside interests. The County
177 Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
758 well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
[743] part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the devel ,ment of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
[423] Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a
[563] black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
(P. 5iV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[177] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

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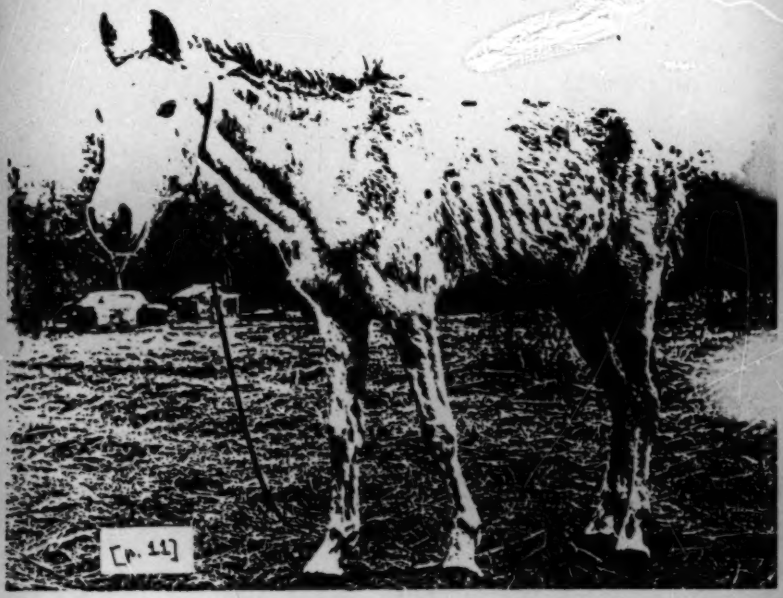

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## GOD AIN'T MAKING NO MORE LAND

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Land on these islands got to be so valuable because of the development projects on Kiawah and Seabrook. At one time you could get an acre of land for less than fifty dollars. Now land costs a lot more. It's almost impossible to buy land now. We got people out here now that come to buy with cash money. This is a way of enticing and influencing people because people have spent all their lives trying to make some money and here this guy walks up to you with rolls of thousand dollar bills circled by hundreds and five hundreds and starts talking. Many of these people just want to take the money and I can understand it. But you have to let them know that God ain't making no more land, and if you got any, you better hold onto it and try to work some other type of arrangement like long-term leasing. Sometimes you can be land-rich, but you can lose it all.

Black land is a threat to further development. It's slowing things down. I'll give you an example of how these developers operate. There is a black family that used to own about seventy-nine acres of land on Johns Island. The land developers were out there like buzzards trying to find an heir to that property that would not have any interest in the property. In this particular case the heir was somebody in New York and the developer said, "I will give

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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you X amount of dollars for what you own on Johns Island." He said, "Man, what are you talking about? I have never been to Johns Island." The developer said, "Yes, but you own something down there." The developer looked like Santa Claus to him and he just went on and took the money. 423 197 425

The developer took the signed agreement into probate court and started suing for partition. They couldn't agree on how to divide the seventy-nine acres. The court said since the relatives could not agree who was going to get the swamp, who was going to get the waterfront, who was going to get whatever, then the whole property should be sold and the money divided.

The developer wanted the whole thing anyway. When he signed the piece of paper for whatever he owned, he became a member of the family. He would not agree to any settlement. When they had the partition sale, he had someone come and outbid the rest of the family.

We're planning quarterly land workshops now so that people can learn more about how to protect their land. 423

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

[651]
[428]

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
[464] there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to main-
[184] land jobs for the past three or four decades. In the mainland community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older gen-
[212] tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

362 is 4.67. Edisto has 239 Black occupied units.

Precise data on the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island housing units were unavailable. The following figures are based on a total of 3,685 rural units and 613 rural farm units in Charleston County and can consequently serve only as a general indicator for the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island households. Only 1,547 of the rural units have all plumbing facilities. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six of these units are renter occupied. The overwhelming majority (3,381) of the units have no inside water facilities. One thousand six hundred and forty-five of the units were constructed before 1939 and 1,384 between 1940 and 1949. One thousand three hundred and twenty-seven of the units are valued at less than $5,000. The median size of rural units is 4.05 rooms.

362 365 [427] [435]

Of a total of 18,952 Black occupied units in the county, 8,142 units are owner occupied. Of the owner occupied units 2,988 were occupied in 1949 or earlier and 1,069 of the renters have a similar residency pattern. The median size of all Black occupied units is 4.7 rooms. The median size of owner occupied units is 5.7 and 4.0 for renter units. The median monthly rent paid is $41.00 for units without and $48.00 for units with all plumbing facilities.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
•423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] U. S. *Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters in places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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175one of Boston, in the project, and on March 9 bought 6,795 acres, valued by the commissioners at $24,120, for about $7,000, eleven plantations including Coffin's Point, Fripp's Point, Cherry Hill, Pine Grove, John Fripp's Big House, Mulberry Hill, Corner Farm, two plantations on Ladies Island, and Morgan Island.[58] For the most part he employed to help him in the experiment the superintendents and teachers who were already on the plantations. After conducting the enterprise for two years with many vexations and losses, he began to sell the land in 1865, some plantations to white men from the North, others in small tracts to Negroes. He got from $5 to $10 an acre for land for which he had paid a little more than a dollar.[59]

The land bid in for the United States had been bought with the idea of providing for military and naval purposes and with the hope eventually of placing land within the reach of the Negro. The President's instructions to the tax commissioners of September 16, 1863, outlined a plan whereby this hope might be realized. After listing the land to be reserved for military and naval purposes, providing for land to be sold to men serving in the army, navy, or marine corps, and setting apart thirty-six school farms of 160 acres each, he directed that all parts of certain tracts not otherwise appropriated be surveyed into twenty-acre plots and sold to "heads of families of the African race, only one to each, preferring such as by their good conduct, meritorious services, or exemplary character, will be examples of moral propriety and industry to

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[58] MS, South Carolina Maps, 366. But see *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 172.
[59] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 277, 296, 313, 324, 326.

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those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[80] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction.

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On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[81] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[82]

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[80] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc.* no. 146, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[81] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[82] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

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General Sherman, after having finally reached the sea in his famous march thereto, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865, setting aside "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida," for the freedmen, and especially reserved the islands for "the sole and exclusive management" of the Negroes.[63] The order, however, specifically exempted from its operation those whites who had bought land at the tax sales. Saxton, who was authorized to put the terms of the order in operation, at once began to settle Negroes on the land. No Negro, however, acquired the title to the land by virtue of General Sherman's order. Later, Congress, for the relief of those who had been settled on abandoned plantations, ordered, in an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau Act of July 16, 1866, a sale of most of the public land at $1.50 an acre to "such persons and to such only as have acquired and are now occupying lands under and agreeably to the provisions of General Sherman's special field order." This same act called for a sale of the school farms in St. Helena's Parish at $10 an acre.[64]

Before the Government had sold all the land which it had taken over in 1863 for the non-payment of taxes, the possession of it had become an irksome problem, grievous alike to the Government and to the people who were trying to rehabilitate the region after the War. Money was scarce and the buyers few. It was not until 1876 that the Government finally disposed of all the land.

[63] *House Ex. Doc.* no. 11, 39th Cong., 1st sess.
[64] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, secs. 6-12.

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THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 •423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government 423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to pur- 423 chase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily rou- [434] tine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it had come the responsibility of earning their own living, [241] and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 37n.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

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CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered 491
in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, 248
led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On 175
either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow 361
porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former 175
overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated 248
the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as 423
far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked 175
off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond (137)
was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four 248
weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. (243)
Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough (244)
for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old

[p. 191]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[5] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[5] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

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175 him, ere he will gain all his rights; but I would rather, for his own
657 sake, see him oppressed for generations, than be spoiled and petted as he has been here. He would come out of the struggle more manly and self-reliant.[7]

Philbrick had been opposed from the first to giving the Negroes anything except in payment for services actually performed. He observed in the autumn of 1862 that they were more economical of food than they had been in the spring when they thought that the Government would ration them as their masters had done. Philbrick would have followed the same rule in regard to tools, paying them wages enough to enable each person to buy his own hoe and spade. The superintendents were likewise op-
175 posed to the Government policy of selling land to the Ne-
657 groes at a special price. After the sales had been effected
• 423 and the Negroes had been in possession of their holdings for more than a year, Philbrick was of the opinion that "no race of men on God's earth ever acquired the right to the soil" with so little effort as the Negroes on St. Helena. He thought that they would have been better off had they paid the market value of the land, "because they would use the land for which they had paid full price more economically, would be likely to get more out of it, and would be taught a feeling of independence more readily than by being made the recipients of charity."[8]

175 Philbrick himself had acquired his land at a lower price than the Negroes had paid, but he overlooked this
657 fact in evaluating the Government's policy toward the Negro because he was honestly attempting to put into

[7] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers. Feb., 1865.
[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 276, 277.

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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[16] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[16] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it
•423 was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

(578) As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 Hard times drove many of the young men from the
167 Island and led many a mother and father to permit even
735 their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
[848] desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
• [423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## GOD AIN'T MAKING NO MORE LAND

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Land on these islands got to be so valuable because of the development projects on Kiawah and Seabrook. At one time you could get an acre of land for less than fifty dollars. Now land costs a lot more. It's almost impossible to buy land now. We got people out here now that come to buy with cash money. This is a way of enticing and influencing people because people have spent all their lives trying to make some money and here this guy walks up to you with rolls of thousand dollar bills circled by hundreds and five hundreds and starts talking. Many of these people just want to take the money and I can understand it. But you have to let them know that God ain't making no more land, and if you got any, you better hold onto it and try to work some other type of arrangement like long-term leasing. Sometimes you can be land-rich, but you can lose it all.

Black land is a threat to further development. It's slowing things down. I'll give you an example of how these developers operate. There is a black family that used to own about seventy-nine acres of land on Johns Island. The land developers were out there like buzzards trying to find an heir to that property that would not have any interest in the property. In this particular case the heir was somebody in New York and the developer said, "I will give

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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you X amount of dollars for what you own on Johns Island." He said, "Man, what are you talking about? I have never been to Johns Island." The developer said, "Yes, but you own something down there." The developer looked like Santa Claus to him and he just went on and took the money. 423 197 425

The developer took the signed agreement into probate court and started suing for partition. They couldn't agree on how to divide the seventy-nine acres. The court said since the relatives could not agree who was going to get the swamp, who was going to get the waterfront, who was going to get whatever, then the whole property should be sold and the money divided.

The developer wanted the whole thing anyway. When he signed the piece of paper for whatever he owned, he became a member of the family. He would not agree to any settlement. When they had the partition sale, he had someone come and outbid the rest of the family.

We're planning quarterly land workshops now so that people can learn more about how to protect their land. 423

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

[651] [428]

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[795] Baptist Church was located.

764 At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
152 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
[767] ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

764 M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
171 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers, there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach, its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my husband died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me
[123] if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground.
46 Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the
24 cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the
(492) Devil! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road
(412) and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise
597 up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
94 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[737] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[665] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[934] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using
[429] it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

362 is 4.67. Edisto has 239 Black occupied units.

Precise data on the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island housing units were unavailable. The following figures are based on a total of 3,685 rural units and 613 rural farm units in Charleston County and can consequently serve only as a general indicator for the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island households. Only 1,547 of the rural units have all plumbing facilities. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six of these units are renter occupied. The overwhelming majority (3,381) of the units have no inside water facilities. One thousand six hundred and forty-five of the units were constructed before 1939 and 1,384 between 1940 and 1949. One thousand three hundred and twenty-seven of the units are valued at less than $5,000. The median size of rural units is 4.05 rooms.

362 365 [427] [435]

Of a total of 18,952 Black occupied units in the county, 8,142 units are owner occupied. Of the owner occupied units 2,988 were occupied in 1949 or earlier and 1,069 of the renters have a similar residency pattern. The median size of all Black occupied units is 4.7 rooms. The median size of owner occupied units is 5.7 and 4.0 for renter units. The median monthly rent paid is $41.00 for units without and $48.00 for units with all plumbing facilities.

362 423 427

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 657 658 427

tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 outlined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of planting under the system arising out of the sale of plantations:

175 658 667 248

> I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this, most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and employ some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more. The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules, carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the ensuing year.[35]

175 657

The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of government-operated plantations and was content until the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, permitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
466 the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
[427] acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by
[465] the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during
248 the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

BROWNVILLE

322 Walking sticks (Plate IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard
532 carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones [41c] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc)
412 with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia).
532 Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] An-
[524] other man employed his spare time in the carving of small wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§

422 An old Negro (Plate V) B living in very poor circumstances owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he
[428] had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 36th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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142
302
291
416

*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

423
425

We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

[651] [428]

I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977).

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5.

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70.

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22.

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592.

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13.

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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CHAPTER VII

# THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

## THE SLAVE AND THE LASH

567 THE EVERY-DAY life of the slave people on a St. Helena plantation was by no means crowded with 461 constant toil. In the late spring when the cotton had to be hoed at the critical stages and again in the autumn when [466] the cotton was in "good blow" they might work from [431] "day clean" to "fust dark," but these were unusual periods, and, as a reward for the extra labor, their masters dealt out choice rations of molasses and meat and passed around presents of tobacco and gay headcloths. The ordinary task of a full hand kept him in the field only four or five hours a day so that the "smart" ones were habitually through by two o'clock. Only the "t'ick headed" remained as late as five. The rest of the day was theirs to spend as they chose.

000 A southern youth, Hamilton Couper, who had spent all his life on his father's sea-island cotton and rice plantation on the Georgia coast was surprised to find the white servants working so hard in New Haven where he was attending Yale. The Irish maid-of-all-work in his rooming house, so he wrote to his mother, "does more than any 567 servant I have ever seen."[1] The Honorable Amelia Murray of England who visited Couper's parents at their Hopeton plantation was also impressed with the difference in work required of the southern slave and the northern "saucy help." "I never saw servants in any old English family," she observed, "more comfortable, or more de-

[1] Couper-Wylly Papers. Hamilton Couper to Mrs. J. H. Couper, 1846.

[p. 124]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace [22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[432] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a newspaper published by the cult. These are believed to possess
[755] unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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177 Hilton Head Island became known as a resort for the affluent. But similar developments have taken place on other Sea Islands. Hilton Head appears in many ways to have forecast what the future would bring. Its recent course is worth closer examination. In 1950 nearly all of the residents of Hilton Head were black; by 1980 they were outnumbered five to one by whites. According to Fraser, development has been a good thing for black natives of the islands. Resort development "caused black-owned land on Hilton Head Island to increase in value from $100 an acre near the beach or near the marshes to $50,000 or $100,000 an acre today. This flows into the pocket of the blacks who elect to sell," he says.

177 423 435 432

> I sold lots at $7,000 which today sell for $350,000. Some blacks have done the same. Some of them, smarter than I was, held onto their land, as I and developers developed our land and pushed up the values. Now they are selling. I am jubilant, positively jubilant, when a black farm family that has held the land for five generations on Hilton Head Island, land that was worth $100 when we arrived here, sells it today for $50,000. I think that's wonderful.

Fraser contends that

177 423 432

> it is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. Every black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, and uses a part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment in the future of that family. I wish more of them would do it.

The emergence of Hilton Head Island as a playground for rich white northerners, in the opinion of Charles Fraser, has been beneficial for everyone.

But others are less sanguine. "We have witnessed some changes on Hilton Head over the last twenty-five years," suggests Emory Campbell, a native of the island, "and they have not all been good from the black perspective." Some contend that black landowners were induced to sell their land too cheaply—either through trickery or because they did not know the land's fair market value. Unquestionably some black families made money on the transactions, at least by comparison with the barterlike economy of the predevelopment decades. But even those who

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright.
423 For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant
432 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

511 The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton
464 Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in
177 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricultural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

464 While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort
871 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi-
177 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requisite education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533)
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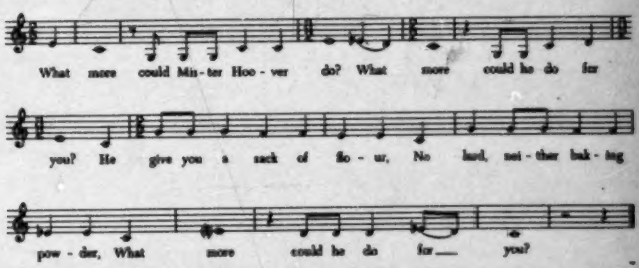


(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

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My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

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The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[p.9]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
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434 They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came
735 along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
342 go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
(354) lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
342 the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
354 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
492 over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

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226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of
[227] wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of pal-
[824] metto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around
[432] and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license.
[434] Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
803 went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together.
It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start
(241) with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I
• 432 could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday
177 speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that
[432] helped me to educate most of my children.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

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Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood,

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
•432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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the money thus obtained they bought extra clothing, coffee, sugar, and what was with them the chief necessity of life, tobacco.[31] 567 432

R. W. Roper estimated in 1844, in an address delivered in Columbia, S. C., before the State Agricultural Society, that it cost a planter $11.52 annually to feed a slave.[32] His estimate was based upon the following rations: twelve bushels of corn at 50 cents a bushel, twelve quarts of salt at 1 cent a quart, two pounds of bacon a week at 4½ cents a pound, and twelve pounds of tobacco a year at 6 cents a pound. While the prices quoted in 1844 were, of course, not the same for each year of the ante-bellum period, they approximated fairly closely the general average. 567 435

Clothing cost the planter considerably less. St. Helena planters ordinarily allowed each slave two suits a year, one for summer and another for winter. Thomas A. Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, gave out in April for every 200 hands 500 yards of men's blue cotton cloth, like the material used in workmen's clothes in the North, 600 yards of coarse unbleached cotton shirting for the men, 600 yards of the same material for women's underclothes, 600 yards of calico in gay colors for frocks, 100 handkerchief pieces, and 100 straw hats for men. In November he issued 550 yards of stout woolen cloth for men's clothes and 600 yards of thinner woolen for women, 1,200 yards of unbleached cloth for shirts and underclothes, 100 turban handkerchiefs for the women, 100 warm caps for the men; 200 pairs of shoes, and 67 blankets of assorted sizes. The house servants got hose and flannels in addition to 567 291

[31] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.
[32] R. W. Roper, "Address," *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. 3, p. 89.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

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567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
592 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
593 also that there was little family affection among them. Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
461 within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
461 in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
•432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

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to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

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clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[108]

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The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[108] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

175 657 [432] [435]

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

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Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

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[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc.* no. 6, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money. 175 511 736 (434) (651) (432)

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[18] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent: 175 423 735 (651) 175 423

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[18] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population
161 changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

•433 In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their
241 natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job oppor-
[178] tunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will
affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is
already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods.
[464] By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent
of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers
were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah
464 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment oppor-
177 tunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that
"operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in
1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb
to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the com-
pany's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the
resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
[668] nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the island. The resort developments and the new small
[241] businesses offer some employment, but farming,
[178] long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
• 433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

(P xiii, B)

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
• 433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
[464] there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

243 of the county's economy, it was still cultivated on the river
433 island for the consumption of its inhabitants, with some surplus sold for cash. Two men in their eighties could describe in detail each phase of the long growing season, and the utensils used in processing the ripened grain. During the
[464] lifetimes of these men, however, the island made the transition from a subsistence farming economy to one based on
464 laboring jobs held in mainland communities. Typically, young men went to live in nearby towns for periods ranging from two weeks to several years, working at jobs in lumber mills, in shipyards, on ocean-going vessels, and even in New York factories. Other men and women took laboring jobs on farms
243 and plantations closer to the island. The rice crop was still cultivated during this transition period, but by the thirties the cultivation was essentially under the supervision of one older man, a preacher and permanent resident of
243 the island. At times when intensive heavy labor was needed
464 for the crop, many of those who were working off the island returned to help in the harvest. With increasing job opportunities associated with World War II and the availability of motorized transportation, making the boat trip across the water a matter of minutes rather than hours, rice cultivation came to an end. Three successive years of disastrous flood tides in the forties finished the transition period.

464 Today most families have at least two members who
484 commute daily to jobs on the mainland. Many of the middle-

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was tell-
567 ing tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge
533 used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she ex-
533 plained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

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Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud[20] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433] [248] [20] Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead
291 of the usual two suits received by field hands.

Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of cloth-
567 ing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55
291 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a
435 yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handker-
chief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing
567 a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the
435 cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day
465 laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that
567 slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated
433 only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the planta-
tion operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

567 The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with
342 the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



175 S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had
657 left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve with-
567 out remuneration in this social experiment, contributing
464 himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St. Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum
(248) times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops
(433) from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[5] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[5] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

(435)
(465)

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•434
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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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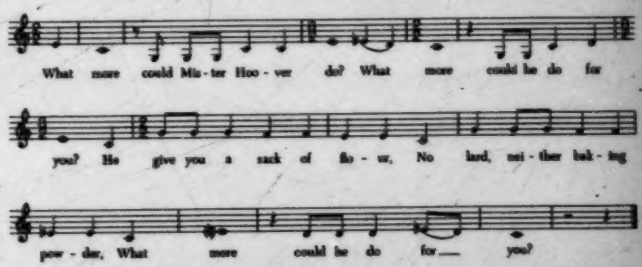
Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533)
(539)




(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

159 735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 735 657 [465] The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735 657 462 241 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 [262] [243] Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 432 226 434 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[redacted]

[p.97]

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

735 433 227 434 735 824 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a living. Anything they could do to make a living.

They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 342 [354] The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 342 354 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 493 492 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 722 WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

159 226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] [227] [824] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox.

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. [432] [434] Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat.

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did
226 the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a
(335) carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now.
(484) I'm working at a block and pipe company—making door lintels and window lintels, all different kinds of stone.

• (434) The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting
(241) season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159 511 434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159 [511] But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up—hard time and good time—all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

142 291

[p.53]

000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA
ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

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464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

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162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

•434 While the median annual income of rural families was $6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was $2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under
434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median
592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had
464

434 592 464 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 15,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey reports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

464 794

The discrepancies between these figures are apparent. First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accuracy of the latter figures. However, the methodological limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

464 794 114

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their
545 performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the Coastal Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight.
[434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large
545 number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white
179 people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home
533 with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during
545 the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful
[434] to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the
[178] sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[59]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[60] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[61]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[59] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[60] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[61] Weehaw Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 432 231 434

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 551 553 551

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. 461

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
582 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
567 also that there was little family affection among them.
593 Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go
461 home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already
461 been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their
434 hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 423 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 423 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily rou- [434] tine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it had come the responsibility of earning their own living, [241] and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 37n.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[5] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[5] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
736 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
(244) S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
(434) only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[18] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[18] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



177 Hilton Head Island became known as a resort for the affluent. But similar developments have taken place on other Sea Islands. Hilton Head appears in many ways to have forecast what the future would bring. Its recent course is worth closer examination. In 1950 nearly all of the residents of Hilton Head were black; by 1980 they were outnumbered five to one by whites. According to Fraser, development has been a good thing for black natives of the islands. Resort development 177 "caused black-owned land on Hilton Head Island to increase in value 423 from $100 an acre near the beach or near the marshes to $50,000 or •435 $100,000 an acre today. This flows into the pocket of the blacks who elect to sell," he says.

432

> I sold lots at $7,000 which today sell for $350,000. Some blacks have done the same. Some of them, smarter than I was, held onto their land, as I and developers developed our land and pushed up the values. Now they are selling. I am jubilant, positively jubilant, when a black farm family that has held the land for five generations on Hilton Head Island, land that was worth $100 when we arrived here, sells it today for $50,000. I think that's wonderful.

177 Fraser contends that

423 432

> it is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. Every black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, and uses a part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment in the future of that family. I wish more of them would do it.

The emergence of Hilton Head Island as a playground for rich white northerners, in the opinion of Charles Fraser, has been beneficial for everyone.

But others are less sanguine. "We have witnessed some changes on Hilton Head over the last twenty-five years," suggests Emory Campbell, a native of the island, "and they have not all been good from the black perspective." Some contend that black landowners were induced to sell their land too cheaply—either through trickery or because they did not know the land's fair market value. Unquestionably some black families made money on the transactions, at least by comparison with the barterlike economy of the predevelopment decades. But even those who

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

(435)
(465)

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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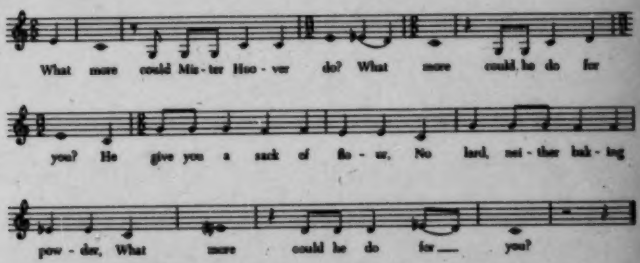
Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533)
(539)




(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
935 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
• (435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(438) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
935 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
(388) hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

362 is 4.67. Edisto has 239 Black occupied units.

Precise data on the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island housing units were unavailable. The following figures are based on a total of 3,685 rural units and 613 rural farm units in Charleston County and can consequently serve only as a general indicator for the secondary characteristics of Black Sea Island households. Only 1,547 of the rural units have all plumbing facilities. One thousand three hundred and eighty-six of these units are renter occupied. The overwhelming majority (3,381) of the units have no inside water facilities. One thousand six hundred and forty-five of the units were constructed before 1939 and 1,384 between 1940 and 1949. One thousand three hundred and twenty-seven of the units are valued at less than $5,000. The median size of rural units is 4.05 rooms.

362 365 [427] [435]

Of a total of 18,952 Black occupied units in the county, 8,142 units are owner occupied. Of the owner occupied units 2,988 were occupied in 1949 or earlier and 1,069 of the renters have a similar residency pattern. The median size of all Black occupied units is 4.7 rooms. The median size of owner occupied units is 5.7 and 4.0 for renter units. The median monthly rent paid is $41.00 for units without and $48.00 for units with all plumbing facilities.

362 423 427

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave
262 his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly
(263) gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man
(276) two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

(226) In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be
567 indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small
241 patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of
567 the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which
231 each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St.
432 Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Ne-
(435) groes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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the money thus obtained they bought extra clothing, coffee, sugar, and what was with them the chief necessity of life, tobacco.[31] 567 432

R. W. Roper estimated in 1844, in an address delivered in Columbia, S. C., before the State Agricultural Society, that it cost a planter $11.52 annually to feed a slave.[32] His estimate was based upon the following rations: twelve bushels of corn at 50 cents a bushel, twelve quarts of salt at 1 cent a quart, two pounds of bacon a week at 4½ cents a pound, and twelve pounds of tobacco a year at 6 cents a pound. While the prices quoted in 1844 were, of course, not the same for each year of the ante-bellum period, they approximated fairly closely the general average. 567 435.

Clothing cost the planter considerably less. St. Helena planters ordinarily allowed each slave two suits a year, one for summer and another for winter. Thomas A. Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, gave out in April for every 200 hands 500 yards of men's blue cotton cloth, like the material used in workmen's clothes in the North, 600 yards of coarse unbleached cotton shirting for the men, 600 yards of the same material for women's underclothes, 600 yards of calico in gay colors for frocks, 100 handkerchief pieces, and 100 straw hats for men. In November he issued 550 yards of stout woolen cloth for men's clothes and 600 yards of thinner woolen for women, 1,200 yards of unbleached cloth for shirts and underclothes, 100 turban handkerchiefs for the women, 100 warm caps for the men; 200 pairs of shoes, and 67 blankets of assorted sizes. The house servants got hose and flannels in addition to 567 291

[31] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.
[32] R. W. Roper, "Address," *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. 3, p. 89.

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567 291

these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead of the usual two suits received by field hands.

567 291 435

Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of clothing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handkerchief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

567 435

Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

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567 342

The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[60] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction.

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[435]

On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[61] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[62]

[435]

[60] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc. no. 146*, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[61] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[62] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc.* no. 6, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

(533) " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, ceduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

•436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

(759)

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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123 People in general are often insecure about their particular varieties of speech, and collecting spontaneous speech data can be a problem for anyone conducting a linguistic survey. It is even more of a problem on the Sea Islands because the native speakers of Gullah can and do adjust [195] their speech to produce the closest possible approximations of standard English when they are addressing strangers. To eliminate pressure on the speakers to avoid the creole speech (and to help validate my presence), I explained that one of my objectives for being on the islands was to learn as much as possible about folk medicine "roots," folktales, "lies," and "the old-time talk." I explained, for example, that my grandmother had taught me to identify and collect herbs or roots which were helpful in alleviating certain ailments or even in effecting certain cures. These topics generated much interest and humor; consequently, I was able to assemble a wide store of knowledge concerning medicinal cures, complete with folktales, as well as to collect several varieties of speech data.

123 Something I learned by sitting through one market day in Charleston illustrates a final point. As I observed an islander selling tomatoes, I • 439 realized that she felt much more satisfaction when she sold her goods to a person with whom she had haggled assiduously over the price than when she sold the same amount for a higher price to a well-intentioned but clearly patronizing customer. She had been robbed of the satisfaction of arriving at an "agreed" price. Feelings about the inequality of human beings had been transmitted along with the unequal prices of the tomatoes.

123 Achieving and maintaining equality in relationships is crucial when 124 striving to establish rapport with informants. Kenneth Goldstein cites a statement to this effect made by Alan Lomax in 1950 during a symposium on data collecting at the Mid-century International Folklore Conference held at Indiana University:

> People say to me that they would like to help me along with my work, that I look as if I need help. And I tell them that I am taking up their time and that I would like to make it up to them. There was never any question of dignity being involved; none of us in our situation was more dignified than anyone else. If the informant liked to drink, I drank, and if he liked to acquire a salary, I haggled with him very hard and very seriously, but we fought over it as equals.[6]

[p. xxiv is blank]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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285 rials—pine needles, bulrushes, sweet grass, and palmetto leaves—for
868 the girls and women to weave. The children learn to make baskets at around six years of age, and by the time they are in their teens, each has mastered a certain style and design that generally carries his or her trademark in the weave. Most of the baskets follow a simple coiling
285 technique with a knot used as a base. The free ends of the sweet grass bundle are folded and then wound around the knot to begin a coil. Then an opening is pierced in the center knot and a strip of palm leaf is pulled through the opening, wrapped around the grass coil, and pulled back through a second opening made in the knot to anchor or station the coil. As this process is repeated, the coil begins to circle out from the center knot to create a basket base that is circular or oval. From this base, the basket is constructed by changing the angle at which one circular row is fastened to another. The palm stitch in the Mt. Pleasant baskets does not interlock with the stitches in previous rows of the coil. Consequently, the stitches appear to radiate out from the center knot in a linear way, much like the spokes of a wheel.[41]

The baskets, like the islanders' other crafts, are displayed along
439 U.S. Highway 17, north of Charleston, or sold in the open markets
•439 near downtown Charleston where tourists crowd in daily to haggle over the prices of vegetables, hand-woven clothing, jewelry, and other wares, including items of brass, silver, and gold. Everything has a bargain price, and the basket sellers, like the other marketeers, are professionals in the art of bargaining. Baskets are priced according to size and difficulty of design, and it is a bad reflection on one's selling skills to be pressured into parting with a basket at a price lower than that established by the community; such an act may bring censure from one's family and from members of the community. The basket weavers, although seemingly unsophisticated and some of them certainly poor, are quite shrewd bargainers. I watched an exchange that took place when a very impressive car stopped in front of a basket stand along Highway 17. The driver, smoking a large cigar and accompanied by three elegantly dressed women, strolled over to look at the baskets. He picked up a tray of coasters and asked the basket weaver how much she would charge him to make coasters with specific dimensions for his beer cans. She hesitated, looked down at the basket that she was weaving, and said, "About twenty dollars." He then asked how long it would take for her to make them. She replied with some reservation that it would take her at least a week. He quickly took a

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439 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and
437 told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable
156 insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in
596 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family commu-
621 nities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to
596 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called
423 "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the
602 primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island commu-
(423) nities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

**WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF**

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
(438) your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
(388) hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[22]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[22] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

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SANDFLY

761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have
775 found no rest, but instead would have roamed the countryside.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and
789 charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and representatives of different corporations frequently visit
• [443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root*, *Lucky Mojo Love Drops*, *Black Cat Ashes*, and *Courting Powder*.[6] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place
[794] in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[795] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
474 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[529] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[872] (P.xii-B) cation and voter registration.
[866]

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(438) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty
(231) cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice. And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up
(388) hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

185
159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
[474] Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The
[692] time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to
Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
177 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
666 "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."

664 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better,
185 make them realize that they are human being when they come into the
court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong,
but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know
they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting.
If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly
would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

159
474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
● 443 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
474 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
185

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.

443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the
185 Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

159
443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

•443 494 You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

178 In tweive years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 758 74 [452] [734] [737]

Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

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While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

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Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

554 871

He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in
(761) sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

754 Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their
787 belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the
(791) Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider
456 it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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763 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the impor-
•456 tance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible
764 effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives
and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common
[171] among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe
[175] without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for
spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find
peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely
wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in
764 rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing
175 of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to
[178] the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or
want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other
practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily
accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same
[171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not un-
usual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—
clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body,
which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with
branches and leaves.[52]

764 On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated
with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always
containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the
glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some
said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the
items; others commented they were merely copying what they had al-
ways seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced
[178] for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement
vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's
love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but
they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services.
People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even
more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is
given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and
the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 28]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## THE SICK BENEFIT, AND DEATH BENEFIT

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In the old days people couldn't afford insurance so we make up that Moving Star Society from ten cents each from Sunday School. We decided to bought a piece of ground to build that hall. And after we got 'em built we give 'em name: "Moving Star Hall." We got member from all different church. Generation after generation join and come out, join and come out. Some die and gone. The sick benefit. And death benefit. We still yet going on. By the help of the Lord we 'spect to go on 'til we are done.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## THAT SOCIETY THERE, THEY TREAT YOU ALL RIGHT

Society is better than insurance to me. That society is supposed to tend the sick and bury the dead. Everybody who in there pay dues. They write from twenty-five cents up to one dollar a month. You is a twenty-five-cent member, you get twenty-five dollars when you die; you is a fifty-cent member, you get fifty dollars; you is a seventy-five-cent member, you get seventy-five dollars; you is a dollar member, you get a hundred dollars. Just as much as you pay, that's as much you get out. If you be sick, society service two person out to sit down with you all night, every night, until you get better or worse. If you don't go and sit, you be have to pay a dollar fine. If you sick and aren't able to pay your bills, they keep it up for you, live or dead; they elect money from the table and they keep you arrear. Insurance not going to do that.

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And then the insurance man going to give you your money—put it on the table. Now, how you going to bury? That money can't move to dig grave. But that society there, they treat you all right. They don't give you your money and leave you there. They give you your money and give you attention. And we got pallbearers and everything in there. We got the pallbearers to take you from the undertaker and bring you to the church; take you from the church and carry you in the graveyard. They put you down there, and we got the member to cover you up. See, that's done.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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177 178 [458] There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression. "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh*." The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

*When Roots Die* makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians,

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
466 acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by
[427] the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a
[465] money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during
248 the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

175 248 [458] 175 423

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

175 657 735

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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771 hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being
[162] "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were
[175] formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines
[361] Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

• 461 The younger group seem carefree as they perform their
883 tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a
[789] summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

115 Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

824 Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call
[777] Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It
[757] bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

[757] We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other
• 461 sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb) A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young (231) puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from •461 the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three 123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished (115) to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt (291) hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

(361) Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and wondering how far from the main road this little settlement

(829)

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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Georgia

# *Possum Point*

491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
•461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here
(491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
•461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),[B]* whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[23]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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early twentieth century.[2] Thus they are quite naturally suspicious of anyone taking notes, carrying equipment, or wandering about unaccompanied by a resident. The islanders are a proud, perceptive people and can very soon sense insincerity and patronizing attitudes. It generally requires more than an offer of cash payment, gifts, or other remunerations to motivate them to assist a researcher's study. Though it was not my original plan to become indoctrinated into Sea Island culture through hard labor, I learned very quickly that most of the islanders are active, "going" people. Those who are not engaged in city jobs are likely to be fishermen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, basket weavers, market people, or laborers in the produce fields. Often workers allowed me to accompany and assist them, and I found that the rewards for becoming involved in daily life through hard work were great indeed. Returning home from a day in the fields in an open-bed truck, listening to the islanders laughing, joking, and planning for the weekend, made the tasks I had accomplished that day seem easier. Equally important, I obtained some of the most interesting speech data while learning to make baskets or working in an okra field.

After five years of gathering information on the Sea Islands, I went to Africa in 1978 to compare the Sea Islanders' language and culture with the patterns of some of their ancestors. The Nigerian villagers' welcome was far warmer on my first introduction to their communities than the Sea Islanders' had been. Many of the elderly Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio women had never seen an African-American woman and walked some distances to see the *Indocha*, or what was termed a "white-black woman." The label was used not out of disrespect but for lack of a better one to refer to a person born from African heritage but raised speaking a European tongue. After I explained my purpose for coming far "across the water," I was never in need of anyone to assist in any efforts. The villagers were as eager to hear what words, customs, and traditions the Gullah speakers retained as I was to tell them. Their eagerness was sharpened by their fervent hope that somehow some of the language, literary traditions, and social customs had derived from their particular culture, whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Ibebio. Life among these people was fascinating and amazingly similar in some ways to the life patterns of the Sea Islanders, even after the passage of centuries. It is about these similarities in language, literature, and culture that I promised to write this book.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate
[562] in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during
538 the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
• 461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as
179 those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
857 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the
171 Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
(533)
(539)

> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
248 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed
461 a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when
the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

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that cotton did not lie around or be stored after picking since too much exposure injured the product. Some overseers worked the slaves at night and on Sundays. The rawness and wetness of the weather did not deter managers and planters from ordering all "available" hands out to the fields. Though work in the gin house was considered "light" work, this "cotton barn" offered little relief from cold and dampness. The air inside was so unhealthy that slaves preferred the openness of the fields. Workers breathed flying lint and dust during the long hours as they labored in standing positions.[43]

17
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The labor had a telling effect on the slave women's physical health. A callous attitude developed toward needs of pregnant women, postpartum illnesses, infant care, exhaustion and exposure to inclement weather. Bondswoman Susannah, in relating to Laura Towne, the tragedy of having all three of her living sons sold away, mentioned that she had actually had twenty-two pregnancies. Another defiant Gullah woman who worked in the house was beaten frequently by order of the mistress and retaliated by bringing "not one nigger" to Maussa. Another woman was buried up to her neck in earth as punishment, a few days after she had given birth to a stillborn child. Laura Towne, who saw signs of illtreatment, recorded various accounts:

> On this place, the Oaks, Loretta showed me her back, arms and breasts today. In many places there were ridges as high and long as my little finger and everywhere marks of the whip. She said that her children had been killed in her by whipping. She says it was because when "heavy with child," she could not do the full task of a field hand. I suspect also being rather apt to resist and rather smart in speaking her mind, poor thing. She has suffered terribly and it is no wonder that she is more indifferent about her clothes and house. . . . She says this was "de cruelest place."

Loretta lived on the plantation of Daniel Pope, a member of the Sea Island Baptist "aristocracy" who "gave no shoes, salt, molasses, nor Sunday clothes . . . neither would he allow the field hands any meat, nor permit them to raise pigs." In the year before the Civil War Pope determined to make the people work as much as possible, "so he kept them in the field from morning till night and lashed them every day."[44]

Francis Kemble noted on her visit to the Georgia Sea Islands that the principal hardships fell to the lot of the women. She wrote of her first visit to the "Infirmary":

> Women lay prostrate on the floor, without bed, mattress or pillow, buried in tattered and filthy blankets. . . . I stood in the midst of them, perfectly unable

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lak white man's," that is, with no marks of the whip. "Talk o' lick um sar?" answered one slave when queried about floggings, "yes, sar, nebber did noffin but lick um sar." He insisted that they were whipped when they didn't work and "when we work, hard lick um all same sar." A "devil" for cruelty was Alviro Fripp who "before he got religion use to cuss and cuss and cuss." But when he joined the Baptist church, he could no longer cuss, "so he used to lick 'em instead." The "richest man on St Helena," Edgar Fripp, was reportedly the meanest, and his temper knew no bounds at "full moon." He also worked his slaves all night in full moon at cotton-picking time. The Gullahs went out of their way to avoid him for if a hat was not tipped quick enough or a bow low enough, Fripp would "lay his horsewhip on them well."[60]

Of the many cases of harsh treatment and sometimes actual barbarity, few compared with the 1849 incident recorded by Thomas Chaplin in his Journal. Chaplin's neighbor, James Sandiford, was brought before an inquest of planters regarding the death of his slave, Roger. In examining the slaves' remains, Chaplin wrote that "such a shocking sight never before met my eyes." The slave, a born cripple who "used his knees more than his feet," had been instructed, on a "cold and bitter day," to paddle a boat downriver for oysters and then to cut a bundle of mud marsh. Roger, instructed to return before "high water," did not show up until "ebb tide." But he brought back seven baskets of oysters and a small bundle of marsh. "That," commented Chaplin, "was more than the primest of my fellows would have done." But Sandiford gave Roger thirty lashes for not returning sooner, for not cutting more marsh, and for hollering loudly while being flogged for the first two offenses. Sandiford later eavesdropped on a conversation Roger had in the kitchen with another man. Two versions of the exchange were reported. According to the planter, Roger stated that if he had "sound limbs" he would shoot down a white man before he took a flogging. The man to whom Roger spoke denied this, informing the jurors that Roger said "he would turn his back on them if they shot him down," which Chaplin believed was the truth. Neither comment, in Chaplin's opinion, warranted the punishment Roger received:

> For these *crimes*, this man, this demon in human shape, this pretended Christian, member of the Baptist Church, had this poor cripple Negro placed in an open outhouse, the wind blowing through a hundred cracks, his clothes wet to the waist, without a single blanket & in freezing weather, with his back against the

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*Women and children in the evening after "Mauma's" task is done. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. 304]

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88.

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21.

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchman Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21.

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook. "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal*, 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27.

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground.
46 Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the
241 cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the
Devil! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for
(492) that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road
and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax,
(412) some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise
597 up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home
and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

159 461 If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get (826) your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

159 512 My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

159 I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my nineteen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

STORIES

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When we was small, we didn't 'low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
•461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
595 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

159 telling why there are not more of his generation around now to keep company he says "en d last years I ca'n waak lik I en d past. Dey'll be many mo ob ma time round here da dae, butbiln d white man's bridges and railroad kill musa us out. Wen dem come from d railroad waak dey body wae dead. I tri ta tel dem ta lern to make lik waak, but dey mules n at age fifty dey waz tiad ole men. Oderwize dey'll be many mo ob ma people wete me tadae."

159 •461 Reverend Gripe.--The right Reverend Gripe differentiated between human and inhuman labor. Born in 1893, this man refused to work for the large white farmers. He worked and maintained his own land, but when there was an extra penny in "fightin d white man field" he refused. Once he went to lime house store (Captain Limehouse, the head of a powerful family in the area) to buy steak meat. Captain Limehouse a noted nigger whipper asked "where a nigger git steak money?" The six foot three inch two hundred plus pound Reverend Gripe replied "by not waakin ya fields," at which Limehouse laughed and dismissed the Reverend as crazy. Taking insult the Reverend jumped in his new Nash automobile and went then and thereafter to the city for his steak meat.

177 RACE RELATIONS ON THE ISLANDS

Now with bridges and interconnecting paved roadways

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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*Tetch*, for remnant. "T'engk Gawd, 'e lef' uh leetle tetch een de bottle."

[804]
[461]

*Tas'* (*task*), one hundred and five feet square, one quarter of an acre, the daily task on sea-island cotton plantations.[a] Used now as either a measure of area or of distance. "My gun kin shoot two tas'," i.e. 210 feet or 70 yards.

*Use* in the sense of "frequent certain feeding grounds, be accustomed to go, linger habitually about."[b]

*Yowe* for ewe.

*Frail*, to strike, to beat.

*Ax* for ask.[c]

*Piggin*, a small cedar pail with one panel extended for a handle.

*Pyo'* for "pure," in the sense of "fully, absolutely"; modern slang, "nothing else but": *de pyo' nutt'n.*

*Staa't-naked*, instead of "stark-naked."[d]

*Quile* for coil.

*Find*, in the sense of "to supply with victuals." "Buh Sun promise Buh Fowl-hawk fuh fine um een bittle effn 'e ketch 'im een 'im baid."

*Quills*, still used for pipes of reed or cane.

*Shote*, for young hog.

*Killick*, for "killock," an anchor of stone.

*Gaul* for swamp.

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[a] Mr. Bennett explains a "task" as one-half an acre for a hoe hand; three-quarters of an acre for a cotton-field hand; one-quarter of an acre for a rice-field hand. Thus a man and his family can *cut a tass; tie a tass, an' carry a tass intuh de flat.* From this comes the phrase, a *done-tass niggah*, for a worn out laborer, too weak or too old to work; or lightly, for the laughing darkey, his day's work done and his hoe canted over his shoulder. I. 343.

[b] Widely employed throughout the South by both white and black, usually as a hunting term in connection with doves, partridges, and turkeys. Dignified Elizabethan. Compare Spenser's "Where never foot did use", and Milton's Lycidas,

"Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks."

Listed along with *quile* (coil) and *gaum* as colloquial white usage by Charles Foster Smith in "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," *The Southern Bivouac*, Nov., 1885.

[c] Good Chaucerian and Caxtonian; standard English till 1600; still used in the Midland and Southern Dialects in England; and in general much easier and pleasanter to say than "ask".

[d] It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *staa't* goes back to the older "start" (steort), tail.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

•461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to discover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

[171] [538] 326 171

George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

567 322 567 335 342 567 322

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet-makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21). Both made a number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the

322 [335] [461] [171] 461 517

A, [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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461 517 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that *Art for Art's sake* never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this [177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 17 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be 533 114 17 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

533 171

### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[170] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## KNEE-BONE

533 [46] [50] Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side [177] [796] with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

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533
539

Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone didn't I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone didn't I call you
Ha-ah Lord knee bone bend.
Knee-bone in the mornin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the mornin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the evenin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the evenin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.

533 Creighton Churchill explains to me that when this song was used for row-
501 ing it could have had only one rhythmic accompaniment, the oars, since the other
461 two rhythms, the hands and heels, would have thrown the rowers off their beat. To use his words: "The speed of the rowing version must also have been slower, for one could not possibly row to the rhythm of this version. It should be recognized as well that no musical meter known to man can represent exactly the rhythm of oars in their locks; in this song especially, it is something intangible and personal, like the beat of the Viennese waltz. For the sake of simplicity I have represented the rowing rhythm in this transcription as 2/8, 3/8, 3/8, equal to a full measure of time for the voices and other rhythms."

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## ZION

533 585 Most Negro weddings, in church or out, are conducted, I am told, without music; but when Ben Davis was married, this song was used with telling effect in the Frederica African Baptist Church. Two ushers walked from the altar with lighted lamps in their hands, and met the bridal party at the door. Two little girls headed the procession and strewed flowers in its path. Ben, with the maid of honor, was followed by the bride on the arm of the best man. To the music of "O Zion—when the bridegroom comes," sung by the guests who filled the church, the participants moved to the altar, where the ushers put down their lamps, and Joe Lowman, the preacher, was waiting for them. When Lowman asked Ben: "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" Ben spoke up "good and strong": "Yes suh!" When the same question was asked of Norah, her answer was very weak. This did not satisfy the parson: "Answer as though you mean it. This ain't for today and tomorrow, this is a lifetime business!" Everybody laughed. Lowman, after the usual procedure, offered a prayer and ended the ceremony by telling Ben to "salute the bride."

533 [461] Besides being used in church and at praise meeting, I find "Zion" was one of the favorite rowing songs of the Butler oarsmen. Tall, lean Liverpool, who looks like an Arab sheik, showed us how he rowed to its rhythm:

533 539 585

Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come
Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come.

Chorus: O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
When the bridegroom come.

Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come
Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

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CHAPTER SIX

# *Work Songs*

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and—during the heat of the day—calling to each other across wide fields. The call was peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

533 198 (461) • 533 198 171

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood—southern New Jersey—began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that, in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now." [1] However, there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large numbers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me My Money Down!"

533 171 533 461

[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

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as they hoisted and lowered the hogsheads and boxes of their cargoes; one man taking the burden of the song (and the slack of the rope) and the others striking in with the chorus. They would sing in this way more than a dozen different songs in an hour; most of which might indeed be warranted to contain "nothing religious"—a few of them, "on the contrary, quite the reverse"—but generally rather innocent and proper in their language, and strangely attractive in their music; and with a volume of voice that reached a square or two away. This plan of labor has now passed away, in Philadelphia at least, and the songs, I suppose, with it. So that these performances are to be heard only among black sailors on their vessels, or 'long-shore men in out-of-the-way places, where opportunities for respectable people to hear them are rather few.

Something of the African background of these "pure negro songs" may be gathered from a description of the work songs of West Africa, given by N. G. J. Ballanta, who tells us: "Music in Africa is not cultivated for its own sake. It is always used in connection with dances or to accompany workmen. The rhythmic interest of the songs impels them to work and takes away the feeling of drudgery." He goes on to say that work songs are "—mainly rhythmic—short phrases mostly of two or three bars; solo and chorus follow each other instantly; the chorus is in many instances composed of two or three ejaculatory words, answered by the workmen. Tempo moderate." This summary fits so many of the songs used by our stevedores that the connection is unmistakable.

The similarity between the songs of African workmen and those of their cousins in this country is also illustrated in some examples from the shipping docks of Beira, given by Natalie Curtis-Burlin. One of them, used by laborers in pushing or pulling heavy things, might have been sung on the docks of Brunswick. Another, like so many of the work songs of the American Negroes, was suggested by the particular job in hand, in this case, the literal translation runs: "Dawn—with freight—Yes, yes!—Dawn—with freight—Look for the label!"

Among the Negroes, any song with the proper rhythm is used to accompany whatever work requires its help. While those of a religious character have always been the greatest favorites in our section,[3] the type of work is necessarily the determining factor. It is unlikely that a shanty could be used for rowing, or a rowing song for beating rice. In the old days, if no suitable verse came to mind for a particular task, one was made up then and there out of slender material. Fanny Kemble,

[3] It is interesting to notice that the religious songs used by the stevedores and other workmen are vastly superior to those heard in church and prayer meeting. The reason is self-evident: the latter have been dressed up to conform to the white folks' fashion.

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in her *Journal*, gave several illustrations which show how anything was grist for the Negroes' song-mill. With the rivers affording the only means of travel, it was natural that she should hear rowing songs of all kinds; and on one occasion she had the unique privilege of hearing her own praises extemporaneously chanted by her two Negro boatmen. They described her personal attractions, and amused her intensely by their repeated references to her "wire waist." [4]

Today the Negroes are less inventive, and generally confine themselves to a substitution of names or familiar lines in the old songs, but we can still hear examples of the way they utilized incidents or phrases that struck their fancy. If a captain said: "It's rough going 'round the Horn," the Negroes made up a song about the statement, and we had: "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla gal, Go 'round the Horn!" "Ragged Leevy," a waterfront character of Brunswick, was described in the shanty that bears his name. "Little Johnny Brown, fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound," was so popular among the stevedores that he figured in one of their jolliest shanties; and "Yonder come that *Hessie*" always brings a regretful feeling to those of us who remember the "good old days" on St. Simon's when the *Hessie* was our means of communication with the outside world, and the captain obligingly did our errands.

In our machine age it is inevitable that these work-songs should pass. Before they have entirely disappeared, records should be made of the few examples that have survived.

## SHANTIES

If anyone needs more information about the use of these shanties, I suggest that he apply to either Joe Armstrong or Henry Merchant of St. Simon's Island. Both were at one time leaders of stevedore crews, and both have told me the uses to which the different songs were put. Since I am a land-lubber and more interested in music than in the mechanics of loading lumber and stowing cotton, details concerning the latter have not stuck, while the tunes have—to the last note. Any mistake in describing their application is mine, not Joe's or Henry's.

In the early days of the lumber industry, great rafts of logs were nailed together, and—with two or three men in charge—were drifted down the Altamaha to the mills at its mouth.[5] Ships from everywhere came for the sawed lumber. Julia once

[4] African explorers with more knowledge of the native dialect than their boatmen realized were often entertained in the same manner, but their defects—not their charms—were derisively enumerated.

[5] Fanny Kemble mentions in her Journal that on one of her boat-trips from Darien she saw "The river . . . covered with Ocone [river] boxes." She describes them as monstrous square

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533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard 533 anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the 505 ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions 461 such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers," [7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe [8] (Illustration 31) A calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu 461 of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.

[567] [8] In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.

A, [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

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O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

## CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

[46]
[505]

This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick" [9] in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

[9] This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.

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•[461]
[506]

SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

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## ANNIEBELLE

533 •461 Of all the shanties, this concerning Anniebelle appears to be adaptable to the most varied uses, and to be the most widely distributed. Joe tells me he learned it over forty years ago from the stevedores who loaded lumber on the vessels at the Hilton-Dodge mills, but its main use was for "spikin' steel" on the railroads. I notice, however, that he puts the song to equally good use in chopping wood or swinging the weed cutter. In the mines it is called a "hammerin' song."

533
539

Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't weep
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't moan
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't go
Hunh!
Leave home.
Hunh!
When I throw
Hunh!
My head
Hunh!
In the bar
Hunh!
Room doo'
Hunh!
I'll never
Hunh!
Get drunk
Hunh!
No mo'.
Hunh!
Don't want t' hurt nobody
Hunh!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



O-h no
Hunh! 533
O-h no 539
Hunh!
Dis ole hammer [15]
Hunh!
Kill John Henry
Hunh!
Laid him low buddy
Hunh!
Laid him low.
Hunh!

At this point Joe interpolated rhythmically: "Stan' by for another verse."

Ain't no hammer
Hunh!
In this mount'in
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy.
Hunh!

Several years ago I heard the following version sung by Boogaloo, one of Darien's happy-go-lucky Negroes, as he cut weeds on the highway shoulders in front of Josephine's house. It was amusing to read in a recent issue of *Time* a letter from Mary J. Phillips telling of the explanation of the present war Boogaloo had given her husband. Mrs. Phillips quotes Boogaloo as saying: "Boss, I tells you what I thinks about this here war. Germany, some back, she starts a crap game, threw an eight, then falls off. Now she wants her money back and starts grabbing." I imagine that Boogaloo's speech was more consistent all through, but the thought is clearly his. 533 [461]

This is the hammer that kill John Henry
Tell 'im I'm dead, buddy, tell 'im I'm dead
Cap'n Smith what you reckon?
Ten-pound hammer kill John Henry
Kill' my buddy, Lord, but 'e can't kill me. [539]

[15] Sometimes he specifies "nine-poun' hammer."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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32. St. Simon's Shanty Singers

[facing p 224]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## RICE SONGS

243 461 553 Growing rice was a thriving industry along the Ogeechee, Altamaha, and Satilla rivers a century ago, but today it is difficult to find even a handful of grain to demonstrate how it was beaten. At Hofwyl Plantation, the last in Glynn County to grow rice to any extent, I asked Jerry Rutledge about the songs that were used for planting rice, and getting it ready to eat. He gave me these appropriate lines:

[539]

John say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
John-say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
If you sow it in the rain, you got to reap it jus' the same
You got to reap in the harvest what you sow.

He explained how the rice sheaves, about a foot through, and tied with a twist of straw, were whipped with "frails"; they were laid in parallel rows on a large sheet on the floor with the butt ends out. When two Negroes "t'rashed" together, they always sang as they faced each other. The short part of the flail which flew in the air in a seemingly reckless fashion was called a "bob," and it was rather important to have its gyrations rhythmically controlled. As soon as one side of a sheaf was clear of rice it was turned over and the other side whipped. By the time the string was broken the grain was in a long row in the middle.

Julia Walker, born near Riceboro in Liberty County, gave me precisely the same description of the work, and sang the following song as she demonstrated how the "frail" was used. Frankly, I was skeptical of the strength of the rawhide that attached the bob to the stick, and kept well out of range:

[539]

Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
My Lord call you—wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late I know, sinner, too late.
Church bell ring—you wouldn't come
Preacher preach—an' you wouldn't come
My Lord call you—an' you wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late, sinner, too late.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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243 461 (535) Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quick and effective dance step, the outer husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work was done to a similar step, with these words:

533 539

Peas an' the rice done done
Higho—Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho—Higho!
How do you know—done heard it blow
Higho—Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okro—Nana—Nana! [18]
Eat some an' leave some—Nana—Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright wor'
Poo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me—Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'—Do Lord remember me.

(535) A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indicate how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a preliminary scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533
539

You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [412] [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243 171 [17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## A. B. A. B. A.

243
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The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

533
534

Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Gally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

[20] Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.

[21] The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion.

[71]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[171] [22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
• 461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
567 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
[342] their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
[114] with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
[243] particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
567 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
[164] for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
522 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
533 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[26] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

533 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
199 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy; and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[26] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[171] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



## OH WHEN I COME TO DIE

53 [50] [461] When Willis was a child and went to Lonesome Point for fish and oysters with his father, Adam Proctor, this is the song they often used to make the rowing easier. It is recognized, of course, that the rhythm had to be readjusted to the stroke of the oar. Josephine Young says the song was also used "down on our knees, for watch night 'n prayin'." Needless to say, she would have left off the final g in "dying."

Chorus: O when
(O when)
O when
(O when)
O when I come to die
Give me Jesus.

When I am dying
When I am dying
When I am dying my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When trouble is over
When trouble is over
When trouble is over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection
461 must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me
(296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

(234) She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:
(539)

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn
461 of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the tradi-
296 tional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

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By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533
461
264
[191]

Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

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Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

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57
461
[412]
[533]

On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
559 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[797] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made
697 it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon
[461] I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He
771 laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently
577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea
673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that
685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] *The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.*

[31] *In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."* [171]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton. In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[15] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions besides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and be otherwise employed in."[16] Thus the production of

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[15] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[16] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

175 569 461 249

### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

175 248

The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 461 248 (804) (407)

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

567 461 241

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for Weehaw plantation near Georgetown, which were also observed on St. Helena plantations, were as follows:[21]

Corn: Sowing done in gang. Covering done in gang.
Hoeing ¼-acre Hauling up ½ acre.
Plowing corn 2½ to 3 acres; a man & mule will tend 30 acres. Stripping fodder ¾ acre on first day—after that strip 1 acre & carry home that of the previous day.

Potatoes & Slips:
Planting—3 [hands] in a ¼ acre, who also bed it up.
Hoeing—2 in a ¼ acre. Hauling up 20 Compass.[22]
Digging slips—men, 5 rows—Women, 4 rows & carry home.
Digging roots for allowance—5 to 7 rows, as they bear.
Weeding is usually done by the shufflers.[23]

Peas: 3 hands to 3 acres when planted between corn.
Harvesting—2 large blankets.

Ditching . . . 6 to 8 tasks. Spreading straw[24]—if wet ½ acre.
if dry ¾ acre. Listing in straw—½ acre.

Getting task stakes, 500 to a hand[25]

Splitting Rails—100 Rails 12 ft long & heavy

Cutting Wood—1 cord. . . .

Splitting garden railings—500 to 3 men. . . .

Cutting down & piling up corn stalks, 1 to 1¼ to 1½ acres.

Digging ditches . . . —600 cubic feet.

The tasks at cutting marsh grass and digging marsh mud for fertilizing the fields were estimated by the cart load and varied with the weather and the distance of the marsh from the field.

[21] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book.

(804) [22] A compass was five feet as measured by a wooden triangle called a compass.

[23] Children or superannuated men and women.

[24] On St. Helena plantations marsh grass was used instead of the rice straw spread on the Weehaw fields.

[25] Each hand's task was staked off.

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CHAPTER VII

# THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

## THE SLAVE AND THE LASH

567 THE EVERY-DAY life of the slave people on a St. Helena plantation was by no means crowded with constant toil. In the late spring when the cotton had to be hoed at the critical stages and again in the autumn when the cotton was in "good blow" they might work from "day clean" to "fust dark," but these were unusual periods, and, as a reward for the extra labor, their masters dealt out choice rations of molasses and meat and passed around presents of tobacco and gay headcloths. The ordinary task of a full hand kept him in the field only four or five hours a day so that the "smart" ones were habitually through by two o'clock. Only the "t'ick headed" remained as late as five. The rest of the day was theirs to spend as they chose.

A southern youth, Hamilton Couper, who had spent all his life on his father's sea-island cotton and rice plantation on the Georgia coast was surprised to find the white servants working so hard in New Haven where he was attending Yale. The Irish maid-of-all-work in his rooming house, so he wrote to his mother, "does more than any servant I have ever seen."[1] The Honorable Amelia Murray of England who visited Couper's parents at their Hopeton plantation was also impressed with the difference in work required of the southern slave and the northern "saucy help." "I never saw servants in any old English family," she observed, "more comfortable, or more de-

[1] Couper-Wylly Papers. Hamilton Couper to Mrs. J. H. Couper, 1846.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

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567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
582 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
593 also that there was little family affection among them. Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go
• 461 home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already
461 been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

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to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

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clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[338]

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The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[338] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

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872 [175] grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 [46] [567] As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 527 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[82] [273]

574 527 175 Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[82] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He stated that for generations the men of his family had engaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

[462] [322] [286] [824]

Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

322 412 532

Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

794 346

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analysis]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in
517 kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa),
[264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a
[273] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo,
[171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than
[196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island story-
• 462 telling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
•462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
1.23 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
[562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during
461 the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462.

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

159 735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 735 253 259 (465) The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

735 259 462 241 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 (262) (243) Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 432 226 434 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

735 291

[redacted]

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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561 sta on d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb fer d chilln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long to exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma dae" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

Still another point to be considered in looking at
861 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
562 differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of
[578] the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disci-
plined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which signifi-
86 cant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perspective of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea-Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
[177] siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad scale influence of the mainland elements on island

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs.
789 On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh
Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chi-
472 nese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Ed-
115 wards * who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano
759 tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the
old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a
• [463] popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he
[757] was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly.
"I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef
[231] dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.
825

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Table 2. Racial Breakdowns for Five of the Carolina Sea Islands

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| *Year* | *Population* | *Edisto* | *James* | *Johns* | *Wadmalaw* | *St. Helena* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | Total | 1,948 | 3,058 | 3,264 | 2,054 | 4,626 |
| | Black | 1,693 | 2,419 | 2,826 | 1,813 | 4,458 |
| 1940 | Total | 1,955 | 3,913 | 3,534 | 1,858 | 4,266 |
| | Black | 1,717 | 2,709 | 2,633 | 1,607 | 3,961 |
| 1960 | Total | 1,589 | 13,872 | 6,252 | 2,326 | 6,048 |
| | Black | 1,306 | 4,168 | 3,260 | 1,980 | 4,994 |
| 1970 | Total | 1,374 | 18,969 | 7,530 | 2,024 | 5,718 |
| | Black | 1,115 | 5,217 | 3,104 | 1,719 | 4,278 |
| 1980 | Total | 1,345 | 27,719 | 9,296 | 2,440 | 8,134 |
| | Black | 1,124 | 6,173 | 3,975 | 1,935 | 4,934 |

*Source:* U.S. censuses of population.

paratively remote, do not show any significant population changes. In the late 1970s Edisto Island had only 19 persons per square mile dispersed over a 72.6-square-mile land area. The 1980 census revealed a population of 1,345 persons—another slight decrease. Edisto's population remains predominantly black (84 percent). Its slow growth is attributed to the lack of incorporated areas, of major manufacturers, and of essential services such as water and sewer.[17]

Wadmalaw Island, situated between Johns and Edisto, is rural in nature and like Edisto has exhibited very little in- or out-migration. In 1970, 85 percent of the people were black, and this figure had dropped only to 79 percent in 1980. Even though 80 percent of the housing is occupied by owners, Wadmalaw is ranked second in the region in economic distress. It has no water or sewer services, and its only industry
[464] is Metal Trades, which provides services primarily for ship repair. Most of the inhabitants are laborers, farmers, and fishermen, though
• [463] there are an increasing number of professional persons who have returned home to the island to work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on.[18]

563 The addition of more whites is not precipitating an erosion of the traditional social and racial composition of most of the Sea Island communities. They remain isolated, with predominantly black popula-
[161] tions. Only the most readily accessible islands, particularly James,

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse. The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels, skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

> Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 178 463 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

[531] [177]

285 171 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

[178]

285 868 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators.
Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland. With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain, such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in schools in other states.

871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never attended school. An early school on the island was held in the church building, paid for by island residents themselves. In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one; those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In recent years the county school district has provided boat and bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary and high school students; the island school was closed with consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close family relationships which obtain between several of the speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show striking differences in language use.

121 In the mainland community, older men use more
562 standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
193 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
184 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington, D. C. For the island community, women generally use more standard forms than men in all three age groups, although speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145 possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in the island community.

121 I suggest that sex differences in language used by
562 the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
463 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
193 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
184 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
[197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
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464 562 197 463 no use of standard English and which entail little interaction with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by black men in the region are blue collar and require few language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
[121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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St. Helena Island



the drivers quite generally remained at home issuing rations and directing the work of the plantation.

R. King, Jr., overseer of the Butler estate, thought that the selection of drivers was one of the "grand points" in plantation management. A cruel driver could demoralize the whole plantation, while an honest one could keep the slaves busy and happy. "An order from a driver," he said in explaining his method of plantation discipline, "is to be as implicity obeyed as if it came from myself, nor do I counteract the execution, (unless directly injurious,) . . . It would be endless for me to superintend the drivers and field hands too, and would of course make them useless."[112] Miss Harriet Ware, a missionary to St. Helena Island in 1862, described Limus, a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations, as being "very smart" and easy to learn. "He has the energy and *cuteness* and big eye for his own advantage of a born New Englander. He is not very moral or scrupulous, and the church-members will tell you 'not yet,' with a smile, if you ask whether he belongs to them. But he leads them all in enterprise, and his ambition and consequent prosperity make his example a very useful one on the plantation."[113]

Next to the driver in importance and authority were the tradesmen and the house servants. While the num-

[112] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec. 1828. "But the grand point [in managing the Butler estate] was to suppress the brutality and licentiousness practiced by the principal men on it; (say the drivers and tradesmen). More punishment is inflicted on every plantation by the men in power from private pique, than from a neglect of duty. . . . The driver to screen favourites, or apply their time to his own purposes, imposes a heavy tax on some. Should they murmur, an opportunity is taken, months after, to punish those unfortunate fellows for not doing their own and other tasks. . . . As an évidence of the various opportunities that a brutal driver has to gratify his revenge, . . . let any planter go into his field, and in any Negro's task he can find apparently just grounds for punishment."

[113] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 37-38.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

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The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16]

[554]

Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M.

[797]

Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

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[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18] 567 463 554 [466]

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862 found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants. 567 463

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house. 567 357

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 267.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



THE TASK SYSTEM

464 Less than half of a planter's total number of laborers
567 could usually be counted upon for a full day's work.

When Captain Basil Hall visited the United States in 1827 and 1828 he found on a sea-island plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 122 slaves. Of these, seventy were men and women between the ages of fourteen and fifty; forty-eight were children under the age of fourteen; and four were superannuated. The seventy workers were classified as follows: thirty-nine full hands, sixteen three-quarter hands, eleven half hands, and four quarter hands. Out of seventy persons, therefore, the planter had fifty-
463 seven and a half "taskable hands," but those working in
359 the fields were only forty-four taskables, while the other thirteen and a half were employed as cart drivers, nurses, cooks for the Negroes, carpenters, house servants, and stock minders.[20]

The number of taskable hands on a plantation varied from year to year. Children were not sent to the field until they were fourteen, but were put to work at minor jobs, pulling weeds, "minding child," picking up trash, washing dishes. Superannuated slaves were also given tasks calling for little physical exertion; such as, gardening, tending horses, nursing, sewing. *Enceinte* women did half tasks until confinement, and women with suckling babies also did half task until the child was eight months old. A slave who had been sick did a portion of a task until he had sufficiently recovered to resume his accustomed amount of work.

[20] Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828*, II, 229.

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771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east
(115) of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
(464) Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

775 "I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[50] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
(845) bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

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# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. 363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. 366 The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find em- [464] ployment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ven- [165] tured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
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# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Sapelo Island*

131 SAPELO ISLAND IS ONE OF THE CHAIN OF "GOLDEN
Isles" lying along the Georgia Coast. The word Sapelo was
103 derived from "Zapala," the name used by the Indians when
the island was a favorite hunting ground for the tribes that
had given up much of the mainland to the Spaniards and
172 later to the English. Among the landmarks that recall
colorful historical episodes are Indian mounds, tabby ruins
of colonial days, and the remains of a house built by Jean
Berard Mocquet, Marquis de Montalet, a French Royalist
who immigrated to Georgia from Santo Domingo about
1797.

000 Plantation life flourished on Sapelo in the early nine-
teenth century. Here Thomas Spalding conducted one of
the most extensive agricultural enterprises in the coastal
section. The "big house" on the south end of the island was
a spacious tabby mansion, so strongly constructed that the
original walls are still standing and form the nucleus of the
present dwelling. The island, with the exception of a num-
ber of Negro homesteads, is now the property of Richard
Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but, although
many improvements and changes have been made, much of
the atmosphere of the early days has been preserved.

•464 Industrial activity is concentrated in the central portion
of Sapelo, where there is a sawmill that gives employment to
many of the islanders. Nearby are the company houses, a
368 post office, and a store. Several Negro churches and a dance
hall are located elsewhere on the island.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright.
423 For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant
432 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

511 The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in
•464 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricul-
177 tural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort
464 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi-
871 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requi-
177 site education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment, and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the unintentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

177 871 [193] [194]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
(175) munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in 1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
(161) 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population increase, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the immigration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial com-
161 position, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100 or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrialization, and these are not among the most remote and economically distressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to
(464) remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth, as is shown in Table 2.

The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to ma-
161 jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
177 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Is-
179 lands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4).[A] James Island, situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabitants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
162 lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Table 2. Racial Breakdowns for Five of the Carolina Sea Islands

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| *Year* | *Population* | *Edisto* | *James* | *Johns* | *Wadmalaw* | *St. Helena* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | Total | 1,948 | 3,058 | 3,264 | 2,054 | 4,626 |
| | Black | 1,693 | 2,419 | 2,826 | 1,813 | 4,458 |
| 1940 | Total | 1,955 | 3,913 | 3,534 | 1,858 | 4,266 |
| | Black | 1,717 | 2,709 | 2,633 | 1,607 | 3,961 |
| 1960 | Total | 1,589 | 13,872 | 6,252 | 2,326 | 6,048 |
| | Black | 1,306 | 4,168 | 3,260 | 1,980 | 4,994 |
| 1970 | Total | 1,374 | 18,969 | 7,530 | 2,024 | 5,718 |
| | Black | 1,115 | 5,217 | 3,104 | 1,719 | 4,278 |
| 1980 | Total | 1,345 | 27,719 | 9,296 | 2,440 | 8,134 |
| | Black | 1,124 | 6,173 | 3,975 | 1,935 | 4,934 |

*Source:* U.S. censuses of population.

paratively remote, do not show any significant population changes. In the late 1970s Edisto Island had only 19 persons per square mile dispersed over a 72.6-square-mile land area. The 1980 census revealed a population of 1,345 persons—another slight decrease. Edisto's population remains predominantly black (84 percent). Its slow growth is attributed to the lack of incorporated areas, of major manufacturers, and of essential services such as water and sewer.[17]

Wadmalaw Island, situated between Johns and Edisto, is rural in nature and like Edisto has exhibited very little in- or out-migration. In 1970, 85 percent of the people were black, and this figure had dropped only to 79 percent in 1980. Even though 80 percent of the housing is occupied by owners, Wadmalaw is ranked second in the region in economic distress. It has no water or sewer services, and its only industry
[464] is Metal Trades, which provides services primarily for ship repair. Most of the inhabitants are laborers, farmers, and fishermen, though
[463] there are an increasing number of professional persons who have returned home to the island to work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on.[18]

563 The addition of more whites is not precipitating an erosion of the traditional social and racial composition of most of the Sea Island communities. They remain isolated, with predominantly black popula-
[161] tions. Only the most readily accessible islands, particularly James,

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 241 In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is [178] already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. [464] By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah 464 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that 177 "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

# INTRODUCTION

177 178 [126] It has been more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

•464 212 114 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and laborers. The level of education for most was quite low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about life, and particularly a richness of folk expression, that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts of the South. A musician with training in folklore, he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its survival? We would spend the two years we lived [101] on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that question and trying a variety of projects designed to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

[P. xi-A]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
[668] nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

• 464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
[241] island. The resort developments and the new small businesses offer some employment, but farming,
[178] long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

(P XIII, B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[122] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

●464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

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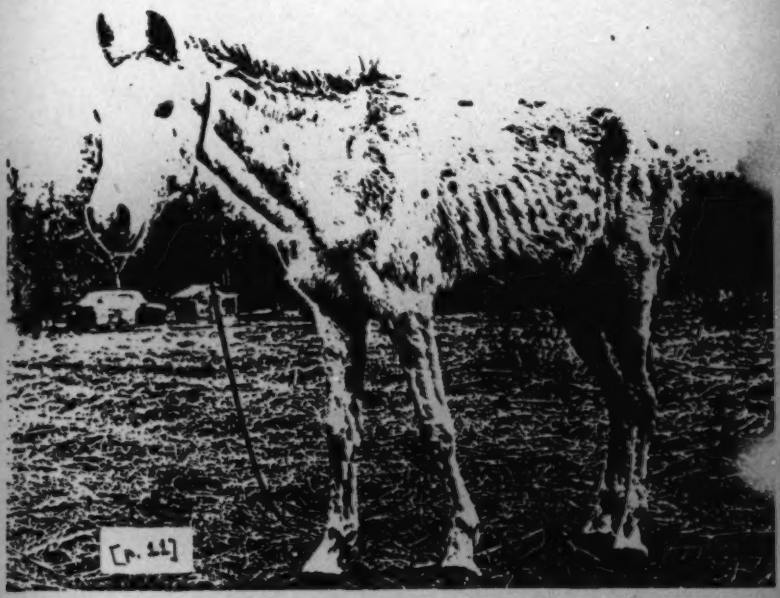

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE

464 The people on Johns Island, those that are not working in the city or as domestics, most of them make their living off truck farms on the island. Especially the women. They work on the farms of plantation owners. They pick snap beans, they dig white potatoes, they pick tomatoes, pack cabbages, spinach and whatnot. Those are the things that they depend on for a living.

During the winter months they go into a hardship because most of the farms don't have anything to do. That's the hardest time that they have to face.

Sometimes we underestimate these people and forget they have something we really need. These are people who haven't gotten a college education, or even a high school education. But anyone able to raise twelve children—and raise 'em healthy too—must know something good. They were smart enough to plant and to raise the kind of thing the children need. They raised their own hogs, they raised their cows, they had the milk with vitamin D what they need.

Some of these older people thought very deeply. Mother-wit and faith in God helped them to do a lot, and some achieved more than some of the young people who have been able to go to college.

159 he teach me how to paddle a boat. After he died, I took it up myself. I did
226 the same thing: go in the river and catch some fish and sell it. Most of it is mullet fish, mullet and spots, and some catfish, all different kinds. Cast net. Run from three to four feet deep to maybe sometimes seven to eight feet deep. I go by myself or with my brother.

159 I began to do some carpenter work too. I was working along with a carpenter, and after a time I began to learn how to do some of the work for
[335] myself. So I finally try alone, and I made it all right. I do my own work now. I'm working at a block and pipe company—making door lintels and window
[401] lintels, all different kinds of stone.

[434] The best kind of money people can make is on electricity works and 'chanical works and maybe expert carpenters and bricklayers. Harvesting
[241] season in the fall, you can't make much because it's only about three or four weeks long. You can do all right for those three or four weeks. You can make it anyhow. But 'round May and June, that's about the best months of the year on the farm. October you start having maybe some string beans. Then you sit 'til next year in May and June.

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## MORE LIGHT IS SHINING

I am forty. The look of the pudding is not the taste all the time. I have two children. I have a better time raising mine than my parents had raising us. Foods went up a lot, but still you can make it a little better now than you is in past time.

More light is shining. Can see more. Likewise you can do more and think more, 'cause I believe that more light is shining now than was shining in the past. And so help me God, I so glad that I can see some light. And I know there's more light for me. There is a bright light somewhere and I'm going to find it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
589 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
404 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of (855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## INTIMIDATION HAS BEEN BAD

177 829 The whites and the Negroes on this island haven't gotten involved in violence. But the intimidation, I think, has been bad as far as the white is concerned. Like making a person feel like he might not have a job tomorrow. This is something that bothers the Negroes a whole lot. Although it never bothered me because I feel like anybody that works me, he's working me because he's making some money off me, he's not working me because he likes me. He's working me because I'm a good worker and he needs me. And I believe that we all need each other—without the whites the Negro couldn't make it; and I believe without the Negroes the whites couldn't make it.

177 829 464 They've used the migrant workers in this intimidation. When I first knew about the migrant workers, they were really, really treated bad. They had no place to stay when they came here, and they were always treated bad. But since the integration movement has started here on the island, I think the white farmers have really gone for the migrant workers because they know that the migrant laborers really don't stand for nothing. They're just somebody to work.

Most of them, I've found out, have been in trouble before. They had trouble somewhere, or they couldn't make it at home, or something like that, and that's how come they become migrant laborers. So the white farmers figure, "Here's a chance for us to use the Negroes without the Negroes really being able to do anything about it. We don't have to worry about them getting an education. All they want to do is get our crops out, and then we can sort of hurt the Negroes here on the island by doing it this way."

The biggest farmer here, during the last season, he was working the migrant laborers three days and the regular Negroes on the island two days a week. So this is something where the Negroes used to look forward to [465] making during the summertime eighty or ninety dollars a week, it be cut down to thirty-five or forty dollars a week.

177 829 This is to try to keep the Negroes from participating in things. It doesn't matter whether he or she has been participating or not, he's automatically placed in this category. Two farmers came by the Progressive Club last year during the workshops there and acted like they were taking down license numbers. Nobody knows if they were actually taking down the numbers or not; they never published them, but this really scared a lot of Negroes and they wouldn't even want to bring their cars around.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

873 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

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If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages—fact, they have to do that. There's

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 177 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

*Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife [855] and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a cer- [603] tain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 177 I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding [593] there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 177 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

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464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have
177 any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying
491 on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah
(178) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
74 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[737] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[665] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
74 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[734] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
[427] have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

871 875 [464] The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on. [MM]

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids. [554]

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

Historically, the economy of the island was based
243 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
433 there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
[464] Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

243 of the county's economy, it was still cultivated on the river
433 island for the consumption of its inhabitants, with some surplus sold for cash. Two men in their eighties could describe in detail each phase of the long growing season, and the utensils used in processing the ripened grain. During the
[464] lifetimes of these men, however, the island made the transition from a subsistence farming economy to one based on
464 laboring jobs held in mainland communities. Typically, young men went to live in nearby towns for periods ranging from two weeks to several years, working at jobs in lumber mills, in shipyards, on ocean-going vessels, and even in New York factories. Other men and women took laboring jobs on farms
243 and plantations closer to the island. The rice crop was still cultivated during this transition period, but by the thirties the cultivation was essentially under the supervision of one older man, a preacher and permanent resident of
243 the island. At times when intensive heavy labor was needed
464 for the crop, many of those who were working off the island returned to help in the harvest. With increasing job opportunities associated with World War II and the availability of motorized transportation, making the boat trip across the water a matter of minutes rather than hours, rice cultivation came to an end. Three successive years of disastrous flood tides in the forties finished the transition period.

464 Today most families have at least two members who
484 commute daily to jobs on the mainland. Many of the middle-

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators. Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland. With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain, such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in schools in other states.

871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never attended school. An early school on the island was held in the church building, paid for by island residents themselves. In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one; those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In recent years the county school district has provided boat and bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary and high school students; the island school was closed with consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
888 ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
538 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
•464 nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
484 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
[159] has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than the elite group. The social and economic differences between
184 members of the closed community on the river island and the
197 two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
[197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
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463

•464 no use of standard English and which entail little inter-
562 action with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by
197 black men in the region are blue collar and require few
463 language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

464 562 197 463 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—a unique job combination which she handled with skill and grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 186 562 [121] A second factor which may influence both choice of language variety and choice of occupation is that of identification with island life. A more detailed attitudinal study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off
562 the island for extended periods of their lives and that most women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older genera-
(212) tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

562 484 464 184 Mobility patterns are different for men and women in the two communities. In the mainland community, men have been considerably more mobile than women. As previously mentioned, one older woman had spent her entire life working as a domestic servant for the owners of a single plantation. The other woman had a more varied employment record as a field laborer, as a cannery worker for a local seafood factory, and as a cook for a middle-class white family. She had never moved far from the sphere of a single plantation, however. Of the men, Speaker 3 in his early thirties had moved onto a plantation with the help of an uncle, and had remained there as a laborer for fifty years. Speaker 4 was the most widely traveled of this group, having received more formal education in his youth than either of the others. He had worked outside the region during a portion of his middle years, acquiring some skills and obtaining better jobs than the other man. Women in this group use more creole and non-standard forms than men, a pattern which reflects both their lack of mobility and their limited occupational choices. [193]

562 484 184 On the island, older men have been slightly more mobile than older women. Of the women, Speaker 5 has been less mobile than Speaker 6, who lived for a portion of her middle years off the island. Speaker 8 was the only island resident encountered who had never attended school and has been less mobile than Speaker 7. These two men do not differ appreciably in their use of creole forms, however. For [193]

000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA
ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

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•464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

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162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

434 While the median annual income of rural families was $6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was $2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under
434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median
592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had
464

434 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio
592 for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the
464 families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 15,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey re-
464 ports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employ-
794 ment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

464 The discrepancies between these figures are apparent.
794 First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accu-
114 racy of the latter figures. However, the methodological limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



464 794 114 their time and energy in interviewing the leadership personnel of each island, and consequently relied quite heavily on the estimations they provided. The error possibilities which accompany this procedure as the basis for later projection statements are well noted.

HOUSING ON THE SEA ISLANDS

362 There are 11,557 housing units on the five Sea Islands. The median number of persons per unit is 4.01; 3,743 of these units are occupied by Black families. The median number of persons per Black occupied unit is 4.65.

The by island breakdown shows a total of 6,642 units on James Island. One thousand one hundred and twenty-eight of the total are units occupied by Black families. There are 4.63 Blacks and 3.64 Whites per units.

Johns Island has a total of 1,875 units, with 4.01 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 678 of these units and there are 4.58 Blacks per unit.

Wadmalaw Island has 477 units and 4.24 persons per unit. Three hundred and seventy-two of these units are Black occupied, with 4.62 persons per unit.

Yonges Island has 2,224 units and 4.15 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 1,326 of these units; there are 4.78 Blacks per unit.

There are 329 units on Edisto Island, and 4.18 persons per unit. The persons per unit average for Black household

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the
178 tested generational relationships were significant. These
177 differences between generations were primarily attributed
to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of expo-
sure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now
464 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes
177 this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston.
861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the dif-
ferent industries in the region, women are heavily engaged
in domestic service work. The projected results are that
women because of the nature of their employment were much
more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant
discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast,
the clustering work habits of males, in which members of
families are employed by the same employer has operated to
negate the influence of the new work pattern on male par-
ents. The more demanding work requirements which accom-
861 panies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed.
178 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder is-
561 landers base their discipline references was unknown to
593

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## O DE ROBE

533 177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

[464] [567] [17] *In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.*

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The pickers made no effort to remove the dead leaves from the lint; the ginners allowed stained and unstained cotton to go alike into the gin; moting was accomplished by women who sat upon the floor and beat the cotton with twigs; many planters ginned, moted, and packed the cotton in the same room; and the spinner frequently on opening a bag of cotton would find, in addition to the staple, crushed seeds, potato skins, and parts of old clothing. 175 248

Sea-island cotton prepared in this manner was suited only for coarse fabrics. As the demand for the long staple became greater for making fine laces and muslins and as the high prices went to those who carefully handled their cotton, planters were forced to use more painstaking methods. The gin house, although only a simple barn, had separate rooms for the different processes. The cotton on being gathered was never exposed to the sun as formerly, but dried on a scaffold inside. Upon being dried, it was taken to the whipper which extracted the sand and imperfect fibers, and then sent to the assorters each of whom, provided with boxes for clean cotton, worked before a long table covered with wire or wooden slats, sorting the cotton according to color and fineness. From the sorters the staple went to the gins, and from there to the moting tables where women picked out the broken seeds and stained fibres. The lint was then packed into round bags of about three hundred pounds each, 1,500 pounds of seed cotton being required for a bale of this size.

Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, of Edisto Island, estimated in 1844 that fifty-four laborers[22] were required to prepare [464].

[22] This estimate was based upon the use of the foot-gin which was ordinarily employed in 1860 as well as in 1844. When a steam gin was used the number of ginners was reduced to six; when an Eave's improved steam gin, to three.

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the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters, grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector. Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day, Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

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In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger labor supply than the sparsely settled province could afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave market.

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

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CHAPTER III

# THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

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## PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

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[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-809.

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the year. Cotton was planted from about March 20 to April 10; corn about April 1; and sweet potatoes the latter part of March. The routine of labor on a sea-island cotton plantation from planting time until the crops were laid by is illustrated by that on John Fripp's Bluff plantation of 560 acres as recorded in his plantation book for 1856. The spring of this year was cold and wet so that Fripp was late in putting in his crops. 248

He did his first planting on March 20 and 21 when he banked and planted four acres of potatoes. The weather prevented his planting again until April 7 when he put in the rest of his potatoes, two more acres. On the tenth he commenced banking and planting cotton, and by the sixteenth he had put in thirty-eight acres which he recorded were doing "fine." Three days later he began putting in the corn crop and planted that day eighteen acres in the "Savannah swamp field." On the twenty-second he planted twenty-three acres of cotton in the "Marsh field." A week later he commenced the regular corn crop and by the first of May had planted in all sixty-three acres. The next day he planted twelve more acres of cotton in the swamp field and on May 3 put in three-fourths of an acre of rice in the small fresh water ponds by "Point field." On the twelfth and thirteenth he finished planting cotton, making a total of 121 acres.

The hands were busy hoeing cotton from that time until the twenty-second of May when they stopped to put in fifteen acres of "Shinney Peas." Two days later Fripp detailed a few hands to put in an acre of rice near the swamp field. All hands resumed cotton hoeing until July 5 when Fripp began to plant the first of his potato slips. 248 464 567

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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
567 on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July. Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
(412) simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
248 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

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having assumed management in 1802, finding the gang good, but "very disorderly which is invariably the case when there is a frequent change of managers."[9] Later his son succeeded him.

Louis Manigault, after having made only half a crop due to his new overseer's inexperience, wrote, "He says 'he will do better another year, that now he sees into it,' and as is well known, 'Never change an Overseer if You can help it.' We try him once (but only once) more."[10] But he proved no better the second year than the first. "Elated by a strong and very false religious feeling he began to injure the plantation a vast deal, placing himself on a par with the Negroes, by even joining in with them at their prayer meetings, breaking down long established discipline, which in every Case is so difficult to preserve, favouring and siding in any difficulty with the people, against the Drivers, besides causing numerous grievances."[11] And so Manigault was forced to look for a new overseer.

### ORGANIZATION OF SLAVE LABOR

Planters learned early in the use of slave labor that it was necessary to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over the others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations the seasoned Negroes trained the new ones and were responsible for their behaviour. In the early days of the plantation regime, when a gang of fresh Africans was purchased, they were assigned

[9] R. King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[10] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 143.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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in groups to certain reliable slaves who initiated them into the ways of the plantation. These drivers, as they were called, had the right of issuing or withholding rations to the raw recruits and of inflicting minor punishments. They taught the new slaves to speak the broken English which they knew and to do plantation work which required little skill, gathering oyster shells to be burned for making lime, mixing concrete from sand, lime, and shells, cutting wood, and ditching fields. At the end of a year, the master or overseer for the first time directed the work of the new Negro who now had become "tamed," assigning him to a special task of plantation work along with the other seasoned hands who had long since learned to obey orders, to arise when the conch blew at "day clean," to handle a hoe in listing and banking, to stand still when a white man spoke.

The planter usually divided his hands into four classes: drivers, tradesmen, house servants, and field hands. The number of drivers on a plantation depended upon its size. Only the largest of the St. Helena plantations had as many as two. It was the driver's business to superintend generally the field hands, and he carried a small club or whip as his "wand of office." He issued rations; he saw that each laborer's task was properly performed; and he inflicted corporal punishment whenever he saw fit, always, however, subject to the overseer's or master's order. In the absence of the overseer or owner, the driver usually succeeded to much of their authority, and in many cases knew more about the details of plantation affairs than the owner himself. For instance, when St. Helena Island was captured by Federal troops in 1861,

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the drivers quite generally remained at home issuing rations and directing the work of the plantation.

R. King, Jr., overseer of the Butler estate, thought that the selection of drivers was one of the "grand points" in plantation management. A cruel driver could demoralize the whole plantation, while an honest one could keep the slaves busy and happy. "An order from a driver," he said in explaining his method of plantation discipline, "is to be as implicity obeyed as if it came from myself, nor do I counteract the execution, (unless directly injurious,) . . . It would be endless for me to superintend the drivers and field hands too, and would of course make them useless."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, a missionary to St. Helena Island in 1862, described Limus, a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations, as being "very smart" and easy to learn. "He has the energy and *cuteness* and big eye for his own advantage of a born New Englander. He is not very moral or scrupulous, and the church-members will tell you 'not yet,' with a smile, if you ask whether he belongs to them. But he leads them all in enterprise, and his ambition and consequent prosperity make his example a very useful one on the plantation."[13]

Next to the driver in importance and authority were the tradesmen and the house servants. While the num-

[12] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec. 1828. "But the grand point [in managing the Butler estate] was to suppress the brutality and licentiousness practiced by the principal men on it; (say the drivers and tradesmen). More punishment is inflicted on every plantation by the men in power from private pique, than from a neglect of duty. . . . The driver to screen favourites, or apply their time to his own purposes, imposes a heavy tax on some. Should they murmur, an opportunity is taken, months after, to punish those unfortunate fellows for not doing their own and other tasks. . . . As an evidence of the various opportunities that a brutal driver has to gratify his revenge, . . . let any planter go into his field, and in any Negro's task he can find apparently just grounds for punishment."

[13] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 37-38.

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THE TASK SYSTEM

464 567 Less than half of a planter's total number of laborers could usually be counted upon for a full day's work.

When Captain Basil Hall visited the United States in 1827 and 1828 he found on a sea-island plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 122 slaves. Of these, seventy were men and women between the ages of fourteen and fifty; forty-eight were children under the age of fourteen; and four were superannuated. The seventy workers were classified as follows: thirty-nine full hands, sixteen three-quarter hands, eleven half hands, and four quarter hands. Out of seventy persons, therefore, the planter had fifty-seven and a half "taskable hands," but those working in the fields were only forty-four taskables, while the other thirteen and a half were employed as cart drivers, nurses, cooks for the Negroes, carpenters, house servants, and stock minders.[20] [463] [359]

The number of taskable hands on a plantation varied from year to year. Children were not sent to the field until they were fourteen, but were put to work at minor jobs, pulling weeds, "minding child," picking up trash, washing dishes. Superannuated slaves were also given tasks calling for little physical exertion; such as, gardening, tending horses, nursing, sewing. *Enceinte* women did half tasks until confinement, and women with suckling babies also did half task until the child was eight months old. A slave who had been sick did a portion of a task until he had sufficiently recovered to resume his accustomed amount of work.

[20] Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828*, II, 229.

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lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government. 175 657

In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the careless and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward 175 657 567 464

[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

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175 S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had
657 left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve with-
567 out remuneration in this social experiment, contributing
464 himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents gen-
erally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St.
(248) Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum
(433) times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[26]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

175 657 567 702

The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[26] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc.* no. 6, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
466 the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by
[427] the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a
[465] money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during
248 the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

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towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

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175 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor
464 from the Island.

Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of
175 St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them
511 through the year, there were some who prospered. At
[342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still
[492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in
[493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-
[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little
175 prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and
731 night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

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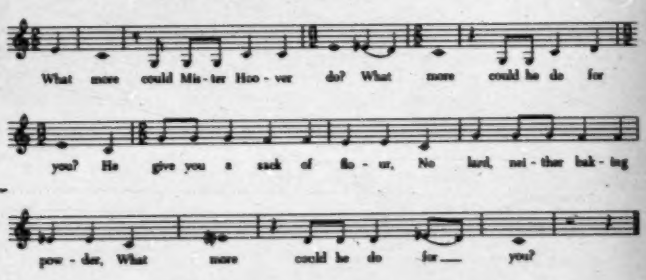


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Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

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My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people--that's why we came.

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The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work--several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp--five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[p.9]

159 584 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 464 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of (855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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159 873 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army, one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 159 185 873 ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING

[465] [241] I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## INTIMIDATION HAS BEEN BAD

177 824 The whites and the Negroes on this island haven't gotten involved in violence. But the intimidation, I think, has been bad as far as the white is concerned. Like making a person feel like he might not have a job tomorrow. This is something that bothers the Negroes a whole lot. Although it never bothered me because I feel like anybody that works me, he's working me because he's making some money off me, he's not working me because he likes me. He's working me because I'm a good worker and he needs me. And I believe that we all need each other—without the whites the Negro couldn't make it; and I believe without the Negroes the whites couldn't make it.

177 824 464 They've used the migrant workers in this intimidation. When I first knew about the migrant workers, they were really, really treated bad. They had no place to stay when they came here, and they were always treated bad. But since the integration movement has started here on the island, I think the white farmers have really gone for the migrant workers because they know that the migrant laborers really don't stand for nothing. They're just somebody to work.

Most of them, I've found out, have been in trouble before. They had trouble somewhere, or they couldn't make it at home, or something like that, and that's how come they become migrant laborers. So the white farmers figure, "Here's a chance for us to use the Negroes without the Negroes really being able to do anything about it. We don't have to worry about them getting an education. All they want to do is get our crops out, and then we can sort of hurt the Negroes here on the island by doing it this way."

The biggest farmer here, during the last season, he was working the migrant laborers three days and the regular Negroes on the island two days a week. So this is something where the Negroes used to look forward to [465] making during the summertime eighty or ninety dollars a week, it be cut down to thirty-five or forty dollars a week.

177 824 This is to try to keep the Negroes from participating in things. It doesn't matter whether he or she has been participating or not, he's automatically placed in this category. Two farmers came by the Progressive Club last year during the workshops there and acted like they were taking down license numbers. Nobody knows if they were actually taking down the numbers or not; they never published them, but this really scared a lot of Negroes and they wouldn't even want to bring their cars around.

159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.
177 So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
185 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
[661] know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
—to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
872 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
873 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
[197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
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177 579 Only twice since the turn of the century has there been a large scale threat of open conflict between the races. The earliest threat was in 1922 and was caused by the beating of a Black woman on the island by a White man. The island's men set out to retaliate. Whites were attacked and beaten in Charleston and atmosphere was tense throughout the county. Then in 1970 the city sanitation and hospital workers went on strike. As the months past without much movement toward settling the disagreements the Black now jobless community became increasingly tensed and similar repeats of attacks on Whites by Blacks were reported.

177 The relationship between the races has never been "peaches and cream." Because Whites maintain a tight hold on the economic patterns on the islands, islanders are to some degree reluctant to physically express their feelings. [579] Shooting incidents between the races, while not common, can be anticipated from time to time. The older islanders who [466] have slaved in the fields of the large farmers have not [465] forgotten the degrading condition under which they were economically obligated to function for some thirty-five cents per day. Younger islanders, also well aware of this history, simply refuse to repeat the pattern. The extent to which they are successful in breaking down the colonial economic patterns on the island will determine the future of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

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567 291 these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead of the usual two suits received by field hands.

567 291 435 Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of clothing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handkerchief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

567 435 Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day • 465 laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that 567 433 slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

567 342 The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

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They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

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[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[26]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[26] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
423 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[243] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work
[465] performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
466 the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
[427] acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a
• [465] money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during
248 the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

177 579 Only twice since the turn of the century has there been a large scale threat of open conflict between the races. The earliest threat was in 1922 and was caused by the beating of a Black woman on the island by a White man. The island's men set out to retaliate. Whites were attacked and beaten in Charleston and atmosphere was tense throughout the county. Then in 1970 the city sanitation and hospital workers went on strike. As the months past without much movement toward settling the disagreements the Black now jobless community became increasingly tensed and similar repeats of attacks on Whites by Blacks were reported.

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having assumed management in 1802, finding the gang good, but "very disorderly which is invariably the case when there is a frequent change of managers."[9] Later his son succeeded him. 000

Louis Manigault, after having made only half a crop due to his new overseer's inexperience, wrote, "He says 'he will do better another year, that now he sees into it,' and as is well known, 'Never change an Overseer if You can help it.' We try him once (but only once) more."[10] But he proved no better the second year than the first. "Elated by a strong and very false religious feeling he began to injure the plantation a vast deal, placing himself on a par with the Negroes, by even joining in with them at their prayer meetings, breaking down long established discipline, which in every Case is so difficult to preserve, favouring and siding in any difficulty with the people, against the Drivers, besides causing numerous grievances."[11] And so Manigault was forced to look for a new overseer. 466 567

ORGANIZATION OF SLAVE LABOR

Planters learned early in the use of slave labor that it was necessary to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over the others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations the seasoned Negroes trained the new ones and were responsible for their behaviour. In the early days of the plantation regime, when a gang of fresh Africans was purchased, they were assigned 466 464 567

[9] R. King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828. (113)

[10] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 143.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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in groups to certain reliable slaves who initiated them into the ways of the plantation. These drivers, as they were called, had the right of issuing or withholding rations to the raw recruits and of inflicting minor punishments. They taught the new slaves to speak the broken English which they knew and to do plantation work which required little skill, gathering oyster shells to be burned for making lime, mixing concrete from sand, lime, and shells, cutting wood, and ditching fields. At the end of a year, the master or overseer for the first time directed the work of the new Negro who now had become "tamed," assigning him to a special task of plantation work along with the other seasoned hands who had long since learned to obey orders, to arise when the conch blew at "day clean," to handle a hoe in listing and banking, to stand still when a white man spoke.

The planter usually divided his hands into four classes: drivers, tradesmen, house servants, and field hands. The number of drivers on a plantation depended upon its size. Only the largest of the St. Helena plantations had as many as two. It was the driver's business to superintend generally the field hands, and he carried a small club or whip as his "wand of office." He issued rations; he saw that each laborer's task was properly performed; and he inflicted corporal punishment whenever he saw fit, always, however, subject to the overseer's or master's order. In the absence of the overseer or owner, the driver usually succeeded to much of their authority, and in many cases knew more about the details of plantation affairs than the owner himself. For instance, when St. Helena Island was captured by Federal troops in 1861,

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the drivers quite generally remained at home issuing rations and directing the work of the plantation.

R. King, Jr., overseer of the Butler estate, thought that the selection of drivers was one of the "grand points" in plantation management. A cruel driver could demoralize the whole plantation, while an honest one could keep the slaves busy and happy. "An order from a driver," he said in explaining his method of plantation discipline, "is to be as implicity obeyed as if it came from myself, nor do I counteract the execution, (unless directly injurious,) . . . It would be endless for me to superintend the drivers and field hands too, and would of course make them useless."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, a missionary to St. Helena Island in 1862, described Limus, a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations, as being "very smart" and easy to learn. "He has the energy and *cuteness* and big eye for his own advantage of a born New Englander. He is not very moral or scrupulous, and the church-members will tell you 'not yet,' with a smile, if you ask whether he belongs to them. But he leads them all in enterprise, and his ambition and consequent prosperity make his example a very useful one on the plantation."[13]

Next to the driver in importance and authority were the tradesmen and the house servants. While the num-

[12] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec. 1828. "But the grand point [in managing the Butler estate] was to suppress the brutality and licentiousness practiced by the principal men on it; (say the drivers and tradesmen). More punishment is inflicted on every plantation by the men in power from private pique, than from a neglect of duty. . . . The driver to screen favourites, or apply their time to his own purposes, imposes a heavy tax on some. Should they murmur, an opportunity is taken, months after, to punish those unfortunate fellows for not doing their own and other tasks. . . . As an évidence of the various opportunities that a brutal driver has to gratify his revenge, . . . let any planter go into his field, and in any Negro's task he can find apparently just grounds for punishment."

[13] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 37-38.

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ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18] 567 463 554 466

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862 found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants. 567 463

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house. 567 357

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 267.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

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CHAPTER VII

# THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

## THE SLAVE AND THE LASH

567 THE EVERY-DAY life of the slave people on a St. Helena plantation was by no means crowded with
461 constant toil. In the late spring when the cotton had to be hoed at the critical stages and again in the autumn when
[466] the cotton was in "good blow" they might work from
[431] "day clean" to "fust dark," but these were unusual periods, and, as a reward for the extra labor, their masters dealt out choice rations of molasses and meat and passed around presents of tobacco and gay headcloths. The ordinary task of a full hand kept him in the field only four or five hours a day so that the "smart" ones were habitually through by two o'clock. Only the "t'ick headed" remained as late as five. The rest of the day was theirs to spend as they chose.

000 A southern youth, Hamilton Couper, who had spent all his life on his father's sea-island cotton and rice plantation on the Georgia coast was surprised to find the white servants working so hard in New Haven where he was attending Yale. The Irish maid-of-all-work in his rooming house, so he wrote to his mother, "does more than any
567 servant I have ever seen."[1] The Honorable Amelia Murray of England who visited Couper's parents at their Hopeton plantation was also impressed with the difference in work required of the southern slave and the northern "saucy help." "I never saw servants in any old English family," she observed, "more comfortable, or more de-

[1] Couper-Wylly Papers. Hamilton Couper to Mrs. J. H. Couper, 1846.

[p. 124]

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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A superintendent's work kept him busy early and late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[38] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In addition to these duties which were essential to the cultivation of the land the superintendent was expected to attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[39]

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One of the most serious problems which the superintendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers. They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

[38] *House Ex. Doc.* no. 142, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[39] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

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175 eral officials, and northern speculators who hoped to make of Beaufort, or if not of Beaufort, of Hilton Head or Bay Point, a great seaport second only to New York. A few planters were able to redeem their land and begin planting [466] under contracts with their former slaves made on terms approved by General Saxton, now assistant commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau.[3] Dr. Clarence Fripp, for instance, began to practice medicine on St. Helena Island shortly after the close of the war and by November, 1865, had obtained a surgeon's contract from General Saxton and was living at St. Helenaville next door to his former residence which was then occupied by Miss Towne.[4] Not more than three or four planters were able to redeem land on St. Helena. The heirs of Captain John Fripp redeemed a part of Corner Farm; Mrs. Eliza H. Chaplin, five acres of her Indian Hill plantation which originally contained 400 acres; and Edgar W. Fripp, 732 acres of

[3] Saxton was succeeded January 15, 1866, by General Robert K. Scott of Ohio. See Webster, "The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 86-91.

[4] Dennett, special correspondent for the *Nation*, in the issue of Nov. 30, 1865, gives a picture of Clarence Fripp on his return to St. Helena. Among the northern soldiers and traders in the hotel at Hilton Head, Dennett discovered a "person who had the easily distinguishable appearance and manners of a South Carolinian." This gentleman, a person of some fifty years old, dressed tolerably well in a suit of grey clothes, with a large display of crumpled linen at the collar and cuffs of his coat, sat before the stove, smoking and talking very freely about his present poverty and his plans for the future. After saying that he had left St. Helena when DuPont captured Port Royal, leaving his plate and furniture behind, he told about the sale of his plantation for federal taxes. "Some Massachusetts man had bought it, and he didn't know when he would get it back. . . . Up in Greenville he soon spent all his money to support his family, but if he'd had money he couldn't have saved his property. How was he to come back inside the Yankee lines and pay the tax? The Commissioners knew very well it couldn't be done; the sale was a very unfair thing." By returning to Beaufort now, "he hoped to be able to pick up a little medical practice; but if his profession failed him, he supposed his son and himself could put up a cabin somewhere in the vicinity, and get fish and oysters enough to live on."

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc.* no. 6, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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175 a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that
464 they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon
the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the
•466 acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by
[427] the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a
[465] money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

### THE STARVING TIME

175 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during
248 the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] The
[458] crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298. [13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

529 829 [545] When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that.

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468 829 533 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

529 829 199 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 240, 264.

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BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live
759 fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms
789 who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, a, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us
789 that she does an active mail order business as representative
• 472 of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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"*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs. On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

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A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Edwards* who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

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"Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly. "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

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"Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
(344) and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
(794) to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
(795) pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *still* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
●474 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
(443) a successful consumers' cooperative owned and op-
(529) erated by some of the poorest people on the island.
(873) It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
(866) on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
(P.xii-B) cation and voter registration.

159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition th
177 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe.
185 know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing
[661] to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
—to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

878 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
813 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
813 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remem-
ber a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charles-
and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find
out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran
into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
474 Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
692 somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
666 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask, "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
474 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 443 ●474 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 178 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

In twelve years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 423 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered by the commissioners. They had the money which 175 they had earned as plantation hands for the Government 423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the pur- 434 chase price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens, and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers. W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did [476] not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 423 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase land on the plantations where they had been born. In staking out their claims they invariably moved their cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started life as landholding citizens on the very ground which they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily routine. Now they had freedom of movement, but with it [434] had come the responsibility of earning their own living, [241] and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation of their little tracts after the manner learned in slavery.

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 37n.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

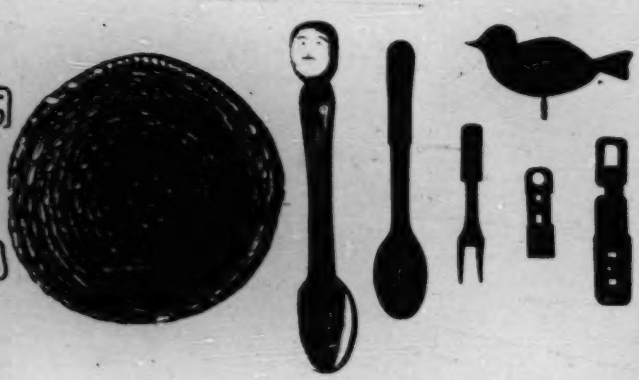
1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

322
532
[412]
[481]

IIa. Carved wooden spoon

IIb. Carved wooden stick with figure

[285]
[412]



IIc. Coil basket and carved wooden objects

[Following p. xxxii-B]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other
461 sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate
532 IIb) A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
481 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
291
●481

[p. 133]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

142
802
291
•481

[p. 172]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



764 [175] [176] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers. [178] [175]

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

• 48 562 178 [164] The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[493] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[562] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[231] [22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[136] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

WILMINGTON ISLAND

115 492 484 "We come in a wagon hitch up tuh a double team uh hawse. We pile ebryting in duh wagon, all duh pots and pans an beddn. Duh women ride in duh wagon an duh men trudge longside.

115 484 "It take us days an days tuh come frum Clinch County tuh yuh. We cross tree ribbuhs. We git tuh one ribbuh wut take us a half day tuh git obuh. Wen night come, we sleep in duh houses long duh road wut duh folks desuhted. I membuh one time we stay at a house wut dohn hab no flo. Jis walls an a roof. We put duh beddn right down on duh groun an sleep deah.

115 567 829 "We done sell tuh Mistuh Barnard. Yuh know duh Barnards, missus? Mis Barnard come outn a Barstow. Dey lib yuh, too. Well, wen we git tuh Wilmington Ilun, deah wuz jis a few houses on duh ilun. Deah wuz still some folks yuh wut hab come frum Africa. I recollect dat one gang uh slabes wuz brung frum Liberia. Dat wuz fo I git yuh. Duh las gang wuz brung attuh I git yuh an dey come ovuh frum Africa an dey stop an add tuh um at Santo Domingo.

"Yuhs heahd bout dat lot, ain't yuh? Big boat try tuh creep up duh Savannah Ribbuh, but dey chase um out tuh open sea an dey keep chasin um till wen dat boat git way an kin lan dem slabes, it way down tuh Jekyll Ilun. Den attuh dey git um deah, dey steal some ub um back an carry um up yuh tuh Hutchinson Ilun. I tink dasso, missus.

"I membuh doze Africans wen dey fus come couldn walk on duh groun bery good. Dey hab lill clumpy feet an dey ain weah no shoes needuh."

We asked if Uncle Robert had ever heard the Africans say how they had been captured and he nodded. "Yes'm, I heahs um talk bout dat many times. Dey say duh wite mens git um tuh come on ship an dey fool um wid all kine uh pretty tings. Den dey lock um in duh hatch an wen dey git out, dey way out on duh open sea."

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[18] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
(789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
• 484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
• 484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
784 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ME. I DON'T LIKE TO PRETEND

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At first I thought people won't want to hear this kind of song. But after I went to Atlanta, Georgia, I was very pleased. I was happy. Everybody was so nice. And I enjoyed myself. That's the first time I ever leave Johns Island to go sing.

Going off, it made me learn a lot. You see a lot of people. You enjoy yourself. People treat you so nice. They really make me feel like I'm something special. That time we went to Seabrook, my picture was in the paper. The lady I work for daughter, she get the picture. She call and say, "Tootsie, you're a celebrity. Your picture's in the paper."

You know, I like to be me. I don't like to pretend. If I go off, I'm not going to pretend that I'm somebody else. I'm going to be me! My children and grandchildren are happy. They're happy to know that their grandmommy go off and sing and picture been in the paper. So I'm happy, too. I didn't realize days past and gone that things was going to work out like that.

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794
484

The best trip I had was when a busload went to Washington from Wesley Church. Rev. Goodwin went and everyone was like one big family. The bus driver took us around and showed us different places. We had a good time. On Sunday morning, we did a church service at the festival.

I really wish we could get some more programs off from here. That's something I been looking forward to. If just once a year, you just get away on some kind of program. I like to see friends I've made in different places. And when I go, I don't want to rush off. After we sing, I want to sit around and listen to other people sing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. June Hunter*

# I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

177 484 When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

142 302 291 524 352 353

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
674 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
178 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

175 that ten masters of 1,700 slaves had been absent from their
567 property for the last twelve months, and that some 15,000 slaves on the tide swamp plantations were managed by no more than forty proprietors during the summer months (Wikramanayake, 1973:158-9). The general picture which emerges of the district in the century between 1730 and 1830 is that of a region whose population was overwhelmingly of West African descent, whose economy was based on intensive hand labor of a crop familiar to many of these immigrants in their homelands, and whose most prevalently spoken language was an English creole.

175 While in its more prosperous days Georgetown was a cultural center and was far from isolated either economically or socially from other populous centers in the state, its position after the Civil War was one of geographic isolation in important respects. With the fall of the plantation economy, boat traffic along the extensive network of rivers in the county was no longer reliable nor frequent. The rivers and marshes which had provided the flood waters for the rice fields impeded the building of roads. As late
484 as 1918, a trip inland to the state capitol, some one hundred miles away, could be a two-day trip over unmarked sand or mud roads (Vaughan, 1969). Until the major bridges were built to span the rivers emptying into Winyah Bay in the early twentieth century, a trip from rural areas to the county seat at Georgetown for supplies or legal transactions could

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

243 of the county's economy, it was still cultivated on the river
433 island for the consumption of its inhabitants, with some surplus sold for cash. Two men in their eighties could describe in detail each phase of the long growing season, and the utensils used in processing the ripened grain. During the
[464] lifetimes of these men, however, the island made the transition from a subsistence farming economy to one based on
464 laboring jobs held in mainland communities. Typically, young men went to live in nearby towns for periods ranging from two weeks to several years, working at jobs in lumber mills, in shipyards, on ocean-going vessels, and even in New York factories. Other men and women took laboring jobs on farms
243 and plantations closer to the island. The rice crop was still cultivated during this transition period, but by the thirties the cultivation was essentially under the supervision of one older man, a preacher and permanent resident of
243 the island. At times when intensive heavy labor was needed
464 for the crop, many of those who were working off the island returned to help in the harvest. With increasing job opportunities associated with World War II and the availability of motorized transportation, making the boat trip across the water a matter of minutes rather than hours, rice cultivation came to an end. Three successive years of disastrous flood tides in the forties finished the transition period.

464 Today most families have at least two members who
484 commute daily to jobs on the mainland. Many of the middle-

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators. Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland. With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain, such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in schools in other states.

871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never attended school. An early school on the island was held in the church building, paid for by island residents themselves. In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one; those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In recent years the county school district has provided boat and bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary and high school students; the island school was closed with consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
•484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[159] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
57 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
56 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
56 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social
184

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
•484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older gene-
[212] ration were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167
166
484
193
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MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND NONSTANDARD VARIANTS

| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

562 Mobility patterns are different for men and women in
484 the two communities. In the mainland community, men have
464 been considerably more mobile than women. As previously
184 mentioned, one older woman had spent her entire life working as a domestic servant for the owners of a single plantation. The other woman had a more varied employment record as a field laborer, as a cannery worker for a local seafood factory, and as a cook for a middle-class white family. She had never moved far from the sphere of a single plantation, however. Of the men, Speaker 3 in his early thirties had moved onto a plantation with the help of an uncle, and had remained there as a laborer for fifty years. Speaker 4 was the most widely traveled of this group, having received more formal education in his youth than either of the others. He had worked outside the region during a portion of his middle years, acquiring some skills and obtaining better jobs than
[193] the other man. Women in this group use more creole and non-standard forms than men, a pattern which reflects both their lack of mobility and their limited occupational choices.

562 On the island, older men have been slightly more
484 mobile than older women. Of the women, Speaker 5 has been
184 less mobile than Speaker 6, who lived for a portion of her middle years off the island. Speaker 8 was the only island resident encountered who had never attended school and has
[193] been less mobile than Speaker 7. These two men do not differ appreciably in their use of creole forms, however. For

562 older island residents, mobility does not seem to influence
484 language use to any great extent, when comparing island
184 residents with each other. When comparing island women and
193 mainland women, however, the greater mobility of island women may well be related to their greater use of standard forms. Among middle aged men from the island, mobility seems to be a factor in the greater use of creole forms by Speaker 12, who refused to commute to a job which prohibits his return to the island nightly. His use of creole features is twice that of Speaker 11, who spent some years working in Washington, D. C. In the younger group, the woman who has been least mobile uses more creole features than Speaker 14, who clerks regularly in a mainland store. Similarly, the young man (Speaker 15) with least mobility reflects this in his speech, when compared with Speaker 16, who works as a waiter in a resort motel during the tourist season. Sex of speaker appears to outweigh degree of mobility as an influence on language use, but within sex, mobility seems to be a contributing factor.

167 Over and above language use, mobility is an important factor in the population patterns of rural Georgetown County. In a report on Population and Economy in the region encompassing the county, concern is expressed about the migration patterns of younger black residents to northern cities. During a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970, 76.8 percent of black males and 72.6 percent of black females between

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[561] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their residence since and before the turn of the century. While
• 484 many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth - versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505] water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484] towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
584 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
175

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
175 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes
[491] have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of
[489] capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the
Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as
they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
[484] must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Conner (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discouerye of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

491 484 [505] 487 505

THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

175

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

[103]

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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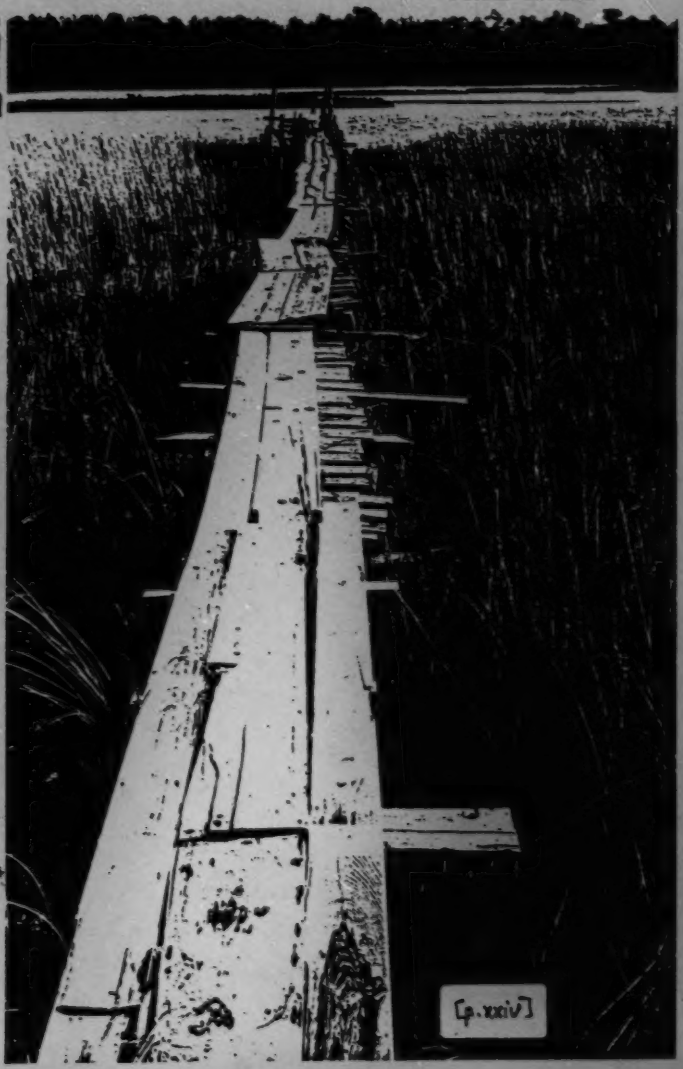

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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[487]

in her *Journal*, gave several illustrations which show how anything was grist for the Negroes' song-mill. With the rivers affording the only means of travel, it was natural that she should hear rowing songs of all kinds; and on one occasion she had the unique privilege of hearing her own praises extemporaneously chanted by her two Negro boatmen. They described her personal attractions, and amused her intensely by their repeated references to her "wire waist."[4]

Today the Negroes are less inventive, and generally confine themselves to a substitution of names or familiar lines in the old songs, but we can still hear examples of the way they utilized incidents or phrases that struck their fancy. If a captain said: "It's rough going 'round the Horn," the Negroes made up a song about the statement, and we had: "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla gal, Go 'round the Horn!" "Ragged Leevy," a waterfront character of Brunswick, was described in the shanty that bears his name. "Little Johnny Brown, fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound," was so popular among the stevedores that he figured in one of their jolliest shanties; and "Yonder come that *Hessie*" always brings a regretful feeling to those of us who remember the "good old days" on St. Simon's when the *Hessie* was our means of communication with the outside world, and the captain obligingly did our errands.

In our machine age it is inevitable that these work-songs should pass. Before they have entirely disappeared, records should be made of the few examples that have survived.

## SHANTIES

If anyone needs more information about the use of these shanties, I suggest that he apply to either Joe Armstrong or Henry Merchant of St. Simon's Island. Both were at one time leaders of stevedore crews, and both have told me the uses to which the different songs were put. Since I am a land-lubber and more interested in music than in the mechanics of loading lumber and stowing cotton, details concerning the latter have not stuck, while the tunes have—to the last note. Any mistake in describing their application is mine, not Joe's or Henry's.

[126]
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In the early days of the lumber industry, great rafts of logs were nailed together, and—with two or three men in charge—were drifted down the Altamaha to the mills at its mouth.[5] Ships from everywhere came for the sawed lumber. Julia once

[4] African explorers with more knowledge of the native dialect than their boatmen realized were often entertained in the same manner, but their defects—not their charms—were derisively enumerated.

[5] Fanny Kemble mentions in her Journal that on one of her boat-trips from Darien she saw "The river . . . covered with Ocone [river] boxes." She describes them as monstrous square

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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4: Caravan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
[668] nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
[489] Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
[241] island. The resort developments and the new small businesses offer some employment, but farming,
[198] long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

199 Development on Johns Island has taken two forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
199 along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

(P xiii, B)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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St. Helena Island



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134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes
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•[489] capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
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[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *White Bluff*

HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff, eight miles southeast of Savannah.

Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate in the various sections which form the settlement and which are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the inhabitants make their living by catching crab and fish which they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the narrow roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty. Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon, contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors and trimmings of some of the houses.

The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main street of the community, passes the houses of other residents set well back from the road. Most of them are small and unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger church.

The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Harris Neck*

361 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR
.491 Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through
361 the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from
[351] the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

889 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remem-
193 bered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Pine Barren Near Eulonia*

122 AFTER THE MUDDY RUTS THROUGH THE PINE clearing had ended, there was no road, and the car jerked
• (491) and bounded about among the pine trees. The soft brown needles made better traveling than the boggy wagon tracks that were behind us, but our method of procedure was rather bewildering, for there was no mark by which to retrace our tracks. As we went deeper into the pine woods there was no sign of habitation.

(115) Our driver,* who had offered to help us when our car had stuck in the bog, was a six-foot, shiny black Negro, strong necked and lithe, with a twelve-inch hunting knife strapped to his hip. We had never seen him before, nor the smaller Negro beside him on the front seat. In the back seat we were concerned with our feet, which rested precariously among loose cartridge shells. We feared that a sudden jolt from a pine stump might make us stamp down on the shells and explode them.

361 Suddenly we came upon a reed and paling fence higher than the head of a tall man. There was nothing to be seen over the top of it, no sign of occupation. We drove around to the side where, protected by some feathery bushes, a small opening hardly distinguishable from the palings led into an enclosure. Scattered without plan about a smooth sand clearing were three or four small unpainted wooden cabins, two connected by a narrow board walk just above the ground. Other smaller structures, sheds, and work tables were placed

* *Reuben Taylor, Eulonia.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## *Possum Point*

•491 A WINDING TREE-SHADED DIRT ROAD LEADS FROM Darien up the Altamaha to the Negro community of Possum
(132) Point. The freshets in the section rise in the rainy season and the road is often flooded. On either side the trees are mirrored in the shallow water which surrounds them. In the
137 spring against the fresh green of the trees and foliage there is the soft color of wild honeysuckle and Cherokee Rose. Through the thickly-massed trees the sun filters dimly; a misty, unreal atmosphere overhangs the entire scene.

342 Set back from the roadway are occasional small dwelling places, with boards turned dun-colored from age and expo-
351 sure. Neatly tended vegetable and flower gardens stretch out to the front and sides of the houses. The owners can be
461 found industriously working in the gardens, sitting on the porches, or gathered in little groups along the road. Here
(491) and there small bridges span the road, and at each of these a number of persons are often seen leisurely fishing, their long bamboo poles forming graceful arcs from the bank to the water.

115 We had been told that Alec Anderson was an old man and one who would be able to enlighten us regarding the beliefs prevalent in that section. We stopped a few times to inquire
491 where he lived. After continuing for several miles, the road turned to the right. It swerved again a short distance later and continued in a narrow, uneven pathway through the
361 woods. This section was but sparsely settled and we glimpsed a cabin only now and then.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
• 491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
[412] we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
[124] picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),[B]* whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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Georgia

# *St. Simons Island*

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by • [491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. [342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower [351] garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a [296] grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[2] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[35] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

535 "One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
• 491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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491 to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined
137 again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

361 The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

368 To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

342 Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls
353 were papered with newspapers and, although there was a
352 motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

115 Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling
(164) very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

829 In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 We went by to talk with Charity Lucas, a fine looking upstanding, middle-aged Negro woman. She told us she did not know much about her father's people,—they had come from around Carolina,—but her mother and her mother's people had come from around Waycross and she herself had been born in Waycross. She said that the coast Negroes were very different from the interior people. She had heard talk of conjure and spirits around St. Marys but she didn't believe much in it herself; she had not been brought up that way.

Her son Robert (Plate XXII), A a tall, lithe, powerful young Negro of about twenty-five, was rather taciturn. He had heard of these things but didn't care to speak of them and didn't believe in them much anyway.

Charity advised us to go to see old Jim Myers. "Now theah's one that's ole an'll be able tuh tell yuh plenty. He's neahly ninety and sho likes tuh talk."

We asked if his memory were good. "Yes'm, it's as good as mine. I guess it's bettuh."

We asked for directions and she told us how to go, ten miles deep into the woods off from the St. Marys-Kingsland highway.

•491 Our road and what later turned out to be a pine needle wagon track carried us through Marianna, John Houstoun McIntosh's plantation, through Sweetwater Hammock and on through other settlements to Mush Bluff Island where old Jim Myers lived. The last mile we had to walk, owing
123 to some swampy patches in the wagon track. A Negro boy of about eleven sauntered around a bush, and his eyes popped open in frightened surprise at strangers appearing so suddenly in the woods.

"Does Jim Myers live near here?" we asked.

"Right theah roun the cawnuh of the path," he said, and
342 we came suddenly upon the house, a three room unpainted, board cabin sitting about two feet off the ground on large,



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-DD--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



829 and what kind of house they lived in. "She ain speak of wut kine uh house but she do speak of monkeys. They have monkeys all roun em and they dohn have tuh do no plantin cuz evrything is wile and they pick it off the trees."

We asked him if he could remember any African words he had heard his grandmother use. "They wuz funny wuds," he laughed, "I ought tuh be able to remembuh em but I caahn. She use tuh sing songs with African wuds. Ef I could study about em, I might remembuh some but now you ask me I jis caahn git em tuh mine. She did sing a chuch song wut have wuds we could unduhstand, an then in the middle of it she say 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by,' and looked like wen she come to the en of each stanza, she sing 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by.' It sho is a long time ago, them days."

• 491 Later we followed a deeply rutted sand road which led westward in the direction of Folkston. Few cars traveled
493 this way and once during our trip we encountered an old fashioned two-wheeled ox cart whose driver guided his oxen deftly to one side in order to let us pass.

115 About three or four miles out on the road we turned in a gate and drove to the side of Shadwick Rudolph's * house. The old man greeted us smilingly. At first glance he did not appear to be the eighty-six years he claimed, but on closer observation we noticed that his eyes were dimmed from age. He talked with us for some time, telling us among (567) other things, "I belong tuh Mr. Dave Bailey. He own Woodbine Plantation. Muh granfathuh, his name wuz Jim. He come ovuh tuh this country frum Africa. He tell me that ovuh theah they have houses made of palmettuh.

829 "Then, ole Nanny Mammy, she live at the plantation too, and she come frum Africa. She alluz set down tuh wuk; no mattuh wut kine uh wuk, she set down tuh do it. Nanny Mammy use tuh set down in the middle of the flo of uh house

* *Shadwick Rudolph, Folkston Road, near Woodbine.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one
• 491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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131 river island rather than a saltwater ocean island.[3] The islands just off
[103] the coast of Charleston include James, Johns, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges, among many others. The Sea Islands of Georgia extend on the northern coast from Harris Neck; on the southern coast they include Sapelo, Darien, St. Simons, and St. Marys.

133 The Sea Islands and surrounding areas were a mere submerged portion of the continental shelf during the early geologic history of North America. As time passed, the ocean retreated to its present position, and the low flatlands left behind became known as the Georgia and Carolina low country.[4]

The Sea Islands are tranquil, flat, swampy lands with elevations
132 ranging from near sea level to slightly over 100 feet. The climate is generally mild throughout the year, with very few recordings of drastically low temperatures. The coastal areas are characterized by slightly higher annual temperatures than other areas, primarily because of their proximity to the ocean.[5] The climatogram shown in Figure 1 illustrates the changes at various times of the year.

133 The Sea Island area is characterized by deep rivers snaking along the coast and dividing the land into countless large and small islands.
134 The sandy soil, which drains inadequately, places economic and devel-
[491] opmental constraints on the area. Road building is extremely difficult in spots; some islands still have no paved roads. The 1979 regional housing market analysis for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester
134 (BCD) Council of Governments estimated that 90 percent of the land
109 area within Charleston County, which includes many of the Carolina
311 Sea Islands, is composed of soils that put moderate to severe limitations on land use for urban development. The soil has poor load-bearing capacities, in addition to the prevailing poor drainage. Thus, financing for development must include provisions for land improvement as well as adequate drainage systems. Of the 2,614 square miles of land within the BCD region, only 5 percent has been developed for urban use; remaining portions of the coastal region are primarily rural.[6]
133 Slightly more than half of the area is forest and woodlands. The marsh
137 and swamplands, nearly a quarter of the total, grow little but marsh weeds, owing to the ebb and flow of daily tidal waters. These lands are flat and dangerous; there are reports of unfortunate islanders' being caught in "suckholes" or "mashmud" and never returning. The overall
[311] pattern of land use is summarized in Table 1.

491 Few bridges, with the exception of wooden crossings, connected

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina



Table 1. Land Use for BCD Region

311
179

| *Category* | *Acres* | *% of Total* |
|---|---|---|
| Developed areas | | |
| Urban uses | 75,000 | 4.29 |
| Residential | 21,000 | 1.20 |
| Commercial | 3,500 | 0.20 |
| Industrial | 12,600 | 0.72 |
| Public and other | 37,900 | 2.17 |
| Agricultural uses | | |
| Cropland and pasture | 178,800 | 10.23 |
| Forest and woodlands (excluding swampland forests) | 861,740 | 49.30 |
| Undeveloped areas | | |
| Marsh and swampland | 416,600 | 23.83 |
| Inland waterways | 140,800 | 8.06 |
| Total | 1,747,940 | 100.00 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1975, p. 5; figuring corrected.

491 the islands to the mainland before 1940. Though considerable sums of money have been expended within recent years on the construction of long, narrow bridges to span the Atlantic coast, ocean recesses, rivers, and streams, the more remote islands, such as Sandy and Daufuski, continue to be inaccessible except by boat.[7] Most of the Sea Islands 361 remain very sparsely settled despite the population growth brought on by recent industrialization and commercialization. The landscape is 133 pastoral and mysterious compared to inland areas of the United States. Most islands are characterized by graceful palmetto trees, expansive 139 green terrain, and atmospheric haze. The landscape in fact bears a striking resemblance to the topography of such coastal countries as Nigeria, Ghana, Angola, and Liberia, the tropical homelands of the Sea Islanders' ancestors.[8]

365 Electricity came to the more remote islands only as recently as the 1960s. Streetlights rarely line the narrow roadways of even the more 373 developed islands, and in late evening the overhanging trees give the roads a ghostly allure. After nightfall it is literally impossible to see even two feet ahead.[9]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and orderly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

342 [177] [827] [356] [592]

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

351 171

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

•491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building [505] materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some
775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Amer-
162 icans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see
567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[786] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

133

[491]

[p. xviii]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHAT I TALK TO PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND ABOUT IS POOLING OUR RESOURCES

There's no way that the island can stay unchanged. It's already changed. There was a time when I knew everybody on the island. I can't say that anymore. There's been such an influx of new people in the last ten years. There's a real new sense of direction there. The new people can always take advantage of the older people. Hopefully, we can control some of the change.

For the first time in my lifetime, the white and black communities have come together. Some of the whites who hated my guts back when you guys were there now are using me sometimes as spokesman to the county government. Some of them who would never have spoken to me, I've been in meetings with them and they'll say, "Let Mr. Saunders explain that." There's a Johns Island planning committee to look at what needs to be changed. I think we might be able to maintain our roads—if we could get some cutoffs on the roads, where those big farm vehicles or the school bus can pull over for the traffic—and if we can do it *and* save the big trees.

I wish I was in a position to get a group of people together to buy up a good bit of the land that is for sale on Johns Island. Some of it I would like to just sit. Some of it you could build the things that need to be done. I would like to see a nice Holiday Inn–type motel over there. There are so many people from the island that are living away from here that come home and their family don't have a house large enough for them to stay in. And they don't want to stay in the city, so they just crowd in together. But if you had a real nice hotel and just a nice restaurant, you could make money on it. There are so many things that could be done.

What I talk to people on the island about is pooling our resources to build the things that will be built on Johns Island. It can be done, but we would have to trust each other.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

179
464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

177
491 Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah
(178) and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

133

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the afternoons and evenings. 206 Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat 504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for [438] major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors [574] and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or 796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island. [493] A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy 491

•491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
346 and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
461 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
476 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
493 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
368 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
794 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



# CHAPTER I

## AN ECOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTEMPORARY SEA ISLAND SOCIETY

### LOCATION OF THE ISLANDS

131 The five Sea Islands stretch along the Atlantic Sea Coast, south of the city of Charleston, South Carolina. The [491] Ashley River Bridge completed in 1922 connects the nearest sea island, James, to the southern tip of the city of Charleston. James Island is about two miles from Charleston.

131 133 The Wappo (Stono) River separates James from Johns Island by way of the Maybank Highway; Johns is five miles from Charleston. The Wadmalaw Creek separates Johns from Wadmalaw Island. Wadmalaw's eastern body gulfs around the south easterly tip of Johns Island. On the north westerly side, the Wadmalaw Sound separates Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. Yonges Island (also known as St. Pauls Island) is neighbored on its north westerly side by the communities of Hollywood, Ravenal and by Meggett to the northeast. Many native islanders ignore the distinction and consider those communities as part of the large island.

Edisto the most distant island is forty-two miles from Charleston. The Edisto beach area located on the southern tip of the island sits in the Atlantic Ocean. Edisto is the largest of the Sea Islands.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

## CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),

177
136

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.

For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al.
197 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
177 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



115 114 Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127] To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

115 114 533 Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[491] When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

11: Johnson H-1,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

[Front End Paper (A)]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

*A Section of Beaufort District from Mills, Atlas of South Carolina (1825)*

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
584 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
195

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
195 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes
• [491] have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of
[489] capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the
Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as
they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
[484] must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

491 484 [505] 487 505

THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

175

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

[103]

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

CHAPTER IX

# THE AFTERMATH

## A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

It was Sunday in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues. 491 248 175

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 361 175 248 423 175 (137) 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old 248 (243) (244)

[p. 191]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

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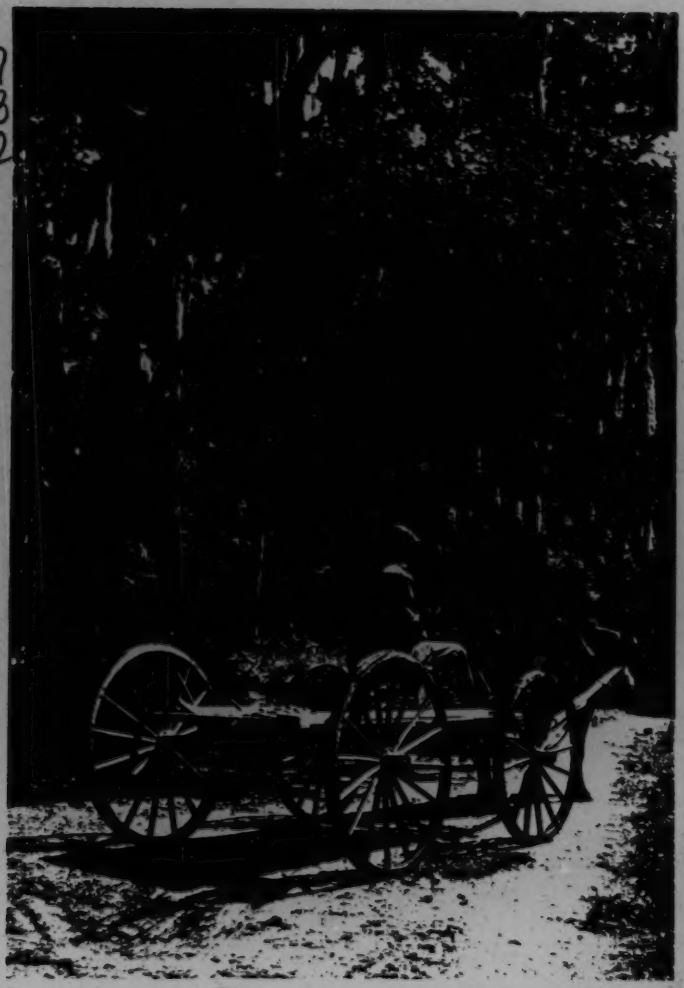

XVI. Julius Bailey and ox cart at Sapelo

[Following p. xxxii-4]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

WILMINGTON ISLAND

115 "We come in a wagon hitch up tuh a double team uh
• 492 hawse. We pile ebryting in duh wagon, all duh pots and
484 pans an beddn. Duh women ride in duh wagon an duh men trudge longside.

115 "It take us days an days tuh come frum Clinch County
484 tuh yuh. We cross tree ribbuhs. We git tuh one ribbuh wut take us a half day tuh git obuh. Wen night come, we sleep in duh houses long duh road wut duh folks desuhted. I membuh one time we stay at a house wut dohn hab no flo. Jis walls an a roof. We put duh beddn right down on duh groun an sleep deah.

115 "We done sell tuh Mistuh Barnard. Yuh know duh
567 Barnards, missus? Mis Barnard come outn a Barstow.
829 Dey lib yuh, too. Well, wen we git tuh Wilmington Ilun, deah wuz jis a few houses on duh ilun. Deah wuz still some folks yuh wut hab come frum Africa. I recollect dat one gang uh slabes wuz brung frum Liberia. Dat wuz fo I git yuh. Duh las gang wuz brung attuh I git yuh an dey come ovuh frum Africa an dey stop an add tuh um at Santo Domingo.

"Yuhs heahd bout dat lot, ain't yuh? Big boat try tuh creep up duh Savannah Ribbuh, but dey chase um out tuh open sea an dey keep chasin um till wen dat boat git way an kin lan dem slabes, it way down tuh Jekyll Ilun. Den attuh dey git um deah, dey steal some ub um back an carry um up yuh tuh Hutchinson Ilun. I tink dasso, missus.

"I membuh doze Africans wen dey fus come couldn walk on duh groun bery good. Dey hab lill clumpy feet an dey ain weah no shoes needuh."

We asked if Uncle Robert had ever heard the Africans say how they had been captured and he nodded. "Yes'm, I heahs um talk bout dat many times. Dey say duh wite mens git um tuh come on ship an dey fool um wid all kine uh pretty tings. Den dey lock um in duh hatch an wen dey git out, dey way out on duh open sea."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullahs working for themselves. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. 305]

735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
282
434 They used to gather moss--this same moss. Every month a man came
along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
735 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a
824 special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water
on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet.
342 And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, every-
[354] thing--cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the
winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
342 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give
354 it a shape--outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind
of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a
common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and
cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two
green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That
was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three
places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down
from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think
there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen
one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
over the island. They used carts and that little tacky--pony, little horse, you
● 492 know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The
army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to
change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors--didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

**WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN**

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain—climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things—automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with (493) oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn
735 flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day.
178 Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody
262 kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way
178 to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 46 241 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground. Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the Devill! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for (492) that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 (412) In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 597 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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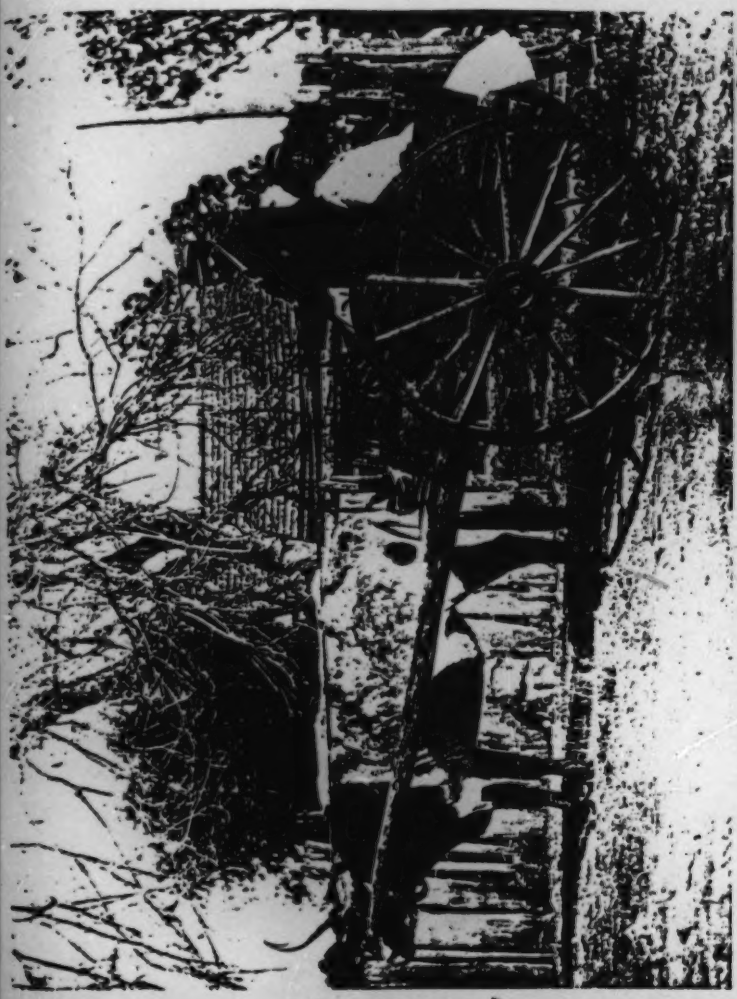
9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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4. Liverpool and His Ox-Cart (Born, St. Simon's, 1828—Died, Darien, 1938)

[facing p. 32]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
[493] a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[562] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[23] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[36] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

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SPRING PLOWING

[facing p. iii]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



248 175 [657] men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded [492] [493] the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy [292] calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

794 576 175

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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St. Helena Island



175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house bein full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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XVI. Julius Bailey and ox cart at Sapelo

[Following p. xxxii-4]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
• [493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[25]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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829 and what kind of house they lived in. "She ain speak of wut kine uh house but she do speak of monkeys. They have monkeys all roun em and they dohn have tuh do no plantin cuz evrything is wile and they pick it off the trees."

We asked him if he could remember any African words he had heard his grandmother use. "They wuz funny wuds," he laughed, "I ought tuh be able to remembuh em but I caahn. She use tuh sing songs with African wuds. Ef I could study about em, I might remembuh some but now you ask me I jis caahn git em tuh mine. She did sing a chuch song wut have wuds we could unduhstand, an then in the middle of it she say 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by,' and looked like wen she come to the en of each stanza, she sing 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by.' It sho is a long time ago, them days."

491 Later we followed a deeply rutted sand road which led westward in the direction of Folkston. Few cars traveled
• 493 this way and once during our trip we encountered an old fashioned two-wheeled ox cart whose driver guided his oxen deftly to one side in order to let us pass.

115 About three or four miles out on the road we turned in a gate and drove to the side of Shadwick Rudolph's * house. The old man greeted us smilingly. At first glance he did not appear to be the eighty-six years he claimed, but on closer observation we noticed that his eyes were dimmed from
(567) age. He talked with us for some time, telling us among other things, "I belong tuh Mr. Dave Bailey. He own Woodbine Plantation. Muh granfathuh, his name wuz Jim. He come ovuh tuh this country frum Africa. He tell me that ovuh theah they have houses made of palmettuh.

829 "Then, ole Nanny Mammy, she live at the plantation too, and she come frum Africa. She alluz set down tuh wuk; no mattuh wut kine uh wuk, she set down tuh do it. Nanny Mammy use tuh set down in the middle of the flo of uh house

* *Shadwick Rudolph, Folkston Road, near Woodbine.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullahs working for themselves. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

[p. 305]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
235
434 They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came
along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
735 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a
824 special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water
on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet.
342 And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, every-
thing—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
(354) lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the
winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
342 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give
354 it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind
of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a
common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and
cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two
green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That
was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three
places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down
from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think
there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen
one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
• 493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you
492 know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The
army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to
change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain,--climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things--automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with (493) oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 735 178 262 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 178 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

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I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

[804]

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
[438] major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors
(574) and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
[493] A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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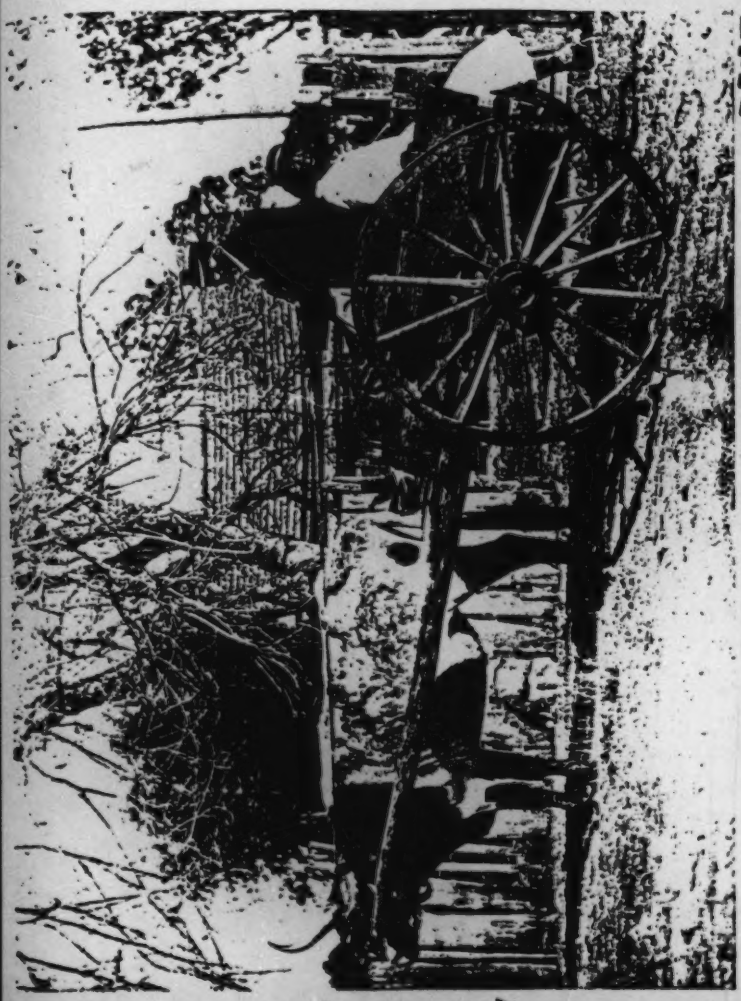

4. Liverpool and His Ox-Cart (Born, St. Simon's, 18:8—Died, Darien, 1938)

[facing p. 32]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[493] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[562] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[23] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[136] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
[412] simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
248 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
•493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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248 175 [657] men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded [492] the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the [493] rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy [292] calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

794 576 175

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a [illegible] children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p. 170]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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[494]

I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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[p.200]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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.501

Fishermen often travel among the islands in rowboats. These two men are preparing to row from Yonges Island to Wadmalaw.

[p. 152]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

[p. 154]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain—climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things—automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) (493) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 735 178 262 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 178 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p.46]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

**I DO MY OWN WORK NOW**

159

The first work I used to do was work on our own farm. I worked to help my father because they really had a hard time to raise us, and we just had to get out and do what we could to help in them days. We had to plant a garden.

Then my daddy was a fisherman, and I began to go in the river along with him and he teach me how to throw net, so I finally learn how to. And

(226)

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[p.47]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## KNEE-BONE

533 [46] [50] Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some populer national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side [177] [796] with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone didn't I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone didn't I call you
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the mornin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the mornin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the evenin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the evenin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.

533 Creighton Churchill explains to me that when this song was used for row-
50 ing it could have had only one rhythmic accompaniment, the oars, since the other
461 two rhythms, the hands and heels, would have thrown the rowers off their beat. To use his words: "The speed of the rowing version must also have been slower, for one could not possibly row to the rhythm of this version. It should be recognized as well that no musical meter known to man can represent exactly the rhythm of oars in their locks; in this song especially, it is something intangible and personal, like the beat of the Viennese waltz. For the sake of simplicity I have represented the rowing rhythm in this transcription as 2/8, 3/8, 3/8, equal to a full measure of time for the voices and other rhythms."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[171] [22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
• 501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
567 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(342) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
(243) a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
(162) there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
567 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
(164) for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[561] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
199 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

[171] In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## OH WHEN I COME TO DIE

53 [50] [461]

When Willis was a child and went to Lonesome Point for fish and oysters with his father, Adam Proctor, this is the song they often used to make the rowing easier. It is recognized, of course, that the rhythm had to be readjusted to the stroke of the oar. Josephine Young says the song was also used "down on our knees, for watch night 'n prayin'." Needless to say, she would have left off the final g in "dying."

Chorus: O when
(O when)
O when
(O when)
O when I come to die
Give me Jesus.

When I am dying
When I am dying
When I am dying my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When trouble is over
When trouble is over
When trouble is over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

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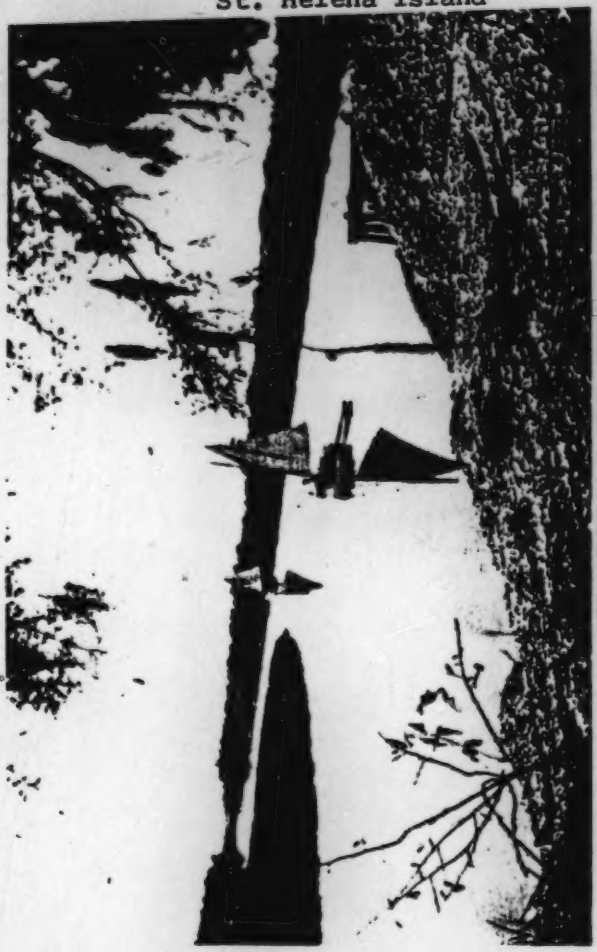

A TIDAL CREEK ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

[facing p. 24]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

DANCING IN MARSH GRASS

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847

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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*Gullahs and the Carolina Lowcountry. (Personal Collection.)*

[p. 327]

[p. 328 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

000

• 504

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after- 206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat •504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for [438] [574] major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or 796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island. [493] A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and 491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

CHAPTER I

# THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully [137]
wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks gracefully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 175
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune 103
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in her honor he christened the projecting land in the name of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and a parish.

## THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Islands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen 131
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504.
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed, [175]
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



131 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
504 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]
175

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
175 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
134 isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
[491] makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
[489] bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the Sea Islands. As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
[484] must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discovery of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.
[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 an parakeet. An, too, he say nuttn ebuh die way. Duh crops jis come back ebry yeah widout habin tuh be planted.

"Das all I membuh Hettie tellin bout Africa. Muh fathuh's fathuh come frum Africa too but wen muh fathuh Belali wuz a small young lad, muh granfathuh wehn tuh Dungeness on Cumberland Ilun tuh trade in slabes an nebuh wuz seen agen. It wuz muh fathuh Belali dat made rice cakes."

When asked about his father's mother, Ben continued, "Muh fathuh's mothuh lib at Altama. Huh name wuz Luna, but muh fathuh's fathuh wuz a unmarried man. Deah's many tings I do not membuh, it wuz sech a long time ago. I know dat wen deah wuz tuh be a buryin, dey alluz bury duh dead at night at duh plantation. Dey alluz come in frum duh tas befo dahk.

"In doze days deah wuz no way tuh git tuh Savannah cep (505) by boat an wen Mr. Couper wannuh go, he use a boat bout fifty foot long an bout six foot wide. He take six strong oahsmen an dey would make it in ten aw twelve hours. I heahd tell ub a house buil by a man frum Africa, wid cawn stalks an mud an wid a straw filluh."

829 The flying story about old Alexander, the root maker, had interested us and we asked if Ben Sullivan had heard of it.

789 "I ain heahd specially bout him but Ise heahd plenty Africans talk bout flyin. Deah's plenty ub em wut could fly.[88a, 89b] I sho heahd em talk bout great doins an Ise heahd ole Israel say duh hoe could wuk by itsef ef yuh know wut tuh say tuh it.[89] It bin a long time sence Ise tought bout tings lak dat, but ef uh studies bout em, dey comes back tuh me."

115 On the way back from Harrington to St. Simons village we stopped at Nora Peterson's * small cabin to talk with her. Nora, the daughter of Tom Floyd, an African who came to

* *Nora Peterson, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

• [505]

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some
775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see
567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
• [505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
346 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
503 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C. Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P XII-A)

484 be a one-day affair by boat. Electricity did not become
365 available in some rural areas until the paving of a coastal
highway in 1936. In this isolated county the population re-
162 mained primarily of West African descent until the most recent
census. Of a total population of 33,500 in 1970, Georgetown
County had slightly more than fifty-one percent white resi-
dents--the first time that whites had outnumbered blacks
since the eighteenth century (Georgetown County Development
Plan, 1972; Rogers, 1970).

2.3 A Closed Community in Georgetown County

131 In more isolated portions of the county, blacks still
162 outnumber whites. One such area is a river island of approxi-
mately fifty square miles, whose two hundred permanent resi-
121 dents are black. The speech used by inhabitants of this
island, together with that of selected speakers in adjacent
mainland communities, is the focus of the present study.

• 505 In important senses, this island constitutes a closed
community. The vast majority of trips made off the island
are for jobs, school attendance, or to secure supplies. Few
people come onto the island without an express invitation
from some island resident, because of the difficulty of ac-
cess. The boat landing is unmarked and must be known to the
would-be visitor, and the distance between the mainland
landing and the isalnd is a two-mile boat trip which can be
hazardous for the unskilled boat driver, and even for the
skilled in bad weather.

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles further. During the day, the only men usually on the island 512 [732] are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily [734] sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for [855] very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By 512 505 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special [574] occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
•505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and
are dependent upon some male family member for transportation
if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the
207 islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since
1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversa-
tions with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion,
reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and main-
landers will have easier access to the island. When the
ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community
will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors
and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# CHAPTER 1

101 The field research on which this dissertation is based resulted from three years of study beginning in July 1973 and continuing through August 1976. In an effort to re-
101 strict variational data, the field work was conducted
121 primarily on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, because it is located further off shore and is less urbanized than many of the other Sea Islands. Linguistic research was also conducted on Johns, Edisto, Yongs and James Islands since
197 I was informed by the inhabitants that the language varied
184 from one island to the next. Bennett gives an account of noticeable interisland variation in the early twentieth century:

> There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote... as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island...was the spokesman's place. (Bennett 1908:336)

Considering the multilingual history and the geographical inaccessibility of these islands, variation is by no means impossible, though the extent is yet unmeasured.

133 The Sea Islands are separated from the Atlantic coast and other islands by tidal channels and dense marshland.
• 505 Before the completion of the bridges connecting several of
491 them to the coast in the 1940's, inter-island communication was limited to a boat which traveled around the islands

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin. For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers," [7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe [8] (Illustration 31) calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533 461 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.

[8] In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.

[567]

A, [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

## CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

[46]
[505]

This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick" [9] in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

[9] This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## 48. KNOCK A MAN DOWN

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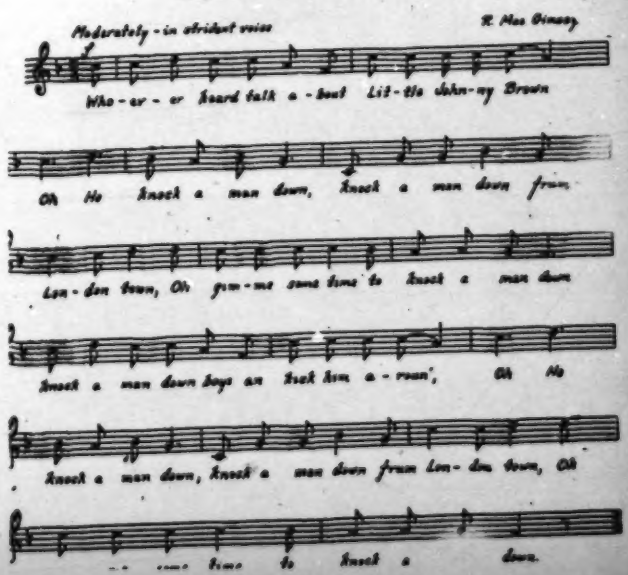
[505]

Johnny Brown was captain of a tugboat called The Dandy, which towed to open water the sailing vessels coming to Doboy Sound for lumber. The stevedores agreed he was "the fines' cap'n of 'em all."

Y'noever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Knock a man down bullies an' kick him roun'
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Y'u ever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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[461]
[505]

## SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

## MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [505] •
water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484]
towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to span, were one of the chief assets of the region. 491 484 [505]. 487 505

### THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region. 175

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort [103]

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84] [505]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright. For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant 423 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no 432 longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

•511 The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in 464 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricul- 177 tural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort 464 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi- 871 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requi- 177 site education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## I SEEM TO MAKE IT ALL RIGHT

159 511 434 When we first bought that piece of land in 1940, my husband was making thirteen dollars a week. I was washing and ironing for two person, and I wasn't making over three dollars a week. And we had to buy the land off that, and build that same house which burn down with that money, plus raise children. But I seem to make it all right. I get used to it. I get four dollars a day now, and it still don't seem much easier. Food cost more, clothes cost more, and the children takes more to go to school.

159 [511] But the Lord didn't promise no human being to eat grass. Only horse and hogs eat grass. So he have a way paved for all those children, and we's had, if it be just one good meal a day. And I raise all of 'em up--hard time and good time--all is a healthy family. Didn't have no trouble 'til I lose my baby a year ago, and he wasn't sick but two days. But with the Lord, all things possible. And God give and He takes, and He takes nothing but His own. I know all those children belongs to the Lord, and He only give it to me for a special time. And I feel like He wants me to keep them children, He make a way for feed them. As the song say, "feed you when you hungry, and He clothes you when you naked." So up to this present minute I can say I have thirteen children living, and I thank God for all of them, and they is good children.

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[p.53]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, i, 268.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[38]

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The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[38] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[8] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[8] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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175 433 .511

ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

### WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175

In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

175 569 659 181

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superintendent under Philbrick for the Government and later remained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
(244) S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
(434) only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
• 511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money. 175 511 735 (434) (651) (432)

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[18] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent: 175 423 735 (651) 175 423

This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which is will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[18] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor
464 from the Island.

175 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of
St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them
511 through the year, there were some who prospered. At
[342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story
houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of
paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still
[492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in
[493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-
stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday
[292] suit.

Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little
175 prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and
731 night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction every-
where. The crops had not been so promising in many
years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in
August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were
carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not
suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the
family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and
part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the
storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I DON'T HAVE ONE DAY HOME

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•512 That's what I'm doing now—working in a kitchen. I get up around five o'clock now, get on my clothes, wash my face and wash up, and I'll go to the back yard and feed chicken. From that I come back and clean up my house, and get out in the road and catch a ride and go to work. And I get to work I take off my coat, my hats, put on a apron and a hat, and go upstairs and get towels, and I wash those towels and put 'em on the line and come back in, start to clean rooms, make up beds. Then after I done do all that, then I come in the kitchen, get something to eat, and home I go. Well sometime I be waiting from three to four hours catching a ride.

I come back do a little work home, and leave from there to go on down to the Progressive Club and stay down there until about nine-thirty, ten o'clock, when it's a clear day. But when they having these party we don't leave 'til two and three in the morning. Get up next morning, go back on the job again. I don't have one day home.

On Sunday, go to church. I get up in the morningtime, get wash up and go outside feed my chicken and water 'em, and take my feet and go on down to the club and open 'em up. I be there around 'bout 'til eleven-thirty, catch a ride and go to church.

Come from church, I'll come back home and get dinner, and from there I go to the society meeting. Then the same Sunday evening we go to the hall to prayer meeting.

I don't have but a couple hours in everything I'm doing. But when I leave from home and come to someone house, like I here with you all now, I'm resting. And when I go home there's no rest. Something there for to do. Ain't nobody pushing me 'round; I'm pushing myself. I see it to do and I got it to do, so I just do it.

I don't care how hard I work in the day, if I get my night rest, it just like I ain't work that day. I get up that next morning, I don't feel it. But what put me down if I don't get my night rest. I get tired and don't feel like going. If I go to bed 'round seven-thirty, eight o'clock, I get up the next morning I don't feel nothing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

159 461 If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get (826) your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

159 My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go • 512 to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

159 I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my ninetsen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

•512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles further. During the day, the only men usually on the island are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 [732] [734] [855] 512 505 [574]

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the afternoons and evenings. 206 Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat 504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for (438) (574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or 796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island. (493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and 491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

EXAMPLES OF DAILY ROU-
TINES OF SEA ISLANDERS

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Sister Carrie.--I can't help but turn around. Sister Carrie at 77 is up at 6:00 A.M. these days. During the school season all the children in the community stop at her gap to warm themselves by the fire and eat the pastries she prepares for them. A great grandmother, Sister Carrie has raised thirteen children. In reflecting on her fifty-one year marriage, she says "da women ta dae ain't wife lik en ma dae. Ca'n member but one dae I ain't had supper steamn hot an d table fer ma husbin." What Sister Carrie did not include was that during those years her day started at 4:30 A.M. By 5:30 A.M. breakfast had been prepared and she was on her way to the fields. She worked the field until 2:30 P.M. when she stopped and headed home to prepare the supper meal. After the evening meal and when the dishes had been cleaned Sister Carrie spent the remaining hours either sewing or shelling beans until the light disappeared. At which time, the family gathered for evening prayer as the final act of the day.

D ole Decon.--Decon Eugene at eighty-three years still breaks his ground with mule and plow. He begins his day at 5:30 A.M. and ends when there is just no more light to work
159 by. The decon has raised eleven head of children, all of whom are away in New York. He and his wife live close to their land, only when tragedy becons are they away. In

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodically to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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539 personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.
775 . . . She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. "See that person over there." Yes, yes. . . . That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge . . . that's right. Well, you see, your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

(774) For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this
• (513) country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

**ALL US WORKS**

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I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

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(513)

Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

539 775 far as from us to the crick, and Lord you could hear the confusion as it 'carried on' in those woods. Well, these things do exist.... No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening, show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. 'See it standing right there, daddy!' But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital and I don't know what the hospital personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.... She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. 'See that person over there.' Yes.... Yes.... That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge...that's right. Well, you see (774) your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

539 774 For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in [513] contact with ~~an evil~~ spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a
524 good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still
123 standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the
342 site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
(365) of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate con-
(514) nections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to
123 make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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Structure and Content of Household Units

362 342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pillowed off the ground some twenty-two inches. These units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse." [343] [514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units 354 some families have both gas and stove cooking options. 362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island 362 there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served
[354] supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this
[264] home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice
[262] cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

538 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

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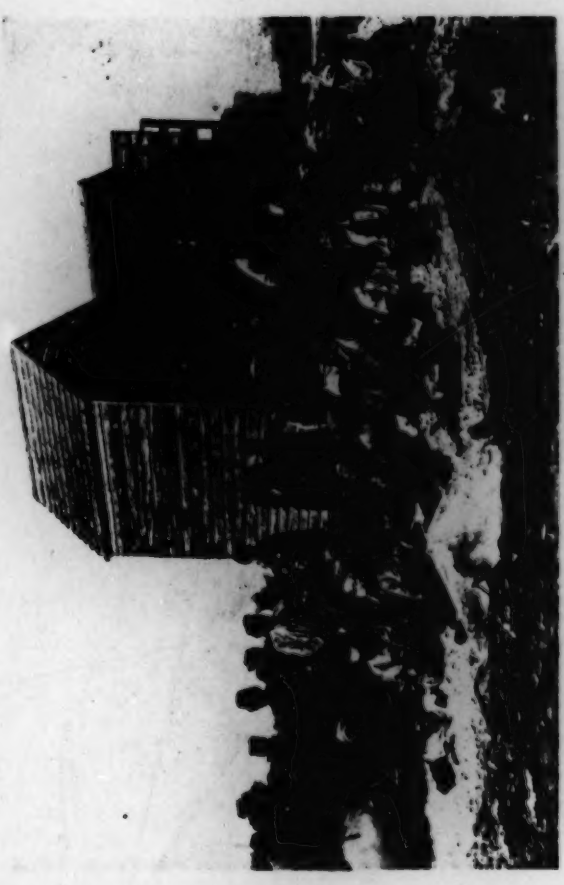

Gullahs and Sea Islands Cotton. (Personal collection.)

[p. 256]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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538 (201) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

## The Setting

538 177 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 •517 (170) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina



538 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in
•517 kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa),
[264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a
[213] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo,
[171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than
[196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island story-
462 telling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



592 593 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his 538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 177 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 851 171 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 517 461 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories. But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
538 Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little
538 nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
•517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleeping times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never understand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways, dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
123 gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538] she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written
159 literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
123 year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter,
757 who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

STORIES

•517
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(533)
(524)
(538)

When we was small, we didn't low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.[162] In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[179] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung without *a full heart and a troubled spirrit*."

[162] "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

"*St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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178 be recognized as African. However, the aesthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

567 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who 322 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Inca- 567 chee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 326 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- 322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21) Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the

517 A, [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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461 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in
• 517 mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this
[177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side
17 issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of re-
533 search employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be
114 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthro-
17 pologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

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### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[170] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84] [505]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522] enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group [123] had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly congenial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

[533] With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
152 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
178 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
567 same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[11] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[12] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness,[13] which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
[522] it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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[527] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[11] With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
[113] Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[12] Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[13] See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
[113] Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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538 wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

*Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well*

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!

But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:

What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] *An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da fulafafa!" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say wulistápápa." The joke lies in the fact that "fulafafa" and "wulistápápá" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.*

[42] Black Roodways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
• 522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[177] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

BROWNVILLE

Walking sticks (Plate
322 IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard
532 carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones [41c] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in
412 several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc) with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a
532 linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia). Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] Another man employed his spare time in the carving of small
[524] wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§

422 An old Negro (Plate V) B living in very poor circumstances
[428] owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 36th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying,
20 "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he
538 tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a
• 524 good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest
123 link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the
342 site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting
[365] of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no
[514] electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be
159 ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to
123 make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



53 Where all wicked *Wicked*
796 Shall cease *Cease, cease! Yes Lord!*

All weary soul *All weary soul!*

Shall be at rest *Rest!*

Jesus said
I am the Bread *I am the Bread. The Bread. I am the Bread*
Of Life

Let us Pray *All right! Yes sir! Yes Lord! Let us pray!*

. . . . . .

538 Gullah Tales Exemplifying Audience Participation

• (524) RIDDLER: Round like a top. Deep like a cup.
Mississippi river ain't full em up!

RESPONDENT: A sifter (strainer)

The reply from the audience is as germane to the Sea Island tales as it is to the prayers and sermons. However, the relaxed social atmosphere in which tales are told permits more exchange between speaker and listener than does the more orthodox surroundings of the prayers and sermons. The storytellers are not set apart from the group by a sacred podium or some other feature used to separate participating service members from the rest of the group. The listeners are therefore free to inject words and phrases, utter clarifying remarks, make gestures, or even help the teller along with his tale if appropriate. These interactions are very subtle and in no way interfere with the performance of a good tale. Likewise, no good tale can be told without the responses of an active audience, and no good tale can be told without the traditional "warming" period to create the right atmosphere. Like the prayers and sermons, the tales are usually preceded—if there is an audience present to act as respondents—by songs, spiritual or otherwise, and then by games, riddles, jokes, and dozens. As previously mentioned, the friendly teasing relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the group

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

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I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

159

I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

[243]
[859]

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[529]

Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

That's the way I come up in this world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

159 584 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 464 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of (855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

142
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

**STORIES**

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When we was small, we didn't low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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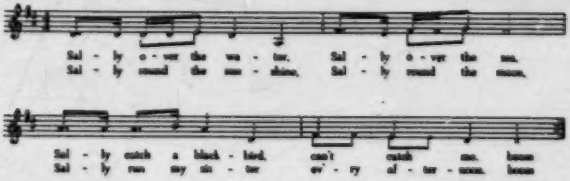
*The Hunter and Pinckney children*

SALLY ROUND THE SUNSHINE



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[539]

SOLO: Annie?
GROUP: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
GROUP: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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●524

[p.116]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN27
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Julie Hanley*

# I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

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When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice, they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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539

(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking 'long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

142
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524

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## GO ROUN' THE BORDER SUSIE

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The action in this ring-play is directed by the verses. While the first verse is sung, the players join hands in a circle and swing to its rhythm. In the next verse "That turtle dove started," indicates that a girl has begun to move within the ring. "Out goes the hornet," is the signal for a boy to follow her. With "Hist the windah," the players lift their clasped hands. First the girl weaves in and out of the circle, between the uplifted arms. The boy follows suit. "Don't miss no windah," explains itself, and the last verse, "Close in d' 'semble," means to close the window when the boy and girl are both on the outside. The fun then begins, and the chorus may need to be sung several times while the hornet attempts to catch the turtle dove, who turns in one direction, and then in another, to avoid capture:

Chorus: Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
That long summer day.

Out goes the hornet, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Out goes the hornet, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, long summer day.

That turtle dove started, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
That turtle dove started, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

Hist the windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Hist the windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

Don't miss no windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Don't miss no windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

Close in d' 'semble, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Close in d' 'semble, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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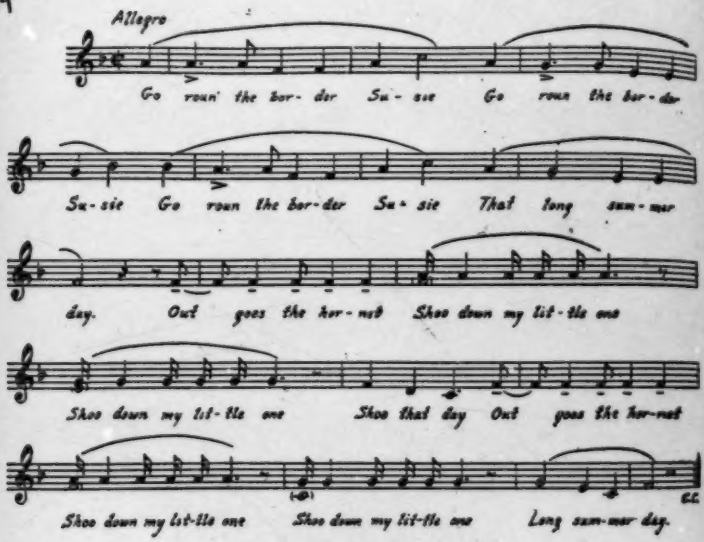
•524

17. GO ROUN' THE BORDER SUSIE




Repeat Chorus: Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
That long summer day.

[p. 98]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## SANGAREE

533
539
(524)

This ring-play varies in action wherever I see it done. For that reason I will attempt no description. The tune, however, always remains the same:

If I live
Sangaree.
Don' get kill'
Sangaree.
I'm goin' back
Sangaree.
Jacksonville
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

If I live
Sangaree.
See nex' fall
Sangaree.
Ain' goin' t' plant
Sangaree.
No cotton at all
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

Chicken in the fiel'
Sangaree.
Scratchin' up peas
Sangaree.
Dog on the outside
Sangaree.
Scratchin' off fleas
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## SHOUT JOSEPHINE SHOUT

533 539 Julia remembered this verse from her youth on St. Simon's—with a fragment of another from the same song:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear y'o' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes, ma'am.
Shout Josephine—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Get a hump on y'o'self you red-eye' devil
Get a hump on y'o'self you big-eye' coon!

(524) (525) Years later, at Broadfield, I found that the verse given above was the chorus of an amusing play song, with pantomime, which is related to both the ring-play and the solo dances. "Josephine! Ma'am?" is sung first as is usual; the leader then tells where the pain (or ornament) is located and the participants instantly try to place their hands on the spot named:

Pain in the head—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the back—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the neck—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the hip—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Josephine
Ma'am?
Want t' shout?
Yes ma'am
What time?
Right now.
Shout Josephine
Shout!

Pain in the toe
Shout! Shout!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



STICKIT BALL A HACK

533 Like "Ham Bone," "Ball the Jack" and "Juba dis an' Juba dat," this curious song is half-spoken in a lively fashion, to rhythmical hand clapping. When the verse is finished "Then you kick it off":

[539]

Jack t' the rack back
Stickit ball a hack
Low ball high ball
Scallion jack.

HAM BONE HAM BONE

533 As is obvious, twelve-year-old Maria's version of these rhythmical lines is mod-
•524 ern. Luck was with me when I found George, another twelve-year-old, who could
[115] give the older verses which are recited in the same way—alternated with similar patting. The only difference is that Maria balances herself on one foot; with her left hand she holds her cotton skirt tight around the "ham bone" section of her anatomy, places her right foot on the other leg below the knee and with her right hand deftly smacks out the intricate rhythm on her "rusty butt." [10] George, however, takes the line of least resistance, and leans with his back against a wall. However, in that position he is able to lift his "ham bone" a little higher and do a rather more complicated bit of patting. His hand flies back and forth like a shuttle between his chest and his rump.

These are Maria's words:

[539]

Ham bone ham bone pat um on uh shoulder
.....[11]
Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t' hold her
.....
I went down town one day
.....
I went with my mother—too.
.....
My mother bought me a billy goat
.....
If my billy goat don't butt
.....
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt
.....

[10] The night she wore a corduroy skirt, the patting could not be heard and her performance missed fire.

[11] These dots represent patting.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



As far as "I went with my mother—too" the lines are repeated, but when it comes to enumerating what she bought, there is this change:

My mother bought me a radio
.....
If my radio won't play
.....
Momma goin' t' beat my NRA
.....

George's lines, which are clearly of an older vintage, are given in the time-honored question and answer manner of Africa. Half-way through they merge into an old play song:

Ham bone ham bone wha's you bin?
.....
All roun' the worl' an' back agin.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd y'u do?
.....
I got a chance an' I fairly flew.
.....
Ham bone ham bone where you stay?
.....
I met a pretty girl an' I couldn' get away.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd you do?
.....
Hopt up to Miss Lucy's doo'.
.....
Ax Miss Lucy will she marry me?
.....
I wouldn't care if poppa didn't care.
.....

At this point George uses the narrative of the old play song: "Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh!" [12]

[12] *Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*To buy his wife a weddin' gown—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*What y'u goin' t' have de weddin' tea'?—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Two big bread an' not a bit a grease—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Firs' come arsun' wuz Mr. Bug—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*He fell in de lemonade tub—Un hunh, Un hunh!*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
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•524

Nex' come in wuz Mr. Snake
.....
Pattin' all round' dat weddin' cake.
.....
Nex' cum in wuz Mr. Bug
.....
Hoppin' all roun' dat whiskey jug.
.....
Nex' come in wuz Mr. Tick
.....
He ate so much till it made 'im sick.
.....

The youngster said he knew many more verses, but these are more than enough to show how lines of proper length can be utilized.

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535

JUBA DIS AN' JUBA DAT

Juba dis an' Juba dat
An' Juba kill d' yalla cat
An' get over double-trouble
Juba!
She served d' meal
She gimme d' husk
Cooked d' bread
She gimme d' crus'
She fried d' meat
Gimme d' skin
That's 'e way momma
Took me in
Now Juba! [13]

By rapidly crossing his hands to first one knee and then the other, Snooks pats out an intricate rhythm to the above staccato lines. When he gets to "Now Juba!" he does some clever footwork that matches the coördination of his hands.

(Illustration 11) A

[13] *Maude Cuney Hare in* Negro Musicians and Their Music *says that the dance Juba is known to be over a century old. Cable in his "Creole Slave Songs" mentions that "The guiouba was probably the famed juba of Georgia and the Carolinas."*

A. [For Illustration 11, see Category 535, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



539

XXI

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524 179 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



is also a figurative type of riddle which is scarcely a riddle from the white child's point of view but which is very much like the African figurative questions. For example, the riddle, 524 177

A rose in de gyaa'den an' a rose outside, what one you take? *Ans.* Rose in de gyaa'den is married gal, rose outside single gal,

is the same sort of thing as the following African riddle:

The tree in our yard gives shade only to our neighbors. *Ans.* A virgin. She is not of use to men of her own family.

Many of the riddles are of rather recent origin and have been brought in by visitors and immigrants, by joke books, advertising booklets, and the like.

All of the riddles collected on St. Helena cannot be reproduced here, but enough may be given to show the range and variety of this type of folklore. 524

1. Horse in de stable an' mange (mane) outside, or Horse in de stable an' reinge (reins) outside. *Ans.* 'Tatuh in de bed an' de wine (vine) outside.

2. Chip cherry up, chip cherry down; no man can climb chip cherry tree. *Ans.* Smoke.

3. Black hen set on de red hen's nes'. *Ans.* Pot on de fiah.

4. White man on a red horse back. *Ans.* Teet' on de gums.

5. Somet'in' holler all day an' holler all night. *Ans.* Tree holler.

6. Grumble all day an' grumble all night. *Ans.* Grummle (i.e., groundmole).

7. Go t'rough a tree an' leave e' guts behin'. *Ans.* Needle an' t'read t'rough de cloth.

8. One hun'ed windows an' no do'. *Ans.* Fish net.

9. If deh a hun'ed room, 'e go t'rough 'em all. *Ans.* Broom

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



524

10. Somet'in' you plant one an' a whole lot get up. *Ans.* Peanuts.

11. Barks here and bites yonder. *Ans.* Gun.

12. Go up green an' come down ripe. *Ans.* Watermelon.

13. Fattes' t'ing in de worl'. *Ans.* Light'od (Lightwood, or fat pine, used by the Negroes to kindle fires.)

14. Hard all aroun' an' sof' in middle. *Ans.* Bed.

15. I went to London Bridge an' meet a man a-standin'. I shake 'e han' an' suck e' blood an' lef 'um still a-standin'. *Ans.* Pump.

16. Once I was walking along I meet a man a-standin', I cut 'e t'roat an' suck 'e blood an' leave 'im still a-standin'. *Ans.* Bottle o' soda water.

17. What come up to de do' but don' come in? *Ans.* De pat' (path.)

18. A crowd of little mans livin' in a flat-top house. *Ans.* Matches in a box.

19. Somet'in' live on two en', dead in middle. *Ans.* Man plowing wid oxen.

20. My fadder had a house, an' nobody cyan' count de windows in it. *Ans.* A net.

21. If ship stern wort' t'ousan' dollahs, what de head come to. *Ans.* De wharf.

22. Roun' as a dollar, busy as a bee. *Ans.* A watch.

23. Big at bottom, small at top.
In de middle go flippety flop. *Ans.* Churn.

24. Whitey sen' whitey to run whitey out o' whitey. *Ans.* White man sen' white boy run white cow out o' cotton fiel'.

25. If my ring drop in middle o' ocean, how I git it out? Ans. By love.

26. I meet a man, ax his name. He tell me look his walkin' rod. *Ans.* Rattlesnake.

27. What got two look-about, one lick-about, fo' run-about, two stiff-stander? *Ans.* Cow.

28. Wood
John
Mass.

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524.

Can you make out the name and address? *Ans.* John Underwood, Andover, Mass.

29. Black man sets on white man's head. *Ans.* Black hen on nest o' aigs.

30. Once I was going up the hipple steeple,
I met a crowd of little people.
Some was white and some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps. *Ans.* Ants.

31. I went upon my father's grave, I ate his meat and suck his blood and threw his bones away. *Ans.* Watermelon.

32. A man rode across a bridge and Yet he walked. *Ans.* Yet is dog's name.

33. Two sisters in upstairs window and they can't see each other. *Ans.* Your eyes.

34. I am here alone. I have one leg, one hand, and one eye. They left me here by myself because I cannot walk, but sometimes they will come and shake my hand, and out of my mouth I will spit. Some of my sisters and brothers spit so slow, people hate to shake their hand. I am very swift. I will spit a bucketfull so quick that some people don't believe it. The longer you shake my hand the cooler I get. Can you guess my name? *Ans.* A pump.

35. Me riddle, me riddle, me ree go right,
Guess where I sleep las' Friday night.
Up in an ol' oak my hea't was ache
To see what a hole de ol' folks make.

*Ans.* Woman had date to meet man under tree. She come early an' go up in tree. Man come an' dig hole—he meant to kill her an' bury her. When he lef', she gone home an' made dis riddle.

36. Man got t'irty-one cow to carry 'cross bridge two time a day to water. How much foot go t'rough de gate? *Ans.* Two, cause man got feet, but cow got hoof.

37. Flower of Virginia, fruit of Spain,
Two meet together in shower of rain.
Put it in a bag and tie it wid a string,
If you guess dat riddle I'll give you a pin.

*Ans.* Dat's a man and woman, married. Dey kissin'.

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• 524 38. Somethin' open like a barn door an' shut like a trap. You guess every riddle but you never will guess this. *Ans.* An umbrella.

39. What is las' t'ing you take off 'fo' you go to bed? *Ans.* Take foot off o' flo'.

40. Black within, red without,
Four corners round about.

*Ans.* Chimney.

41. Scrooked as an arrow, busy as a bee. *Ans.* Creek.

42. As I was goin' 'cross a fiel' o' wheat
I pick up some'tin' good to eat.
It was neither fish, flesh, nor bone,
But I kept it till it walked alone.

*Ans.* Egg.

43. What goes up white an' comes down yellow? *Ans.* Egg.

44. Constantinople is a hard word to spell. Can you spell it in two letters? *Ans.* I-t, it.

45. Crooked as a rainbow, t'iefin' (thieving) as a cat. *Ans.* Snake.

46. Once I was going to London Bridge, I met a man and a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and I couldn't tell the ladies from the gentlemen. *Ans.* Ants.

47. Who always sit with his hat on before the queen. *Ans.* The coachman.

## PROVERBS

538

1. Take cyare mo' bettah nor be sorry.
2. 'Mos' kill bird don' make soup.
3. Singin' in the mornin', hawk catch you befo' night.
4. Young folks listen what old folks say when danger keep out of the way.
5. Everything good to hear is not good to talk.
6. Ev'ry grin-teet' don' mean laugh.
7. Ev'ry shut-eye don' mean sleep.
8. A good run is better than a bad stand.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

### TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524• 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

### *Toasts*[20]

273
574
576
539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

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Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

273
574
575
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*Play Rhymes and Games*[23]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

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524.

II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
'T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

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VI

539 Once I went up the heeple, steeple,
524 Met a crowd of little people.
Some was white, some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps.
O-U-T spells *out*, and you are clean out,
With your mother dirty dish rag in your mout'.

VII

Mother ketch a flea,
Flea die,
Mother cry,
Out go *she*.

VIII

Three little horses in de stable,
One fell down an' skinned his nable.
All ready?
Not yet.
All ready?
Not yet.
Ready, ready?
I'm comin', I'm comin'.

IX[24]

Little gal? Yes, mam!
Won't you go wid me? Yes, mam!
To Tennessee? Yes, mam!
For to hoe some cotton? Yes, mam!
Will you hoe it good? Yes, mam!
Did you went to de barn? Yes, mam!
Did you get any eggs? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it to de cook? Yes, mam!

[24] In this and the one following, the children move in a circle around the leader who puts the questions, the circle making the responses. Sometimes they go through the words without forming the ring. All come in loud on the last line of No. X. For other ring games, see Parsons, pp. 199-203.

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539
524

To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

x

What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
*An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!*

*Game Songs*[28]

1[28]

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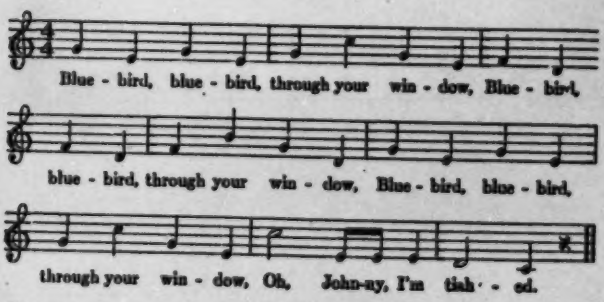


Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
   Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

[28] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[28] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

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•524
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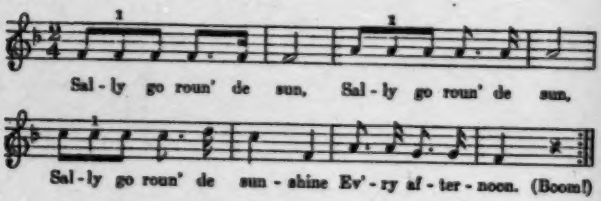
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

II[27]




1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'ry afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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III[38]

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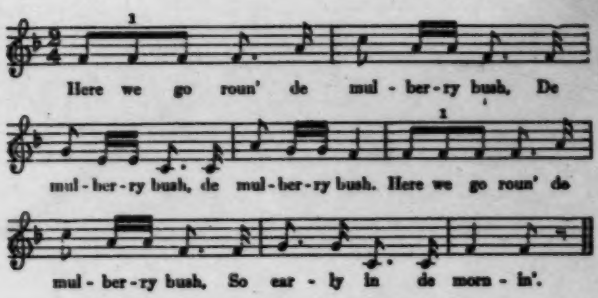


Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
   Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

[38] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

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IV[29]

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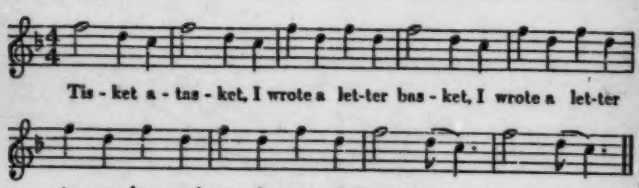
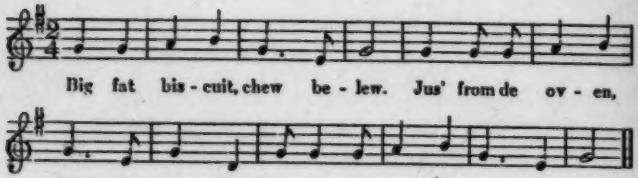



1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

771
171

In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 the big Angel Oak down on the end it would be noon and I could rest.
123 That consoled me. She said that when our shadow was directly under our feet on the row we were tying it would be twelve o'clock. When that happened, true enough, the whistle blew and we stopped, walked back to the truck, took turns getting cool drinks of water with a dipper from the cooler in back of the truck, got our lunches, sat down, ate, and rested.

One o'clock came only too quickly, three came too slowly, and five o'clock quitting time not quickly enough. The temperature rose to more than 103 degrees, and there was nothing between the sun and my head but Miss Myma's straw hat. I will always be grateful to Ida Mae for her help that day. She tied her row and most of mine, but I could at least tell Miss Myma that I had made a day! I would treasure that day and that ten dollars as among my most demanding achievements.

159 As we sat and continued to wait for Ida Mae's company, I re-
123 minded her of her summertime addiction to card playing. When she did not catch a truck to go to the fields, she spent the day, from sunup
•525 to sundown, with her card-playing buddies. They took turns buying a nipping bottle to help them get through the day. I met her when she came to play cards one day under the Angel Oak behind Miss Myma's house and Miss Myma took me out to meet her and her friends. I think I enjoyed these people more than any other group on the Sea Islands. When they played cards, they played for money, and for keeps. They invited me to play once; I accepted and lost twenty dollars my first game. After that, I just sat and listened. I learned that Ida Mae could outplay and outcurse any of the men. In addition, she could match them word for word playing the dozens. Once a card-playing friend asked her to scramble him some eggs for breakfast. She replied, "I ain't you wife." He said he knew that, but he still wanted some eggs. She answered, "I ain't you maid." He said he would pay her to cook them. She replied, "With what? I de win all you money." Then he said, "Well, I pay you with something else then." She answered, "You ain't got nothing else I de want." He said, "Well, you de come on and de go with me and you de see what I got." She burst into laughter and said, "What for I ben go with you, you ain't know what fe do with me if you de get me!"

159 Now we sat on in the dark. Eventually we saw the lights from a car
123 coming up the lane; the car stopped in front of the shanty, and a tall attractive man got out and, as was customary, handed her a half gallon of ice cream as a gift. Since I already knew him, and also knew that he

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together. 159 185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands. 159 345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive (526) (893)

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 159]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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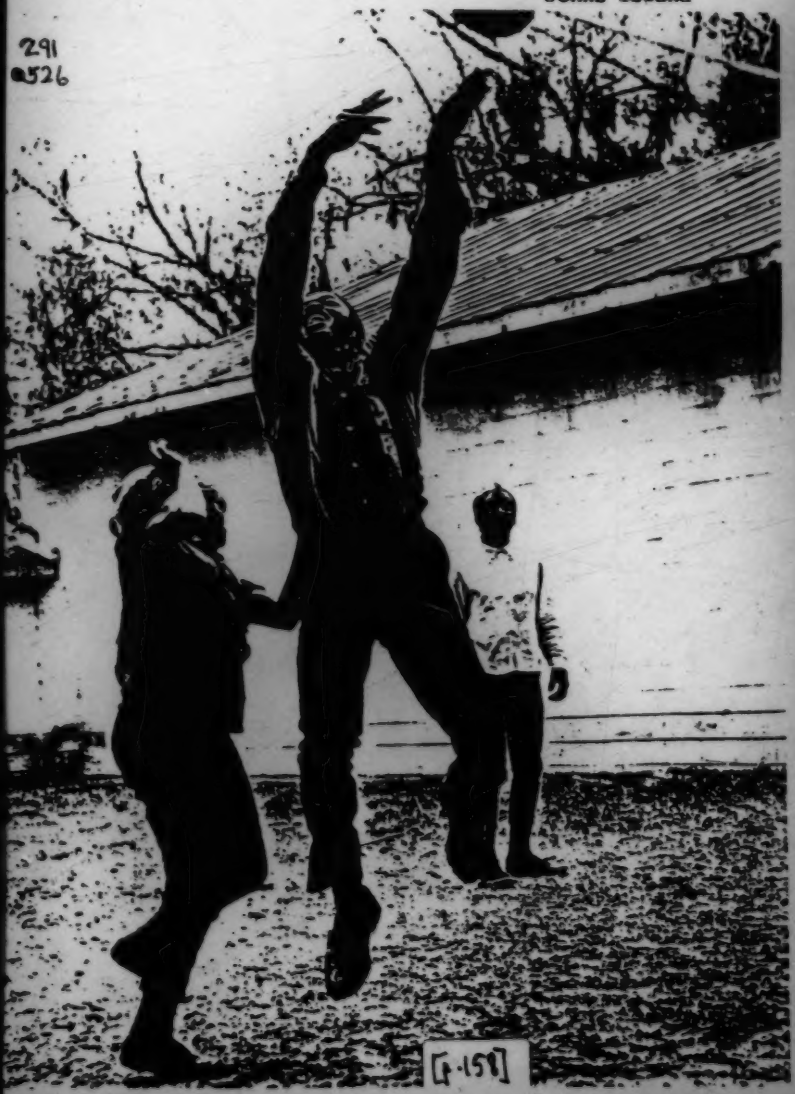

[p.158]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
525 something to twenty.
873

Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
159 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.
185

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN
159 IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT
185
873

We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 789 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," interposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[38]

535 [178] "We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

764 When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
533 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

• 527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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•527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us.
759 We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument,
755 lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn
845 wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]
787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

• 527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

115 Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

[763] "Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [35]

• 527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [36]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[88]
•527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[33, 95] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[50] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

795 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

•521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves," [33] he began. "We pray an
[534] sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance. We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[33, 35]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog
[136] Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he
567 answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about
313 Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by
782 a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
775 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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821 796 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to the sun.

764 Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the [825] coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

•527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[28]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[2] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

•527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[3] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

"One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a
535 long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a
115 mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 567 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he (192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

•527 534 533 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 789 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 (351) A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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## *St. Marys*

361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few
115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a
(351) packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

•527 "I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance
(535) roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
o long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[25] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs of long ago.

527 "I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [16] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem": (186) (539)

> De Talles' tree in Paradise
> De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
> an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my new Jerusalem!
>
> Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem!
>
> Paul and Silas jail-bound
> Sing God's praise both night and day,
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 529 533

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for example, young civil rights workers from all over the region came together. There they exchanged (545) ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi. There they swapped songs and learned new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced to new areas in the South because of these freedom song gatherings.

114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

(P.X-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

159
735

I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

159

I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

(243)
(859)

Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

159
524
(529)

That's the way I come up in this world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of
● 527 July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of
535 all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that
534 we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side,
535 two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

142
291

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## I LIKE THE HISTORY OF IT, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT

178 829 You might take the position that people who live in the culture recognize it as something real great. Most of the time people from outside recognize it a whole lot more than the people that live it everyday. You're talking about people who have done a lot of hard work and been through a lot of hell. But if you can come in and see it, it's so nice and quaint. "I just love to see the quaint little way that they talk," and so on. Folk don't see themselves in that way. Many folk have tried to get rid of that culture that you're talking about.

I don't miss being in Moving Star Hall at all. The way that I like to miss Moving Star Hall and some of the things of the past is to reminisce. But I would not like to be back in it. I like the history of it, and to know that I have been a part of it. I do miss that tradition when Moving Star and all the lodges used to come together on Labor Day. That was a festive time with food and a parade. They used to play flute and drums. That was really exciting. (527)

At certain ages we used to go to Moving Star Hall, and the young people would stand outside and burn tires until almost time for them to have whatever they're going to eat and then you're going to go inside. That's the part that really used to be nice because guys would be talking so much jokes, those stories about the monkey and the baboon; people doing the dozens.

(571) People probably do miss things like the Hall, but there is a lot of community concern and coming together still going on. I still have certain places on the island where I will go on a Thursday or a Friday night, and I'll just slip in and catch up on everything that has gone on. You just sit and all the information passes on. There's a kind of camaraderie that comes out of that.

I always believe that things just move to other levels. Another generation takes it to another level.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 829 [545] When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that. [711]

468 829 533 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

527 829 199 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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668 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins,
533 brought some of us together and told us that a
114 white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife,
•529 Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from At-
533 lanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met
545 Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on, top of, or driven by, this multirhythmic activity.

114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. On the island it was sung in their traditional (533) song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." While working on the Bicentennial • (529) Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1975.

185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

(P.236-A)

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
346 and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
461 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
476 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
493 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
368 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
794 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
• 527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
114 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
178 being." This combination created them; Christianity
177 shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the
same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful,
rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[113] On internal
evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of
1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be
[522] it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the com-
plement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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[520] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[113] "With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

"Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[113] "See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[*]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much [562] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. [114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[*]

They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris- 562 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 178 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery 177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas.[*] But back

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[*]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[*]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[*]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[*]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

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I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

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[2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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which they sang with evident delight."[40] Captain Basil Hall, who was rowed down the Altamaha in a cypress dugout by "five smart negroes," was impressed by the "wild sort of song" with which they accompanied their labor. He thought the song "not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen at Bombay."[41] Whitelaw Reid, who heard the Negroes singing at "Brick Church" on St. Helena in 1865, described their song, "Roll Jordan Roll," as having "a curiously monotonous melody."[42] Miss Towne thought that the St. Helena folk "in their lowest state . . . could always do one thing well—sing." "At first," she said, "they sang melody alone, but after having once been given the idea of harmony, they instantly adopted it."[43]

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A holiday was always the occasion for much singing, dancing, and general merrymaking. It was the custom on St. Helena Island to give the Negroes Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christmas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work. These were holidays which the master set aside for his people and instructed his overseer to observe. P. C. J. Weston clearly indicated in his "rules to the overseer" the holidays which he wished the Negroes on his South Carolina rice plantation to have:

No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except going for a Doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who

[40] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, p. 393.
[41] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 228.
[42] Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 103.
[43] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest, and [except by] those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.[44] 567 527

Most of their holidays the slaves spent "pleasuring themselves." Christmas was the great event of the year, for it was at this time that the master distributed rewards to his people as well as extra provisions of beef and molasses and "hands of tobacco." The master of at least one sea-island plantation also provided his slaves with "plenty of whiskey." At the end of the three-day orgy the Negroes were often "completely done up with eating, drinking, and dancing."[45] [273]

A holiday was also the occasion for many requests to visit the island stores and neighboring plantations, but most planters discouraged inter-plantation visits and required the overseer and the drivers to check up frequently on the activities in the "street." An overseer was supposed to see that all was well in the quarters before he went to bed, and the drivers were also responsible for keeping the street quiet. It was by this means rather than by the patrol system that sea-island planters kept peace on their plantations at night, although occasionally the planters or their overseers joined in "riding a patrol." No slave was permitted either by law or by plantation regulation to be absent from home without a ticket. While some planters permitted every well behaved slave to have one whenever he requested it, others issued tickets more [574] 567

[44] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 117.
[45] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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(1525-ca. 1880)
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872 grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, (175) charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

•527 As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon [46] Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, [567] so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plan- 527 tation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They (273) are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[22]

574 Although there were occasions when people from all 527 parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday 175 afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[22] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[33]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[33] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when
•527 all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over
[505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84]

The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of Jan-
[567] uary not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the
517 rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were
175 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom,
181 ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place
[794] in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[795] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs, and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
494 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[529] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[872] (p. xii-B) cation and voter registration.
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9: Parrish NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For additional information on the songs and musical texts of the Georgia Sea Islands, see Categories 533 and 539.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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## A Sermon

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For true, the Lord ben give em silver trumpet,
and he shonuf know how for blow em!

The Reverend Renty Pinckney is minister of New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. His sermon is not presented in its entirety here, because it is very long. The Reverend Mr. Pinckney, like most island ministers, has memorized the Bible thoroughly; his creativity is revealed by his ability to join scattered allusions into a cohesive whole.[23]

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### The Bread of Life

Rev. Renty Pinckney
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God is the Bread of Life
God will feed you when you get hungry *Oh yes! I know he will. All right! Yeah. Amen! Yes sir!*

Look on the mountain
Beside the hill of Galilee *My Lord!*

Watch his disciple
Riding on the sea *Yeah! Uh huh!*

Tossing by the wind and rain *Yeah. Come up*

Going over the sea of temptation *Uh hum*

Brother, I don't know
But I begin to think
In this Christian life *Yes!*

Sometime you gone be toss *Yes, yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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By the wind of life *Yes, my Lord!*

The wind gonna blow you
From one side to the other *Yes!*

On this Christian journey

The way ain't gone be easy on us children *No!*

And the disciple as they was going across *Oh yes sir! Yeah.*

The wind was tossing
As they was going over to Cana *All right! Uh hum*

The King was on the safe [same] side
To the Sea of Galilee *All right*

To the land Gothen
It was so sufficient size
To be call a city *Yeah, right! Yeah*
It was close to the seashore *Shore. Yes*

One half mile long
Quarter of a mile wide *Yes sir!*

Brother, I know
Jesus would be so glad *So pleased!*

There he was among them
Brothren of our Lord
And his disciple *Yes! Yes sir. Oh yes*

The Gospel!
Of John was formed in writing *Writing*

Jesus was towhead *All right*

They begin to wonder brother *Yeah!*
How is this could be *Yeah!*
We left him on the other shore *Yeah*
But this morning we are here *Yes, here. My Lord!*

Jesus don't have a boat *Boat.*

Don't have a airplane *Ah hah! Yeah!*

Here he are on the bank this morning *Yes sir*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



• 53
796

Yea God! *Yeah God! Amen!*

What a fortune
All the power in he hand *Oh Yeah!*
Got power for we *Yeah*
When we get hungry *Yeah*
He's able to feed us *Yes sir*

O Lordy!
Come to tell you children *Yes!*
Jesus! is the Bread of Life *Jesus!*

My brothren *My God!*
Come to him *All right!*
Come to him *Yeah!*
He feed you when you get hungry *All right. Oh yeah!*

He will be on the ark *Yeah!*

Yea God! *My God*

Upon the montain someone said
Jesus said *Yeah!*

If you come to me
I'll give you water *Water*

In dry land *Dry land!*

O Lordy!
Jesus is the Bread of Life *Yes!*

How do you know *Uh huh!*

He's the Bread of Life? *Yeah!*

When he begins to speak *Yeah!*

He's the Bread of Life, brothren *Yeah!*

O Lordy!
I begin to think back *Yeah!*

In Moses time
when he said *Yeah!*

God feed them *Oh yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



• 53
796

With manna from on heaven
My brother! *All right, yeah!*

I was out in the wilderness
Didn't had nothing to eat *Uh huh*

God feed them *My Lord!*

With manna from on high *Yes!*

To stop a little while

(Pause)

I be able to preach for you *Yeah! All right*

If you feed me with that bread *Yeah! All right*

I be able to call him *Yeah*

If you feed me with that bread *Yes*

O Lordy! *Oh Lord!*

I be able to book up *Yeah! All right*

Pick up my brother *Yes!*

Who is down in the ditch this morning *Oh yeah!*

If you feed me this morning *Yes! Lord*

I be able to call *Yeah Lord*

The lost sinner home *Yeah!*

O Lordy!
Jesus!
Is the Bread of Life *Yeah*

God knows
Somebody look *Yes*

Back in space of time *Yes!*

Saw Jesus
Coming through
Seventy-two generations *Yes. Uh huh*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



53
1996

One said
When he look at Jesus *Oh yes!*

Yea God! *Yea God!*

His feet *All right*

Look like polish brass *Yeah!*

Eye look
Like a consuming fire *Consuming fire*

Hair look
Like lamb wool *Lamb wool*

Pressing the wine press *Yeah!*

All by himself *By himself*

Coming down to the gate *Yeah!*

To let you and I
Have a right *Right*

To the Tree of Life
O Lordy! *Oh Lordy!*

Jesus is alive *All right!*

My brothers *Yes!*

When I get hungry *Ah yeah!*

My soul get hungry
I go to Him *Yeah. All right!*

And say unto Him *Yeah. That's right!*

God I want you
Feed me with the Bread of Life *Yes!*

Feed me *Feed me!*

Til I want no more *Want no more!*

Then at last *At last!*

In this old world *Yes! This old world. Thank you! At last. Yes sir. Step right on up. All right*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



• 53
796

(Long pause)

Brother, I don't know about you, friend *Yes*

But I begin to sing *Yeah!*

Deep down in my heart *All right! Sir!*

But Jesus is the Bread of Life *Uh huh! All right*

Great God! *Yes!*

Some how *Some how. Yeah!*

Some way *Some way!*

That same Jesus *That same Jesus!*

One day *Yes!*

I Look down *Yes sir! Yeah!*

Into the old pit *All right!*

A little wretch
Like me was
My brother *Yeah!*

Stoop down *Stoop down!*

And lift me up *Lift me up!*

Take my feet
Out of the mucky mire *Yeah!*

Climb up on
Rock of eternal ages
Establish my goings *Yeah! Yeah!*

Say unto me *Amen!*

I want you *All right!*

To go out into the world *Yeah!*

Tell man and women *Yeah!*

I said
I was dead
But I'm alive, brothren *I'm alive!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



• 53 Tell them I said *Yeah. All right!*
796 When they get hungry *Yeah!*

If they would come to me *Yeah!*

I would feed them *I will feed them. Yes!*

Tell them I said *Yes*

When they get lonely
Don't have a friend *A friend*

I will be a friend for them *Yeah*

Tell them I said *Yeah*

When all bodies *Yeah*
Walk off from them
And put he name on every milepost *Oh Lord!*

I'll be right there with them *Yeah!*

Tell them I said *Yeah! Yeah!*

When mother, father
Forsake you *Oh yeah*

I be by your side *By your side*

O Lordy!
And when you come *Come, Jesus!*

To the end of your journey *Yeah!*

And you are weary *Weary!*

Of life my brother *Yeah!*

Old battle is won *Won!*

I'll be right there *Be right there!*

When the time come
My God almighty! *My Lord*

Gonna call the Angel *Yeah!*

Take care *Oh yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



53
796

I want you to
Stand around *Oh yeah!*

The throne this morning *Oh yes*

Want you to sing *Yeah!*

As you ever sing before
Somebody who will come out *Yeah!*

From Jerusalem *Yeah!*

Crying out
I know *All right!*

Back yonder *Yonder*

In yonder world *Yonder world*
I cry some Sunday

A charge *Jesus! A charge I have! Right*

To glorify *Glorify!*
My brother *My brother!*

I don't know
But I look across
In the amen corner *Corner*

See somebody *Yeah!*

Who cry out
One day *Yeah!*

I saw the lighthouse *Yeah! Oh yeah*

O Lordy! *My Lord*

I wanna be there! *Oh yeah!*

I wanna be there! *Oh yeah! Oh yeah!*

I wanna be there! *Oh yes! I wanna be there!*

Over yonder

(Long pause)

I wanna view the beauty land
Where God eternal glory *Eternal glory!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•53 Where all wicked *Wicked*
796 Shall cease *Cease, cease! Yes Lord!*

All weary soul *All weary soul!*

Shall be at rest *Rest!*

Jesus said
I am the Bread *I am the Bread. The Bread. I am the Bread*
Of Life

Let us Pray *All right! Yes sir! Yes Lord! Let us pray!*

. . . . . .

538 Gullah Tales Exemplifying Audience Participation

[524] RIDDLER: Round like a top. Deep like a cup.
Mississippi river ain't full em up!

RESPONDENT: A sifter (strainer)

The reply from the audience is as germane to the Sea Island tales as it is to the prayers and sermons. However, the relaxed social atmosphere in which tales are told permits more exchange between speaker and listener than does the more orthodox surroundings of the prayers and sermons. The storytellers are not set apart from the group by a sacred podium or some other feature used to separate participating service members from the rest of the group. The listeners are therefore free to inject words and phrases, utter clarifying remarks, make gestures, or even help the teller along with his tale if appropriate. These interactions are very subtle and in no way interfere with the performance of a good tale. Likewise, no good tale can be told without the responses of an active audience, and no good tale can be told without the traditional "warming" period to create the right atmosphere. Like the prayers and sermons, the tales are usually preceded—if there is an audience present to act as respondents—by songs, spiritual or otherwise, and then by games, riddles, jokes, and dozens. As previously mentioned, the friendly teasing relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the group

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Rev. James Grant

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

53
796

Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

292
142
794
796
786

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



• 53

## WHERE WAS PETER

Where was Peter when the church fall down
In some lonesome valley with his head hang down
Oh, where was Peter when the church fall down
In some lonesome valley with his head hang down.[4]

Jesus done lock de lion lion
done lock de lion lion
done lock de lion lion
de lion jaw.
(Repeat three times)

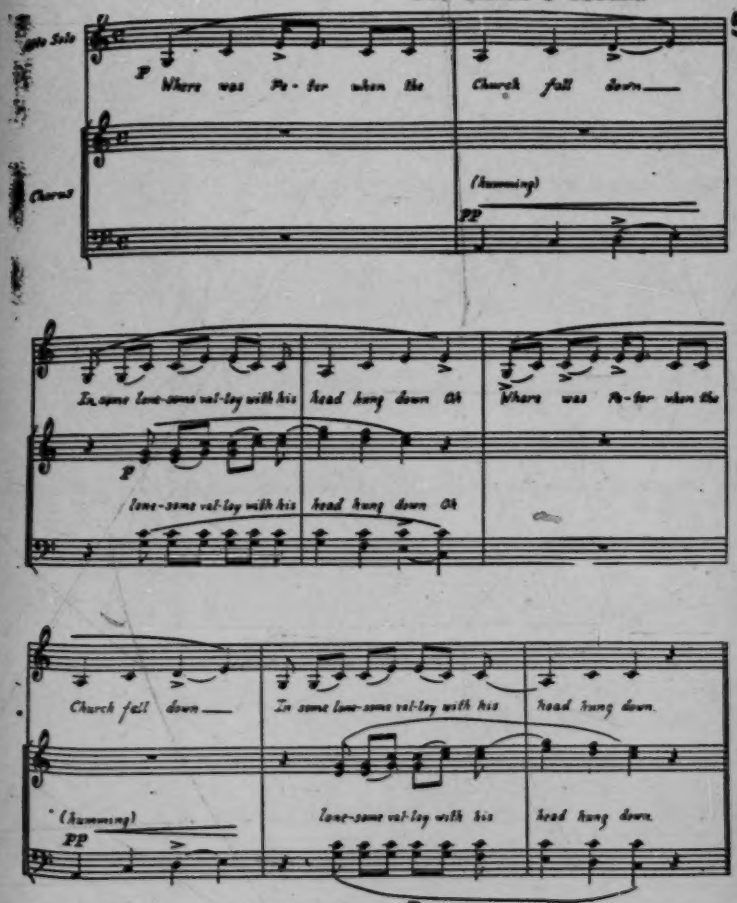
[4] Creighton Churchill adds the following note: "Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this song is its canonical form. In occidental music a canon is a piece in which one voice or part leads off with the theme, and is followed, at given intervals, by one or more harmonizing voices carrying the same melody or musical figure. This song, short and naïve as it is, is actually a canon between the solo voice and the chorus, with perfectly orthodox, foreshortened endings at the finish of each two-measure phrase."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island



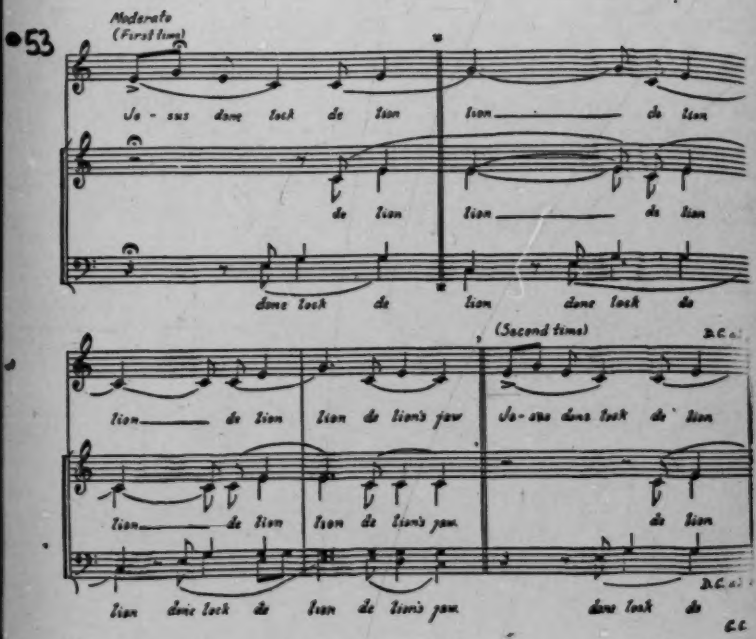

[p.65]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p.66]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## MOONLIGHT–STARLIGHT

•53 In *Slave Songs of the United States*, the origin of a song similar to "Moonlight–
(764) Starlight" is attributed to St. Simon's Island by Colonel Trowbridge, who is quoted as saying "that it was sung at funerals in the night time—one of the most solemn and characteristic customs of the Negroes." Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes
764 a "buryin' " that took place at the Butler Plantation in 1839:

> Yesterday evening the burial of the poor man, Shadrach, took place. I had been applied to for a sufficient quantity of cotton cloth to make a winding-sheet for him, and just as the twilight was thickening into darkness I went with Mr. —— [Pierce Butler's husband] to the cottage of one of the slaves . . . a cooper of the name of London, who was to perform the burial service. The coffin was laid on trestles in front of the cooper's cottage, and a large assemblage of the people had gathered around, many of the men carrying pine-wood torches, the fitful glare of which glanced over the strange assembly. . . . Presently the whole congregation uplifted their voices in a hymn, the first
(53) high wailing notes of which—sung all in unison, in the midst of these unwonted surroundings—sent a thrill through all my nerves. When the chant ceased cooper London
(782) began a prayer, and all the people knelt down in the sand, as I did also. . . . When the prayer was concluded we all rose, and, the coffin being taken up, proceeded to the people's burial-ground, when London read aloud portions of the funeral service from the Prayer-book. . . . The service ended with a short address from London upon the subject of Lazarus, and the confirmation which the story of his resurrection afforded our hopes. . . . When the coffin was lowered the grave was found to be partially filled with water—naturally enough, for the whole island is a mere swamp, off which the Altamaha is only
(152) kept from sweeping by the high dikes all around it. This seemed to shock and distress the people, and for the first time during the whole ceremony there were sounds of crying and exclamations of grief heard among them . . . and so we returned from one of the most striking religious ceremonies at which I ever assisted.

When Margaret, one of my star shouters, was buried a few years ago at Kelvin Grove, in the old slave yard on the marsh, I too was shocked to see the coffin lowered into the water, but in this instance such an occurrence was taken as a matter of course.

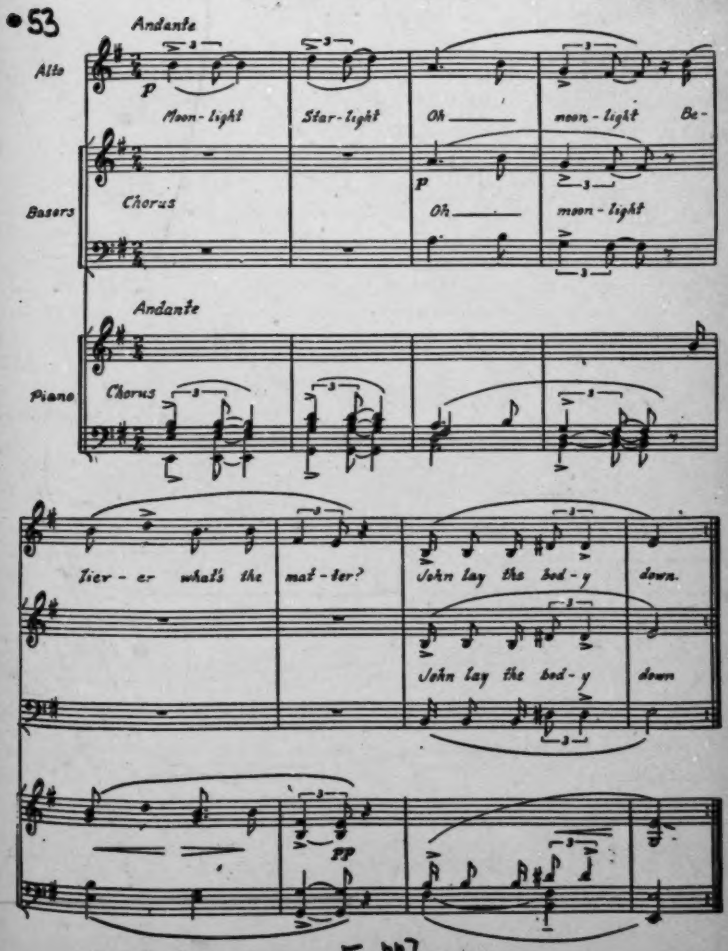
53 Of all the primitive songs this is the most plaintive as well as the most impressive:

Moonlight–Starlight
O-o-h [13] Moonlight
Believer what's the matter?
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)
John lay the body to the tomb
O-o-h—let me go!
John lay the body to the tomb
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)

[13] Sung with the lips closed. The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

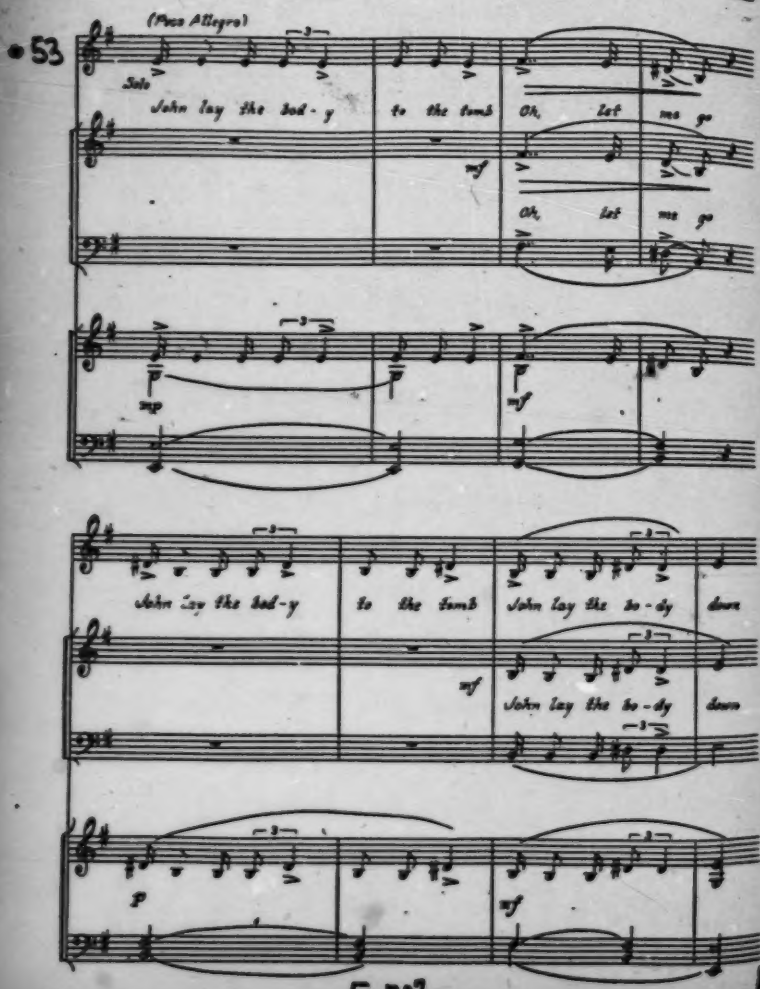
9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

12. MOONLIGHT–STARLIGHT




[p. 77]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

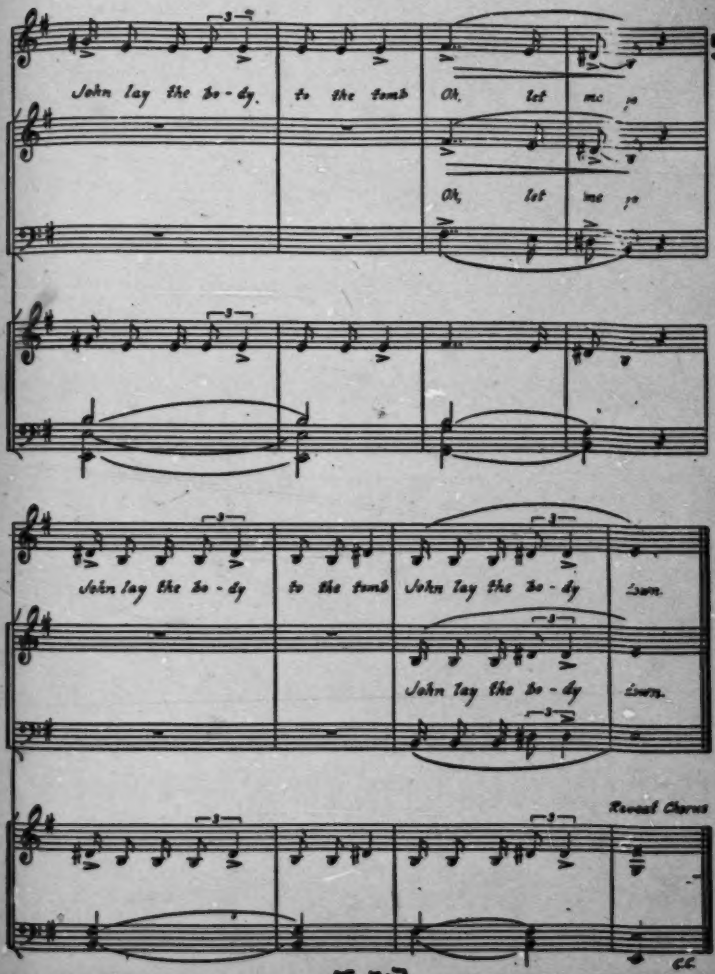


9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## GO ROUN' THE BORDER SUSIE

•53
524

The action in this ring-play is directed by the verses. While the first verse is sung, the players join hands in a circle and swing to its rhythm. In the next verse "That turtle dove started," indicates that a girl has begun to move within the ring. "Out goes the hornet," is the signal for a boy to follow her. With "Hist the windah," the players lift their clasped hands. First the girl weaves in and out of the circle, between the uplifted arms. The boy follows suit. "Don't miss no windah," explains itself, and the last verse, "Close in d' 'semble," means to close the window when the boy and girl are both on the outside. The fun then begins, and the chorus may need to be sung several times while the hornet attempts to catch the turtle dove, who turns in one direction, and then in another, to avoid capture:

Chorus: Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
That long summer day.

Out goes the hornet, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Out goes the hornet, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, long summer day.

That turtle dove started, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
That turtle dove started, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

Hist the windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Hist the windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

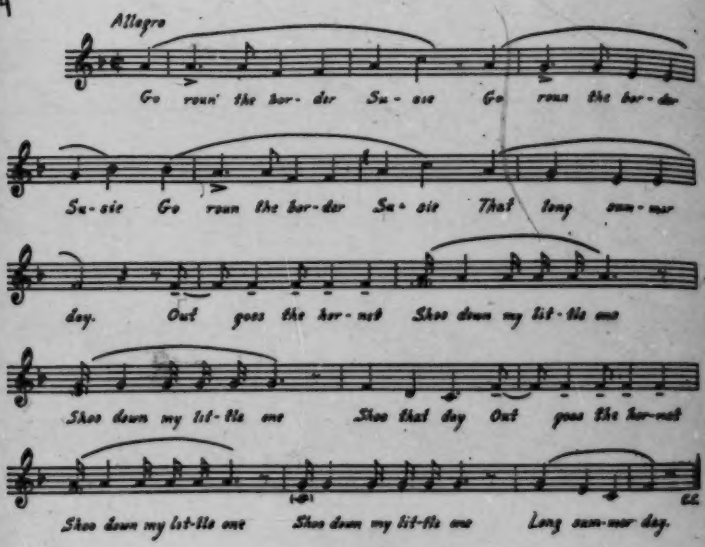
Don't miss no windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Don't miss no windah, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

Close in d' 'semble, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, shoo that day
Close in d' 'semble, shoo down my little one
Shoo down my little one, that long summer day.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

●53
524

17. GO ROUN' THE BORDER SUSIE




Repeat Chorus: Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
Go roun' the border Susie
That long summer day.

[p. 98]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



THE BUZZARD LOPE—A SOLO DANCE

535 Since 1915 I have known that such a dance as the Buzzard Lope [6] could be found in the neighborhood of St. Simon's; but the Negroes of that section always told me it was done on some far-off island, such as St. Catherine's or Sapelo. Over ten years ago I asked the same question of a newcomer, as a matter of routine, which I had for years put to the other shouters: "Can you do the Buzzard Lope?" When she said: "Yes'm," I was a bit stunned . . . but she could, to perfection. To my surprise, however, I found that a number who had previously denied such a gift were close seconds. (Illustrations 23 and 26) A

• 53 This group used an old religious song with narrative lines of a suitable character. In ante-bellum days the slaves called the graveyard "the ole field":

THROW ME ANYWHERE

Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Members,[7] you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die
In that ole field.

(191) [6] Dances simulating the peculiar characteristics of animals are popular in Africa; and Mr. Herskovits tells me he has seen a similar dance in Dahomey.

[7] Deacons, preachers, brothers, sisters, and mother are all mentioned as wanting to die "In that old field."

A, [For Illustrations 23 & 26, see Categories 535 & 142, plates facing pp. 129 and 160 respectively--Analyst] –

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island

53•

Soprano

Throw me an - y - where

Basses

In that ole field

Throw me an - y - where, Lord

In that ole field

Throw me an - y - where

In

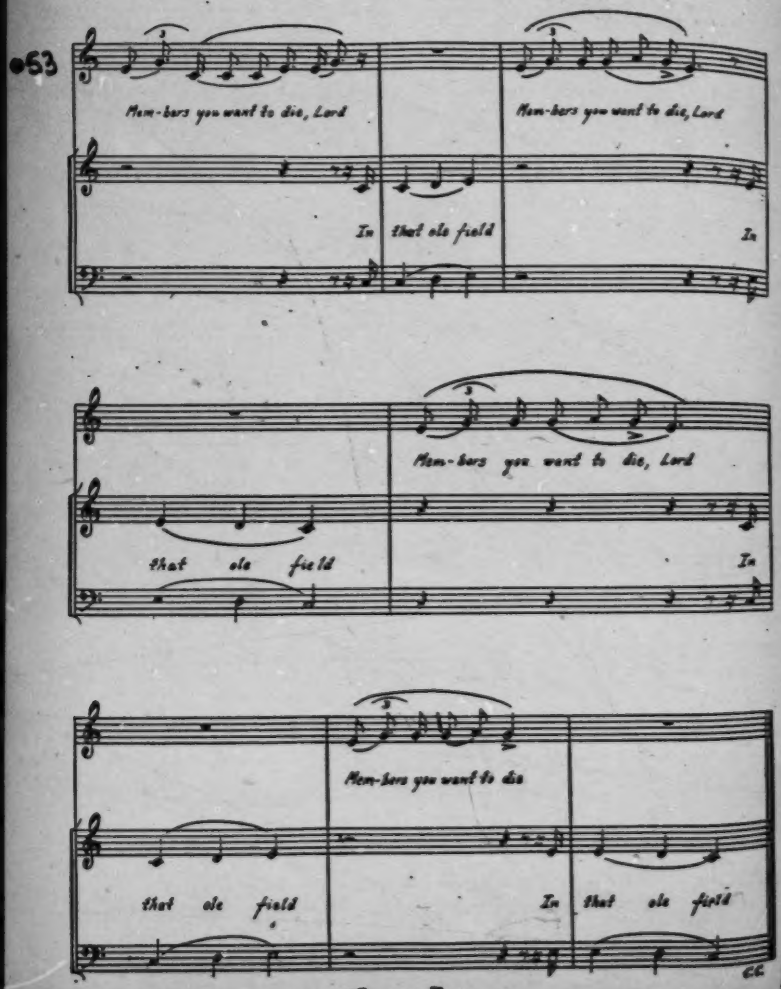
Throw me an - y - where, Lord

that ole field

In that ole field

[p. 109]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## BALL THE JACK

53 Several of our Negroes "Ball the Jack," as well as the African performer who did a similar serpentine wriggle at a wedding ceremony in the moving picture, "Sanders of the River." [14] Some day, if I ask enough questions, I may discover the original name of the dance—if it had one. Just why it should have been called by a railroad term I can't figure out, unless its African name had somewhat the same sound.

Susy's head and shoulders are stationary and so are her feet (Illustration 10), but there is a flow of undulating rhythm from chest to heels, with a few rotations in the hip region, done to this rhythmic patter:

Ole Aunt Dinah
Sick in bed
Send for the doctor
The doctor said
Get up Dinah
You ain' sick
All you need
Is a hickory stick
An' I ball the jack on the railroad track.

And so on ad infinitum; the words are of no particular moment, only sounds for carrying the rhythm. A box and a stick would do as well.

535 "Ball the Jack" was brought to St. Simon's about fifty years ago by an "up-country" Negro, and has been performed ever since—to the accompaniment of shrieks of contagious laughter—by the little Negroes in Jewtown. Two white children and their nurse happened along one day. The children's attention was at once riveted, by the severe words of the nurse, on what was being done: "You stop dat while I have my chillen aroun'."

In later years Martha, who weighed over two hundred pounds, went through the performance for me—although, as a neighbor of hers said, "Martha didn't have the figure for it." You could scarcely call it a dance, and I don't wonder "Aunt Lou" did not want her white children copying the contortions which suggest the neck of a chicken attempting to swallow something too big for comfort.

[14] "Snake Hip" is a far more appropriate nickname.

A. [For Illustration 10, see Category 142, plate facing p. 88--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## I JING-A-LING

53 Chorus:

I jing-a-ling—jing-a-ling-a-ling
I jing-a-ling—jing jing jing
I jing-a-ling—jing-a-ling-a-ling
I jing-a-ling—jing-a-la-ling

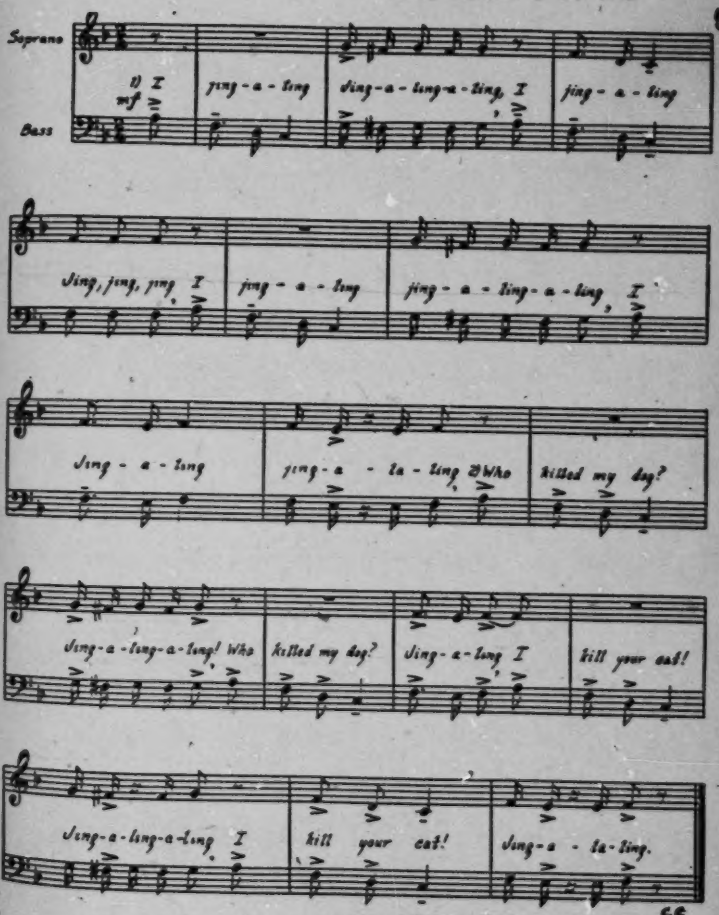
Who killed my dog—jing-a-ling-a-ling
Who killed my dog—jing-a-ling
I kill your cat—jing-a-ling
I kill your cat—jing-a-la-ling

(repeat chorus)

Whose hat is that—jing-a-ling-a-ling
Whose hat is that—jing-a-ling-a-ling

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



• 53

THAT SUITS ME

Chorus: Come on Mauma, le's go roun' the wall
An' that suits me
Come on Mauma, le's go roun' the wall
An' that suits me
Come on Mauma, le's go roun' the wall
Don' wanna stumble an' Ah don' wanna fall
An' that suits me.

Well Isa'h lookt up an' 'e saw the chariot comin'
An' that suits me
Isa'h lookt up an' 'e saw the chariot comin'
An' that suits me
Isa'h lookt up an' 'e saw the chariot comin'
Step on the wheel an' the wheel keep a turnin'
An' that suits me.

Repeat Chorus:

O three more rounds up Jacob' ladder
An' that suits me
Three more rounds up Jacob' ladder
An' that suits me

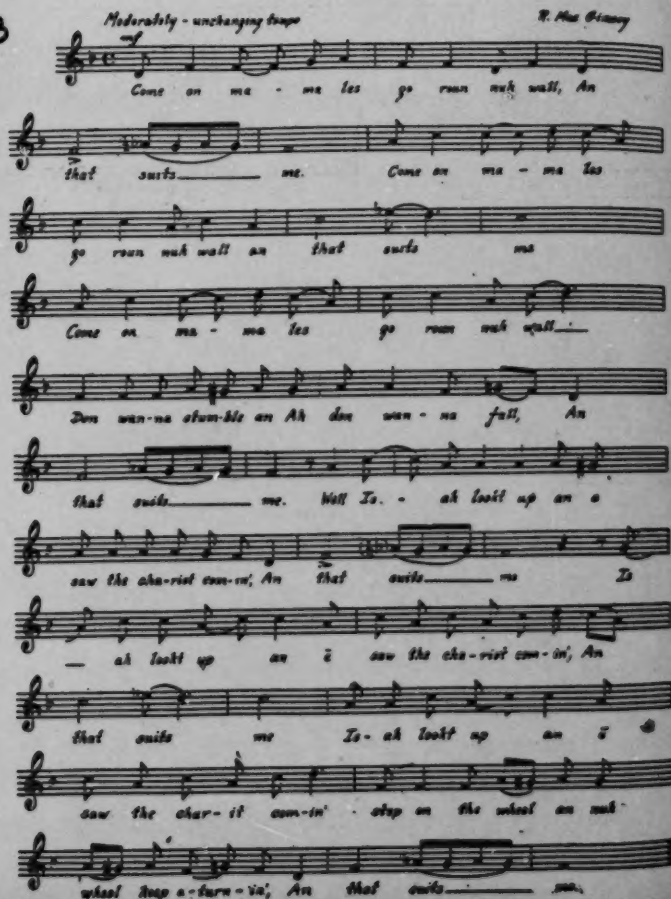
Three more rounds up Jacob' ladder
Every roun' go higher an' higher
An' that suits me.

Repeat Chorus:

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

27. THAT SUITS ME

•53



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

•53 

WHEN I RISE CRYIN' HOLY

Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

[821] Julia Armstrong gives me this version of the same song. It was sung during thunder-storms, which were believed to express God's anger:

Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island

53

Leader

Alto

Bass

p

Oh My Lord

mf

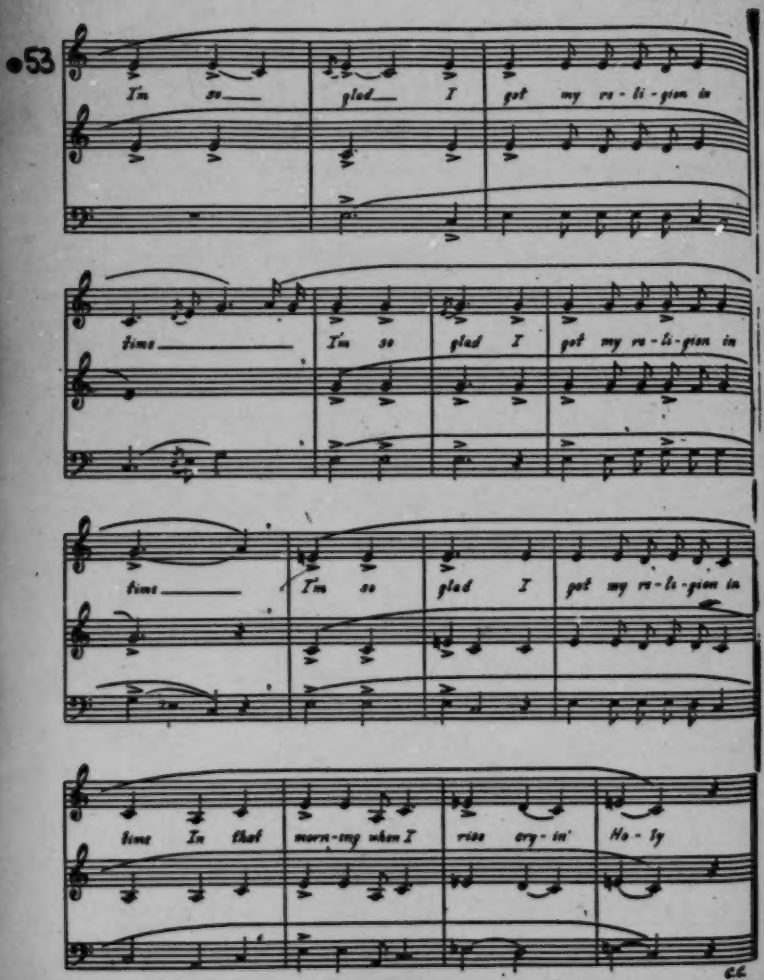
This is a need - ed

time Oh My Lord This is a need - ed

time Oh My Lord This is a need - ed

time In that morn - ing when I rise cry - ing Ho - ly

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island




[p. 150]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

123
796
(346)
(352)

Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

796
786

• 53

See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



•53

See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word
Not a word
Not a word
Not a word.
They judged Him all night long
all night long
all night long
They judged Him all night long
An' He never said a mumblin' word.
They judged Him all night long
An' He never said a mumblin' word
Not a word
Not a word
Not a word.

The following is a description of what was done to Him: "They led Him from hall to hall. . . . They whipped Him all night long. . . . They nailed Him to the cross." The scene is brought closer with: "Don't y'u hear how the hammer ring?" and the song ends with a verse made out of the phrase: "Wasn't that an awful shame!"

MAY BE THE LAS' TIME I DON'T KNOW

This dirge-like tune is one of the favorites at communion service:

Chorus: I don't know I don't know I don't know
May be the las' time I don't know.

May be the las' time we eat together
May be the las' time I don't know
May be the las' time we drink together
May be the las' time I don't know.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



•53

May be the las' time we shout together
May be the las' time I don't know
May be the las' time we pray together
May be the las' time I don't know.

(repeat chorus)

Eatin' of the bread an' drinkin' of the wine
May be the las' time I don't know
It may be the las' time we moan together
May be the las' time I don't know
I don't know I don't know may be the las' time I don't know
It may be the las' time I don't know.

## ONE-A THESE DAYS

533
539 This was a favorite song for the close of prayer meeting:

One-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
When the Lord call me home.

Chorus: Soon shall be done with the crosses
Soon shall be done with the trouble of the worl'
Soon shall be done with the crosses
When the Lord call me home.

Sister Julia, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
When the Lord call me home.

Other "sisters" and "brothers" present are named in lengthening the song.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## RIDE ON CONQUERING KING

53 As mentioned elsewhere, this is a good example of the question-and-answer type of song and was used at a "settin'-up" in accordance with the custom of sending messages by the dying to relations and friends in the other world.[18]

763
787
795
53

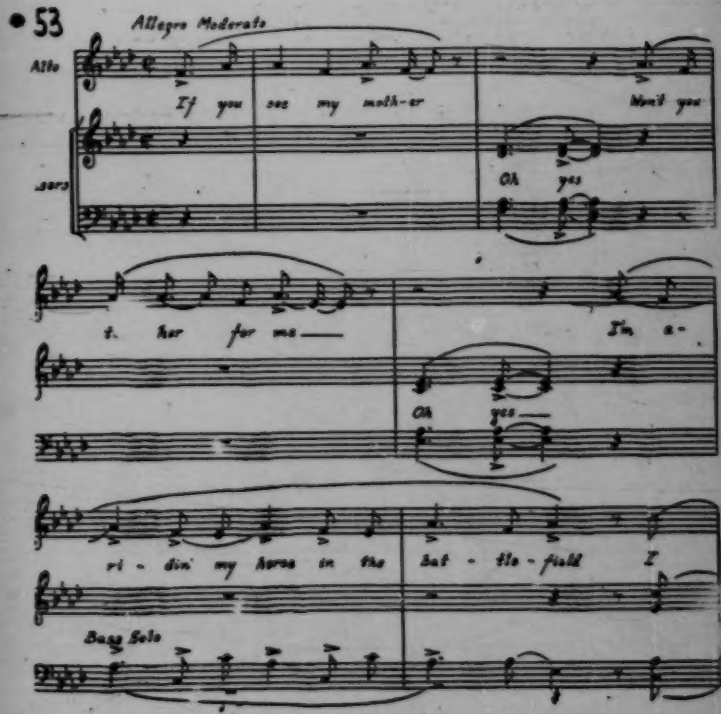
If you see my mother
Oh yes.
Won't you tell her for me
Oh yes.
I'm a ridin' my horse in the battle-field
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

Chorus: Ride on King
Ride on King
Ride on Conquering King
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

[18] All of them are named in lengthening the song.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

43. RIDE ON CONQUERING KING



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

53

want-a see my Je-sus in the morn-in'

Chorus

Ride on King Ride on King

Ride' on Con-quer-ing King I

want to see my Je-sus in the morn-in'

[p. 184]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



•53

## PAY ME MY MONEY DOWN

Pay me, Oh pay me
Pay me my money down
Pay me or go to jail
Pay me my money down.
Oh pay me, Oh pay me
Pay me my money down
Pay me or go to jail
Pay me my money down.

Think I heard my captain say
Pay me my money down
T'morrow is my sailin' day
Pay me my money down.

(chorus)

Wish't I was Mr. Coffin's son
Pay me my money down
Stay in the house an' drink good rum
Pay me my money down.

(chorus)

You owe me, pay me
Pay me my money down
Pay me or go to jail
Pay me my money down.

(chorus)

Wish't I was Mr. Foster's [10] son
Pay me my money down
I'd set on the bank an' see the work done
Pay me my money down.

[10] Mr. Foster was the "Big Boss" at the Hilton-Dodge Mills on the west side of St. Simon's, and the ex-stevedores tell me they always sang this verse when they saw him coming.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

50. PAY ME MY MONEY DOWN

53.

Allegro Moderato

mf

Pay me, Oh pay me Pay me my

mon - ey down Pay me or go to jail Pay me my

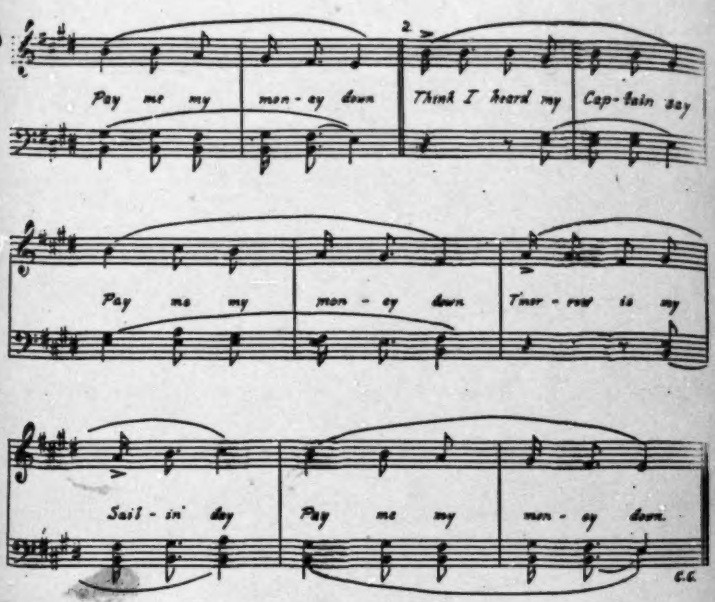
mon - ey down. Oh Pay me, Oh Pay me Pay me my

mon - ey down Pay me or go to jail

[p.209]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

53




533
539

DEBT I OWE

Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe in Brunswick sto'e [11]
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
O Mister Watchman don't watch me
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Watch that nig'ah right behine that tree
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe.

[11] To sustain interest the shanty leader always introduced an element of surprise into his lines. To this day we feel cheated when Floyd fails to include "Jewtown Sto'e" and "St. Simon's Sto'e" when he sings about the debts he "ain' gonna pay," but then, that may be part of the game.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

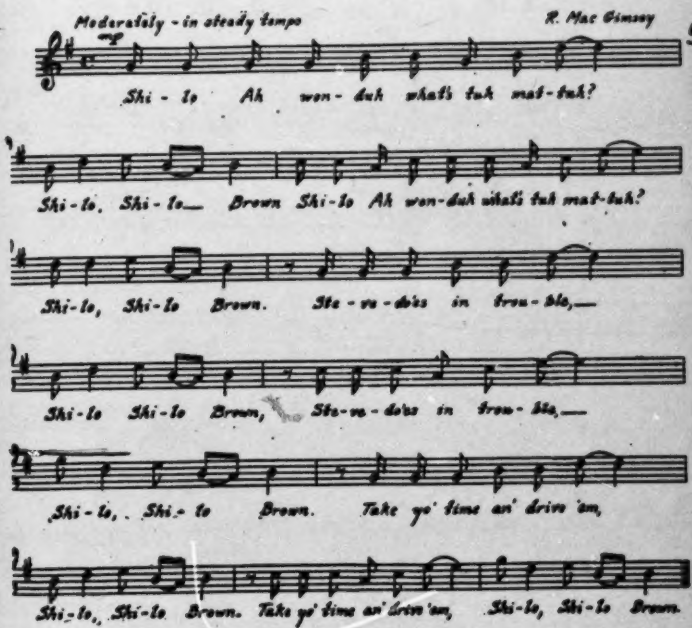


SHILO BROWN

●53 Shilo Ah wonduh what's tuh mattuh?
Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Shilo Ah wonduh what's tuh mattuh?
O Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Stivedore's in trouble
Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Stivedore's in trouble
O Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Take yo' time an' drive 'um
Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Take yo' time an' drive 'um
O Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Shilo gone to ruin
Shilo, Shilo Brown.
Shilo gone to ruin I know
O Shilo, Shilo Brown.

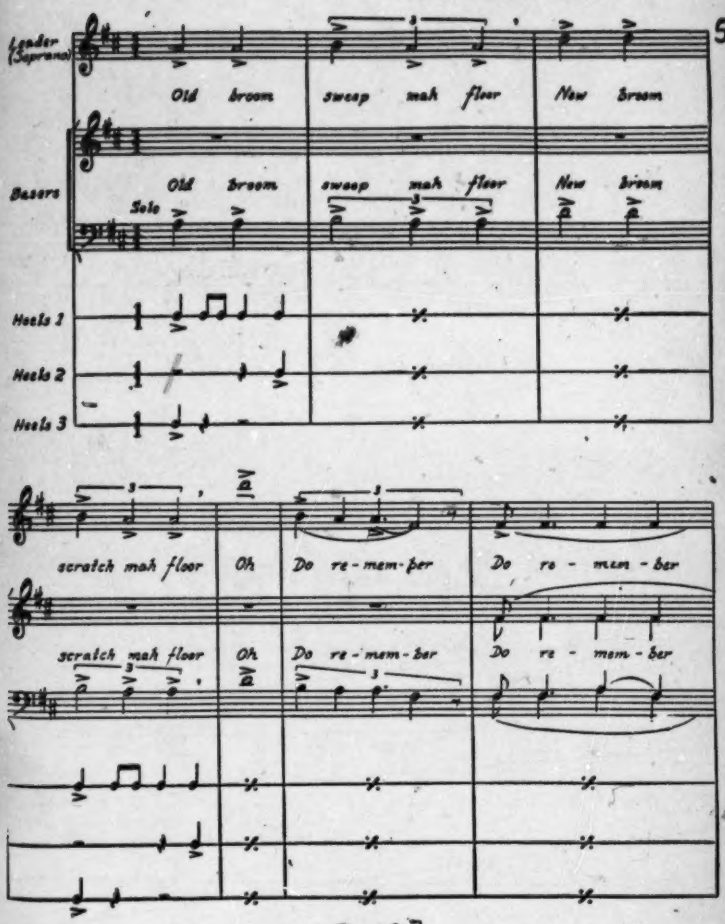
9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

55. SHILO BROWN




[p. 219]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



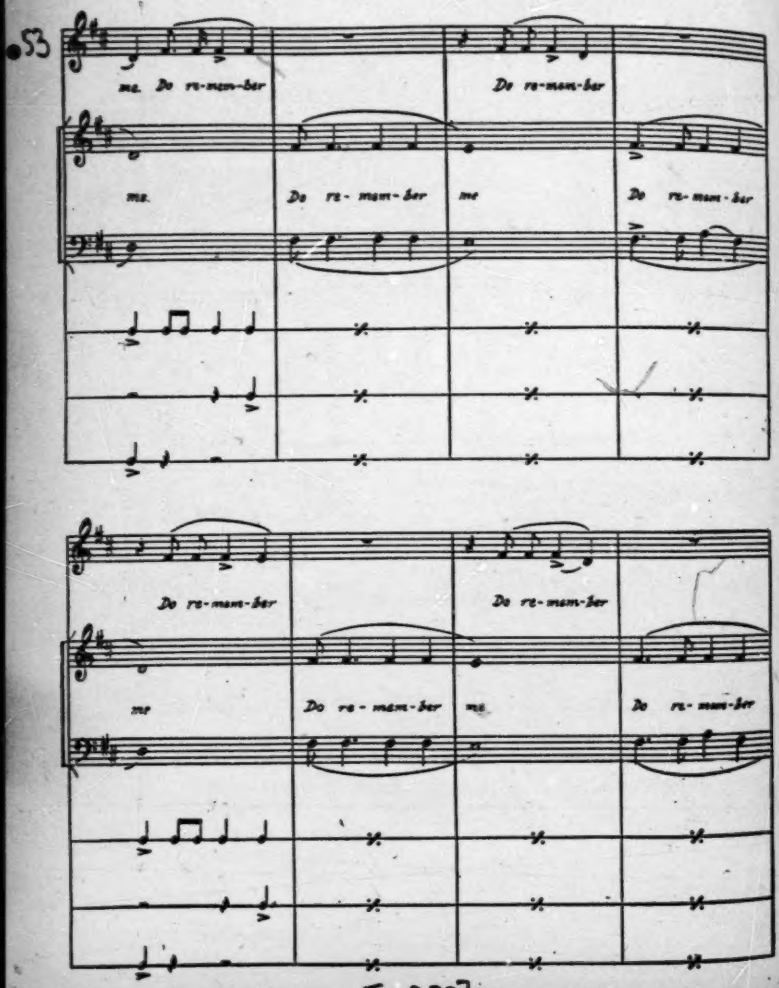
•53

## DO REMEMBER

The rhythm of this song, like that of "Peas an' the Rice," is all-important. The words themselves mean little except that their syllables lend themselves to the flat-footed hopping steps which are utilized to scuff off the outer husks of the rice on the floor. When this tune is used for shouting, there is an interminable number of lines given over to "Do remember me," with emphasis on "do" in the first line, and on "me" in the second. When ready to sing the chorus again—after repeating "Do remember me" eighteen or twenty times—the performers give a stamp on the next to the last "me"—with a perceptible pause.

Chorus: Old broom sweep my floor
New broom scratch my floor
O—do remember
Do remember me.
(repeat)
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember
Don'cha 'member
Do remember
Don'cha 'member
Do remember
Do remember
Do remember me.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

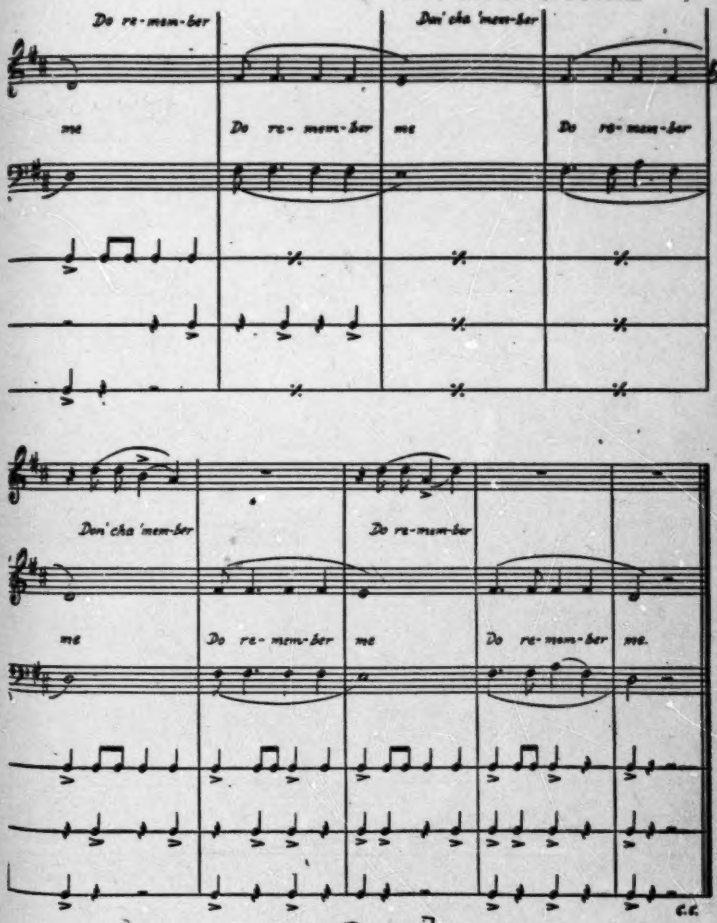


9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## OH WHEN I COME TO DIE

•53 [60] [461] When Willis was a child and went to Lonesome Point for fish and oysters with his father, Adam Proctor, this is the song they often used to make the rowing easier. It is recognized, of course, that the rhythm had to be readjusted to the stroke of the oar. Josephine Young says the song was also used "down on our knees, for watch night 'n prayin'." Needless to say, she would have left off the final g in "dying."

Chorus: O when
(O when)
O when
(O when)
O when I come to die
Give me Jesus.

When I am dying
When I am dying
When I am dying my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over
When the doctor give me over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me
When my friends forsake me my Lord
Give me Jesus.

(repeat chorus)

When trouble is over
When trouble is over
When trouble is over my Lord
Give me Jesus.

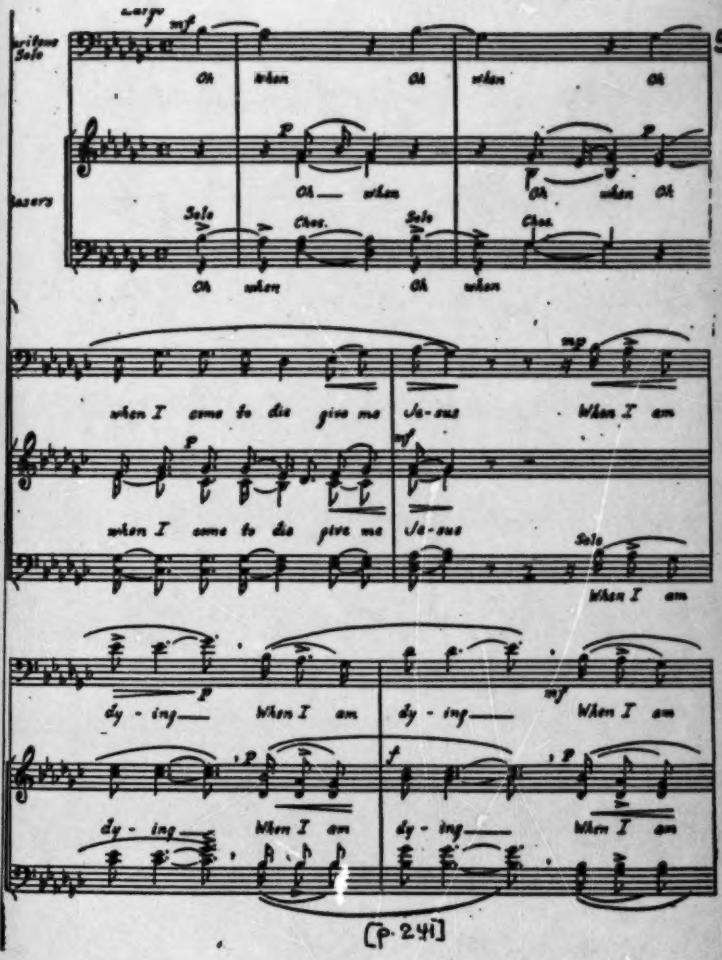
(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

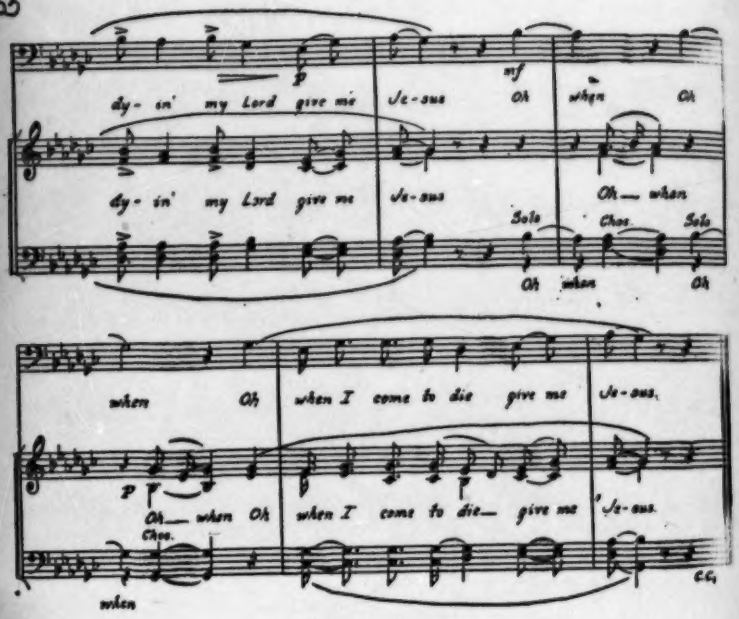
St. Simon's Island




[p. 241]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

53




[p. 242]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



• 53

Chorus: When I'm gon-ne—gon-ne—gon-ne
When I'm gone to come no mo'
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

Y'u're goin' to miss me—for my walk
Y'u're goin' to miss me—for my talk
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

Y'u're goin' to miss me—for my prayer
Y'u're goin' to miss me—for my song
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

Y'u may see me goin' along so
I have my trouble here below
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

Done been up—done been tried
Dat ain't all—got more beside
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

B for the Bible—it's a good old book
Fin' God's word wherever you look
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

Batimas he born blin'
Couldn' keep the Lord God out of his min'
Church I know y'u're goin' to miss me
When I'm gone.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 178 463 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

[531] [177]

285 171 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

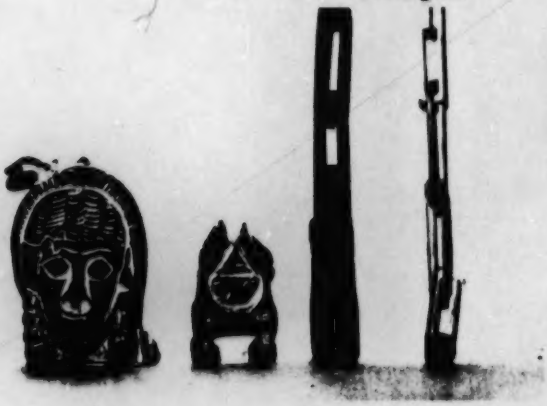
[178]

285 868 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

*532
322



Ia. Carved masks and wooden chains

Ib. Carved wooden figures

[Following p. xxxii-A]

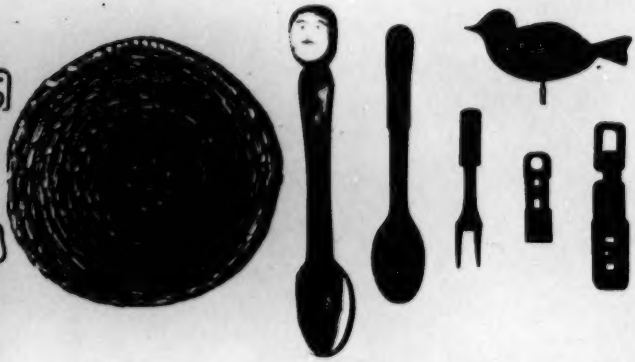
1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

322
•532
[412]
[481]

IIa. Carved wooden spoon

IIb. Carved wooden stick with figure

[285]
[412]

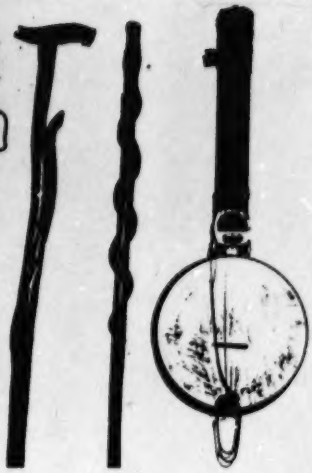


IIc. Coil basket and carved wooden objects

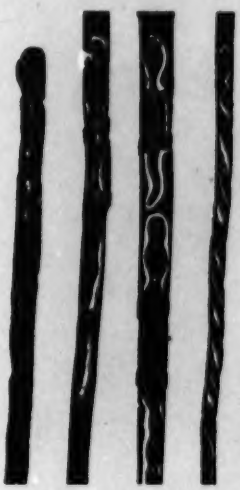
[following p. xxxii-B]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•532
322
[534]

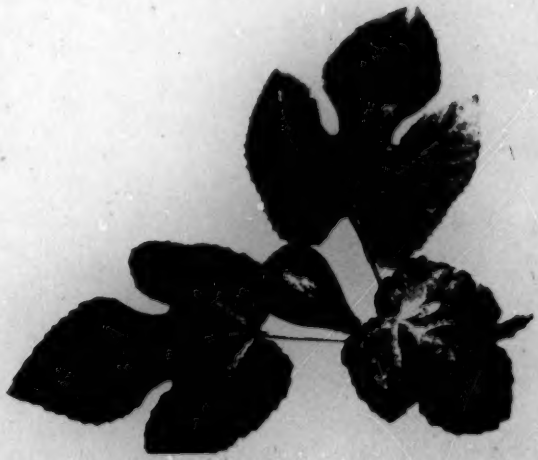


IIIa. Carved sticks and handmade banjo



IIIb. Carved sticks

324
532



IIIc. Carved stone fig

[following p. xxxii-C]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•532
322

IVa. Carved head of man on stick

IVb. Painted wooden figure

[534]
→

IVc. Carved wooden frog

IVd. Goatskin-covered log drum made by James Collier

[following p. xxxii-D]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

322
764
.532

XII. Wooden grave markers at Sunbury

[following p. xxxii-L]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this 322 district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 412 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the • 532 dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A. [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 Refinery; he also cobbles shoes and repairs anything from broken pots to roller skates. Because of his skill as a wood
[322] carver, particularly of walking sticks, he has become known in the vicinity as "Stick Daddy." A decidedly original technique is evident in his carving, but he smiled when this was mentioned.

322 "I nevuh bin taught," he said. "I took up cahvin as paht time jis fuh the fun of it. Muh granfathuh, Pharo Cooper, he used tuh make things frum wood an straw, sech as baskets an cheahs an tables an othuh things fuh the home. I guess I sawt of inherited it frum him."

322 One of "Stick Daddy's" canes is a slender, snake-encircled rod with a handle made from a large black and white die.
•532 Another, slightly thicker, is carved with a single crocodile. The third, a heavy stick topped with a flashlight handle in which the snapshot of a young Negro girl has been inserted, is artfully decorated with a turtle, a large crocodile, and a small, sinuous snake (Plate IIIb).[A] The chief characteristic of "Stick Daddy's" work is the boldness with which the carved figures, dark-stained and highly polished, stand out against their unfinished natural wood background. Very different is another stick that was found abandoned in an office building in the city. This has a man's head for a handle but the stick proper is so covered with minute, unpatterned crisscrosses that the little figure of a man upside down, a horned head also upside down, and an undetermined object which may be either man or animal, are noticed only when the cane is carefully studied.

757 "Stick Daddy," besides being a general repair man and carver, knows a few "sho cuos" for illnesses.

"I kin make a sho cuo fuh chills an fevuh. Yuh take some cawn fodduh an boil it an make a tea. Yuh drink some an bathe in some an yuh'll git well soon. Fuh a cold yuh git some life-evuh-lastin and make a tea tuh drink, aw git some Jack-O."

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]

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262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, en I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our attention. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden
• 532 figures (Plate Ia, Ib). He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
[115] nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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322 Walking sticks (Plate IIIa, IIIb) were brought to our attention. One had a lizard
•532 carved on its handle,* while the likeness of a snake twisted its body realistically about the length of the stick.[50, 70a-h] On a similar stick of dull, yellowish wood the tense, erect head of the large reptile which wrapped itself about the cane formed the handle.[50] In the gaping mouth was held a ball. Even the smallest detail had been delicately and artistically executed. We could learn little of the history of the stick except that it had been carved many years ago by an old Negro who had given it to the present owner and soon afterward moved away from the section.** The snake decorating [50] a third cane had eyes of rhinestones [41e] which gleamed and flashed as the stick was moved about.†

322 Crude hand-carved wooden table utensils were in use in several households.[70a-h] We were shown a fork (Plate IIc)
412 with only two prongs set wide apart on the far sides of the base. One of the spoons (Plate IIc) was about the size of an average tablespoon, but with a bowl of considerably greater depth.‡

322 One Negro showed much ingenuity in the carving of a linked chain § with a box-like object attached (Plate Ia).
532 Inside the box was a small wooden ball. This entire contraption had been made from one solid piece of wood.[70f-h] An-
[524] other man employed his spare time in the carving of small wooden dolls, jointed and so designed that they could stand alone.[41e-i] §§

B

422 An old Negro (Plate V) living in very poor circumstances owned a number of interesting objects.‖ These he said he
[428] had inherited from a grandfather who had come to this country from Santo Domingo, West Indies. Among the ob-

* *Made by and property of William Brown, Florence Street.*
** *Property of Henry Haynes, 41st and Harden Streets.*
† *Crawford Smith, 1704 Ogeechee Avenue.*
‡ *Made by and property of Alfred Wilcher, 610 West 31st Street.*
§ *Ibid.*
§§ *Made by and property of Marion Ralph, 2411 Harden Street.*
‖ *Julian Linder, 612 West 36th Street.*



A, [See Category 322, plates following p. xxxii-C, B, & A--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-E--Analyst]

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant (324) item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc). A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex- (789) ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv- B 532 ing.[70a,e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb), about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII), C well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on 115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did 533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the (539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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# *Wilmington Island*

115 UNCLE JACK TATTNALL* AND UNCLE ROBERT PINCK-
226 ney ** are river men. For many years they have earned a frugal living by casting for shrimp or crabbing or fishing in the Wilmington River. Apparently they are in little fear of the elements. Winter or summer, at whatever hour of the day or night the tide is "right," they are on the water in their bateaux.

311 Many of the Wilmington Island Negroes depend upon the river for their livelihood. In leisure hours, here as in other
461 sections, skillful fingers carve or weave to pass the time away.
322 We were fortunate in being shown a walking stick (Plate IIb) A carved some years before by an old fisherman of the
•532 island.† The delicately detailed figure of a human being
481 formed a third of the stick, with hair, features, fingers, and shoes carefully executed. The narrow thin figure stood stiffly gowned in a garment edged with a saw-tooth design.

124 For some time we had been anxious to obtain interviews with Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert, who were among the oldest inhabitants of Wilmington Island, in order that we might learn something regarding beliefs and customs that had been handed down to them. Until the present time, we had met with little success.

124 A barbecue to be held in the side yard of Celia Small, one
114 of the islanders, at last gave us the long hoped for opportunity of meeting a number of the residents at one time.

* *Jack Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Robert Pinckney, Thunderbolt.*
† *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 122 West Jones Street, Savannah.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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Georgia

SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII)[A] set on graves
322 that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
532 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41a] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
(342) leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

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115 one-quarter Indian. While we were on the subject of Indians, he remembered a rusty part of an old Indian gun which he had found in the vicinity. Displaying this, he explained in detail how the trigger struck a piece of flint, thereby igniting the powder.

322 We inquired about his wood carving and he showed us
• 532 some of the wooden figures about which we had been told.
(412) One of these, a spoon of cedar, was about a foot in length and had the roughly-sculptured head of a man on its handle (Plate IIc).[41e] A The head was square in shape, the features were only slightly raised, and the eyes were nail heads.[41e] Another item was a frog [41i] which, with eyes of brass nail heads, crouched on a block of wood (Plate IVc). B The frog and the stand had been carved from a solid piece of wood [70f, h] and lightly varnished.

As we left, the old man promised us, "Wen I gits muh hans back intuh use, I hopes tuh cahve a cane wid a gatuh on it lak duh ones I made long ago. Wen I do, I sho sen it tuh yuh."

We had no idea that we would hear from him again, but a few months later he wrote us that he had made a stick especially for us. This proved to be of stout cedar carved with a large alligator and topped with the bust of a Negro man cut all in one with the body of the stick and painted black to signify his race (Plate IVa). B The smooth, almost square, protruding skull of the figure, its small, high-set ears, broad mouth, blue bead eyes driven in by minute steel nailheads, and little short arms with four-fingered hands are all noteworthy points. The alligator's eyes are also blue beads driven in by nailheads.

361 After leaving William Rogers, we retraced our way back over the winding dirt roadway into Darien and from the town we drove eastward through a residential section. The houses here were substantial and attractive, surrounded by

A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
B, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-D--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

764
832

12. A Combination of African Ideas and American Burial Conventions

[Facing p. 112]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

142

18. A Bronze Head Dug up at Ife in 1938

19. Its American Counterpart

326

327
532

20. An Iron Gate Latch Made by Willy Rogers

21. Alligator Carved by Lonnie Davis

[facing p. 117]

9: Parrish NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

●533
539

[For additional information on the songs and musical texts of the Georgia Sea Islands, see Category 53.]

OLD FORT

794 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine.
796 Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the
chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demon-
796 strations become more and more violent. Several of the con-
gregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious in-
786 toxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19]
[533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious version of au improvised hymn. The participants in the dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of contortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver, they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance goes on.[46]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine, the man who, according to their own account, was not born in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in New York City and who was sent to earth to save his followers from destruction.

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Georgia



115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.' "

[226] [224] [533]

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, e, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [66] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

[845]

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[33] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[778] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[432] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found
[755] for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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796 less of the hindrance to the rest of the worshipers, jumps up
786 and down wildly, crying out in a shrill, hysterical voice. At length, exhausted, he sinks to the floor and is dragged by friends from under the whirling feet of the others.

One woman, seized by such a paroxysm, falls to her knees, screaming incoherently. Exhausted by her violent emotion, she lies on the rough board floor, her jaws hanging open loosely, her eyes closed. Slowly, she raises her hands and beats them together muttering, "Praise Daddy. Praise Daddy Grace."

[533] The pulsating rhythm of the instruments increases in tempo. A man leaps high into the air, gesticulating and babbling; faster and faster he whirls, until he too falls from utter exhaustion. Still the wild display continues. The terrific nervous strain is taking its toll, and now all but a few of the dancers stumble wearily. The steady, insistent sound of the drum urges them on; feet still shuffle, hands beat out the rhythm, and voices chant an incoherent incantation.

Abruptly the band ceases and members straggle back to
796 their places. Those who have fallen out from exhaustion are dragged to the benches by their friends.

The service continues. During the evening many collec-
796 tions are taken up. Two of the deacons, acting on behalf of
794 the Bishop, urge the people to contribute freely. Their methods of approach present a strong contrast. One, stout, dark-skinned, and clad in a pearl gray suit, has a gentle and persuasive manner. He says softly to the congregation, "Precious Haht, hep us tuh raise fawty bucks fuh Daddy Grace right quick. Wile duh Prophet sits on duh throne befo us, let us all contribute freely tuh him."

The other deacon, short and wiry, darts about among the congregation. His manner of speaking is quick, and he barks his orders to first one and then another of the church members. "Step right up now," he advises. "Dohn hole back on us. Anybody else now, come right up an contribute.

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796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.
(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of
(152) each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
• (533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
[324] item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc).A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
[789] ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in
532 contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carving.[70a-e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb),B about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70a, d, e]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII),C well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
•533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
[539] following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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115
•533
539

BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live
759 fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms
789 who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, c, 43] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us
789 that she does an active mail order business as representative
472 of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelli-
gent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), said he had made a
number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us
764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral
ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum
• 533 while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they
marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and
shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the
man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave
(764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
• 533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

•[533] "'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

[759]

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[58a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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## TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
• 533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(757) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie (789) smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had • (533) taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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533 spired a ballad. Attributed to no single author but apparently added to from time to time, the ballad now runs:

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On duh thuteent day ub May
Yuh could heah ole Bo-Cat say,
"Git muh deed an policy.
Tun it in duh ashes way."

Den ole Catherine she begin tuh inquyuh.
Didn know ole Bo-Cat had dem in duh fyuh.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Put uh in duh boat,
Dey begin tuh float,
Dey float tuh duh Raccoon Keys.
He knock uh on duh knees.
Catherine holluh, "Wa-Wan-Wa."
Bo-Cat make uh "Na-Nan-Na."
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh bres
An duh oah done duh res.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh back
An duh oah miss an crack.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Wen Bo-Cat wehn back home
He meet uh daughtuh all alone.
Uh daughtuh say, "Bo-Cat, Bo-Cat,
Weah my mama is?"
Bo-Cat tun right out he head
An he tro uh cross duh bed.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

(115) One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

(777)

674
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764

"Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

"Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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## SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, e]

791 794 783 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We [533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 202 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 [782] The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[37b, e; 58b, e]

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•533 202 [115] Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 796 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh [533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 301 789 [777] Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a, e] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his [227] twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed [286] like one glad of congenial company.

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

"Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George 115 wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh gran- 567 daddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

"Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five 115 wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh •533 music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use 534

* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

754 "But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told

115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any

262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

• [533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 534 [202] He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[33] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[36] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance. 534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot 764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, 9]

795 796 [182] "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.'"

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
• [533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

764 When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
533 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [12a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[24]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke. (761) Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins."[43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals[44] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

115 Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

• [533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [35]

533 535 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [33]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 606 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben, who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 [534] We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [28]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [53]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom.
534 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic,
202 dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [797] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we
795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long
796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi-
[782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh
[783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
(532) There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of the things of which she had heard him speak.

829 "He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
782 I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
829 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

787 We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

"Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
(533) big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We 764

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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533 534 764 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh way." [24]

534 We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of drums.

[237] "We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

567 829 We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that were real Africans.

"Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 829 789 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduhstan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue, he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 25] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
(237) skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through
the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an
easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing,
and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage
in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company
offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have
preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as
well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI),[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
picture of survival elements that have persisted since the
days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new
country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate
XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of
Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas
Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her
small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to
conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco
and began to talk:

•533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[22]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum,
rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin
plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak
mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, wherewith shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and reasoning with his congregation. His voice would carry a pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
•533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 567 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he (192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 534 533 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 789 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 (351) A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

"Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
567 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a
782 great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[49] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
•533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[63] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats
•533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the
764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

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Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

Heavenly Father
Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and [522] enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly con- [123] genial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

[533] With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, [171] Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[M1] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[194] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to par-
[196] ticipate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
• 533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
538 of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Furthermore, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
159 finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered
791 could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

*Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years,
159 and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

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782 acquire the ability to join in the words of prayer, but only those who
537 have the gift can move the congregation to shout out a response.

None of the prayers are written, and herein lies much of their inventiveness. Many rival T. S. Eliot's *Wasteland* in elaborate allusions to works of literature. The most effective ones are alive with imagery, maxims, puns, understatements, and cultural references which the audience understands and responds to enthusiastically. More important, the prayers are filled with devices used judiciously throughout to induce the rhythmic incantation that is imperative to the Sea Island prayer tradition. Alliteration, transplacement, interplacement, epanaphora (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses), and other features create pleasing recurrent sounds which stir, stimulate, and evoke verbal responses from the audience. Epanaphoric passages—for example, "I want to be the child of God! / and I want my sins forgiven / I want my spirit meek and mild / and I want to go to Heaven when I die"—add to the beauty of the prayers and also demonstrate the speaker's skill as a rhetorician. The echoes of words and phrases in the
[539] audience's responses attest to the community's respect and admiration for skillful and creative use of language:

> Master, it's no lower *No! No lower!*
> Could I come this evening
> Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*
> Guilty heart within
> Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned!*

Alliteration is used, as in "coax and call," "cold, cold hearts," and "Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," to help establish the rhythm, as well as to contribute to the enthusiastic and energetic tone of the entire delivery.

The strong rhythm and chanted delivery of the prayers accords with
782 the prayer traditions of many African and African-derived cultures,
• 533 including those of West Africa, the West Indies, and South America.
The rhythmic chants are crucial to the developmental flow of the
537 prayers.[2] Once the rhythm is established, it is maintained through various means, most important of which is the reply from the listeners. Some truly impressive prayer givers excite an audience to maximal response through their energetic diction and explosive tone alone. Others may intensify the rhythmic effect by drumming with a chair, tapping a cane against the floor, or just swaying back and forth in time to some inaudible sound.[3]

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782 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American
794 congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker
537 says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established
533 by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element
537 in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif
(539) asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

> Master Jesus, hear me
> Another one of you[r] servant
> Bow this evening, Jesus
>
> Sin anguished and bended
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Crying to you this evening, Jesus
> For Mercy
>
> While mercy can reach [us]

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782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[539] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting
[533] both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
782 are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The
539 important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary
[782] Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

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539 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myma introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[538] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

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## The Lord's Prayer

539
782 Most Revered Mr. Mike Simmons
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1976

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as was done in heaven.
Give us this day, O daily bread
And forgive those who art in trespass against thee
O heavenly Father!
We are meeting on worldly soil today
Calling on your name
And, heavenly Father, couldn't do nothing until you come
Come now, Jesus, if you please?
The revered thanks to you today, heavenly Father
O Lord, if you please!
Look upon me in the eyes of pity
In the heart of compassion
I be so please, heavenly Father
O Lord, from last August, the single
They told us at least
O heavenly Father, you know when fall down, get up
Ben calling on your name
And I couldn't do nothing until de come!
Come now, heavenly Father, please, if you please

Amen!

115 Tom Mack is an active member of the Wadmalaw church community.
782 He is a professional singer and is considered well on his way to per-
•533 fecting the prayer-giving tradition. Though he is in his early forties, he is, according to the islanders, still experiencing the "scalding water" of life, one of the primary ingredients in learning to chant the words of the prayers with emotion. When he heard that I was writing a book, he came by to see me and offered the following prayer for me to complete.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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## Chapter 3

782 539 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 •533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary: 175 567 197

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena: 175 533 (797)

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the 114

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and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that 175
deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21]

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of 175
Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were 567
planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was 669
reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22]

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War 175
of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and (533)
prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an (539)
informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of

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the leaders of the intended insurrection. The slaves held secret meetings on one of the islands near Charleston and the "proceedings were opened and closed by the singing of this "Hymn of Freedom":

*Hail! all hail! ye Afric clan*
*Hail! ye oppressed, ye Afric band,*
*Who toil and sweat in Slavery bound;*
*(Repeated)*

And when your health & strength are gone
Are left to hunger & to mourn.
Let *Independence* be your aim,
Ever mindful what 'tis worth.
Pledge your bodies for the prize
Pile them even to the skies!
*Chorus*
Firm, united let us be,
Resolved on death or liberty
As a band of Patriots joined
Peace & Plenty we shall find.

*Look to Heaven with manly trust*
*And swear by Him that's always just*
*That no white foe with impious hand*
*(Repeated)*

Shall slave your wives & daughters more
Or rob them of their virtue dear.
Be armed with valor firm & true,
Their hopes are fixed on Heaven & you
That truth & justice will prevail
And every scheme of bondage fail.
*Chorus*

*Arise! Arise! shake off your chains*
*Your cause is just, so Heaven ordains*
*To you shall Freedom be proclaimed.*
*(Repeated)*

Raise your arms & bare your breasts,
Almighty God will do the rest.
Blow the clarion! a warlike blast!
Call every Negro from his task!
Wrest the scourge from Buckra's hand,
And drive each tryant from the land.
*Chorus*

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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
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> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
248 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed
a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when
461 the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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These were golden opportunities for the missionary. The entire plantation gathered to see a body laid to rest in "its narrow house." The preacher first consoled the sorrowful widow, bidding her to trust God, "the husband of the widow and father of the fatherless." He then addressed the dead man's fellow servants on the necessity of preparing for death: "In a word I preached Jesus and the resurrection, and by the glimmering of the lightwood fire, was the burial service read and the body committed to the dust." Upon leaving the plantation late that night, the missionary was moved by thoughts which were probably not very different from thoughts which the slaves who had just witnessed the burial might have, "thoughts on life, on life's duties, on life's end: of the wants and woes of the world."[62]

Once again the missionary capitalized on an opportunity to involve himself in the black community and the slaves' experience. His efforts to share in and add meaning to life and death among the bondspeople helped make him a presence in the quarters even if he came but twice a month. He was, for his caring, often looked upon fondly. Although the missionary represented the same forces of oppression as did the master, the slaves perceived the spiritual arm of the dominant society as perhaps its one redeeming quality, a contradiction to serve the slaves' interests. Still the fondness was more on an individual level. A well-meaning Methodist like Chreitzberg was accepted though all he preached and taught was not. From the slaves' vantage point it was unwise to completely relinquish that which had previously provided spiritual solace and replace it with something new and as yet untried. For missionaries able to secure access to plantations, spiritual rewards might be inspiring if short-lived. Through catechism, "class meeting," and carrying out of pastoral duties, Methodists experienced some triumphs for Christianity. Missionaries never succeeded in dethroning black leadership and felt that this influence continually created obstacles to Christian conversion.[63] Nevertheless, Methodists proved to be relentless in the dissemination of their doctrines. As Gullahs grew more attentive to the preachers' words, they discarded the incongruous and discordant features of the instruction and fashioned the religion of slaveholders into something peculiarly their own.

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One of the most significant effects that Methodism had on Gullahs was in the creation of the religious music of these slaves. Some scholars argue that the actual source of Gullah religious songs can be traced to Methodist hymns and tunes sung at camp meetings. Certainly Methodist

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hymns were adopted by the Gullahs and other slaves. Francis Asbury traveled the seacoasts of Georgia and South Carolina frequently. While he gained few white converts, he was impressed with the black response to his preaching. During the Civil War, musicologists and others, fascinated by Gullah songs, noted that what was sometimes called a "Negro song," was of white origin, especially the so-called religious songs. But to these white melodies, the Gullahs added their own "spirit and relish," giving a "peculiar individuality and nationality" to the music. Thus it is pointless and probably inaccurate to insist that whites and blacks did not create sacred music together when they worshipped together. Such was the case at camp meetings and revivals. Still these gatherings were not as common in the Lowcountry as they were elsewhere. Some writers argue that the camp meeting was distinctly a pineland and upcountry institution. Although evidence indicates that a few camp meetings were held in the rice communities—the hinterlands of the Sea Islands—we find no record of its presence on any of the Islands. The influence of the domestic slave trade, black-white cultural borrowing, and diffusion were all factors in the creation and development of African-American music. Nevertheless, a unique continuity in religious songs can be found in the Sea Islands and coastal lowlands. There were indeed two types of religious music among the Gullahs who adopted Christianity; those songs and hymns learned from white religious instructors and mainly Methodist in origin, and those representing the product of the Gullah's own creativity and imagination, generally referred to as spirituals or prayer songs.[64]

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The primary influence of Methodist preachers on the development of spirituals was in providing Gullahs with raw material for their songs. From past spiritual traditions these African-Americans inherited a mysticism, sense of drama, and creative antecedents that aided them in expressing and interpreting through song the apocalyptic and miraculous elements of biblical narration already rich in symbolic imagery. Also, New Testament biblical lore was not unlike the Gullahs' own oppression and suffering. From the Sea Islands in 1843, A. M. Chreitzberg provides examples of the spontaneous creation of spirituals. In delivering his message, the missionary enforced the concepts of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the meeting, the group was "much affected" by a "soft female voice" singing:

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539]

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[45]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual:

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On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a

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175 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poi-
764 gnant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas
Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volun-
533 teers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

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> I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
> Lay dis body down.
> I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
> To lay dis body down.
> I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
> To lay dis body down.
> I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
> Lay dis body down.
> I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
> When I lay dis body down.
> And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
> When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many
771 accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubt-
edly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so
799 little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by
adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quick-
567 ened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even
181 more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations. Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong related by Sam Polite:

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I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:

> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[58]

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Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt. John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never "licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman, Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging. Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for kindness.[59]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

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175 771 799 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "General Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:

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> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
> .....
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
> .....
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
> .....
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

175 771 779 795 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude toward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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dition to Florida, one of the black preacher's exhortations was reportedly "worthy of a place in 'American Oratory.'" He urged the men to seek the post of danger and fight bravely. "He who is de fust man to get on de boat," he rallied, "and de fust to jump on shore, him, if he fall, will be de fust to get in heaben." Then, as if himself in the midst of battle, and aroused by the occasion, he added fervently: 17 701

'An' when do battle comes—when you see de Kunn'l put his shoulder to de wheel, and hear de shot and shell flying all around like de rain drops, den remember dat ebery one ob dose shot is a bolt of de Almighty God to send dem rebels to deir eberlasting damnation.[16]

Sacrifices for freedom were not only made by Gullah soldiers, for the war effort was a community enterprise. The men's absence from the plantations placed the burden of breadwinning solely on the women, who shouldered it admirably. Gullah men had at first objected to the women working in the fields because this labor had taken such a heavy toll on female health. But women insisted on working "fur pay," and did so "with a will," sometimes working two tasks in one day. Thus, while the men went off to fight or to work as laborers for the army, field work continued. Women, boys, and girls worked side by side, planting, hoeing, picking, sorting, ginning, and packing the cotton. They also raised vegetables and poultry for consumption and to sell. The women were ambitious and disciplined, laboring with "tireless energy" when working for themselves and their families. Sometimes they even managed to attend newly established schools in order to "catch a lesson." As a way of further supporting loved ones away with the regiment and the army, the women wrote letters. Many of the Northern women's "spare time" was spent writing words of love and encouragement dictated by the freedwomen.[17] It was a period of optimism, when social relations knitted over generations proved tenacious and steady. This was also a time when the faith of the bondspeople seemed to bear fruit. 17 722

The subject of freedom was often symbolically and thematically expressed in Gullah spirituals. While these "prayer songs" appear to be a portent of the future in a Christian context, they contain ambiguity that implies otherwise. Double meanings and surrogates abounded, and Gullah spirituals could often be interpreted in several ways. For example: 17 533 • (539)

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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

175 533 771 When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the 175 song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder 701 we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that 533 it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and 175 usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. 181 Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and cooiness in combat, thus 701 affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to 533 credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that 175 their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" 533 for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had devel- 186 oped over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533 186 539

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem":

> De Talles' tree in Paradise
> De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
> an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my new Jerusalem!
>
> Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem!
>
> Paul and Silas jail-bound
> Sing God's praise both night and day,
> An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
> To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 527 533

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

. . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.

The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.

The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew, through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
787 been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
794 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
[795] that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The
[533] three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 787 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."**

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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CHAPTER 10

# *Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phenomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these [533] [157] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, foreboding, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of demoralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical 761 775 [171] death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation experience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gullahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its 000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife beliefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

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implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000 Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761 sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware 533 that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.'" Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539] children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought [787] to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of [567] the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
•533 tude toward death:
(539)

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
791 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased night bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

567 763 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were [754] sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by [759] his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated 567 764 the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they [533] sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> [789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to an- [775] other across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> [533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[11]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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APPENDIX D

# The Deity

776 The Gullahs' concept of the deity was not that of a God of wrath, but one of love and mercy. In Gullah music, phrases such as "Kind Jesus," [533] or "In the mornin' when I rise, tell my Jesus Huddy ho," indicate that for these slaves Christ was a warm personal friend, as well as a fellow sufferer. Similarly, the Gullahs' prayers also express how they viewed 776 782 their relationship with God. Prayer was considered actual communication with Jesus, and He was expected to listen and hopefully answer the appeal in some way or another. In such verbal expressions the supplicator reveals inner ideas of the deity. In a study done among the Gullahs in the 1930s, it was observed that by far the most prominent attribute of the deity in prayers was merciful, being mentioned 189 times as opposed to a total of 119 times for all the other attributes ranging from loving to glorious. No description suggesting wrath or vengeance was among the characteristics attributed to the deity.[1] In the following prayer, recorded during the Civil War, one is able to observe the Gullahs' poetic imagery, spirituality, sense of community, and their attitude toward the deity:

### *Aunt Jane's Prayer*

782 539 776 Der Maussuh Jesus, we all uns beg Ooner (you) come make us a call dis yere day. We is nuttin' but poor Etiopian women and people ain't t'ink much 'bout we. We ain't trust ask any of dem great high people for come to we church, but do' you is de one great Maussuh, great too much dan Maussuh Linkum, you ain't shame to care for we African people.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. De sun, he hot too much, de road am dat long and boggy (sandy) and we ain't got no buggy, for send and fetch Ooner. But Maussuh, yo' 'member how yo' walked dat hard walk up Calvary and ain't

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"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

> 'Gawd will take care ob me.
> Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
> Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he vanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm. I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

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17 Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing
567 Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Ed-
113 dings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

[197] 48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

17 50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6;
113 field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

797 51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

797 52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

793 53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

17 56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York:
113 Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*,
[797] February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Missions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

[797] 61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

17 64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare
797 Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who ar-
• 533 gues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–
113 84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Mazeebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": *iv*, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

## 7. *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

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25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

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2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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# PREFACE

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The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. . . . Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker, and the dreamer. This is the firing line.

*W. E. B. DuBois, speech at Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, October 20, 1946*

177 THE TRAFFIC on River Road is heavy. When I first came to this part of Johns Island in 1964, it was a quiet rural black community. Now expensive cars cruise past on their way to Kiawah and Seabrook islands. These resort islands can only be reached by driving across Johns Island and meeting the approval of a guard at a security gate. Beyond the guarded gates are plush hotels and upscale shopping facilities, beachfront houses and condominiums. Those who are waved through the checkpoint are mainly affluent visitors from afar.

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The traditional and the modern coexist eerily on Johns Island now. I notice the incongruity at once in Wesley United Methodist Church. I sit in its elegant pews and listen to the organist and the robed choir perform staid hymns from the Methodist hymnal. But the congregation sings out in the old African polyrhythmic style of the sea islands, almost as though the hymns were ancient spirituals. The present organist accompanies the hymns in a jazz-influenced modern gospel style that dominates the singers and sometimes drowns them out. The result is exciting, but I miss the special kind of excitement of the old *a capella* shouting style for which Johns Island is famous.

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
[668] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
641 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home
871 to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
563 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
[668] rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[664] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year work-
ing with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for example, young civil rights workers from all over the region came together. There they exchanged ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi. There they swapped songs and learned new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced to new areas in the South because of these freedom song gatherings.

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114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
• 533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

In the intervening years, this evolution toward more modern forms has continued. Moving Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *still* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

In the 1960s the most unusual and modern institution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island. It contained a large grocery store and the only gym on the island and served as a center for adult education and voter registration.

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159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

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> Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island.
>
> The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.

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> Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston low-country, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

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The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

(P XV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

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> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(p. xvi-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

128 THIS BOOK IS BASED on tape-recorded material. In putting it together we tried to use the strongest photograph to illustrate each text; the person in an accompanying photograph is not necessarily the person speaking. Please see the list of photograph credits at the back of the book for specific information.

(197) We have deliberately refrained from caricaturing the pronunciation of Gullah dialect by distorted spellings. There are a number of scholarly (113) studies of Gullah now available in addition to Lorenzo Turner's classic 1949 book *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

• 533 The songs are sung without instrumental accompaniment. In most of the religious songs, com- 128 plex hand and foot rhythms are added as the spirit mounts. This particular style is called "shouting." Songs are usually sung with an informal leader in a call and response pattern. The transcriptions are inevitable simplifications of what is sung, for to capture the subtle shadings and minute variations of pitch and rhythm would result in an almost unreadable score. Because the style is highly improvisational, the melody, the words, and the order of the verses vary with every performance and from one singer to another.

533 We strongly urge the reader to listen to these 216 songs on two Folkways records of Johns Island music that are available: *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts and Children's Games* and *Moving Star Hall Singers and Alan Lomax: Sea Island Folk Festival*. A new compilation of the best of these recordings is available on Folkways album 40031, *Been in the Storm So Long: Spirituals and Shouts, Folktales and Children's Songs*. An interesting comparison of the particular style in the Johns Island area with that of coastal singers further south can be made by listening to the albums of songs from the Georgia sea islands and from nearby McIntosh County.

(p. xvi-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

[533]
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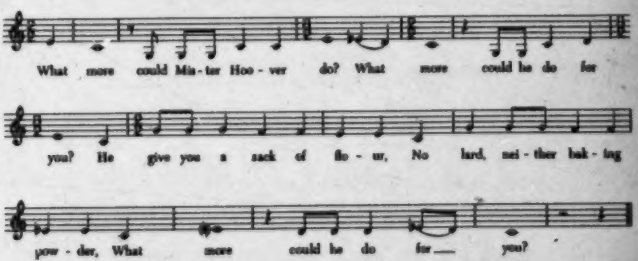


[252]

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*The Bligen Family*

**ROW, MICHAEL, ROW**

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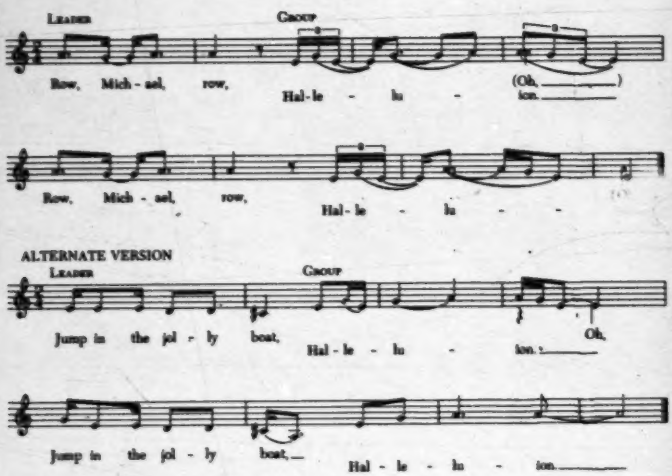


Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Halleluion.
Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Halleluion.

Oh see how we do row . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row . . . etc.

Let's row the boat ashore . . . etc.

Just gimme a living chance . . . etc.

Sister Mary, row your boat . . . etc.

Everybody try their chance . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row,
Halleluion.
Row, Michael, row,
Halleluion.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

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When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.

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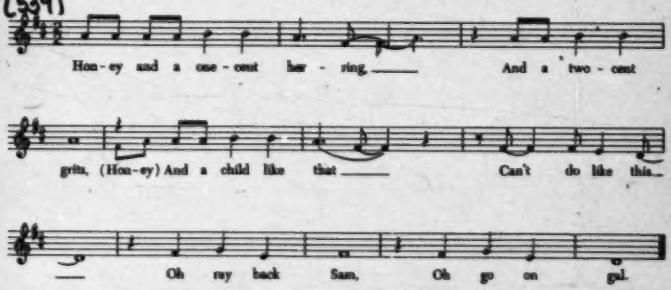


So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Bertha Smith and*
*the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**LAY DOWN BODY**

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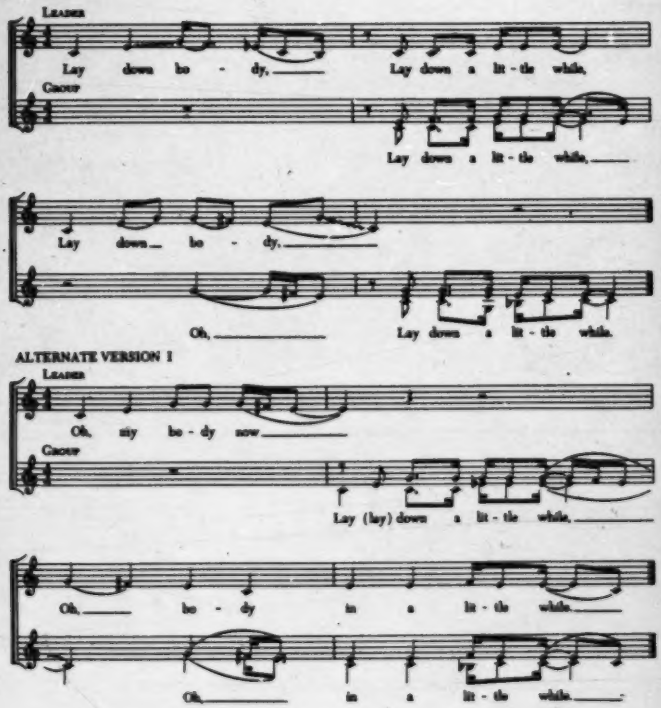

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

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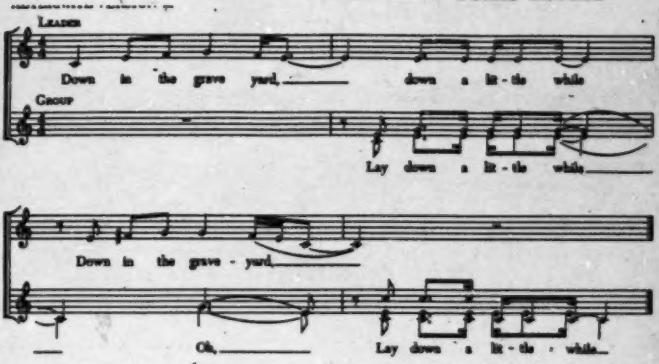


Leader: I know you tired,
Group: Lay down a little while,
Leader: I know you tired,
Group: Lay down a little while.

Come from a distance . . . etc.

Oh body now . . . etc.

Ain't you had a hard time? . . . etc.

Last December . . . etc.

Tedious was my journey . . . etc.

Rocky was my road, Lord . . . etc.

Ain't you got somebody gone? . . . etc.

I got somebody gone . . . etc.

Oh my body now . . . etc.

Just keep a-rollin' . . . etc.

Body, ain't you tired? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you lonesome? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you weary? . . . etc.

Lay down body,
Lay down a little while,
Lay down body,
Lay down a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

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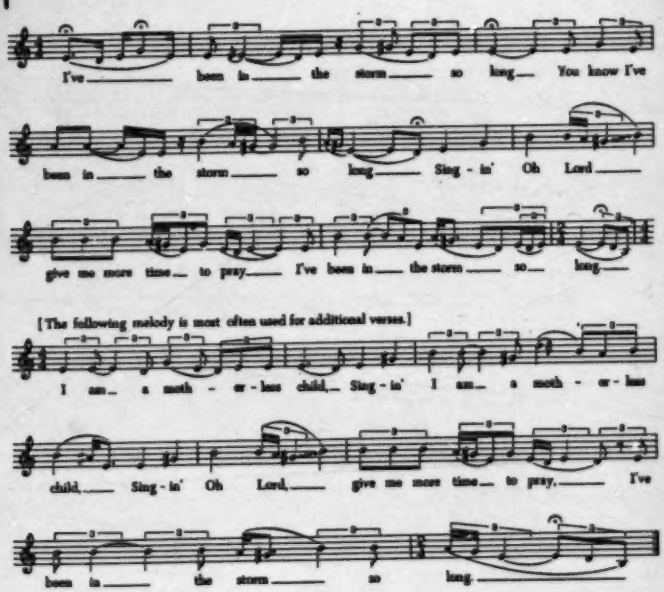
## BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG




This is a needy time,
This is a needy time,
Singin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

Lord, I need you now . . . etc.

Lord, I need your prayer . . . etc.

Stop this wicked race . . . etc.

Stop all my wicked ways . . . etc.

Somebody need you now . . . etc.

My neighbors need you now . . . etc.

My children need you now . . . etc.

Just look what a shape I'm in,
Just look what a shape I'm in,
Cryin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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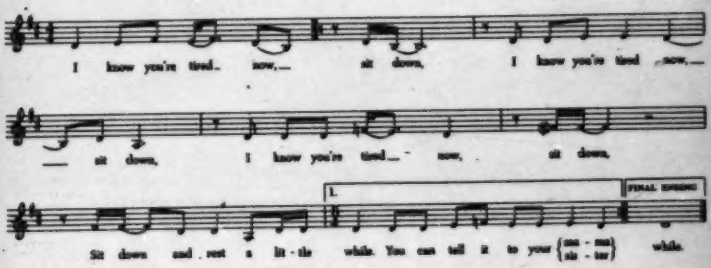
*The Moving Star Hall congregation*

**I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED**




You can tell it to your {mama, sister, sit down,
You can tell it to your {mama, sister, sit down,
You can tell it to your {mama, sister, sit down,

Sit down and rest a little while.

You come from a distance, sit down . . . etc.

I know you weary, sit down . . . etc.

Oh sit down servant, sit down . . . etc.

I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
Sit down and rest a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Bertha Smith and*
*the Moving Star Hall congregation*
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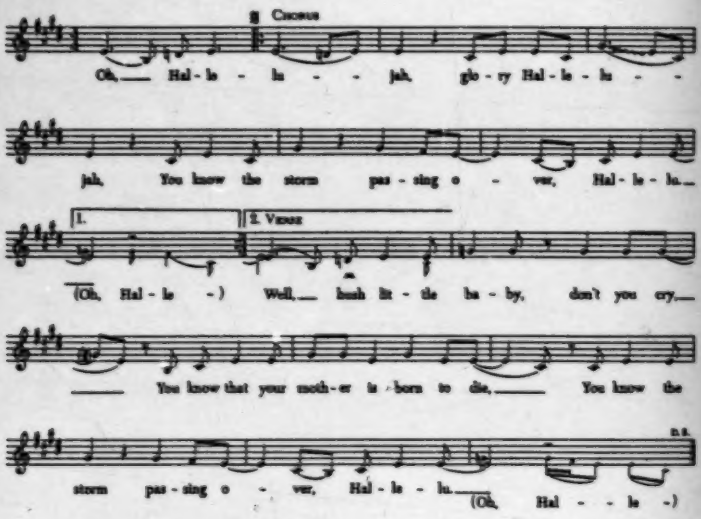
THE STORM IS PASSING OVER




Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,
Sometimes I'm almost to the ground,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus--2 times)

Some say Peter, some say Paul,
Ain't but one God for we all,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

The tallest tree in Paradise
Christians call the tree of life,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus--2 times)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SHOUTING FOR A BETTER DAY

796 533 786 Every Sunday night these people have meeting at Moving Star Hall. Every December 24th they have what we call a Christmas watch night meeting, and every December 31st, a New Year's watch. They sing from twelve o'clock until day clean.

They know the tune, they're ready to shout. They're giving praise to the great Supreme Being who have stood by them in the past days from slavery up to this present. Just to hear these songs remind us of our hardship. Those songs are the ones that made them happy, made them go through those hard days—the days when they didn't have a place to live of their own, didn't have a piece of land of their own, and were living on a plantation.

786 796 These people are hard-pressed people, and they are optimistic enough to believe that there are better days coming. When they get into these religious shouts, they feel so happy until that's all they can do but shout. The motions go into the hands and into the feet and they start clapping, and you can't keep them sitting—not when they start clapping, brother. They feel so happy 'til they got to shout. People sixty years and seventy years old clap and shout and jump all over the floor without falling down.

786 796 154 These people are trying to satisfy themselves, satisfy their soul. It's the only place they could be happy because life is so hard and sometimes there are any number of persons who do not know where the next meal is coming from. They can't talk back if they go on the farm regardless of how mean they were treated. Sometime their task they had was overburdening. Sometimes somebody watching them that they didn't have a chance even to stoop. They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting.

*Mr. John Smalls*

## 796 786 ANYTIME YOU COME, YOU IS IN

We don't charge nothing to come in Moving Star Hall. Moving Star Hall are free, and the door are open for each and every one. Whether you are white, whether you are dark like myself, or different color, come in. If you can preach, come on. We all preach. Don't say, no, you can't come up to this table. You can preach, pray, or testify. If you want speak, anything you want say, you got the opportunity—we give it to you.

'Cause we know we are in God hand. God made *all* of us. Don't make a few and somebody else made some; God made all. So I am happy to meet you all.

I hear the white madam say a while ago she glad we let 'em come in. "No, don't worry with that, Madam. Anytime you come, you is in. Bring friend, whatever; you's in." So sing, shout, get happy. But don't fall out!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## LEAD ME TO THE ROCK HIGHER AND HIGH*

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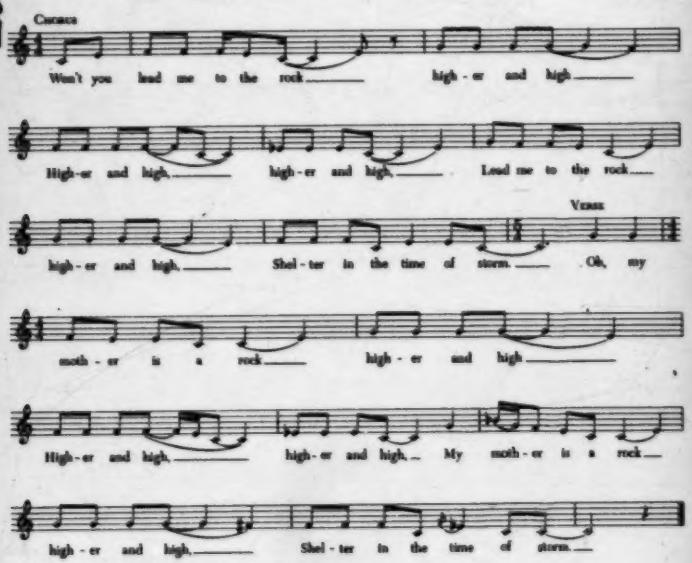


* Also sung elsewhere in the South "*Lead Me to the Rock Higher Than I.*"

(Chorus)

Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

(Chorus)

Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

Variant of verse:
Oh my God is a rock in a weary land,
Weary land, weary land,
God is a rock in a weary land,
Shelter in a time of storm.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 69]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

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[p.70]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.72]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

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[p.73]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

**ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL**

The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 342

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

142 291 796 533 786 794

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. John Smalls*

## EVERYBODY HAS A TURN

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In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. We put him in the front to take the text. Then take myself, I follow. Then whosoever I wanted to assist—Eli Smith or any other leader. And we go on that way. Everybody has a turn.

We have prayer service the first Sunday night in the month; and the second Sunday night let the brothers preach; then the third Sunday night we let the sisters testify; then we go right back on the fourth Sunday night the brothers will preach again. We used to had it just how it come. We feel like prayer meeting tonight, we have that. But later days, we decided we would mark it out, that every person would know where he going.

That way we trying to do it now. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

• [533] Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you wanted to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody. They can't sing long as you're talking; wait 'til you finish talk.

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*Mr. John Smalls*

## TURN THESE BIG FISH LOOSE

Now friends, we still moving on.
I'm not going to linger with you
'Cause I want to turn these big fish loose.

Brother Deas will come and set the foundation,
The road we going to travel by,
That all of you could know the way to go.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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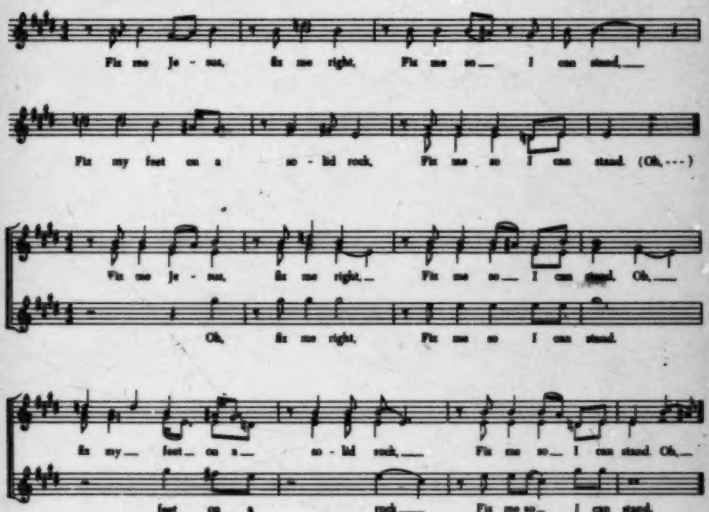
59A

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**FIX ME JESUS**




My tongue tired and I can't speak plain,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand.

Fix my home, Lord, fix it right . . . etc.

Fix my family, Lord, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix my neighbor, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix me warrior, fix me right . . . etc.

Fix me Jesus, fix me right,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

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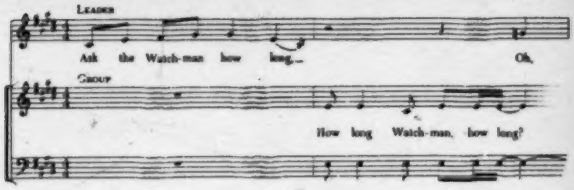
**ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG**




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.
Oh, all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more rings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

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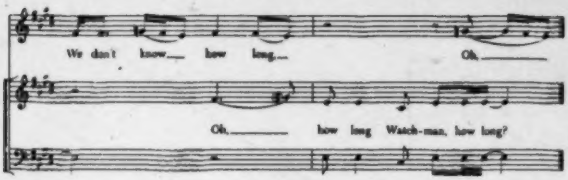


Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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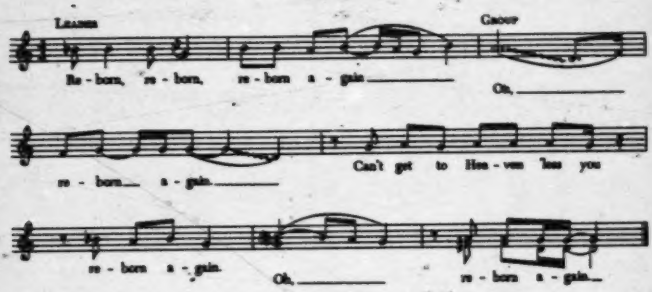
*Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**REBORN AGAIN**




Leader: Won't you reborn Member, won't you reborn again,
Group: Oh, reborn again.
Leader: Well, you must keep a-rollin', got to reborn again,
Group: Oh, reborn again.

Oh, reborn warriors, won't you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Yes you can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh, goin' to the river, gonna take my walk,
Oh, reborn again.
Meet Jesus mother, gonna stand and talk,
Oh, reborn again.

Just let me put on my travelin' shoes,
Oh, reborn again.
I'm goin' to Heaven, gonna carry the news,
Oh, reborn again.

Let me tell you the natural fact,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven, ain't comin' back,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sing and shout,
Oh, reborn again.
There ain't nobody there gonna turn me out,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sit right down,
Oh, reborn again.
Ask Jesus mother for my starry crown,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan is mad and I'm so glad,
Oh, reborn again.
Lost the soul he thought he had,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan he walking like a snake in the grass,
Oh, reborn again.
He always walk in a Christian path,
Oh, reborn again.

Wonder what Satan keep growlin' about,
Oh, reborn again.
He chained up in Hell and he can't get out,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh one of these mornings and it won't be long,
Oh, reborn again.
I'll see some grapes a-hanging down,
Oh, reborn again.

I pick a grape and I suck the juice,
Oh, reborn again.
Sweetest grape I ever taste,
Oh, reborn again.

Reborn, reborn, reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.88]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 533 (869) There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (178) We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 771 178 879 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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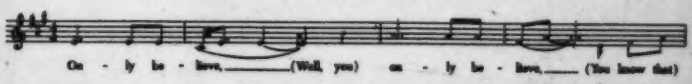
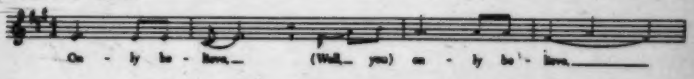
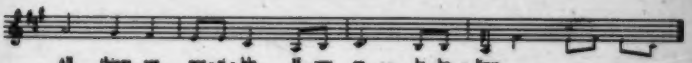
*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

**ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE IF YOU ONLY BELIEVE**



ALTERNATE VERSION




'a) variant

Only believe, (well, you) only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Just trust Him now) only believe, (well, you) only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Keep on prayin', if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Tell the warriors, if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

Only believe (never doubt Him now), only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(He'll be your {mother, father,} if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

**STORIES**

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When we was small, we didn't 'low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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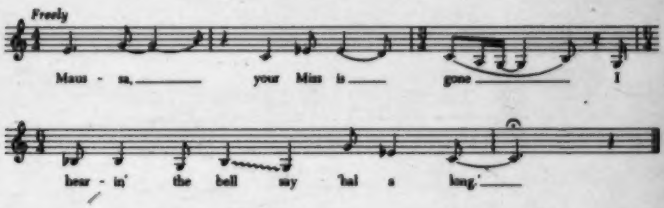
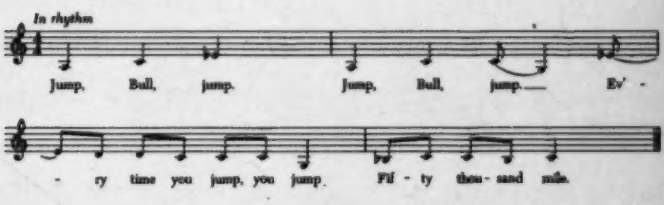
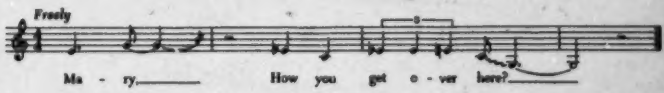
Well the old Devil had a rooster; he was a teller. And as they began to travel, old Rooster get in the Devil face and spur 'em. Say:




Devil say, "How long gone?"
Say, "Long time."
Then he tell the rooster, "Go down yonder and get my old bull that jump fifty mile away." And the Devil get on the old bull back, say:




Well, he made one jump, he jump right by Jack and Mary, and Jack drop one grain corn, and it turn a ocean of water. And all that time it take for that water to dry up, Jack and sister was far away. Then the Devil made a loud cry, saying:



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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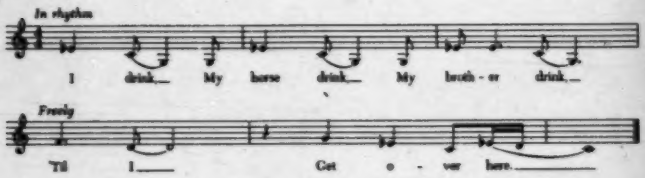
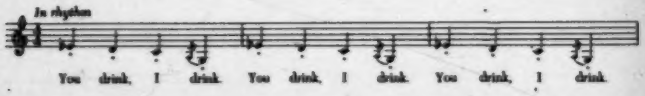
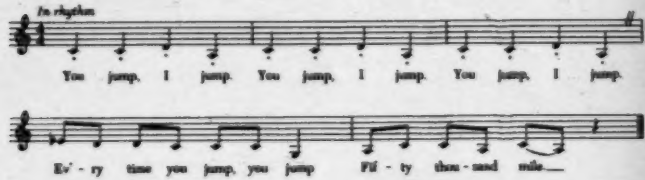
Mary say:




Old Bull say:




He drink, and bust the bull belly loose, and when he think the bull was going fifty thousand mile an hour, the bull couldn't make but five mile an hour. And old Devil take some string and tie the old bull belly up. And all that time Jack and Mary was far away. Then he get on the old bull back and say:




And jump right by Mary and Jack. Then Jack drop another grain of corn, and it turn a whole mountain, 'cross and 'cross the world. Old Devil say:

"Mary,
How you get
Over here?"

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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## BARNEY McCABE

538 We learn some these stories from my uncle, Harry Williams. He was kind of rough, but he really could tell some stories.

539 Once upon a time it was a twin sister and brother. The sister name was Mary and the brother name was Jack. One day they decided to go on a long traveling. But Jack was a wise child and he told Mary to go in the house and ask Mother could we go. Her mother say, "Yes, you could go, but take care." So Jack say, "Wait a minute, Sister," and went to the barn and get four grain of corn. And Mary said to Jack, "What you gonna do with that corn?" Jack said, "In a long while, you will see." So he put the corn in his pocket.

Then before he leave home Jack told his mother, say, "Mama, I got three dogs—Barney McCabe, Doodle-le-doo and Soo-Boy. I going to leave a glass of milk on the table. If you see that glass of milk turn to blood, I want you to turn my dogs loose."

So they went on traveling and all the time wondering what was the end going be. Pretty soon it come dark and they begin to get weary. They knocked at an old lady house. The old lady run to the door, say, "Who is it?"

Jack say, "Me, Mama. Could we spend the night here? 'Cause we far from home and we very tired." Old lady say, "Oh yes, come on in."

All that time she was a witch-craft and the children didn't know it. She fed them and put them to bed. She had a knife she call "Tommy Hawk." After she put the children to bed she began to sharpen it up:

539
533 *In tempo*

Pen - ny, get your knife, Pen - ny, get your knife, Pen -

- ny, get your knife, go shock 'em, shock 'em. Hump_

__ back a Jo - sie back a see An - to - ny,

Ma - ma and your dad - dy tell me so,____

See so, I think it so Tam - a - ram - a - ram.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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539 Children say, "Grandma, what's all that noise? We can't sleep."

She say, "That ain't nothing but your grandma frock-tail switchin' to get your supper hot. You all go back to sleep."

So Jack begin to wonder how they can get out of there. Then he remember the old lady have a room full of pumpkin. Jack takes two pumpkin and put 'em in the bed and cover 'em over, pretend it was he and his sister. Then Jack throw one grain of corn to the window, and it turn into a ladder. Jack and Mary climbed the ladder down and they start traveling for home.

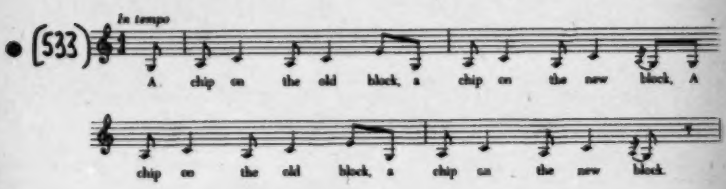
The old lady sharpen her knife faster:

"Penny, get your knife,
Penny, get your knife,
Penny, get your knife, go shock 'em, shock 'em.

Hump back a Josie back a see Antony,
Mama and your daddy tell me so,
See so, I think it so
Tam-a-ram-a-ram."

She didn't hear no noise, so she sneak in the room and chop up the pumpkins in the bed. Then she ran in the kitchen and got a dishpan, and pull back the cover. And when she think she putting the meat in the pan for cook for breakfast, she drop the pumpkin in the pan. And Jack and Mary was long gone.

She get mad, grab Tommy Hawk and flew down on those children. The children drop another grain of corn and it turn a tall pine tree. And Jack and Mary flew up in that tree. The old lady start cut on the tree, say:




Then Jack drop a grain of corn down from the pine tree, and back home that glass of milk turn to blood. Them dogs begin to holler. Jack's mother (533) ran in the yard and turned the dogs loose. Jack say:

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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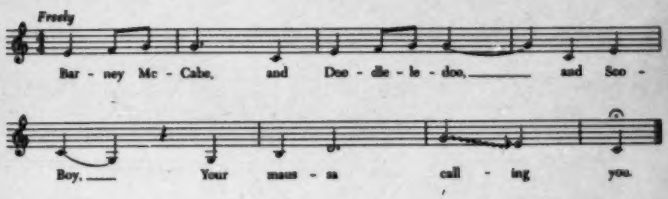
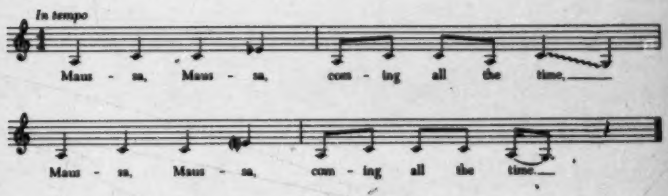



Dogs say:




Old witch say:

"A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block,
A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block."

Every time she chip, the tree lean and lean. Jack call:

"Barney McCabe, and Doodle-le-doo, and Soo-Boy,
Your maussa a'most gone."

Dogs say:

"Maussa, Maussa, coming all the time,
Maussa, Maussa, coming all the time."

539 Jack drop another corn, the last corn, and it turn a bridge. And then when the old witch pull the ax up for take the last chop and chop Jack and Mary in the head, the dogs ran up. Barney McCabe cut her throat, Doodle-le-doo suck her blood and Soo-Boy drag her on the bridge, the bridge bend and that's the way that story end.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

(789) If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

● 533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

(534) And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

(584) My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1980) 1909
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*Mr. Joe Hunter*

**WHAT YOU GONNA DO?**

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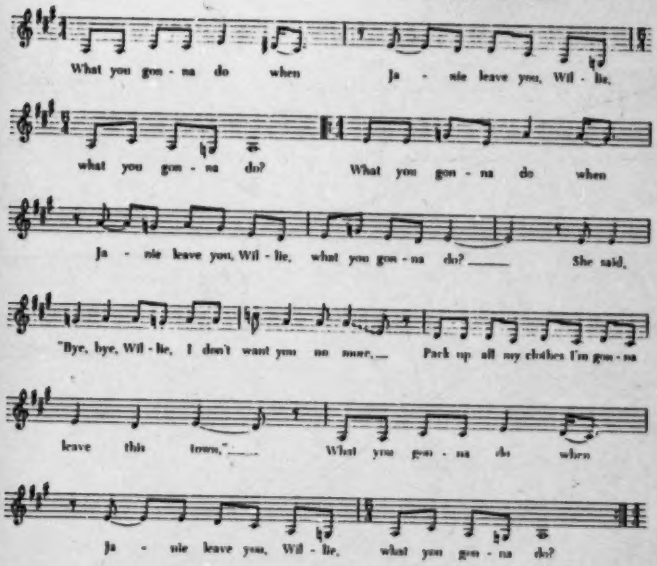


What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, baby, I don't want you no more",
Sitting here crying, Janie, please don't go,
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, Willie, I'm putting you down,
Pack up my clothes I'm gonna leave this town",
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Junie Hunter*

**WATER MY FLOWERS**

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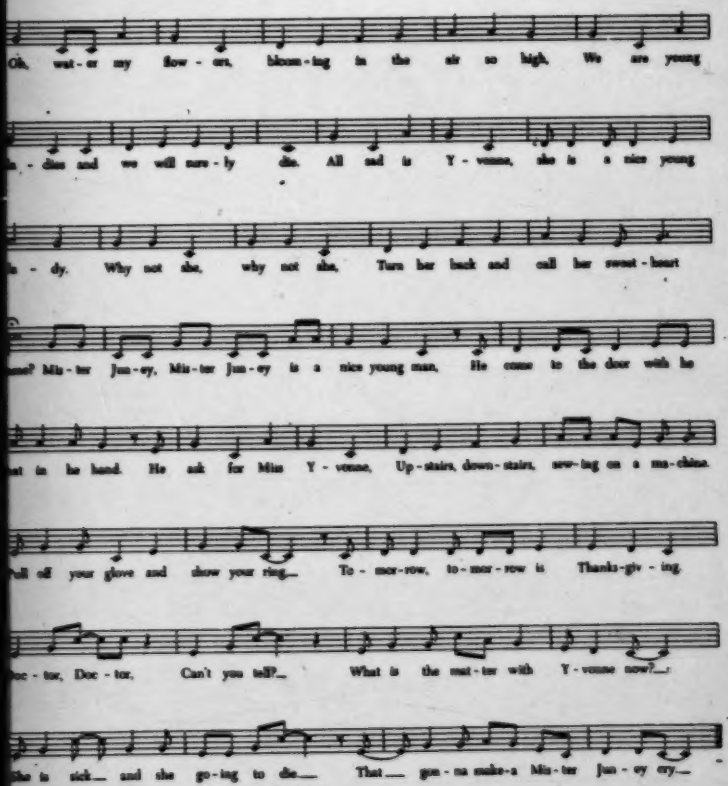

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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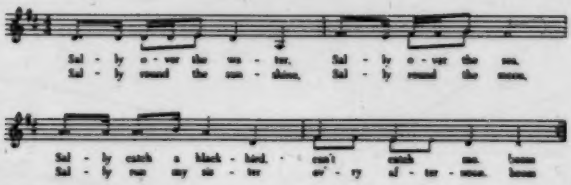
S39

*The Hunter and Pinckney children*

**SALLY ROUND THE SUNSHINE**



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children*

**OLD LADY COME FROM BOOSTER**

533*
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Old la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter, The roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't get egg like she use - ter. Oh, Ma, you look so, Oh, Pa, you look so. Who been here since I were gone?— Two lit - tle boy with the blue cap on.— Hang 'em on a— hick - 'ry stick, Rank - y tank - y— down my shoe, The Buf - fa - lo Boy gon - na buy it back. Pain - y me hip, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me knee, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me leg, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me el - bow, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me shoul - der, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me neck, Rank - y tank - y. On— up to me head,— Rank - y tank - y. Don't— leave me here, Rank - y tank - y.— Old la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter. The roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't tell the news like she use - ter.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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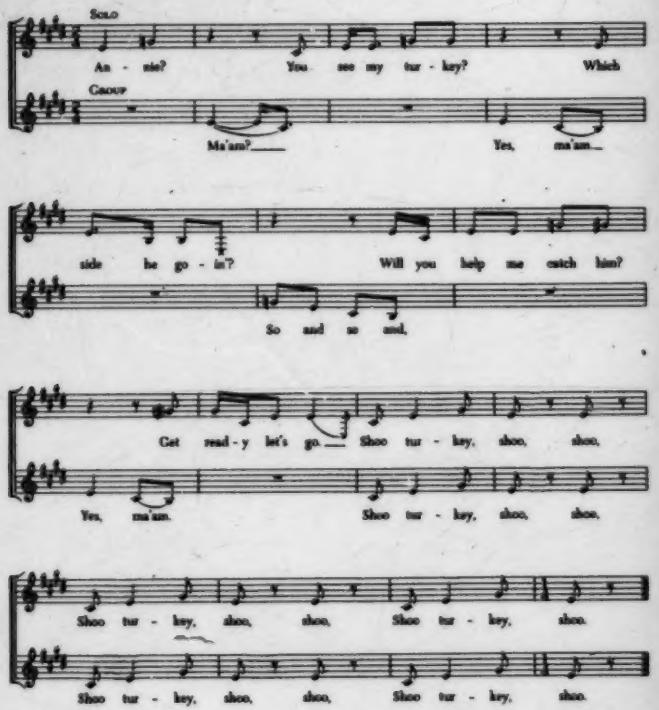
*Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children*

**SHOO TURKEY SHOO**




Clapping pattern also used

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[539]

SOLO: Annie?
GROUP: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
GROUP: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
GROUP: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**TALKIN' 'BOUT A GOOD TIME**

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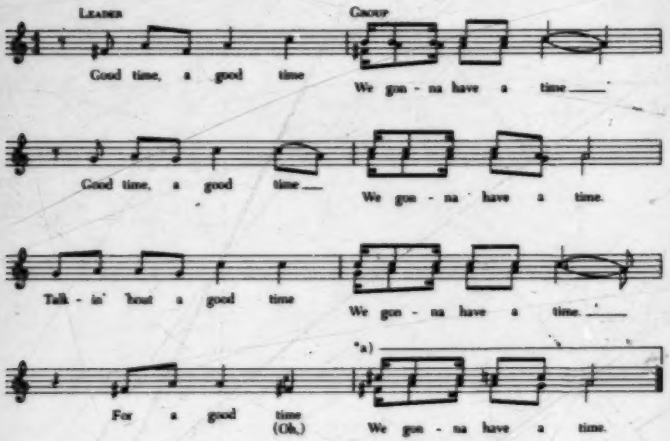


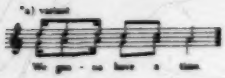


Leader: Singing for a good time,
Group: We gonna have a time,
Leader: For a good time,
Group: We gonna have a time.

Praying for a good time . . . etc.

Let's have a good time . . . etc.

Talkin' 'bout a good time,
We gonna have a time,
For a good time,
We gonna have a time.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Miss Laura Rivers*

**THAT'S ALL RIGHT**

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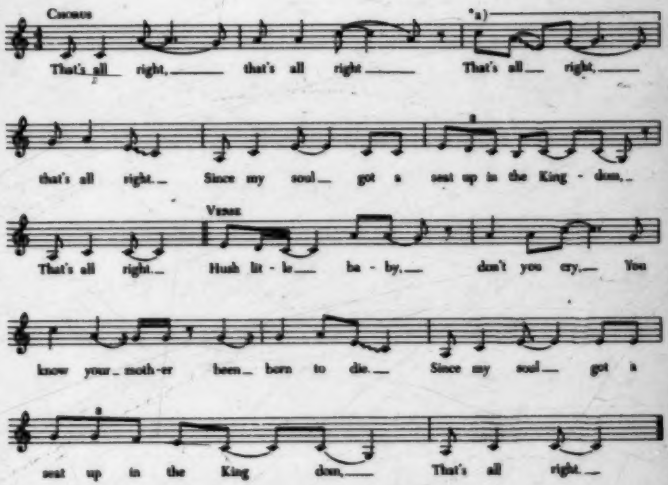

You go brute me, you go scorn me,
You go scandalize my name.
Since my soul go a seat up in the Kingdom,
That's all right.

(Chorus)

One of these mornings, it won't be long,
You ask for me and I'll be gone.
Since my soul . . . etc.

Two white horses side by side,
One of those horses Jesus ride.
Since my soul . . . etc.

(Chorus)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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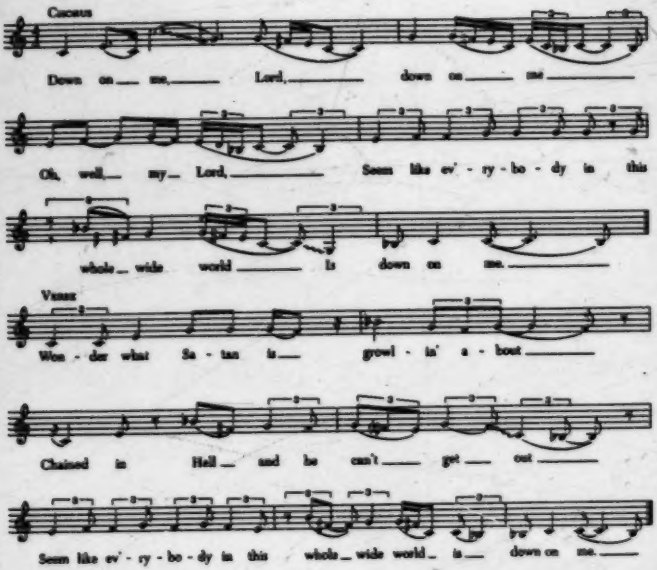
*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

**DOWN ON ME**




I been baked and I been scorned,
I been talked about sure as you're born.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

When I get to Heaven going to sing and shout,
Nobody there going to put me out.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

(Chorus)
Down on me, Lord, down on me.
Oh, well, my Lord, seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

You can talk about me just as you please;
The more you talk the more I'll bend my knees.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

One of these days and it won't be long,
You go look for me and I'll be gone.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter and*
*the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**YOU GOT TO MOVE**

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I got to move, we got to move, We got to
move, we got to move, Oh, when the
Lord, Lord get read - y, you got to move. Oh,

ALTERNATE VERSION

You may be rich, you may be poor, You may be
high, you may be low, But when the
Lord get read - y, you got to move. Oh,

My brother move, my brother move,
My brother move, my brother move.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

O sometime I'm up, sometime I'm down,
Sometime I'm almost to the ground.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

Oh we got to move, we got to move,
We got to move, we got to move.
When the Lord, Lord get ready, you got to move.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*The Moving Star Hall congregation*

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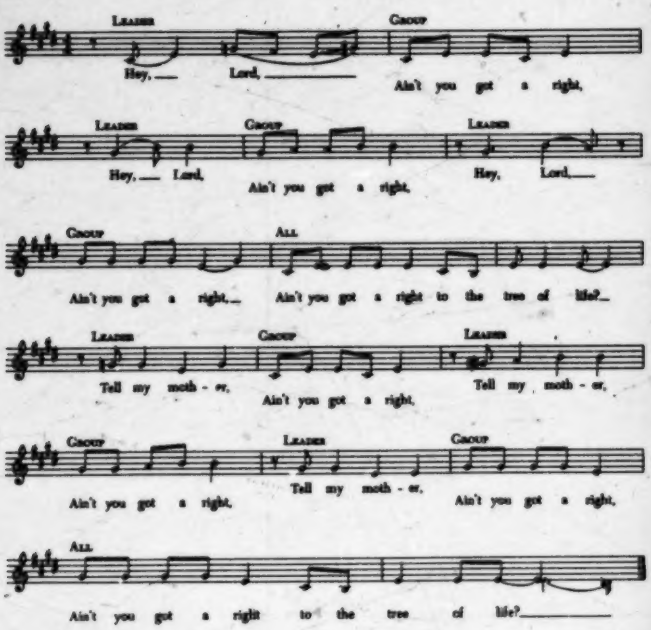
## AIN'T YOU GOT A RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?




Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
All: Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

Tell my children . . . etc.

Tell the world . . . etc.

Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right,
Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right.
Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right,
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

533
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CHORUS

Hold on mem-ber, hold on, um, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

VERSE

Some - time I up, some - time I down, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

CHORUS

Hold on, my dear sis - ter, hold on, Lord, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(ALTERNATE CHORUS)

Hold on, won't you hold on, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(CHORUS)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(VERSE)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(CHORUS)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement. [114] [668]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Myles Horton**

## THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185

The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(895)

Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

(533)

Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I WILL OVERCOME

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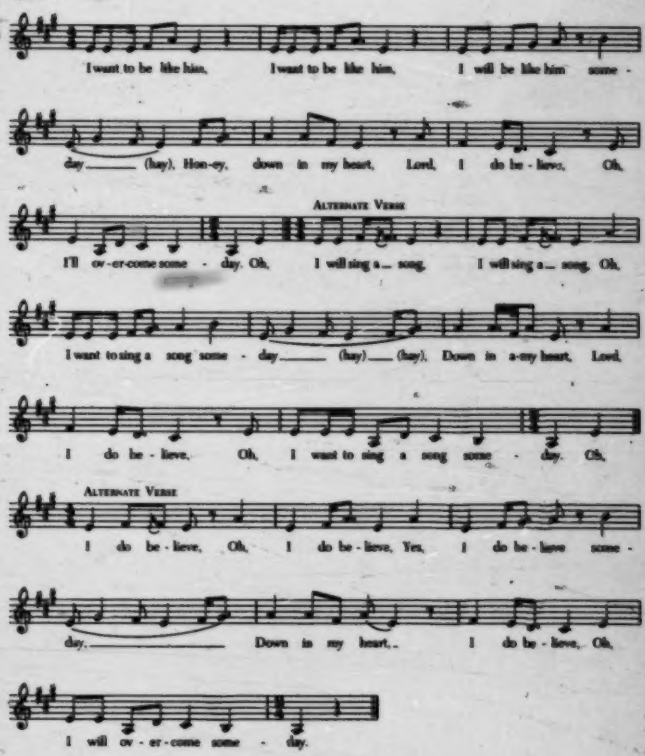


I want to be like him . . . etc.

I will sing a song . . . etc.

I want to walk like him . . . etc.

I want to pray like him . . . etc.

I'll see the king . . . etc.

Oh, I will overcome, I will overcome, I will overcome someday,
Lordy, down in my heart, I do believe, I will overcome someday.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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533 The story of how "I Will Overcome" became "We Shall Overcome" is a fascinating one, and much of the history is in the South Carolina lowcountry area. "I Will Overcome" was widely known in black churches throughout the South. The first time it was used in an organized protest situation was in Charleston in 1945, when the Food and Tobacco Workers were out on strike for five months and had a daily picket line. The striking workers, mainly black women, began to adapt the song to fit their situation. They changed the *I* to *we* and sang, "We will win our rights" and "We will organize" and "The Lord will see us through." Workers from the Charleston situation took the song to Highlander where it became the unofficial theme song for years and was carried to many other picket lines by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander staff. Pete Seeger learned it from Zilphia and began introducing it to northern gatherings and northern audiences. Guy Carawan heard it from Pete and others, and through his work at Highlander, helped pass it back into the southern freedom movement in the early 1960s. From there it went around the world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

533 186 The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying (178) out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

216 186 My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 867 869 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

869 And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as 186 the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for 178 them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the 867 future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older 869 than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to [538] know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang • 533 and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there [534] wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

● 533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

[178] [186]

It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong religion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

771 869

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 794 [796] [888]

In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

791 794

I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

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It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through, when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

791 794 798

It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying. That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. A. C. Jenkins*

## ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or ninę o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
674 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
178 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that.

For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

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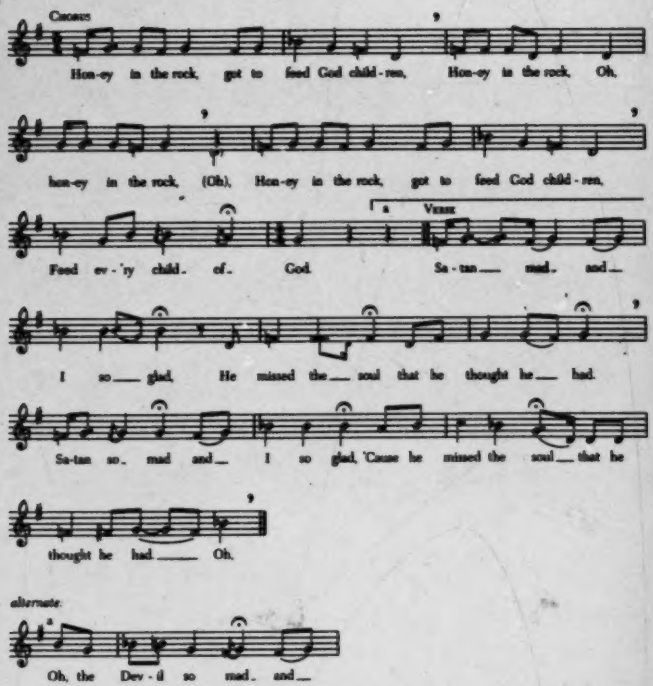
*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HONEY IN THE ROCK



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

●533
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(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking 'long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, got to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

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[p. 233]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

# AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship (668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 533 114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field (P 235-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

668 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins,
533 brought some of us together and told us that a
114 white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife,
529 Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from At-
533 lanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met
545 Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

(P. 285-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

533 Mrs. Hunter, or Ruth Bligen. Benjie would call, "Oh, see God's ark," and everybody would respond, "See God ark . . . Tell me how long . . . See God ark a moving." Every note had a wave to it, a curve of sound loaded with vocal power and emotion. Ruth Bligen always carried the high line and the sound of her singing reached you first, pulling the other, lower lines with her. When the chorus ended, the rhythm changed. What had been double rhythm format moved into three cross times. People rose to their feet, and their feet moved in one time, their hands crossed their foot pattern, and the melody operated at a more intense level on top of, or driven by, this multi-rhythmic activity.

114 Since that first visit I have returned to the island many times to work with Mrs. Hunter and also with Septima Clark and William Saunders, always guided by the work that began with Esau Jenkins' efforts to transform the lives of people of his home community and the cultural research of Guy and Candie Carawan, which went far beyond field collecting. In 1972 I returned to the island for the funeral of Esau Jenkins. I returned also to interview Mrs. Hunter, Septima Clark, and later the tobacco workers who had used "We Shall Overcome" in their union meetings and on the picket lines. On the island it was sung in their traditional (533) song style, complete with the shout and as "I Will Overcome." While working on the Bicentennial (529) Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian, I worked with Rev. Willis Goodwin to bring a congregation and a prayer band from Johns and Yonges islands to the festival during the summer of 1973.

185 THE WORK of Esau Jenkins lives. The work of Septima Clark lives. You can see it in the health centers. You can see it in Bill Saunders' political work and the rise in the number of registered voters. You can see it in the development of Bernice Robinson as a leader, teacher, and candidate for office. Maybe Ethel Grimball is exactly what the school board needs; maybe she is the work of Septima Clark in the eighties and nineties. Today Gerald Mackey's description of teaching in the school system is reminiscent of Septima Clark's struggles with that same system years ago.

[P.236-A]

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491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[159] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
[166] time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

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000 Since their day, many writers have depicted various phases of Negro life and character, ranging from the broad comedy of Octavus Roy Cohen to the sombre psychological sketches of Mrs. Julia Peterkin, the penetrating analysis of DuBose Heyward, and the problem note of T. S. Stribling and Clement Wood.

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197 To come to the Gullah dialect in particular, owing to the peculiar difficulties of representing its sounds in written speech,[11] its appearances in literature have been gradual and infrequent, and up to the last few years have met with comparatively small popular acclaim. What seem to be its only three ante-bellum echoes are Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837;[12] Jupiter, in Poe's "Gold Bug," 1843;[13] and William Gilmore Simms' three stories "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya, or the Loves of the Driver," appearing in 1845 and 1846.[14]

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.533 Within a few years after the close of the war there appeared several important contributions by Northerners whom the war had brought into first-hand contact with Negro plantation music.[15] The earliest was a carefully edited collection, *Slave Songs of the United States*, New York, 1867. These songs were gathered mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, and were accompanied with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the

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[11]This difficulty exists not only for the writers but for the readers as well. It will probably always keep Gullah from becoming as popular as the easier, upland dialects of Harris and Page.

[12]In her Preface Mrs. Gilman says: "Some apology may be necessary, as a matter of taste, for the frequent introduction of the Negro dialect, but the careful reader will perceive that it has only been done when essential to the development of individual character."

[13]The peculiar genius that could create "Ulalume" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" was not fitted to depict a Negro successfully. Jupiter's characterization, however, is better done than his dialect, which is not so bad for Gullah as it would be if it were an attempt at the upland dialect.

[14]Published in the collection entitled *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, in two parts, New York. As to the authenticity of these stories, Simms says in the Prefatory Advertisement: "I have mostly drawn from living portraits, and in frequent instances from actual scenes and circumstances within the memories of man."

[15]See also Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, p. 133.

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[10]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[11]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[12]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'."
[195] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";* also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance** of the primitive Negro Christians

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[539] Whoga, whoga, whogalor, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Cuo me sormber norty sundundilly indelarum.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Olawia! Olawia!
Odatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

*"Mass' Sam tell we ol' Mauxxa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry bat-o home."
Bennett, II, 6.

[583] **For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.
Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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## SPIRITUALS

• 533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism," and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs," shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more plaintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition" and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made," either by

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[152] [113] "For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

"Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

[113] "At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 426, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

"Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

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individuals" or by groups, spontaneously. The latter method is the more interesting because it is one of the rare contemporary situations where communal composition may be observed actually at work: An emotionally charged atmosphere (as religious worship regularly charges it among all but the most sophisticated Negroes) a striking, rhythmic phrase from preacher, leader, or worshiper, and the thing is done. One of the most beautiful of recent spirituals was a spontaneous outburst of petition to the great "Maussa" after the terrific cyclone of 1911 in South Carolina, built around the refrain-appeal, "Lord, don' let de win' blow here no mo'."[38] And during the World War a similarly tense situation produced a like result. As described by a Negro worshiper on that occasion: "Somebody shout out, 'O Lord, we gwine 't'row dat Kizer down,' an' den somebody else catch 'em an' t'row 'em back, an' befo' you know it de whole chu'ch was a-rockin' an' a-prayin'. It was a gran' hymn."[39]

Many of the simplest and most beautiful of the spirituals are cast in this form: that is, a striking leading line with choral repetition and variations. Frequently the words are crude, childish, and inconsequential, but usually both melody and harmony, especially harmony, are rhyth-

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[38]The same authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 189) describe individual authorship as follows: "Among the lowly Negro folk of the South the making of spirituals is still a reality. Every community has its 'composers'. Often they are supposed to possess some special gift of the 'spirit'. From sermon, prayer, and crude folk wisdom they draw ideas and inspiration for their compositions. Sometimes the results are pathetic, but not infrequently there springs up a song which would compare favorably with the old spirituals."

See, also, Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 21.

[39]See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, No. 39.

[40]Two similar instances are thus described by Odum and Johnson (*The Negro and His Songs*, p. 32): "A Negro preacher recently reached a climax in his discourse in the phrase, 'Oh, with the wings of the morning, I'd fly to that heavenly land.' He repeated this a number of times and made gestures with his arms suggestive of flying. His black robe added to the forcefulness of the suggestion and the impression became a part of the song of that church. . . . If a single personality dominates the whole in an expression that appeals to the present sense of fitness, he is the author of a new song. For example, a visiting minister once shouted out during such a scene: 'Oh, the hearse-wheel a-rollin' an' the graveyard opening—ha, ha,' but got no further, for his refrain was taken up by the chorus, and the next day saw a new version of the well-known song."

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See, also, the origin of the song, "O, de ole nigger-driver!" as described by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," *The Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1867, pp. 692, 693. It is from this article that the beautiful "Lay dis body down" spiritual is quoted on page 39.

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533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

533 539 Here are some of the most characteristic:

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 178 814 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been fortunate in having two distinctly preservative influences exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

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belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517

The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871]

This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island.* In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals.**

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This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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*Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled sperrit.*"

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**St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

***St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[a]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much (567) nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. (114) Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[b] They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris- 567 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 138 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery 177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas.[c] But back

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[a]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[b]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[c]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

"For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the (520)

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
114 the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
178 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
179 being." This combination created them; Christianity shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-
zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful, rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[113] On internal evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of 1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[113] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
[522] appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the complement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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[529] scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[113] With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[113] Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[113] See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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Nor must it be forgotten that the Negro is both a splendid actor and a born dramatist: he dramatizes a situation concretely and vividly, and dramatizes himself and his own feelings with equal facility.

All of these factors are to be taken into consideration when dealing with the origin of the spirituals.

But however originated and compounded, spirituals constitute one of the most distinctive additions of the Negro to the culture of America. A leading Negro publicist[16] sums up his race's contributions somewhat as follows: the cake-walk, jazz music, the animal folk-tale, the Blues, and the spirituals. In the minds of many the greatest of all are the spirituals.

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[16]James Weldon Johnson.

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## CONCLUSION

178 538 (533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*,[" besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.]"

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] [83] [171] "Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toas'" he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

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114 Through the kind offices of Chalmers S. Murray, of Charleston and Edisto Island, South Carolina, and Albert H. Stoddard, of Savannah, Georgia, and Daufuskie Island, South Carolina, the doors of their respective islands were opened to me. Their generous assistance will never be forgotten.

[127] To Foresta Hodgson Wood, I am deeply grateful for the many photographs she has generously contributed. To Clara E. Sipprell, Ralph Steiner, Dr. Orrin S. Wightman, Maxfield Parrish, Jr., and others I also give thanks for the use of various pictures.

To Creighton Churchill I am under obligation for his inspiring coöperation and sustained interest.

But for the help generously given by Mary Burnet, of Athens, Georgia, I doubt if this book would ever have been finished. My debt of gratitude to her is immeasurable.

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533 Thanks due these and other friends must not, however, obscure the fact that without the coöperation of the colored singers—the only people qualified through their racial background to present properly the traditional songs—there would have been no occasion for this book or these acknowledgments.

Although Julia Armstrong, of the singing Proctor family, has never told me the half of what she knows, particular thanks are due her for the help she has given since 1915. Her husband, Joe Armstrong, her brother, Willis Proctor, Cornelia and Edith Murphy, and others at the South End of St. Simon's have all aided in resurrecting old songs. Ben Davis, of the North End, comes of another family of singers, and special mention is due him for his loyalty and dependability. Bessie Cuyler, Catherine Ramsey, Peter Davis, Alec Stewart, and Mansfield Jackson have demonstrated the fine spirit on which the successful presentation of this type of music depends. There are other first-rate singers on the island, but the foregoing are singled out because they recognize that the requirements of the group take precedence over those of the individual.

[491] When a causeway was put across the marshes in 1924 and St. Simon's Island was connected with the mainland, we were able to include other Glynn County singers in our "Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia." Among those who have proved their devotion to the slave songs are Jeffry Union and Susyanna Vallion. Several of the children in the Broadfield contingent, trained by Susyanna and her assistants, Clara Roberts, "Coots" Hightower, and Gertrude Cohen, now sing at the Cabin on St. Simon's with the older group. In McIntosh County, Josephine Young is an able exponent of the old-style singing: so are Henry Shaw, Rosa Sallins, Julia Walker, Nancy and Alphonzo Thorpe.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jackson-
115 ville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee
•533 River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society. Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by re-
178 ligious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these
197 strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preservation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

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114 Salem County, New Jersey, where they found sanctuary among the Friends.[4] One of the stations of the underground railroad was located in our community, and the consideration shown the runaway and manumitted slaves caused them to settle there in such numbers that by 1840 they needed, and built, a large two-story church, and, after emancipation, still another. In my childhood they so greatly outnumbered the white voters that we had a colored overseer of the roads. At that time there was no lack of spontaneous music and laughter among them. However, in the late eighties, when a railroad was put through their village, the sophisticated Philadelphia Negroes were enabled to show the country cousins that they were hopelessly out-of-date. Then it was that the dull but stylish hymns of the white man supplanted those of the old régime, and standardized behaviour became the rule.

114 •533 I did not hear the slave songs again until I visited the coast of Georgia in 1909. As we all know, opportunity rarely knocks more than once, and this time I took steps to insure that the songs should not escape me. Herein, I believe, rests my right to know something about them.

The Negroes frankly say that it was a good thing I arrived on St. Simon's when I did, and I know that if I had been there years earlier I could have saved many priceless songs which are now lost. These primitive songs—like the carvings of Africa—had been ridiculed, and the Negroes were ashamed to sing them in the presence of strangers. It took considerable brain-cudgeling to find a way to overcome their feeling that the traditional mode of expression was peculiar and old-fashioned, and to show the singers that many white people recognized its beauty.[5] As can be seen from the photographs illustrating this book, these colored people have regained faith in their birthright—and I hope it will last.

Another question asked me is the reason for avoiding the term "spiritual." To-
(128) day it is applied to almost any religious song in Negro dialect, regardless of its age or

[4] *From the probated will of the Quaker, John Fenwick, it is evident that in 1683 there was one "Black" too many in our settlement. He disinherited his "grand childe Elizabeth Adams totally . . . except the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgrescen against him, me & her poore father, by giving her true repentance & forsakeing yt Black yt hath beene the ruine of her . . .". About 12 miles south-east of Salem is a town called Otheilo and a few miles farther east is Couldtown where Elizabeth and her "blackamoor" are said to have located.*

[5] *For years I tried to think of a way to rekindle interest in the old songs. In the dark of a wintry four A. M., I awakened with the full-blown answer: form a society and admit only those who could sing in the old way. The plan was nothing but good common sense—and it has worked.*

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origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]

I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909, were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

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[6] Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.

[7] Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.

[8] Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro

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175 These transplanted New Englanders were outstanding people, and undoubtedly made their influence felt in South Carolina just as it always has been in Georgia. The center of Revolutionary ideas was in their community at Midway. It sent two signers of the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, and among its notables were six foreign missionaries and eighty-two ministers. When the British burned their church, during the Revolution, the members built another—in 1792—that was a replica of the Congregational churches seen throughout New England; and, when the parishes became counties after the Revolution, they called theirs Liberty County. Although the members of this church—organized in Massachusetts, removed to South Carolina, and then to Georgia—had been in the South for generations, their sympathies were clearly with their Northern co-religionists: their pastors came from New England and one of them was the Calvinist, the Reverend Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Under these conditions it is unlikely that they omitted the use of the *Bay Psalm Book*, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1640), of which the revised and enlarged edition of 1651 was called the *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments*. The first edition having been adopted by nearly every congregation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, there is no reason to believe that it was any less popular with the God-fearing colonists who went to the Southern outposts. The slaves of the group of Puritans who had settled on the Ashley River probably sang *Spiritual Songs*[9] with their owners just as the slaves of their descendants at Midway undoubtedly did. In all likelihood the name "spiritual" struck the fancy of the Negroes, and accounts for its application to the songs of their own composition. Naturally enough these songs had little in common with the hymns sung with the white people, and were used only at such services as took place—apart from the slave-owners—during the week at prayer meeting held at the praise-house or the cabin of a deacon, or at a "settin'-up" or a funeral.

• (538) Before the year 1800 the old hymn book, which had gone through more than

church, but in the South, they have always been welcomed—a survival of an earlier custom. If I had known this when I first went to St. Simon's I could have learned what I needed to find out without the delay to which I was subjected. But I was from the North—and was told nothing about the Negro. Before the first World War pushed the War Between the States into the background, anyone who hailed from New England was suspect if he showed an interest in the colored people. This attitude still exists in certain places on the South Carolina coast. To those who know the unsavory record of Northern carpet-baggers, such a situation is not surprising.

[9] Before 1743. Spiritual Songs for Children, by J. Wright, was published by John Newbery.

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175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)

> Narrow road is Heaven road
> Believer I know
> With here and there a traveller
> Believer I know
> The broad road is Hell road
> Believer I know
> Thousand walk together there
> Believer I know.

(177) It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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Unfortunately our system of notation is inadequate to interpret the Negro's traditional music. For this reason the writers who work in libraries and not in the field, and base their claim of preponderant white influence on book versions and on the singing of students in Negro schools, have the best of the argument. No matter how skillful a musician may be, he is hampered at the start because his interpretation is conditioned by his training and by the limitations imposed by our form of notation.[10] As for the singing of Negro students, it is a known fact that education and folk-music have never been compatible. Under such circumstances the advice given by Thomas P. Fenner in his preface to *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, written in 1873, is the best I know. He tells us "tones are frequently employed which we have no musical characters to represent. . . . It is of course impossible to explain them in words, and to those who wish to sing them, the best advice is that most useful in learning to pronounce a foreign language: *Study all the rules you please, then—go listen to a native.*" In addition to listening to a Negro, I would suggest writing down the words as sung—not as recited. With the best intention in the world the Negro

[10] N. G. J. Ballanta, in an explanation of his idea of the need of a seventeen-tone octave to correctly express African music, tells us why the Western scale is unfit for use in African melodic expression. He believes that "a different system of tuning should be adopted to satisfy the demands of African musical expression, as the values given to notes tuned to equal temperament of twelve divisions to the octave, however much they may be of advantage to the western musician for his system of harmony, do not at all agree with the values given to those same diatonic steps when sung by the African. The same thing is true of Negroes in the United States whose singing of their native songs has a better effect when unaccompanied by the piano than when accompanied. . . .

"Theoretically speaking, Western musicians agree that there are seventeen different sounds in the octave to be provided for; but, by the system known as 'Enharmony,' two sounds are represented by one key known as the sharp and flat to adjacent keys."

Mr. Ballanta goes on to say that "the Africans employ Septimal Harmony in a great majority of cases and there is no reason why they should be made to give way to the Western system of tertian harmony by employing the present tuning of the piano."

In an address made some years ago, Mr. Ballanta stated that "The æsthetic value of the Spirituals arises from the fact that they are conceived and sung in harmony. This fact has baffled many musicians, as the folksongs of other peoples are conceived in unison. The reason is that the Negro in singing, as his African brother, thinks not of a scale which is simply a succession of individual tones, and which forms the basis of the folksongs of other people, but of a chord where there are three distinct and individual tones sounding at the same time, and in combination producing a harmonious effect."

This interesting explanation agrees with what W. E. Ward tells us in "Music of the Gold Coast" concerning the African's amazing ability to carry on "five simultaneous rhythms, the melody and four percussion parts." On St. Simon's Island, three simultaneous rhythms are quite common—the melody, hand clapping, and tapping of the feet or heels on the floor.

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533 126 never speaks the words of a song as he sings them.[11] To catch what is sung is difficult, but it is the only way that the tricky rhythm of a song can be learned. Any person who wishes to give an authentic presentation must be respectful of the older Negroes' disregard of our rules of spelling, pronunciation, and punctuation, and above all resist the temptation to use a formula. As the editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* say in their preface: "The remarks upon the dialect which follow have reference . . . almost exclusively to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island [South Carolina]. They will, no doubt, apply in a greater or less degree to the entire region of the southeasterly slave States, but not to other portions of the South. It should also be understood that the corruptions and peculiarities here described are not universal, even here. There are all grades, from the rudest field-hands to mechanics and house-servants, who speak with a considerable degree of correctness." These words apply perfectly to the types of dialect found on the Georgia coast, and explain the lack of consistency in the songs of this collection.

533 Few people realize that the slaves—like their African cousins—sang on every possible occasion. Religious ceremonies, as well as work and play, were all conducted to music. Naturally there were times when singing was a solo matter—as over the wash-tub—but the Negroes have always been gregarious (private life as we know it has never been popular among them), and it is no wonder their singing reflects this characteristic. In consequence it is particularly important to know how each of the two or three outstanding singers handles his contribution to the effect produced by the group. It seems to me that Creighton Churchill has succeeded admirably in conveying this idea—but as he frankly says, the whole problem is one of approximation. When it comes to reproducing peculiarities of African music and tones for which we have no symbols, we are out of luck. As Fenner indicates, the best we can do is to listen to an accredited singer.

Those who sing in the traditional manner never appear to take breath when

[11] Syllables are frequently divided arbitrarily to suit the rhythmic needs of a tune. Sometimes the last syllable of a word is attached to the one-syllable word that follows, and whole syllables are occasionally omitted. The slave disliked certain sounds in the English language. Th was difficult for him to pronounce, so was final g, and he dropped an r whenever it interfered with fluency. It is no wonder that a white man cannot compose an authentic slave song, for the transplanted African thought in the speech pattern of his native land, and employed his limited English in that fashion. He also disregarded genders as he did in Africa. On Hilton Head, South Carolina, the dialect of the Negroes sounds—at a little distance—like a foreign tongue because of its curiously different emphasis and intonation. Close at hand, however, the meaning becomes clear enough.

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533 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 114 178 177 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

[12] A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.

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533 114 177 178 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

[13] As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."

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English language are distorted to fit the rhythm of Negro music: where the white man would sing, 'Go down, Moses,' the Negro chants, 'Go down, Moses' . . . .These identical accents are found in even the wordless vowel refrains of native African songs."

Many more questions will crop up than have been touched upon in this section, but I hope that the most important are answered in these explanatory words.

*Lydia Parrish*

*St. Simon's Island, Georgia*
*December 1, 1941*

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533 since allegedly new "spirituals" keep turning up in many quarters. (Mrs. Parrish's theory of the origin of this word is worthy of remark: that it was bestowed as a result of the proselytizing of Puritans from Dorchester, Massachusetts, who brought the Bay Psalm Book with them to Dorchester, South Carolina, with ensuing consequences.) But are these fresh creations? Repeatedly, songs believed to be new have proved to be songs well-known in some other place than the one in which they were found. Thus it transpired, in the case of a certain "new" American Negro song, that it was the precise equivalent of a chant well-known and still heard in Africa! In this connection the background of African origins of American Negro song, dance, religion, and ceremonial is of special interest, and a further testimony to the soundness and the zeal with which the author has conducted her
121 investigations. Is it, then, that the singer who improvises, as he believes, in reality
533 draws subconsciously upon a deep well of racial experience and memory? The idea is extremely suggestive. And if this should be the case, how far does the identical principle apply to the acts of individually developed composers? Thus the peasant Dvořák turns with much simplicity to Czech folk song for a musical expression which is natural, rather naïve, and fresh and eloquent; while a Sibelius, a composer of more subjective and complex mind, composes, as a young man, the *Kullervo* Symphony, and then goes into the forests of Karelia and hears the Finnish peasants singing the runes of the Kalevlaka in phrases similar, in spirit and contour, to the ones from which he has made his score. One goes farther up the creative spiral, and discovers the stylistic and spiritual qualities of the folk songs of races transmuted in the music of a Mozart, a Beethoven, a Verdi, or a Wagner. In this sense the folk song of a race is all-inclusive. It would then appear that however highly developed the individual speech of a great composer, his expression, in proportion to its sincerity, is in essence that of his forebears and his environment. It is important to bear this
533 aspect of Mrs. Parrish's studies in mind—important not only as it bears upon her earnest and greatly needed effort to restore to its proper place in art the uncorrupted song of the American Negro, but also in its bearing upon the cultural present and future of the American people.

533 How significant the relationship is can be realized if in the first place we dis-
114 pense with the misleading and ridiculous theory that Negro religious music is an imitation or variation of the hymns of the white. That is a most unfortunate product of pedantry, sophism, or racial prepossession, as the case may be. It is a nonsense which should long since have been dispersed by the plain evidence of ordinary hu-

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533 114 man cars and the simplest intelligence. But it has stuck in various quarters, and been echoed by those willing to sit between library shelves—or not even in such learned quarters—and fit facts to prepossessions, or let others do their thinking for them.

Now if this were merely a doctrine and refuge for the narrow-minded, it would have done no particular harm to anyone but themselves. The unfortunate thing is the manner in which the doctrine is inculcated, in the name of education, in the mind of the Negro; and especially in the mind of the Negro teacher who must lead his own people to "enlightenment." What is to be said, not of that teacher, but of those who have taught him, or her, to say that, of course, if the Negro students in the class can't learn to sing their songs as they should—i.e., as ancestral tradition and spirit and style dictate—they must be "corrected." Anyone who has listened, first to the singing of Negroes naturally and inimitably expressing themselves in song, and then hearkened to the vitiated and Bowdlerized versions of these same songs, conventionally harmonized, rhythmed, and performed by a frocked Negro choir, will know without further inquiry the profound and inescapable difference between Negro folk music and the material it is supposed to emulate, and will say amen to the indignant words of Mrs. Parrish, to the effect that, while slavery of the body is terrible enough, slavery of the mind may be an even deeper wrong and a greater destruction.

533 One wonders, indeed, if the Negro composer can ever arrive who will reveal in an individual way the genius of his race, under these well-nigh insuperable obstacles to sound education and a liberating development. How is that composer to be freed, instead of inhibited, in the expression of what is within him? If such a development ever does occur, we as the American people will have evolved, for at least one phase of our expression, a music of new potencies and horizons, of which, as the author of this book observes, there is crying need in the whole world of sophisticated modern composition today. In the meantime, for the white musician as well as his darker colleague, it is of the utmost importance to realize the strength that there is in the product of Afro-American folk music, to conserve it in its original essence, and to understand its real values.

000 One can go farther. One can say that the principle involved has a vital bearing upon future cultural developments of the world after the present war. The optimists among us—and the writer is one of them—see in this conflagration, not only an end of at least some of the terrors which have held back the social development of

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## *Introduction*

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This book of Mrs. Parrish's is a singularly sincere and valuable contribution to the subject of Afro-American song. It is first-hand work with an excellent background. The data are the result of personal experience of Negro song at its sources. The approach is that of a writer who by fortunate circumstance was peculiarly equipped for her studies. Her first experience of the Negroes and their music was that of the girl in a Quaker community whose Abolitionist tendencies had made their locality first a station of the Underground Railroad in slave times, and later a haven where ex-slaves gathered and sang. The vitiating influence of the white teacher bent upon uplifting and de-racing the Negro was not to be felt where the blacks greatly outnumbered the whites, and where the whites, being Quakers, gave music a wide berth in their religious services, permitting the Negro to sing his songs in his own native and unashamed way. Nor, until the eighties, were these singers made self-conscious or musically corrupted by the sophisticated Negroes of the near-by city. They were heard by a young girl at the most impressionable period of her life. The quality of the original songs and the way they were sung left indelible memories.

Many years later, Mrs. Parrish found herself the chatelaine of a home on St. Simon's Island on the coast of Georgia, in a district which proved a veritable sanctuary of Afro-American music, and from which her investigations branched out into neighboring territories of the coasts and islands of Georgia and South Carolina, eventually reaching the Bahamas and Haiti. It is probable that the first slaves transported to America were landed near the place which became her Southern home. The beginnings of one of the most mysterious and fruitful amalgamations of racial musical elements that music knows may well have been here.

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How old are these folk songs? And are they still being produced? This last is a question of great importance, and not only where this one issue is concerned. The answer concerns the entire evolution of the musical art. Mrs. Parrish believes that the body of the American Negro's music accumulated within a period, roughly, of one hundred and fifty years. There are those who would dispute this statement,

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000 the entire human race and the nations thereof, but a burning up of the rubbish of an ideology based upon the conception of racial ascendency. That dark and medieval doctrine is not as new as it may seem, or as old as to have faded from the subconscious of the most advanced peoples today. In a large degree, at least, it is going to go. It is going by the board, as these lines are written, in February of 1942, after Pearl Harbor, and after the fall, so perilously near extinction of white supremacy in the Far East, of Singapore. Other peoples than the English-speaking nations, with that hitherto immovable conviction of superiority—which they shared with western Europe—are going to take a hand, and a powerful one, following the debacle of totalitarianism, in the liberated expressions of peoples. That is going to affect art, greatly to its advantage. The deep, but narrow, chauvinistic, and exhausted cultures of a few small nations have come to the end, at least temporarily, of their creative resources. New blood, new spirit is needed, and history is seeing to it that, under the most tragic circumstances, it is being supplied. These processes will also apply to America, and to the very essential broadening of our perspectives, and our half-conscious, extremely costly emergence from slavery of many kinds—and perhaps to confinements of mind, which have made so difficult and so rare American creative achievement in music. Let emancipation, of a real and not an affected or sentimental kind—but a real emancipation of ideas and of culture—begin at home.

533 199 It is, however, not to be assumed from the foregoing, any more than from Mrs. Parrish's pages, that in acknowledging the unique and unparalleled contribution of the Negro, we can overlook or minimize the white influences which have contributed to the quality of his song. Clearly and incontrovertibly, the "spiritual"—as other types of Afro-American folk music—is of Negro origin. No white composer or hymnal has produced anything like it. At the same time, such a music would never have come into existence if the Negro had not been brought here in bondage, with all the concomitant emotional, religious, and artistic consequences of that tragic experience. Here is a fusion of spiritual and musical forces not to be duplicated in the 533 music of any other land—and this though all folk music, as it evolves through the centuries, is to be found to consist of the interweaving of various racial and melodic elements. But in no other folk music than America's is there to be discovered such a collision of dissimilar forces as in this American blend. Nor has there materialized such a product in any other country where whites and blacks assembled. Special types of folk song predominate in the most isolated communities, just as the folk songs of the British Isles have existed, uncontaminated, and for centuries, in isolated

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533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

533 128 126 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

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000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or *ex cathedra* musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

Olin Downes

*New York City*
*February 16, 1942*

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CHAPTER ONE

## *Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation*

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

533 177 178 The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On 533 the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration provided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might 177

[175] [1] *In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.*

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never have come into existence. Like those that accompany the primitive African dance called the "ring-shout," they might have continued to be primarily concerned with rhythm, which represents Africa's idea of music, just as melody represents ours. Rhythm, in fact, may well be called the heart-beat of true Negro music, for it is based upon the natural beat of the pulse and its even division of tempo.

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The question as to the identity of the composers of these songs lends itself to a more definite answer, from the accepted fact that folksongs everywhere represent the voice of a people rather than the creation of any one person. Those of the Negro are no exception.

Many Negro preachers and evangelists claim the composition of certain modernized "ballets" [2] and spirituals, but, on investigation, their assertions prove to be based upon the composition of new verses rather than new tunes—all of which fits the idea that folk melodies are traditional, and are looked upon as common property. The African technique may also account for the inability of the white man to sing like the Negro. The latter clearly possesses an intuitive knowledge of the song-form of Africa which enables him to weave polyphonic effects into familiar songs, and to follow acceptably a leader in those he has never heard before. In the old days his gift was such that he could sing extemporaneously—like a bird—on any and every occasion. Without a system of notation, however, we have no means of knowing how much credit was due the creative ability of the individual singer, and how much belonged to communal tradition. The word of white musicians who have recognized in Africa the ancestors of such songs as "I Ain' Got No Fr'en' in This Worl' but the Lord" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" also obliges us to be skeptical of claims of any kind—oral or printed, individual or sectional—as to their composition.

A few years ago a Northern Negro composer made the assertion that "new spirituals are born every day." The news was widely publicized, but he was unfortunate in his choice of an example: the words he gave in illustration belonged to a song that was popular on the coast of Georgia long before he was born. Recently I saw in print that "Ride on, Conquering King" was first sung on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Perhaps it was, yet the fact would be difficult to prove for the song is known throughout the southeastern states and in the Bahamas. Until we are more familiar with the distribution of these songs, and until we know more about the great store of folk music said to exist in Africa, it behooves us to be wary of making positive statements, unless we deliberately choose this method of getting at the truth

[2] Ballads. *In the seventeenth century, the two words were often confused.*

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533 through the corrections that are likely to follow—which may perhaps be a quicker way.

As already mentioned, the lack of a system of musical signs is a serious handicap which interferes with a better knowledge of the authentic slave songs, and makes any estimate of their age pure guesswork. Nevertheless, we do know that 533 175 twenty blacks from Guinea were sold from a Dutch man-of-war to the tobacco planters of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Sometime between that date and, let us say, 1760, these songs probably assumed the characteristics they now bear, for they appear to have become as crystallized by 1776 as folksongs ever are. But unless old church or family records turn up describing the musical reaction of the slaves to their owners' interest in the salvation of their souls, we are unlikely to find out when, how, or where the songs originated.

533 The slave songs or "ant'ems," [3] as they were sometimes called in Georgia before the Civil War and are called in the Bahamas to this day, may have resulted from a spark of divine fire; and the blacks, like so much tinder, may have carried them far and wide through the agency of the slave markets or the removal of the planters from one state to another. Then again, they may have been the outcome of nothing more than an elaboration of simple African themes under the influence of the richer harmonies of the Colonial planters. In other words, the tunes may represent a gradual development over a period of a hundred and fifty years, rather than a full-blown inspiration.

175 533 For all we know, the songs may have originated in Virginia, for there were two hundred thousand blacks in the state at the time of the first census in 1790. It is possible, however, that South Carolina provided the nursery, as the majority of the Negroes in the coastal section of that state and Georgia who today sing primitive "shout" songs and spirituals are Baptists, and Charleston was one of the first proselyting centers of that denomination in the Colonies between 1684 and 1746. It is on record that the zealous efforts of William Screven caused the Baptist principles to be "widely disseminated throughout that region" and the preponderance of Negro Baptists in all the Low Country of South Carolina and Georgia indicates the success of his activities. But we have only historical data to bolster up any of these suppositions, and the chances are that details concerning the origin of the songs will never be learned.

[3] *Old English for anthem. Diana, from Turk's Island, B. W. I., snorted when I called "Study War No Mo'" and "Who Built the A'k?" spirituals. "Them's not spirituals, them's ant'ems!"*

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Evidence of their pre-Revolutionary existence found in Professor C. L. Edwards' *Bahama Songs and Stories* led me to several of the out islands for the purpose of verification. I discovered that Professor Edwards' book included many tunes and verses still sung, though not consecutively, throughout the "Black Border" of South Carolina and Georgia—a fact explained by the author when he says: "The first settlements were in some cases made by families of loyalists who fled from the American colonies during the Revolution." Miss Mary Moseley, in her *Bahama Handbook*, states that the number of whites and Africans was about equal before the arrival of the American loyalists with their slaves—an influx which doubled the white and trebled the Negro population. Elsewhere, Miss Moseley tells us that the slaves numbered from six to seven thousand, and that the Caicos Islands were originally settled by loyalist refugees from Georgia. Stark's *History of the Bahamas* gives further information about the Georgia contingent: "At the close of the American Revolutionary War, twelve families of loyalists settled here with from two to three hundred slaves; previous to that time there was not more than thirty acres of land cleared in all the Caicos." [4]

Such references explain why "much community of both poetical and musical phrase" came to exist between the songs given in Professor Edwards' collection and those found in sections from which the loyalists fled at the time of the Revolution. In H. E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs*, their common origin appears to be overlooked in the assertion that the Bahama songs "show a higher development than do the slave songs of the States"—a fact which is undeniably true of those found in books, but not of those that have escaped, through isolation, the corrupting influence of such Western music as the Negroes usually hear.

The remoteness of the Bahama out islands accounts for the preservation of the genuine eighteenth-century Negro melodies; and on one of the islands may still be heard the tune that accompanied the "ring-play" called "Emma, You My Darlin'," done on their knees—forty years ago—by the barefooted Negro children of St. Simon's Island. How this game song as well as many of the religious songs given in *Bahama Songs and Stories* came to exist on such widely separated islands as those of the Bahama group and St. Simon's may be explained by local history in two ways.

[4] *Diana, from Turk's Island, told me one of the Caicos Islands was near her old home. Her sister lives there, and I could get plenty of "ant'cms" from her. Bethell, in* The Early Settlers of the Bahamas, *lists the names of one quarter of the two thousand loyalists who took up land on the various islands of the group.*

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The first possibility is that they arrived in both places from the mainland of South Carolina. In 1795, a few years after the exodus of South Carolina and Georgia loyalists to the Bahamas, Major Pierce Butler gave up his estate on the Ashley River near Charleston and established about eight hundred slaves on his rice plantation on Butler's Island and his near-by cotton plantation on the "North End" of St. Simon's. Or the songs may have come from Savannah, via Nassau, with the entourage of Captain Alexander Wylly, a loyalist, who was obliged to flee from Georgia to the Bahamas immediately following the Revolution. However, when England began to consider the abolition of slavery in her colonies, this gentleman—who apparently had slaves to lose—became indignant and returned to Georgia. After he had fought against his friends and relations and suffered exile, it seemed outrageous to him that he should be robbed of his property. The fact that a thriving trade existed at that time between Nassau and Darien, only a few miles—by water—north of St. Simon's, and the ease with which he could transport his family and his belongings to this island, probably account for his choosing it as a final resting-place.

In addition to the circumstantial proof of the age of the songs given by history, there is also evidence of continuity of development in the singing of such old Bahama Negroes as Elvira Albury of Harbor Island, born in 1849, and Isabella Bean of Eleuthera, born before 1860, and of such centenarians as Liverpool, born on St. Simon's in 1828, and Janey Jackson, also born on St. Simon's in 1826—to say nothing of Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County in 1844. At the same time it would be reassuring to have more references in books concerning the character of the songs of the slaves. William Bartram provides in a brief passage in his *Travels* the only eighteenth-century description of Negro music I have been able to find.[5] Apparently he was favorably impressed with what he heard and saw on a model plantation in Georgia, on the banks of the Savannah River. In a description of life on board a slave ship that occurs in *Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Slaver* (1827–1847), there is presented in the following words a pleasanter picture of the Middle Passage than is usually given us: "During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed while on deck to unite in African melodies which they always enhance by an extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle." This short paragraph contains the only admission I have seen in ante-bellum books that the slaves brought their "melodics" with them. (Illustration 6).

[5] "*The sooty sons of Africa, forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung the virtues and beneficence of their master in songs of their own composition.*" (April, 1776)

A. [For Illustration 6, see Category 142, plate facing p. 33--Analyst]

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Of all the descriptions of slave music that have come down to us, there is none to equal in closeness of observation those given by Fanny Kemble in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation*. The fact that she was a musician as well as an actress no doubt accounts for the keenness of her perception.[6] The lines that follow have been so widely quoted that I hesitate to give them again, yet it would be unfair to leave them out of such an account as this, since they apply so perfectly to the singing of the descendants of the very slaves who inspired them.

"The high voices all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these . . . performances. With a very little skillful adaptation and instrumentation, I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make the fortune of an opera."

Although Liverpool, the last of the Pierce Butler slaves, claimed to remember his former mistress, her anti-slavery views [7]—voiced to the slaves and the free alike—clearly fell on deaf ears, for the patriarchal Negro lost no opportunity to tell what a fine master he had, and when explaining that he was "Butler born," he invariably added, "an' Butler I shall be until I die." Seated on the whiffletree bar of his ox cart, (Illustration 4)A accompanied by a few descendants of other Butler slaves, this Negro with the courtly dignity of the Old South gave such a dramatic demonstration of ante-bellum singing for the benefit of his Maussa's granddaughter, Lady Butler, as the actress herself would have approved. With whole-hearted fervor and more accuracy and sweetness of tone than one would have expected from a centenarian, Liverpool proved what I have so often noticed: that primitive Negro music is more dependent upon the perfection of its rhythm and the precision that a good leader can inspire in the responses of the chorus, than upon the virtuosity of the individual.

In the Negroes' lack of concern for mere sweetness of sound as an end—with their major interest invariably shown in rhythm, in the melodic balance of a song, and in the performance of the group as a whole—can be seen the same fundamental approach as is displayed in primitive African sculpture. Some examples, dug up by Leo Frobenius at Ife, on the Niger River, are believed by him to belong to the tenth century. This date is of interest in giving an idea of the age of the African cul-

[6] It is unfortunate, however, that her capacity for self-identification led her astray when the atrocity tales told by her husband's slaves aroused her emotions.

[7] Her Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838–39, was first published, for purposes of propaganda, in 1863.

A. [For Illustration 4, see Category 142, plate facing p. 32--Analyst]

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tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe." [8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

[8] *In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 19.*
[9] *Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.*

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123 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
533 so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13).A to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25).B Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
177 tude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
178 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race
177 since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
178 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor *dolefully* informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A, [For Illustration 13, see Category 184, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]

B, [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

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where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

533 But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

535 If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

[12] *The late Howard E. Coffin.*
[13] *Mrs. W. E. Clifton*

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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require the aid of rhythmic songs.

[243] [412] [171]

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

535 533 [177]

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

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In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

535 533 539

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

533

535 171

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

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000 excitement that may lead to such exaltation as few white people ever see. It is an unforgettable experience, rare in these days of practical religion when all miracles are scientifically explained.

533 I notice that men are particularly partial to the work songs, of which the shanties [16] of the black stevedores are the most amusing. When a plantation is near a navigable river or salt water, songs like "Stevedore's in trouble, Carry 'im to the Aly-mo," and "Sandyanna" may possibly be heard. Both carry in their titles the date of their inception, and obviously hark back to the period of the Mexican War. Others bring in Australia and Rio along with "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla Gal—Go 'round the Horn" and suggest the period of the windjammer.

At The Mills on the west side of St. Simon's—in the eighteen-eighties—the Inland Waterway was filled with sailing vessels from all parts of the world.[17] These were loaded with lumber that had been floated down the Altamaha; but, as Cap'n Joe, the crew leader, says, so little lumber moves these days that the songs that helped the stevedores to handle the great "sticks" are well-nigh forgotten. A pity to let one of them be lost.

[184] Then there are the "rags," the "fiddle" or "sinful" songs. These may be plentiful in the interior; but on the coast, where the Negroes are apparently more religious, they have been the most difficult to locate.

533 198 Where there are wide fields, musical half-yodeled calls often bring "'sponses" from laborers a mile away. When a field needs to be burned over, a sail is flapping idly, or rice is to be fanned, you may hear a Negro "calling the wind": "Co' win'! Co' win'! Co'! Co'!" A prolonged whistle follows:

—in the African manner of calling the rain.[18]

533 534 If a plantation is sufficiently remote, and the owner is ultra-modern in his taste, such a jazz band may be organized as has not been heard in many a year. It is only necessary to call for the services of those who can still "rap the bones" (real bones of a thickness and length suitable for manipulation between the middle fingers,

[16] Or chanteys—as some prefer to call them.
[17] Julia Armstrong tells me they were lined up "like sardines in a box."
[18] A gramophone record of a Togoland rain invocation is astonishingly similar.

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533 534 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as [202] we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

[21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section* [175] *prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

[22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay* [171] *of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

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533 545 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the Coastal Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight. [434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 545 177 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

533 545 [434] [187] Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

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533 in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

> My God is a rock in a weary lan'
> A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
> A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
> Shelter in a time of storm.[22]

What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

[22] An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.

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000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 171 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

533 177 178 It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio programs. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

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181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
• 533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
181 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing some-
177 thing that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
[123] indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
181 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned
177 by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[779] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14)[A], it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
[771] except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

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195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19), and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms. [533]

538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A, [For Illustration 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

567 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who 322 could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 342 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Inca- 567 chee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 322 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- 322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21).A Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure, enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the 517

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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461 517 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in mind that Art for Art's sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this [177] attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

•533 17 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of research employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be 533 114 17 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

## *African Songs*

533 171

### FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

[177] The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

[51] Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.

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from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

## 2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she [32] shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

[32] One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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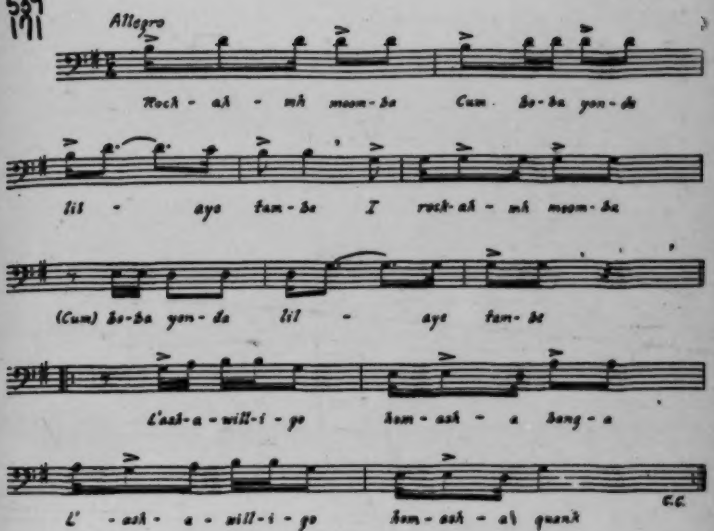


[p.49]

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This song and the one following evidently had a common origin. Perhaps "Ole Dublin" and "Gullah Ben" came from the same part of Africa, or were friends in Liberty County. Both songs are suggestive of the rhythm of the "ring-play":

Wa'k[23] Bil-le Au-ba
Be bul-o
Pretty fine lady
Be bul-o

I WOK OM A MO-NA

The following song was sung by Gullah Ben, who—like Dublin—came from Africa. He taught it to Ben Delegal, who in turn taught it to Amelia Dawley:

Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wok om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa williga sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa williga dwellinda quenk.
Hassa williga sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa williga dwellinda quenk.
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa williga sehowyh quenda here
Hassa williga dwellinda quenk.
Hassa williga sehowyh quenda here
Hassa williga dwellinda quenk.

[23] Pronounce "Wa'k" to rhyme with "rock."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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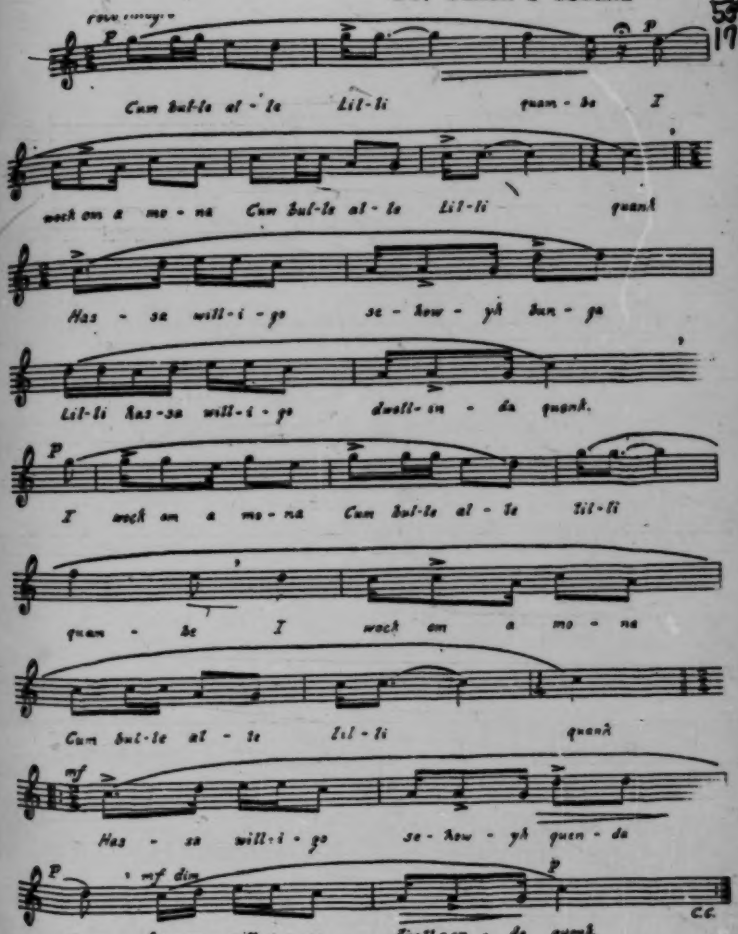


[p.49]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## BYUM BY-E

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The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(763)

The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

(539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

[54] The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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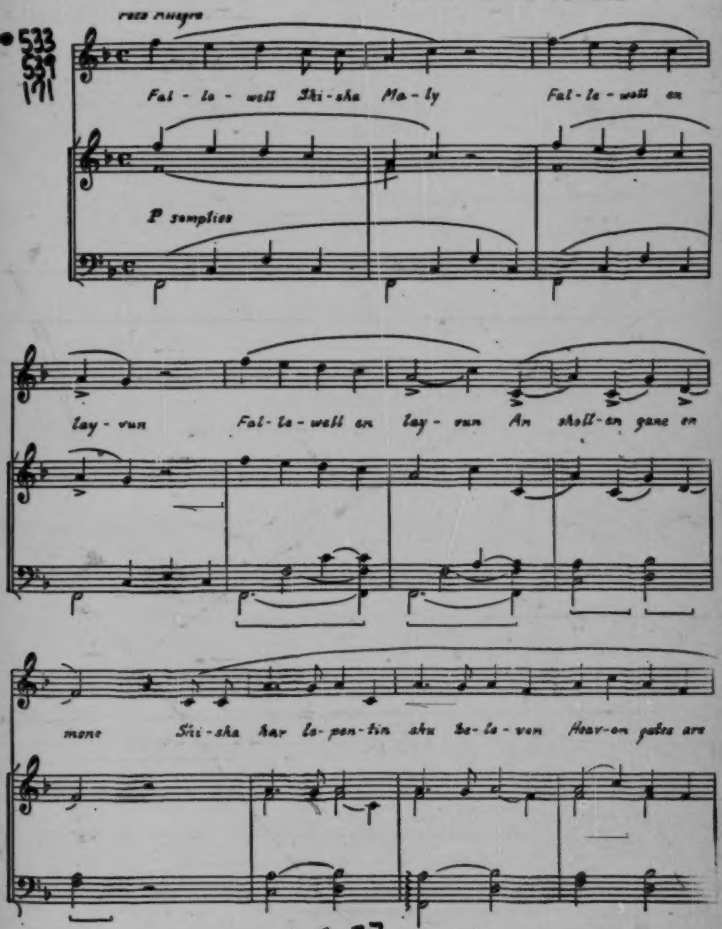


[9.61]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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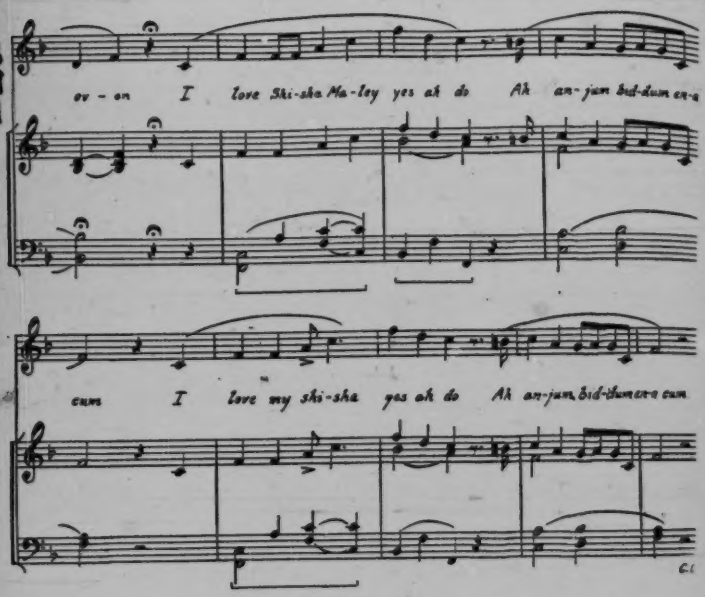


[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[55] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[55] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

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## 5. BYUM BY-E

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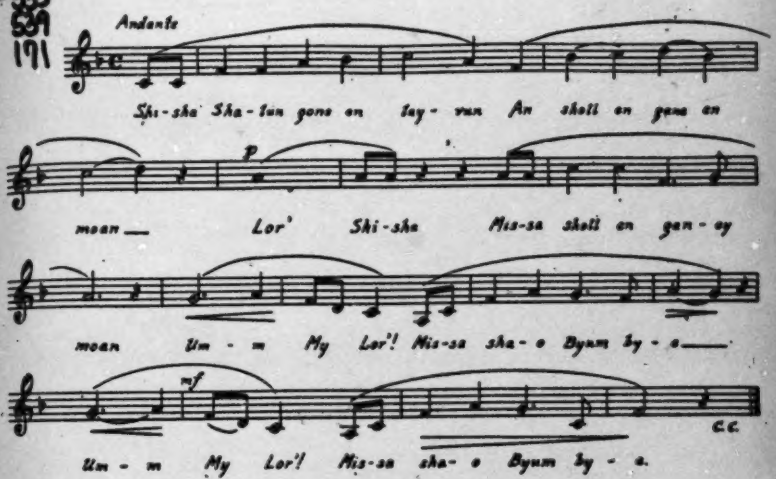


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"U-m-m," [58] hummed with the lips closed, is a strangely moving tone (rightly named a moan), and in conjunction with the exclamatory words, "My Lor'! Missa-shaol" followed by the roll of the African word, "Byum by-e," gives emotional depth to this unusual song.

"Maum Kate" Wilson of Darien used to sing the following phrase: "Sumanar kusi luki tu," over and over, but no one ever learned what it meant. There are other songs in which half the words are African, but without the music it is useless to give them.

[58] An Anglo-African official tells me that the African side-drum (often called "the hypocrite" from the many different tones it is capable of producing through change of pressure of the arm under which it is held) makes a sound very similar to the hummed "U-m-m-m" so frequently employed in the slave songs. This humming is evidently another African survival. Its use is mentioned by the Denis-Roosevelts as common to the Belgian Congo. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, says it is popular among the Zulus: "sometimes . . . a whole chorus will hum together with closed lips."

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536 27) makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 796 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by (782) the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little ●533 in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin'":

(539)

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A. [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analyst]

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Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Oh look at day (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
See day's a-comin (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Call my mother (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Throw off de covah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Start that a-risin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Who that a-comin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord

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6. HA'K 'E ANGELS

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Recitativ (Allegro)

Tenor

Basses (Sopranos + Altos)

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k e an-gels

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k e an-gels

Day day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k e an-gels

Allegro molto

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k e an-gels

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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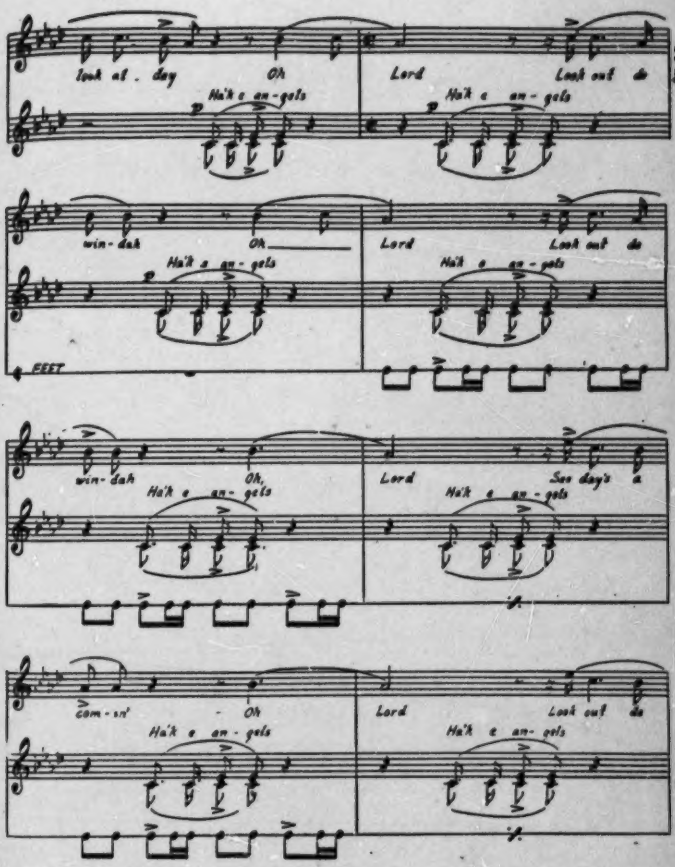


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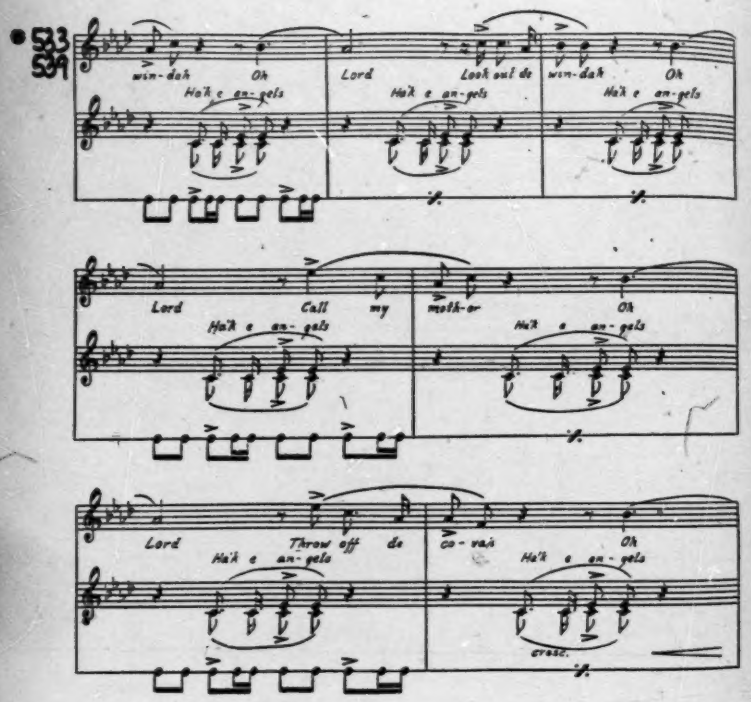

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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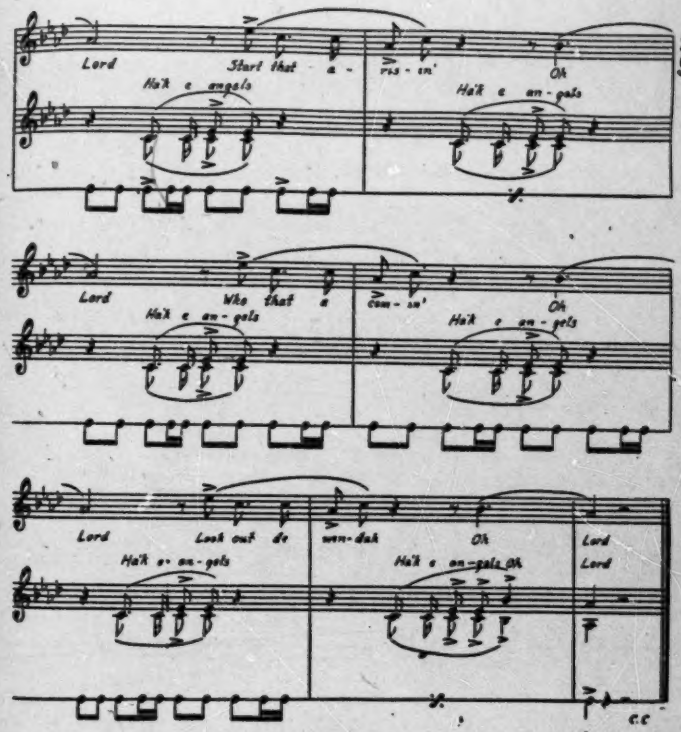


[p. 6]

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## UNTIL I DIE

796 I am told that this shout was once a favorite at "foreday meetin'," held on Sunday in the neighborhood of five o'clock.

Laura considered it her duty to ring the bell, and get the other members out to church. Since her death, however, nobody has felt the urge to take her place, and on St. Simon's the early service has lapsed:

[533]
[534]

I'm goin' tuh set in the humble chair
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Un-til I die.

Chorus: Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
I'm goin' tuh rock from side tuh side 'til I die.
(Repeated several times)

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## 7. UNTIL I DIE

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*Moderately, in steady tempo*
*mf*

*R. Mac Gimsey*

*Gon tuh sit in nuh hum - ble chah__ Gon tuh*

*rock from side to side__ Gon tuh rock frum side to side__*

*_ un - til Ah die Un - til Ah die,__ Un - til Ah die_*

*Un - til Ah die__ un - til Ah die__ Ahm gon tuh*

*rock frum side tuh side__ til Ah die.__*

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## PLUMB DE LINE

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There are as many variations in the words of this shout song as there are counties on the coast of Georgia. However, the warning to "Plumb de line" and the tune itself remain the same, while the naming of deacons and plumbers, sisters and members, and the things they must do is made to fit the rhythm as a glove fits the hand:

Members,
Plumb de line.[5]
Members,
Plumb de line.
O members,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.[6]
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.

[5] *Julia Walker sings "Plumb de line" an octave higher than the others—as was customary with "high tribbles" in the old days.*

[6] *This line is often sung "You want t'go t'Heaven you got a plumb de line."*

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533 539 "Dear brother, Plumb de line," continues the song; and the next verse follows the same construction and thought in: "You got t' live right," following which Old Quarterman always put in an effective "Yes Sir!" The above version, used by Katherine, appears to be more modern than that used by Josephine, who gets a far-off look when she sings:

Deacon deacon,[7]
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
If you pray fo' me
Plumb de line.
I pray fo' you
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.

[7] The deacon "deacons" a song when he reads it two lines at a time for the benefit of any in the congregation who have not a hymn book or who cannot read. The custom of "lining out" and then singing a hymn was copied from the whites, who sang in this manner a century ago—perhaps later in sections where illiteracy prevailed. When done to short metre it is dreary beyond measure, but long metre sometimes has a barbaric charm.

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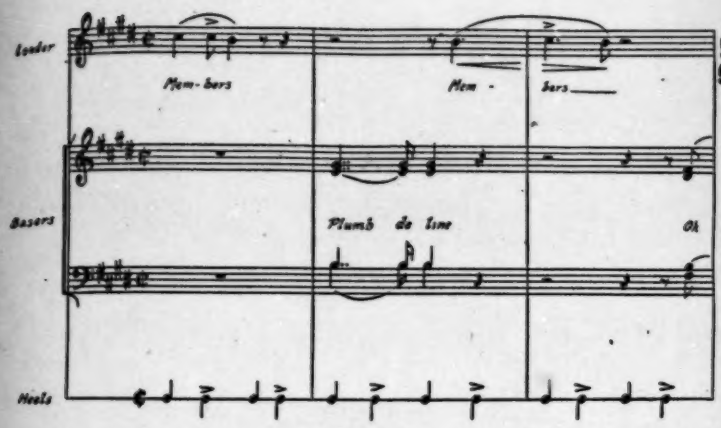
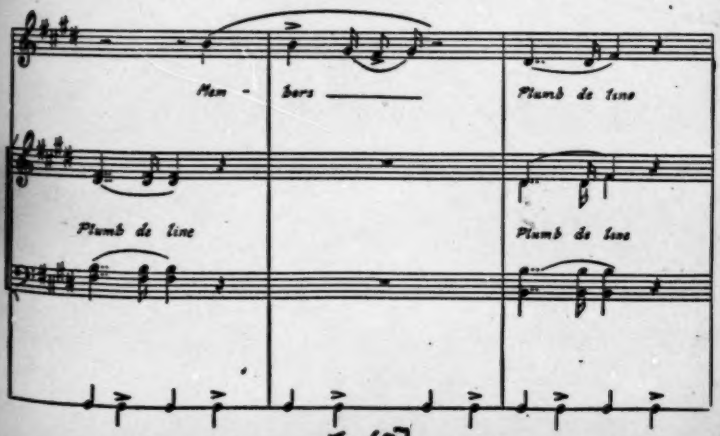
9. PLUMB DE LINE



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Want to go to H'n get a Plumb de line. You got t' sing right

You got t' sing right You got t' sing right

Plumb de line Plumb de line

Plumb de line Want to go to H'n got t' plumb de line.

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## 10. DOWN TO DE MIRE

533 535 Of all the ring-shouts I know, "Down to de Mire" is in more ways than one the most interesting. In the center of the ring, one member gets down on his knees and, with head touching the floor, rotates with the group as it moves around the circle. The different shouters, as they pass, push the head "down to the mire." The several arms reaching out to give a push make an unusually picturesque pattern. The refrain—repeated relentlessly—corresponds in its character and rhythmic beat to that of the drums in a song which accompanied an ominous ceremonial dance seen in *Trader Horn*.[8] One is apparently never too old or too fat to take part in this shout. I saw Quarterman, born in 1844, go "down to the mire" with satisfaction when he was ninety. Josephine, who weighs well over two hundred pounds, thinks nothing of getting down on her hands and knees and, with her head bobbing to the floor, proves the power of mind over matter:

533 539

Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire

[8] I am told that, while the greater part of this film was made in California, "background shots" made in Africa were introduced, for obvious reasons. It is to these shots, naturally, that the above reference applies.

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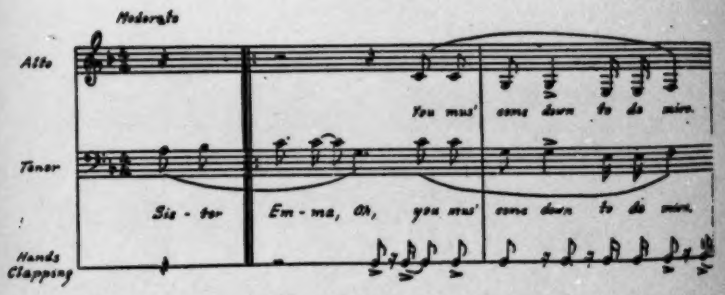
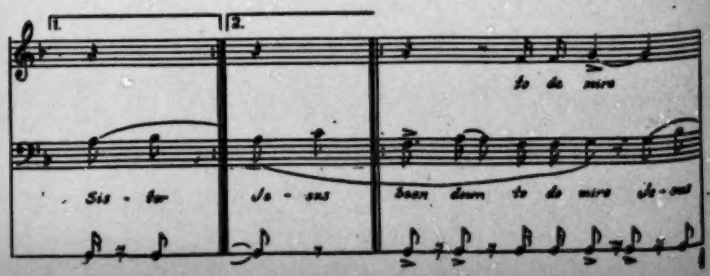
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire.



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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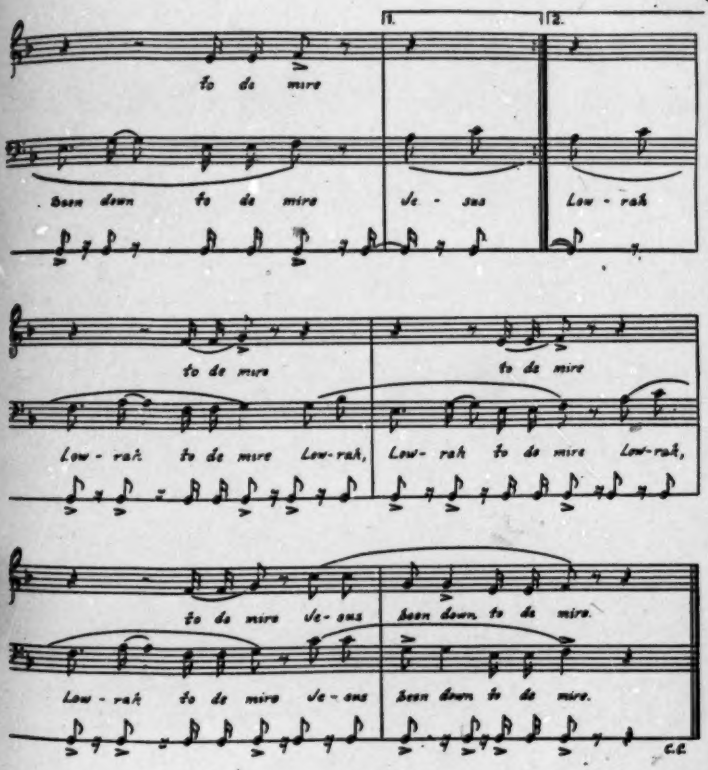


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ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

Hate that [9] sin that made me moan
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Chorus: Hay John—John's on nuh [10] islun
Hay John—E-li Ah can't stan'! [11]

• • •

John's on the isle uh Pat-te-mos
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Take one brick out Satan's wall
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
Satan's wall come tumblin' down
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
One a these days I'm goin' away
Eli—can't stan'!
Won't be back 'till judgment day
Eli—can't stan'!

[194]

[9] "That" sounds like "tat," and "Ah" sounds very like a short "eh."
[10] "The"—following a final "n"—has the sound of "nuh."
[11] The chorus is repeated after every two or three verses.

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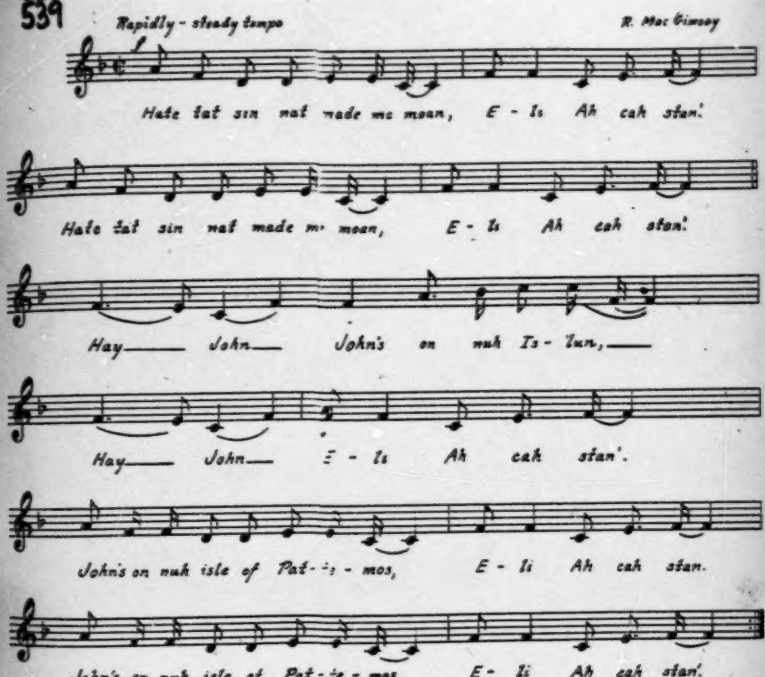
11. ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

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KNEE-BONE

*533
[461]
[501]

Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

[177]
[796]

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

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Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone didn't I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone didn't I call you
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the mornin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the mornin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the evenin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the evenin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.

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Creighton Churchill explains to me that when this song was used for rowing it could have had only one rhythmic accompaniment, the oars, since the other two rhythms, the hands and heels, would have thrown the rowers off their beat. To use his words: "The speed of the rowing version must also have been slower, for one could not possibly row to the rhythm of this version. It should be recognized as well that no musical meter known to man can represent exactly the rhythm of oars in their locks; in this song especially, it is something intangible and personal, like the beat of the Viennese waltz. For the sake of simplicity I have represented the rowing rhythm in this transcription as 2/8, 3/8, 3/8, equal to a full measure of time for the voices and other rhythms."

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?

13. KNEE-BONE

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Moderato

Voices

Solo

Knee-bone when I call you

Chorus

Hannn _____ knee-bone

Oars (Stick)

Hands

Heels

Solo

Knee-bone when I call you

Chorus

Hann-n-n Lord knee bone bend

Repeat for verses 2 to 5

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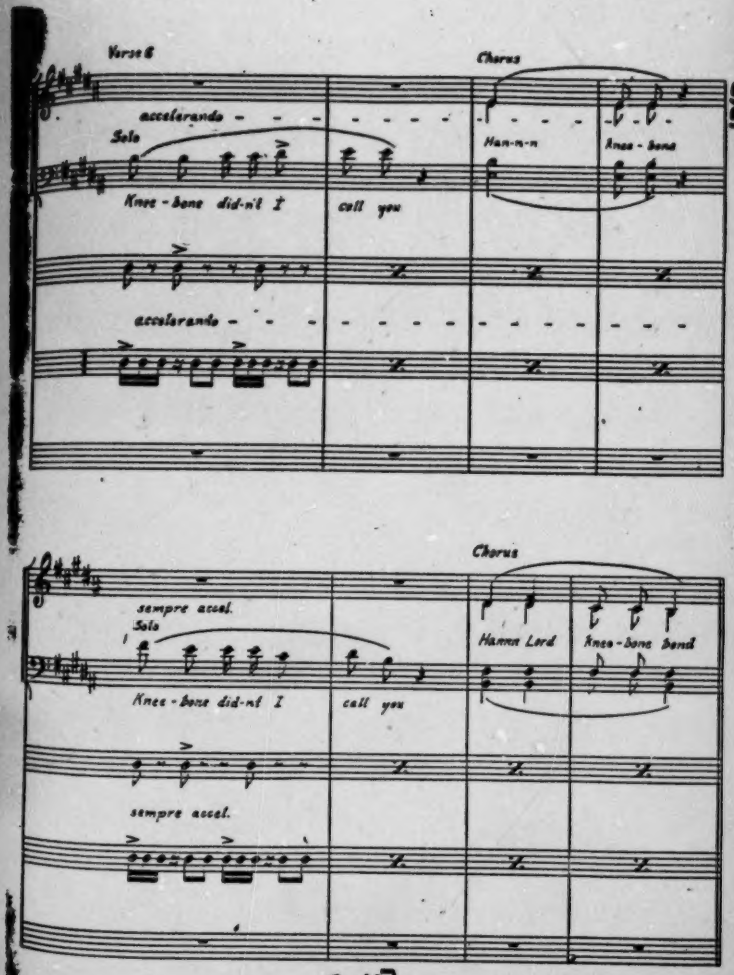

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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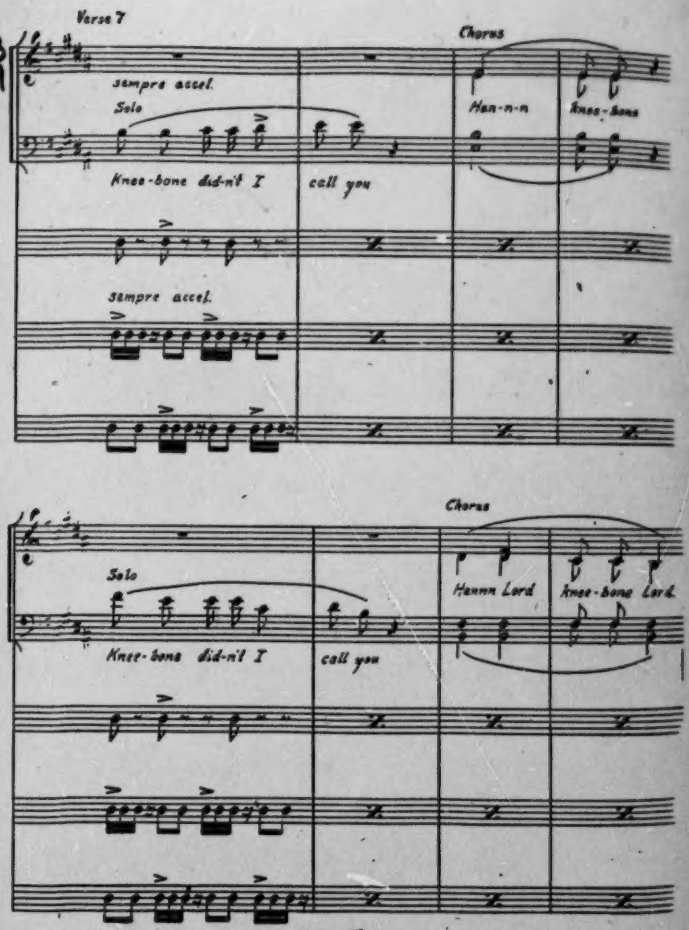


[p.84]

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## OH EVE—WHERE IS ADAM?

533 [126] In taking down a shout song, you are beset with the difficulty of reconciling the different versions. No leader sings a song twice alike, and no two ever sing exactly the same version; yet the beat, the accent, and the tune remain so stable that leaders are unerringly followed. The words are in truth only the vehicle for carrying along the complicated rhythm. This is beaten out by the heels of the McIntosh County group in a way not approached by any other that I know. Shouters sometimes clap their hands; on St. Simon's they always call for a broom handle, which, when knocked on the floor, provides an extemporaneous tom-tom. In McIntosh County, however, they are so proficient in tapping out the rhythm with their heels that they can dispense with both sticks and hand clapping. With their hands free, they are able to do things descriptive of the text which less skillful groups would not be at liberty to attempt.

535 [539] The shout:

> Oh Eve—where is Ad-u-m?
> Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
> Pickin' up leaves.

is a good example of the combination of dancing and pantomime. After swinging deliberately around the circle, singing the slower part of the chant, the dancers, when the time quickens, go through the motion of picking up leaves. With aprons gathered up and bodies bent, the women add greatly to the interest of the dance. All are amusingly industrious, but the men, without the assistance of aprons, are not quite so convincing in following the action indicated by the text.

533 535 Since the version I have encountered in Glynn and Camden Counties holds to "pinnin' leaves," I am inclined to believe that some McIntosh shouter took an artist's license and substituted "pickin' up" for "pinnin' " for the sake of more varied, more picturesque action. At any rate, the delightful result justifies the less usual interpretation of the Biblical text.

With "Lord called Adam—pinnin' leaves," the movement is faster. The feet are not supposed to leave the floor or to cross each other, such an act being sinful. The shouting proceeds with a curious shuffling but controlled step which taps out with the heel a resonant syncopation fascinating in its intricacy and precision. Over

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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam"
534 is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[177] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its
[178] form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of re-
786 ligious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard
152 and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as
159 though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common
159 with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said,
786 "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin
787 sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se
159 seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

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## MY SOUL ROCK ON JUBILEE

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This song was sung and shouted after prayer meeting and after church service usually when the church "got a soul":

Chorus: 'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord![13]
'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

---

Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
I got a right in Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
I got a right in Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Repeat Chorus:

In reference to the following version, Clara said: "When it gets hot, them that's on the outside of the church comes runnin' in." I asked what she meant by "getting hot." "O, you feel good. You know things is warmin' up and you gets revived":

I come t' tell you 'bout Jubilee
O-o-o-h my Lord!
Come t' shout that Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee[14]
O-o-o-h my Lord!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

[13] A wild quavering cry given by the "high tribble"—far above the other singers—makes your "hair riz," as the Negroes say.
[14] Faster, with double rap on "That Jud! That Jud!"

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## GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

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Certain songs are considered to be peculiarly suitable for specific occasions. This shout has always been the favorite farewell song among the St. Simon's Negroes. At the Cabin, the white folks seem to think the evening cannot end properly without it:

Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Goin' 'way to leave you, sorry t' tell you
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Jesus settin' on the Sac'ment Table
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Handin' the bread an' the wine to the members
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah

Good-bye is also said to "all you preachers," "all you false-pretenders," "all you hypocrites," and "all you tattlers."

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15. GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

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Chorus
Andante

mp Good-bye ev'- ry bod-y

f Good-bye, Sing Hal-le-lu-jah

mp Good-bye ev'- ry-bod-y

f Good-bye, Sing Hal-le-lu-jah

f Goin' way to leave you sor-ry to tell you

Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

mp Je-sus set-tin' on the Sac'-ment Ta-ble

f Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

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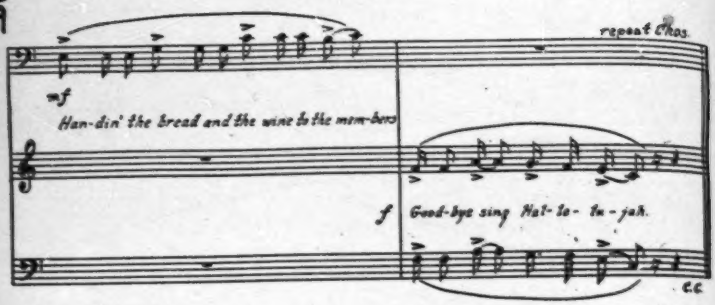


The following verse comes from McIntosh County:

Goin' up in the heaven
Goin' to try on mh garment
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Goin' to try on mh garment
See how it fit me
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.

(Illustration 15)

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CHAPTER FOUR

## *Ring-Play, Dance, and Fiddle Songs*

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535 Of the ring-play, dance, and fiddle songs, only those accompanying ring-play were countenanced by the church. However, certain solo dances like the Buzzard Lope evaded difficulties by using such religious songs as "Gimme Him" and "Throw Me Anywhere." These solo dances appear to have been "done for fun," and in our section bore no particular classification.[1] But the rags, reels, and fiddle or "sinful" songs were an entirely different matter. They were looked upon by church members with considerable horror as quite beyond the pale. Those of mature years would have nothing to do with them, and even today they are regarded with suspicion. In consequence, innocent as they appear to be, they have been the most difficult to uncover. Perhaps if I were a man or a godless colored woman I might find something as racy as was ever composed or sung in a "jook."

533 The ring-play songs were totally unknown to me for almost twenty years after I went to St. Simon's. Entirely by chance I learned about them in the Boston Public Library, when I happened on a short account of "Ring-Games from Georgia" by Loraine Darby,[2] and recognized one of the examples as a shanty used by our Negro stevedores in loading lumber. When I returned to Georgia, I asked Julia what that song had to do with ring-games. Again it was brought home to me that we learn from these people, who have no past, only what we first discover for ourselves. She said: "Dear me! It's a ring-play song, but it's so long since I sung one I'd forgotten we ever did." Later I found that I could not have escaped hearing inferior modern versions had I lived near a Negro school, for the children sing them at the top of their lungs.

With such a clue, I have unearthed various stray bits concerning these interesting game songs. Little has been written about them, and that little naturally classes

[1] Thomas W. Talley, *in* Negro Folk Rhymes, describes them as "star-danced" by one or two individuals at a time.

[2] Journal of American Folk-Lore, 1917.

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533 [177] them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it, either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping, which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to 1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

175 567 Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820 to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was "sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

175 567 533 [177]

175 533

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## EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

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539 This ring-play has been revived by Julia Armstrong, who remembers it from her youth.

Emma you my darlin'
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you duh bad gal
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you from the country
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!

(Illustration 30)[A]

A. [For Illustration 30, see Category 533, plate facing p. 192--Analyst]

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16. EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

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Lively tempo
Chorus
mf

R. Mac Gimsey

Em - ma yo' mah dar - lin'

Oh Em- ma Oh, You turn a - roun' dig a

hole in nuh groun' Oh Em - ma Oh

Verse I

Em- ma yo's a bad gal Oh Em - ma Oh

Yo' turn a - roun' dig a hole in nuh groun'

Verse II

Oh Em - ma Oh Em - ma yo' frum nuh

coun - try Oh Em - ma Oh,

Yo' turn a - roun' dig a hole in nuh groun'

Oh Em - ma Oh.

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14. *Farewell Song in the Cabin*

[facing p. 96]

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## SANGAREE

•533 539 (524)

This ring-play varies in action wherever I see it done. For that reason I will attempt no description. The tune, however, always remains the same:

If I live
Sangaree.
Don' get kill'
Sangaree.
I'm goin' back
Sangaree.
Jacksonville
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

If I live
Sangaree.
See nex' fall
Sangaree.
Ain' goin' t' plant
Sangaree.
No cotton at all
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

Chicken in the fiel'
Sangaree.
Scratchin' up peas
Sangaree.
Dog on the outside
Sangaree.
Scratchin' off fleas
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

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Extra verses are contributed by a Darien singer:

My husban's got the shovel
Sangaree.
An' I got the hoe
Sangaree.
If that ain't farmin'
Sangaree.
I don't know
Sangaree.

Repeat Chorus:

If you want t' see a nigger
Sangaree.
Cut the fool
Sangaree.
Let him ride
Sangaree.
A white man's mule
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

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18. SANGAREE

Lively tempo

R. Mac Gimsey

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If ah live Sang-a-ree Don'— get kill,— Sang-a-ree Ah'm gon' back, Sang-a-ree Jack-son-ville Sang-a-ree— Oh— — babe Sang-a-ree, Oh— babe, Sang-a-ree, Oh— babe, Sang-a-ree Oh,— babe Sang-a-ree.

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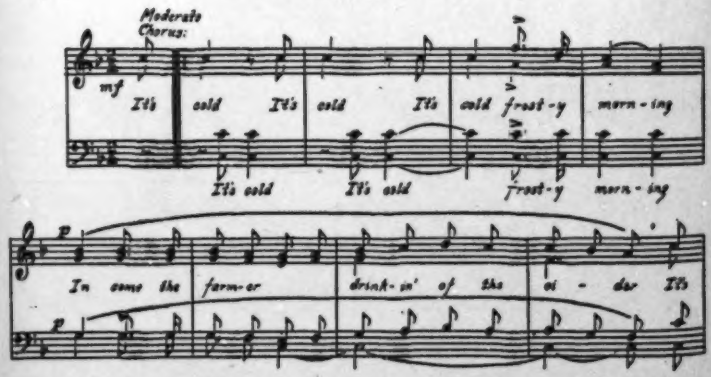
## 19. IT'S COLD FROSTY MORNIN'

The words of this "play," called "a marchin' piece," are clearly derived from an old English song. With "It's cold!" two and two march; with "There she stands right by your side" they change partners and march again:

It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold frosty mornin'
In come the farmer drinkin' of the cider
It's cold ray-me-oo
An' now where to find her
An' now I lost my lover
An' where shall I find her
(repeat)
There she stan's right by your side
Don't she look jus' like a bride
Hug her an' kiss her an' call 'er your own
Then she'll marry you.



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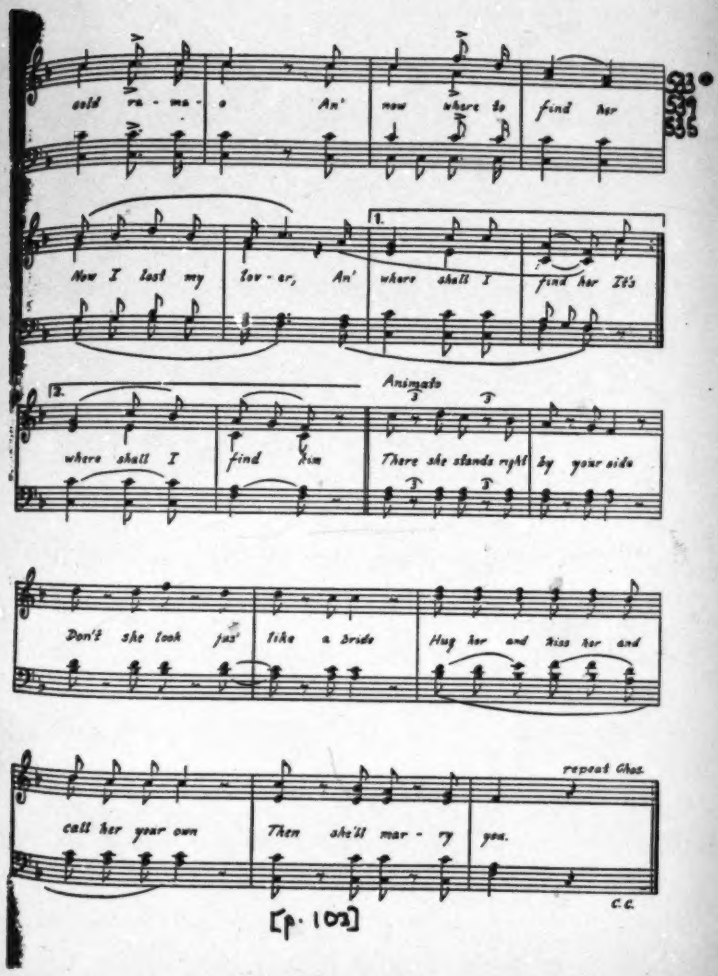

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## PRETTY GREEN SHAWL

From the verses of this "play" it can be seen that it is a "promenading piece" and is the Negro counterpart of "It's Cold Frosty Mornin'." Partners are changed after singing the chorus a second time:

Chorus: Farewell, farewell
Fare you well my darlin'
Farewell, farewell
I love you to my heart

---

Now choose in another one honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Choose in another one honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
So early in the mornin'.

Step gran' (or proud) wid y'r lover, honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Step gran' wid y'r lover honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

Repeat Chorus:

## FOUR AND TWENTY LAWYERS

535 The action is spirited, with much hand clapping that encourages those who "lead off." As far as I can see the figures are similar to those of the Virginia reel, with the exception of the beginning, where "Lead off one" is the signal for a man to walk briskly from the top of the line to the foot (men on one side, women on the other, as is usual). "Up and down" indicates the repetition of the short swinging jaunt; at "Lead off next," he takes the hand of the woman on the opposite end and

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535 they "Step in a hurry" and go "up and down" twice. The play then proceeds in the familiar way. Unless you have been told beforehand it is difficult to distinguish the words of the response "Lawyer's suit." When it is sung by all, as fast as it should be, and overlaps the leader's last word, a strange twist is given the tune. As can be seen, the words are no more than stage directions, but the rhythm is unusual, with the unmistakable stamp of Africa in the ominous cadence found in "Lawyer's suit."

533 536 639 The chorus is repeated as well as each leading line with its refrain:

Chorus: There is four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
Four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
(faster) Lead off one[3]
Lawyer's suit.
Up and down
Lawyer's suit.
Lead off next
Lawyer's suit.
Step in a hurry
Lawyer's suit.
Turn that lady
Lawyer's suit.
Turn her loose
Lawyer's suit.
Don't you hurt that lady
Lawyer's suit.
You hurt my heart
Lawyer's suit.
She's a very fine lady
Lawyer's suit.
Just from the country
Lawyer's suit.
Basket of oysters
Lawyer's suit.

[3] When another man leads off, the verses change to suit the leader. In place of "Step in a hurry" I have heard "Get in a hurry," then:

Very fine gentleman
Lawyer's suit.

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## SHOUT JOSEPHINE SHOUT

•533 539 Julia remembered this verse from her youth on St. Simon's—with a fragment of another from the same song:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear y'o' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes, ma'am.
Shout Josephine—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Get a hump on y'o'self you red-eye' devil
Get a hump on y'o'self you big-eye' coon!

524 535 Years later, at Broadfield, I found that the verse given above was the chorus of an amusing play song, with pantomime, which is related to both the ring-play and the solo dances. "Josephine! Ma'am?" is sung first as is usual; the leader then tells where the pain (or ornament) is located and the participants instantly try to place their hands on the spot named:

Pain in the head—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the back—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the neck—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the hip—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Josephine
Ma'am?
Want t' shout?
Yes ma'am
What time?
Right now.
Shout Josephine
Shout!

Pain in the toe
Shout! Shout!

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Pain in m' leg
Shout! Shout!
Pain in the heel
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That sore toe
Shout! Shout!
That finger ring
Shout! Shout!
That water fall [4]
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That ribbon bow
Shout! Shout!
That ear ring [5]
Shout! Shout!
That slipper shoe
Shout! Shout!
That shiny eye
Shout Josephine
Shout!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Shake the baby—Shake!

The song is closed off with:

A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet!
A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!

(302) [4] An old-time hair-do.
[5] Earring.

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535 On Sapelo Island, I found in the Johnson family a combination of the old dance form with rather more modern steps than the original African pantomime warranted. Of the twins, Naomi did the patting while Isaac did the dancing;[8] an older brother rhythmically called out the cues in a sharp staccato, and another one lay on the floor of the wide veranda representing a dead cow. Anyone who has seen turkey buzzards disposing of "carr'on"[9] will recognize the aptness of the following directions. Those who are at all squeamish had better skip this part. The bracketed asides were given for my information:

(533)
(539)

| | |
|---|---|
| March aroun'! | (*the cow*) |
| Jump across! | (*see if she's daid*) |
| Get the eye! | (*always go for that first*) |
| So glad! | (*cow daid*) |
| Get the guts! | (*they like 'em next best*) |
| Go to eatin'! | (*on the meat*) |

All right!—cow mos' gone!
Dog comin'!
Scare the dog!
Look aroun' for mo' meat!
All right!—Belly full!
—"Goin' to tell the res'."

And with an eye to the dramatic exit, Isaac danced into the house.

[8] *In later years I saw the Buzzard Lope done by Isaac's teacher, Reuben Grovenor—a descendant of the Sapelo Bilali who wrote a "diary" in Arabic. Many times have I seen others do this peculiar dance, but Reuben's performance is far and away the most finished. With effortless grace he gives a stylized pattern of the bird's awkward steps, without any attempt at realism. His is indeed a high form of rhythmic approximation, and those who have seen it at the Cabin are fortunate.*

[9] *Miss Kingsley tells us that in West Africa turkey buzzards are called "Jack Crows"—the natives call them "yubu." In the West Indies they are called either "John Crows" or "Carrion Crows."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## GIMME HIM

•533 539 Another primitive song that offers the proper rhythm sounds slangy, but I am positive that such was not its intent:

Jesus died a happy die
He died fuh sin but not His own
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)
He died on the Roman cross
That we might live
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)

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21. GIMME HIM

*Moderately fast - with no change in tempo* — R. Mae Simon

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539

Je - sus died a hap - py die, He

died fuh sin but not his own. Gim-me Him, gim-me Him

Aw___ sho Gim-me Him, gim-me Him un-

til Ah die___ Gim-me Him, gim-me Him

Aw___ sho. Gim-me Him, gim-me Him un-

til Ah die He died on nuh Rom-an cross that

we might live, Gim-me Him, Gim-me Him

Aw___ sho. Gim-me Him un-til Ah die.

[p. 113]

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STICKIT BALL A HACK

•533 Like "Ham Bone," "Ball the Jack" and "Juba dis an' Juba dat," this curious song is half-spoken in a lively fashion, to rhythmical hand clapping. When the verse is finished "Then you kick it off":

[539]

Jack t' the rack back
Stickit ball a hack
Low ball high ball
Scallion jack.

HAM BONE HAM BONE

533 524 [115] As is obvious, twelve-year-old Maria's version of these rhythmical lines is modern. Luck was with me when I found George, another twelve-year-old, who could give the older verses which are recited in the same way—alternated with similar patting. The only difference is that Maria balances herself on one foot; with her left hand she holds her cotton skirt tight around the "ham bone" section of her anatomy, places her right foot on the other leg below the knee and with her right hand deftly smacks out the intricate rhythm on her "rusty butt." [10] George, however, takes the line of least resistance, and leans with his back against a wall. However, in that position he is able to lift his "ham bone" a little higher and do a rather more complicated bit of patting. His hand flies back and forth like a shuttle between his chest and his rump.

These are Maria's words:

[539]

Ham bone ham bone pat um on uh shoulder
.....[11]
Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t' hold her
.....
I went down town one day
.....
I went with my mother—too.
.....
My mother bought me a billy goat
.....
If my billy goat don't butt
.....
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt
.....

[10] The night she wore a corduroy skirt, the patting could not be heard and her performance missed fire.

[11] These dots represent patting.

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As far as "I went with my mother—too" the lines are repeated, but when it comes to enumerating what she bought, there is this change:

My mother bought me a radio
.....
If my radio won't play
.....
Momma goin' t' beat my NRA
.....

George's lines, which are clearly of an older vintage, are given in the time-honored question and answer manner of Africa. Half-way through they merge into an old play song:

Ham bone ham bone wha's you bin?
.....
All roun' the worl' an' back agin.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd y'u do?
.....
I got a chance an' I fairly flew.
.....
Ham bone ham bone where you stay?
.....
I met a pretty girl an' I couldn' get away.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd you do?
.....
Hopt up to Miss Lucy's doo'.
.....
Ax Miss Lucy will she marry me?
.....
I wouldn't care if poppa didn't care.
.....

At this point George uses the narrative of the old play song: "Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh!" [12]

[12] *Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*To buy his wife a weddin' gown—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*What y'u goin' t' have de weddin' fess?—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Two big bread an' not a bit a grease—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Firs' come aroun' wuz Mr. Bug—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*He fell in de lemonade tub—Un hunh, Un hunh!*

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Nex' come in wuz Mr. Snake
.....
Pattin' all round' dat weddin' cake.
.....
Nex' cum in wuz Mr. Bug
.....
Hoppin' all roun' dat whiskey jug.
.....
Nex' come in wuz Mr. Tick
.....
He ate so much till it made 'im sick.
.....

The youngster said he knew many more verses, but these are more than enough to show how lines of proper length can be utilized.

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JUBA DIS AN' JUBA DAT

Juba dis an' Juba dat
An' Juba kill d' yalla cat
An' get over double-trouble
Juba!
She served d' meal
She gimme d' husk
Cooked d' bread
She gimme d' crus'
She fried d' meat
Gimme d' skin
That's 'e way momma
Took me in
Now Juba! [13]

By rapidly crossing his hands to first one knee and then the other, Snooks pats out an intricate rhythm to the above staccato lines. When he gets to "Now Juba!" he does some clever footwork that matches the coördination of his hands.

(Illustration 11) A

[13] Maude Cuney Hare in Negro Musicians and Their Music says that the dance *Juba* is known to be over a century old. Cable in his "Creole Slave Songs" mentions that "The guiouba was probably the famed juba of Georgia and the Carolinas."

A, [For Illustration 11, see Category 535, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

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## FIDDLE SONGS—FRAGMENTS

•533 Ten years ago, when I hunted up the local fiddler, Green Harris, who was already seventy-six, I tried to find out about the tunes he used to play for the "sinful" young Negroes on St. Simon's. He said: "You caught me without my studyin' cap—they jus' gone." He would not even bring out his fiddle.[15] Finally he admitted he had loaned it: "They're holdin' a revival this week an' I don't want it around the house." The implication was that temptation might be too strong for him—besides, it was improper to have a fiddle in your possession at such a time. After two unsuccessful visits I heard him play old-fashioned dance tunes which had been favorites south of the Mason and Dixon Line in ante-bellum days. Here are the harmless, fragmentary verses he gave me:

[534]

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Tune my fiddle, tune it good
The little neighbor in the neighborhood.

I do I do I tries to do
Put on de silver slippers.
An' I do I do an' I do no mor'
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
My ole Miss' promis' me
Put on de silver slippers.
When she die she set me free
Put on de silver slippers.
She live so long till her head got bal'
Put on de silver slippers.
It look like she never die
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do I do no mor' my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
Oh how happy I feel
Put on de silver slippers.

[15] Joel Chandler Harris tells us in The Critic, December 15, 1883, that "The banjo may be the typical instrument of the plantation negroes, but I have never seen a plantation negro play it. I have heard them make sweet music with the quills—Pan's pipes; I have heard them play passably on the fiddle. . . . and beat . . . on the triangle . . . I have heard them blow a tin-trumpet with surprising skill; but I have never seen a banjo." Cable, himself, grants that the favorite instrument of the negroes of the Southern states is the fiddle.

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Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
No use grievin'
Got t' do widout me
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
I had a little fella
His name was Isabella
He went run awa' wid anudda nigga fella
So-bye-bye my honey I'm gwine.
If you ain't got the money
You can' call me honey
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.

Goin' to the bathin' house
Goin' to the kitchen
My foot slip an' I fell down
I wouldn' go there no mo'.

Choose in the girl with the rosy cheeks
Choose in the boy with the money
Choose in the girl with the coal-black eye
Choose her an' call her honey.

Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!

My oldest aunt heard Virginia ex-slaves sing this verse seventy-five years ago:

Went to see my Sally
My Sally wasn't home
I set myself in the big armchair
And I played on the old jaw-bone.

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•533 Old Jim Gardiner rapped the bones to the rhythm of the two similar jingles
534 that follow:
(534)

Once I went out huntin'
I heard de possum sneeze
I holler back to Susan
Put on de pot o' peas.

I went down to Missy house
Missy was in bed
I took de marrow bone
An' beat her in de head.

Chorus: Ding dang me one
Ding dang.
Ding dang me two
Ding dang.
Ding dang me three
Ding dang.
Ding dang me four
Ding dang.

Toad frog sittin' on the railroad track
Train come along an' break his back.

Chorus:

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## BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

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(635)

A St. Simon's Negro called this a "Cracker Dance" and gave me the following verses:

Bile dem cabbage down
Bile dem cabbage down
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

Went to Susy's house
Susy wasn't home
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

My old Missus promis' me
Bile dem cabbage down
When she die she goin' to set me free
Bile dem cabbage down.

She live so long till her he'd got bal'
Bile dem cabbage down
She gib up de idea o' dyin' at all
Bile dem cabbage down.

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WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE

Julia sang this when she was a little girl—"long time ago":

Chorus:
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

I wish that gal was mine
I wish that gal was mine
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

(repeat chorus)

Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
If you call me honey spen' my money
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone.

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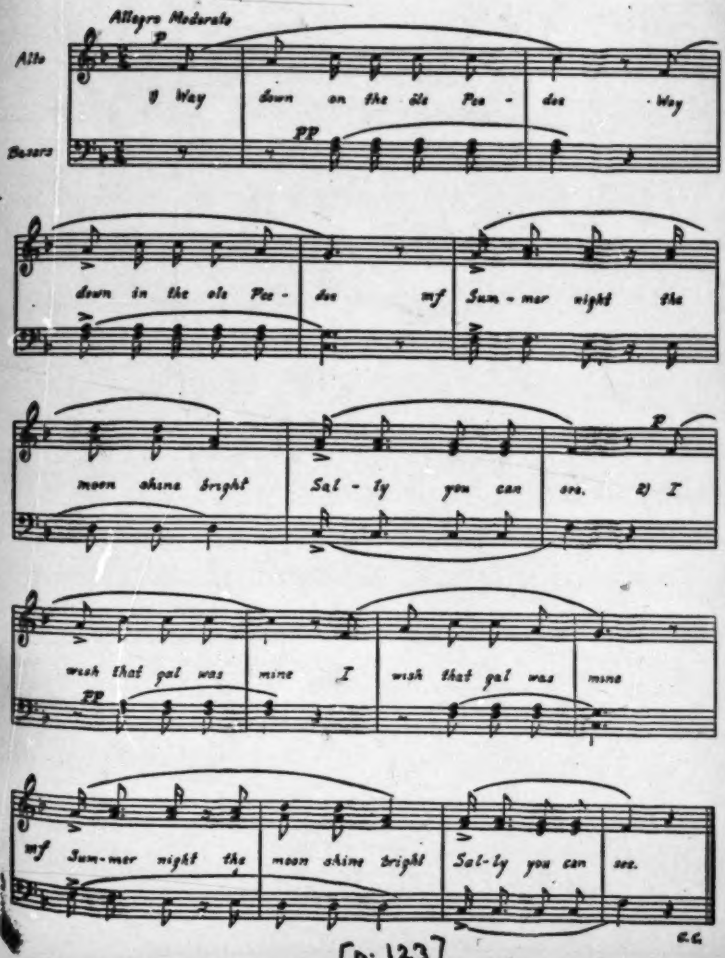
## 22. WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE



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## JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.

Run home muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

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23. JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME

Allegro

Alto

Bass

mf Run 'long muh Lu - lu

p John - ny come a long time

f

mf John - ny is your mas - ter

mf John - ny come a long time.

mf John - ny is your sweet - heart

p John - ny come a long time

f

mp John - ny is your sweet - heart

mf John - ny come a long time.

f

C.C.

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CHAPTER FIVE

## *Religious Songs*

•533 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro,
175 the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black
[533) population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections.

121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave [533] songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of [128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of [171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' 761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt- [152] edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or [782] two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence [787] told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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533 796 At one of our singing festivals, Liverpool, who was well over a hundred at the time, became excited as he heard again the old prayer-meeting song, left his seat, joined in the swaying group of sixty-five singers, and gave a demonstration of the "right hand of fellowship" which he performed with the dignity seen in the minuet. First he gave his right hand to the singer on his right; then, bowing sedately, he crossed his left hand over to the same member. Both hands were then shaken as the singers bowed with the rhythim before passing to the next neighbor and repeating the same ceremony.

[539]

'Tis well an' good I come here tonight
come here tonight
come here tonight
Well an' good I come here tonight
For to do my Master's will.
O Brother Quarterman show me the way
show me the way
show me the way
O my brother show me the way—
The way to the Promised Land.

[794] At old-time prayer meetings the following song brought out all of the members—one at a time—on the floor, breaking up any tendency to stiffness. Each rose as his or her name was called and moved around the circle, returning to the group when another member's name was about to be called.

This same song was called an "ant'em" on Eleuthera, (one of the Bahamas). 533 539 When I asked the singer if it was old, she said: "Methuselum sung 'um."

Oh mh Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Sister Bessie where were you
My sister where were you
My sister where were you
When the Lord was passin' by.

(Illustration 16) A

A, [For Illustration 16, see Category 142, plate facing p. 97--Analym]

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794 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at
796 the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

175 This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall mag-
159 nolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about
• [533] 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of
[291] the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States
began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her
[829] family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

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I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

[4] The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.

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It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Go in the wil'erness
Believer I know
Fall on your bending[5]
Believer I know
Fall on your bending
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
Love the Christian pastor[6]
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
The narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
Here an' there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together, there
Believer I know
Glory Hallelujah
Believer I know
I done cross Jurden
Believer I know.

[5] Knees are implied.
[6] The white minister.

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## 25. BELIEVER I KNOW

Andante

Solo
Alto

p

I know I know Lord, Be - liev - er I know

pp

I know I know Lord Be - liev - er

mf

I know I know the road so thorn - y

Be - liev - er I know I know the road is

pp

thorn - y Be - liev - er I know

mf

It's

thorn - y and rug - gy Be - liev - er

I know It's thorn - y and

rug - gy Be - liev - er I know.

C.C.

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## NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Oh God comman' Brother Norah one day
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' told Brother Norah to build an ark
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Chorus: Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Well Norah commence to buil' his ark
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he buil' his ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

An' the foolish man come a ridin' by
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
Well he point his han' an' he scorn at Norah
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he call ole Norah the foolish man
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
You buildin' yo' ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

Well, the little turtle dove done droop his wing
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he gone on Zion's Hill to sing
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

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26. NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

Andante

Soprano

No - rah Hist the win - dah No - rah

Basso

Hist the win - dah No - rah Hist the win - dah

Legato

Hist the win-dah let the dove come in. Oh God com-man' Bro - ther

No-rah one day — Oh hist the win-dah let the dove come in. An'

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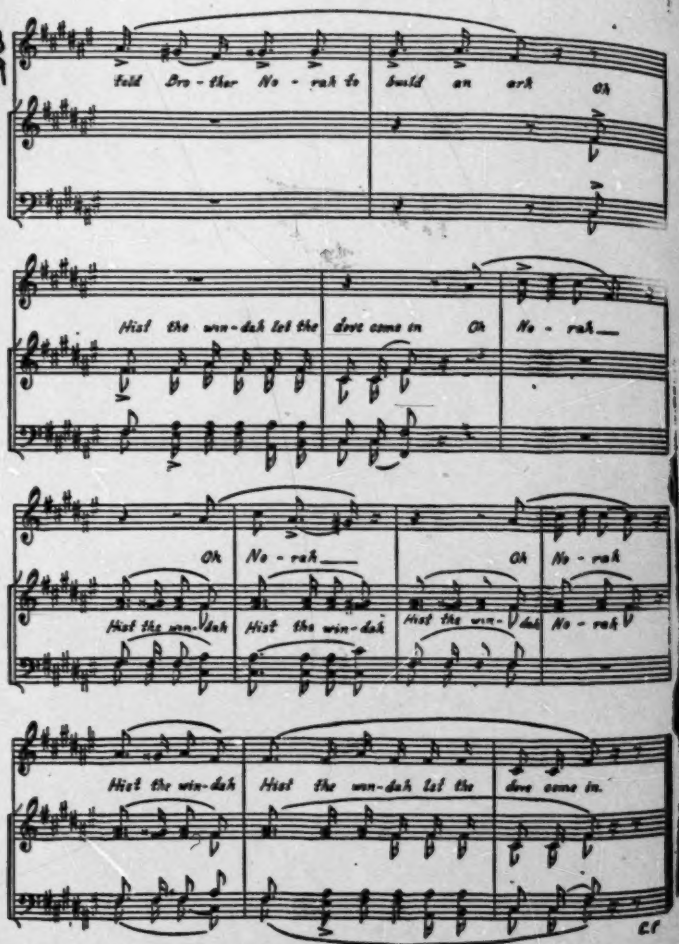

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## 28. WASN' THAT A WONDER

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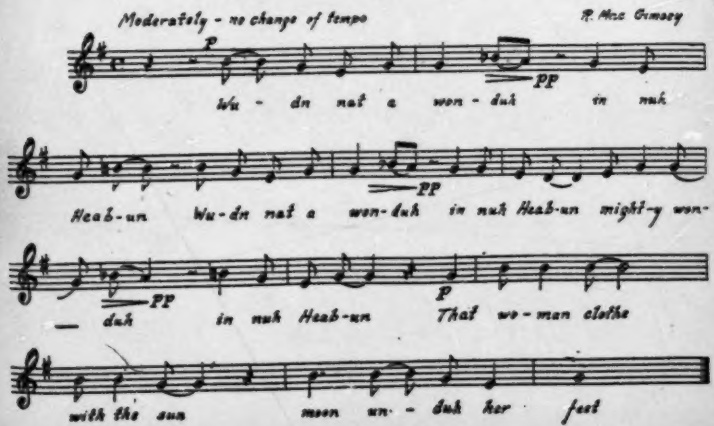
Chorus: Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
It's a mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Well, John' mother may gone before me
But you can't get no higher in Glory
If you get there befo' I do
Jus' tell my Lord I'm comin' too.



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539

## I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

Chorus: One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
Ah heard the angels singin'.

All in my room
All in my room
All in my room
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, Ah wuz down on my knees
Down on my knees
Down on my knees
Ah heard the angels singin'.

No dyin' there
No dyin' there
No dyin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'
Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Well, there's no weepin' there
No weepin' there
No weepin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all over my head
All over my head
All over my head
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
Ah heard the angels singin'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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29. I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

*533
539

Moderately - no variation in tempo — mp — R. Mac Ginsey

One morn - in' soon, One morn - in' soon One morn - in' soon Ah heard duh an - gels sing - in', All in my room All in my room All in my room Ah heard duh an - gels sing. Lawd Ah was down on my knees Down on my knees Down on my knees Ah heard duh an - gels sing - in' No dy - in' thah No dy - in' thah No dy - in' thah Ah heard duh an - gels sing - in'.

[p. 141]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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CAN'T HIDE SINNER

You may run to the rock
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the rock cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the sea
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the sea cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

Oh sinner man
Can't hide
What you going to do
Can't hide
In the Judgment day
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the grave
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the grave cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the Church
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the Church cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the mount'n
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the mount'n cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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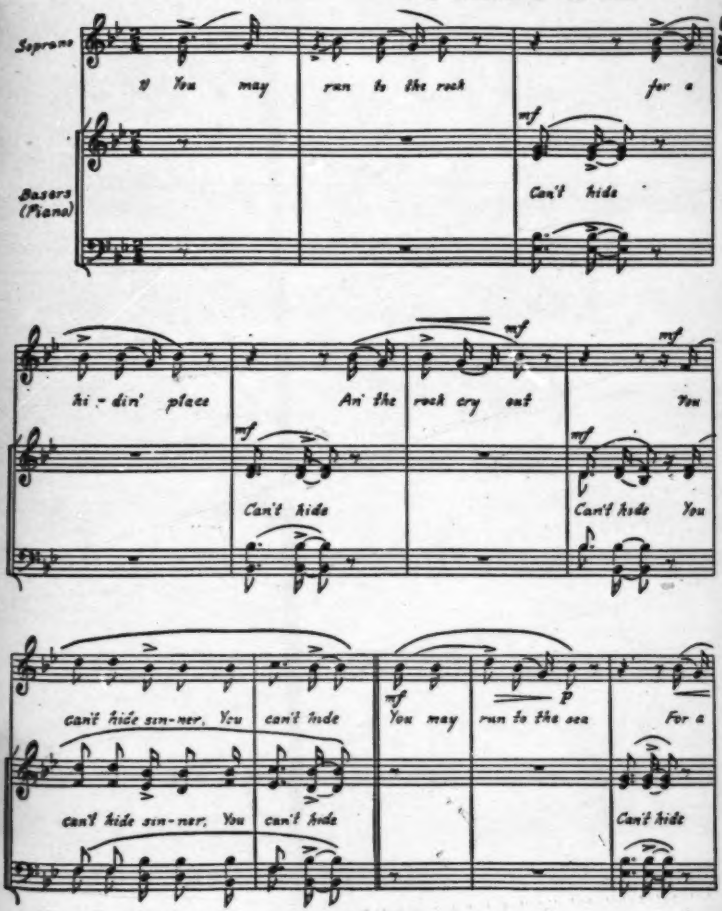

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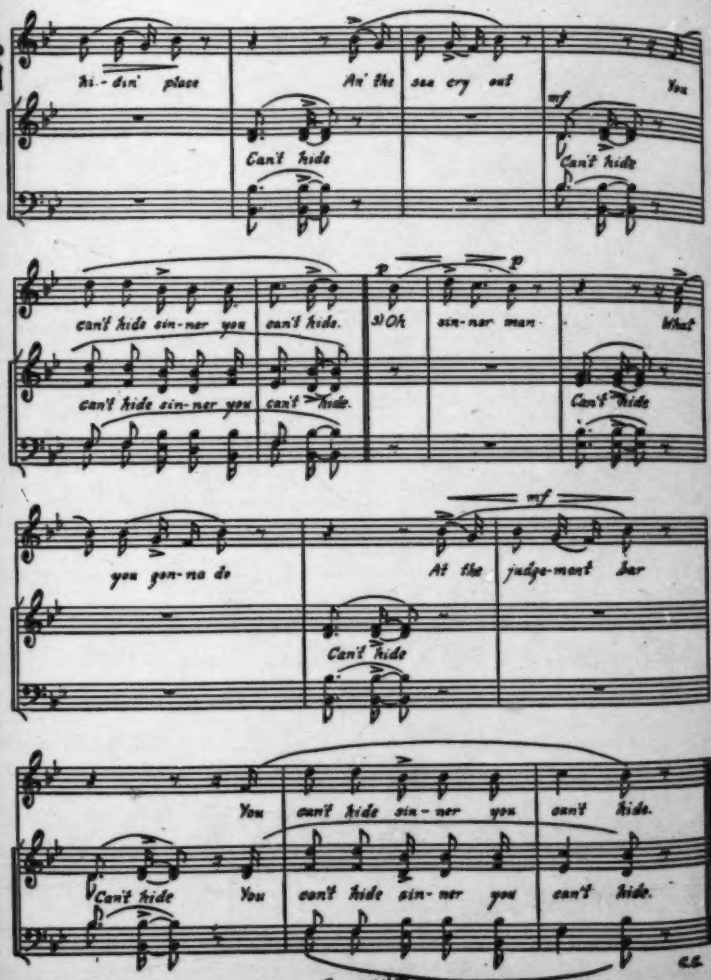

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•533
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25. *The Younger Generation Doing the Ring-Shout at the Cabin*

[facing p. 145]

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## JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

159 567

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

177 567

Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

159 533

[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

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•533
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Chorus: John, John you will see John
Aye John
John, John you will see John
Aye John.

Fiah in nuh Eas' and fiah in nuh Wes'
Aye John
Fiah goinah burn out tuh wilduhness
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

Gawd in nuh wil-d'ness jes begin tuh look out
Aye John
Yes, duh ram hohn blow an' nuh childun shout
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

When Quarterman (Illustration 28) finished singing these verses into my recording machine, he said: "You can't take dat!" And when I played it back to him, he exclaimed: "O My Missus—de debbil!"

Katherine sings the following verses to the same tune:

Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John
Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John.
When I get to Heaven goin' to walk all aroun'
Aye John
Angel in the Heaven can't order me down
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

When I get to Heaven goin' to sit an' tell
Aye John
Goin' to a'gue with the Father an' chatter with the Son
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

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## 31. JOHN, JOHN

533
539

Moderately fast - steady tempo
Chor. mf

R. Mac Gimsey

John, John you will see John— Aye—

John. John, John you will see John Aye—

John. Fi - ah in nuh Eas' An Fi - ah in nuh Wes'

Aye— John Fi - ah gon - na burn out tuh

Repeat Chor. then sing next verse

wil - duh - ness Aye— John.

Gawd in nuh wil- ness jes be - gin tuh look out

Aye— John Yes duh ram John blow an nuh

chil- dun shout Aye— John.

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Chorus: No hidin' place
No hidin' place
Almos' t' the Judgment Bah
No hidin' place.

'Cause Ah don't know what my sister wan'nuh stay here for

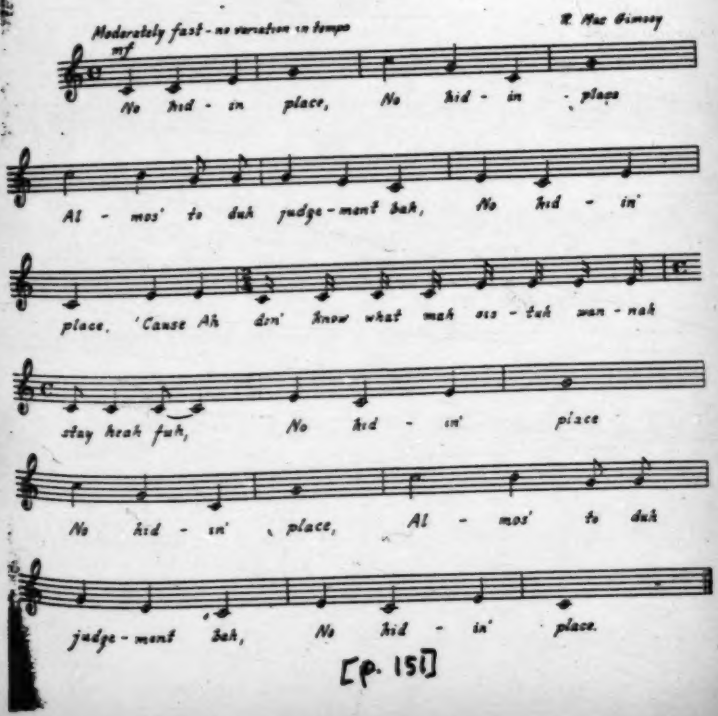
Repeat Chorus:

Ah'm goin' t' run t' the rock for a hidin' place

Repeat Chorus:

Fox got a hole in the groun'
Bird got a nest in the air
There's nare one thing got a hidin' place
But these sinners got none.

Repeat Chorus:



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## LIVIN' HUMBLE

781 •533 "Gettin' religion" is a soul-stirring matter with the Negro. When he feels the serious need of salvation he responds to the appeal of the minister to come forward to the "Mou'ners' Bench"—also called the "Anxious" or "Mercy Seat." There, at the bench directly in front of the pulpit, he kneels while the congregation sings an appropriate song. In the old days he wandered at night until he managed to "come through." Many lines in the oldest songs refer to customs that are now practically obsolete. I cannot imagine a young Negro today wandering alone at night until his "head got wet by the mid'l-night dew."

533
539

Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Christ is a waitin' to receive
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
None but tuh righteous shall git thah
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
O my head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
I pray to my God until I come through
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Ever since I been converted
I been tryin' to live 'umble.

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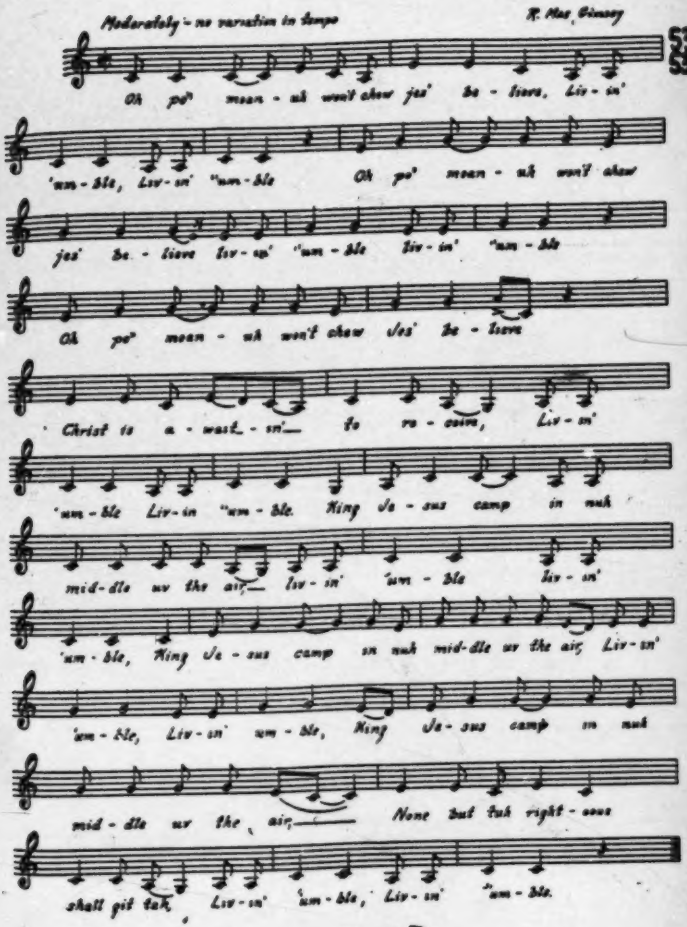

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## SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

•533 781 From the reference to "Mornin' star was a witness too" and "I heard a voice an' I saw no one," followed by "It mus' be Jesus passin' by," it is apparent that this unusual version of "Swing Low" was another of the songs appropriate to the "comin' through" of "sinners," who had agonized at night in order to achieve the proper exaltation.

533 539

Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
It mus' be Jesus passin' by
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
I heard a voice an' I saw no one
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
Mornin' star was a witness too
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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35. SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

Briskly - with no variation in tempo

R. MacGimsey

S33
S39

Oh— swing low,— Oh swing low,— Oh

swing low sweet Char-i-ot— Swing low.

It mus' be Je - sus Pass-in' by— Oh

swing low sweet Char-i-ot— Swing low Swing low in nuh

Eas' swing low swing low in nuh Eas' swing low, swing low char-

- i - ot swing low,— swing low— char - i - ot swing low.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 haps it is true that certain plantation owners were of a superior type and provided a
156 superior example; or was it that the education received by the slaves was better suited to their needs?

•533
539

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to weep like a willo' moan like a dove
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
When my Lord calls me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

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## ZION

533 585 Most Negro weddings, in church or out, are conducted, I am told, without music; but when Ben Davis was married, this song was used with telling effect in the Frederica African Baptist Church. Two ushers walked from the altar with lighted lamps in their hands, and met the bridal party at the door. Two little girls headed the procession and strewed flowers in its path. Ben, with the maid of honor, was followed by the bride on the arm of the best man. To the music of "O Zion—when the bridegroom comes," sung by the guests who filled the church, the participants moved to the altar, where the ushers put down their lamps, and Joe Lowman, the preacher, was waiting for them. When Lowman asked Ben: "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" Ben spoke up "good and strong": "Yes suh!" When the same question was asked of Norah, her answer was very weak. This did not satisfy the parson: "Answer as though you mean it. This ain't for today and tomorrow, this is a lifetime business!" Everybody laughed. Lowman, after the usual procedure, offered a prayer and ended the ceremony by telling Ben to "salute the bride."

533 [461] Besides being used in church and at praise meeting, I find "Zion" was one of the favorite rowing songs of the Butler oarsmen. Tall, lean Liverpool, who looks like an Arab sheik, showed us how he rowed to its rhythm:

533 539 585

Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come
Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come.

Chorus: O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
When the bridegroom come.

Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come
Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

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•533 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
539 When the bridegroom come
585 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come
Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come
What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come
Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come
We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come
We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

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36. ZION

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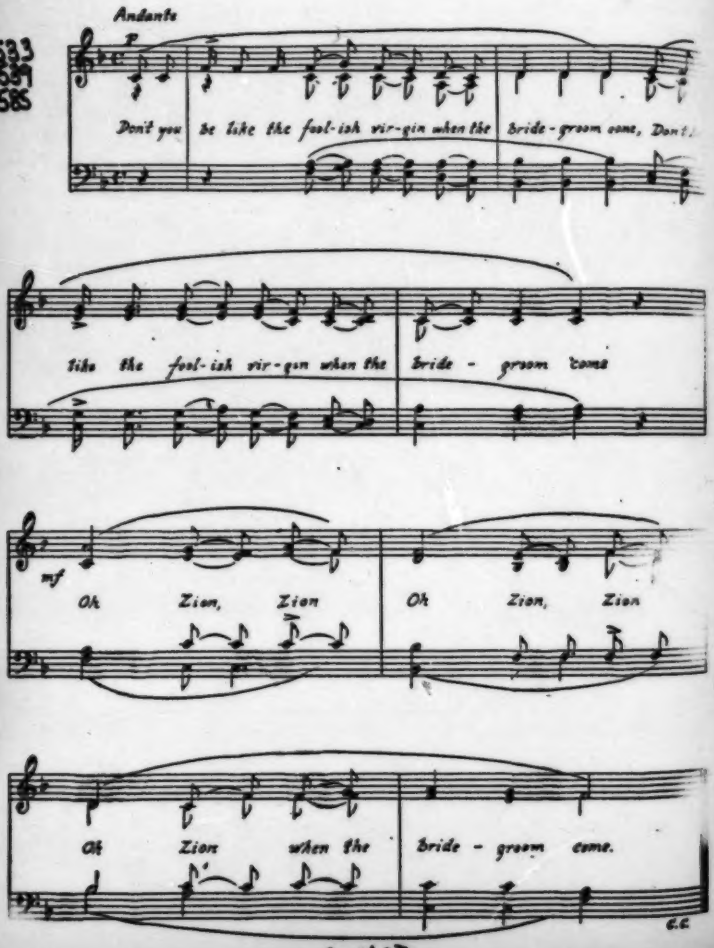
585



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## MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

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716

This song belongs to the exhorting-sermon type which has an African counterpart. The old-time preacher rhythmically chanted his sermon; at effective intervals he broke into song, in which he was joined by the congregation.

533
539

Chorus: My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
My God is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop let me tell you 'bout the Chapter One
When the Lord God's work has jus' begun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Two
When the Lord God's written his Bible through
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Three
When the Lord God died on Calvary.

Chorus: An' Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Four
Lord God visit 'mong the po'
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Five
Lord God brought the dead alive
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Six
He went in Jerusalem and healed the sick.

(repeat chorus)

Stop and let me tell you 'bout Chapter Seven
Died and risen and went to Heaven
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Eight
John seen Him standin' at the Golden Gate
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Nine
Lord God turned the water to wine
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Ten
John says He's comin' in the world again.

(repeat chorus)

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## 37. MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

533
534

*Moderato, marcato*

Baritone (Leader) — *mf* My God is a rock in a wear - y land

Basers

wear - y land in a wear - y land My God is a rock in a

wear - y land Shel-ter in a time of storm. Ah

know he is a rock in a wea - ry land wea - ry land In a

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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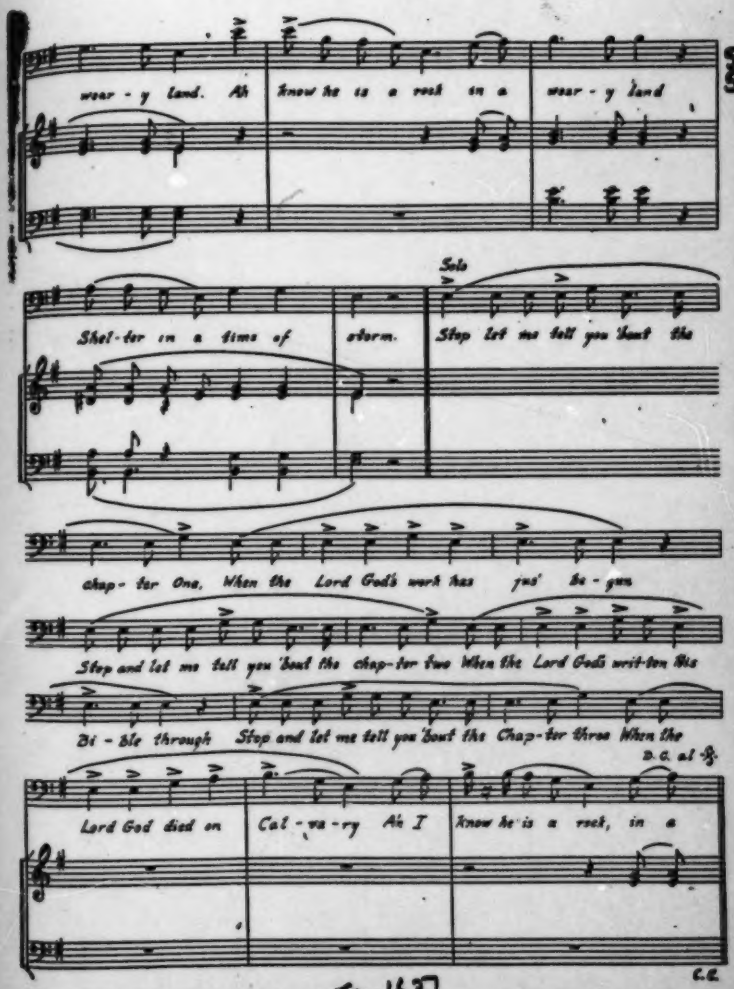

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## THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song [10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 539

Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

[10] Vol. *I*, record 86-A.

[11] Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.

(567)

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533
539

Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

123
796
[346]
[352]
796
786

Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh: His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

53

See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

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## BAPTISM

795 •533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[182]

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[194] [577]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533
539

## WADE IN NUH WATUH CHILDUN

Chorus: Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

If a you don' believe Ah been redeem'
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Follow me down to Jurdun stream
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

Repeat Chorus:

Who dat yonduh drest in white
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Mus' be the childun uv the Isralite
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

Repeat Chorus:

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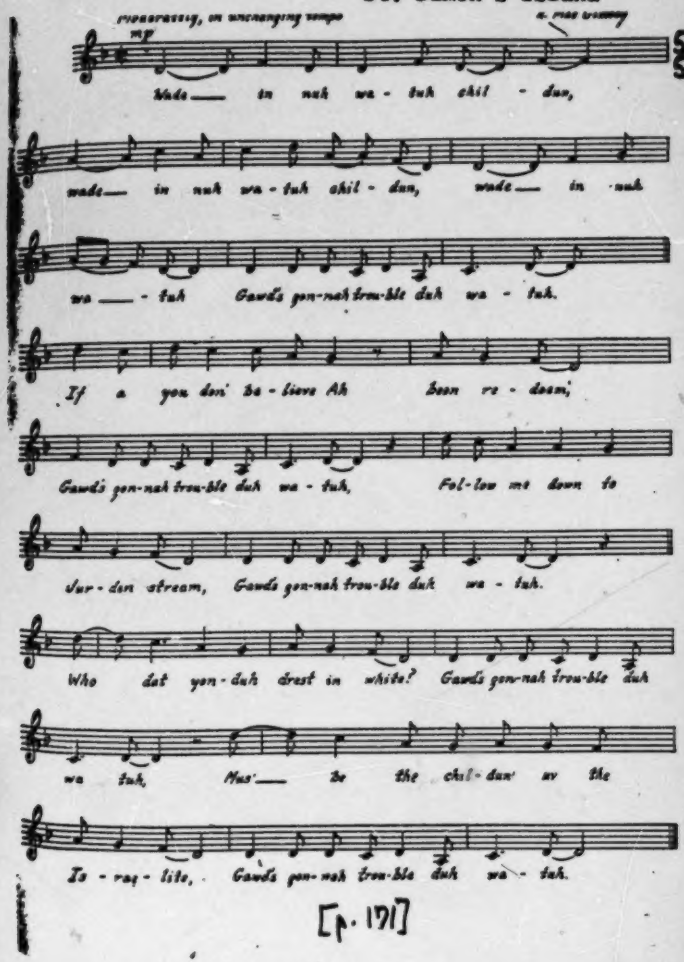


[p. 171]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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•533
539

SABBATH HAS NO END

In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Water caught me to my throat
Jesus Christ was the Captain
An' the Holy Ghos' was my boat.
I'm goin' cross Jurd'n
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Where John baptize three
Up step ole big man Satan say
John baptize me.
Look in the Book of Redemption
There you shall fine
Where Jesus Christ was the doctor
Turned the water to wine.
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Sabbath has no end.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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537

In nuh riv - ah ov Jurd'___

Ah be - lieve In nuh riv - ah ov Jur - dan.

Ah be - lieve In nuh riv - ah ov Jurd'___

Ah be - lieve Sab - bath has no end

. Ah___ went down to duh riv - ah ov Jur - dan___

___ wa - tuh caught me to mah thirst. King

Jes - us Christ was cap - tain___ An' nuh

Ho - ly Ghos' was mah boat. Ahim go - in 'cross

Jurd' Ah be - lieve Ahim go - in 'cross Jur - dan

Ah be - lieve Ahim go - in' 'cross Jurd'.

Ah be - lieve Sab- bath has no end.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

787 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[16] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

•533 569 [164] Susyanna (Illustration 29)A learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[16] As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.

A, [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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771 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know
772 that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the phys-
171 ical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in
533 their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers
771 was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found
(154) release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without num-
(171) ber, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it
533 was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this
789 song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

533
534

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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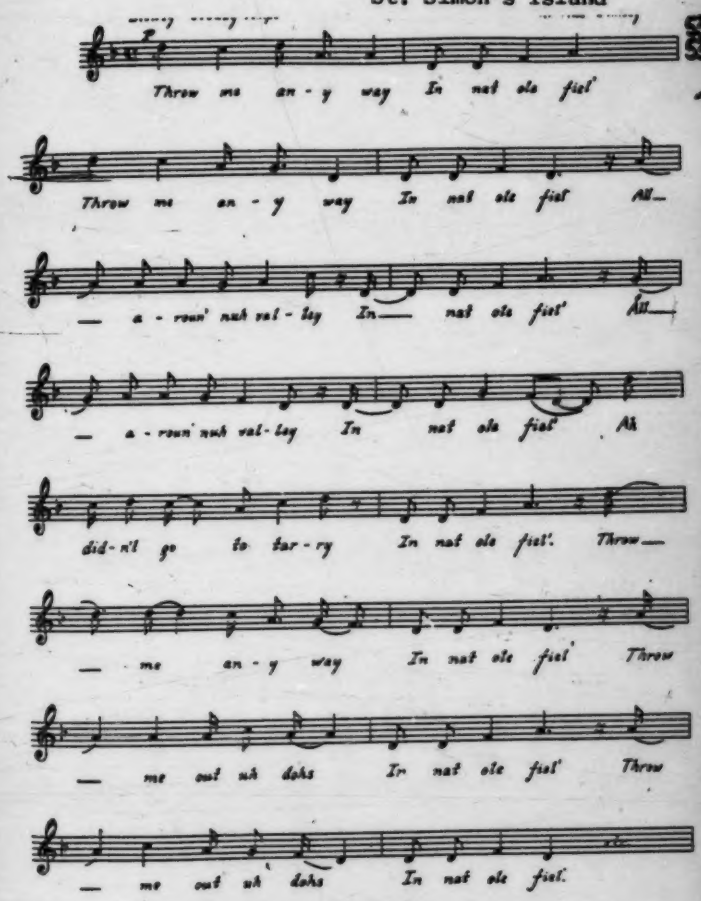
Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p. 177]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## JESUS GON TUH MAKE UP MY DYIN' BED

533 767 Although this song was brought to St. Simon's after the War Between the States, I am told by an old resident of McIntosh County that it originated in antebellum days when there were no colored undertakers, and a certain Negro was appointed on each plantation to make the dead ready for burial.

533 539

Chorus: He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
Jesus gon tuh make up my dyin' bed.
Well, in my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's gon tuh cry
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to close my dyin' eye.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to weep
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to fol' my dyin' sheet.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to moan
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to hear my dyin' groan.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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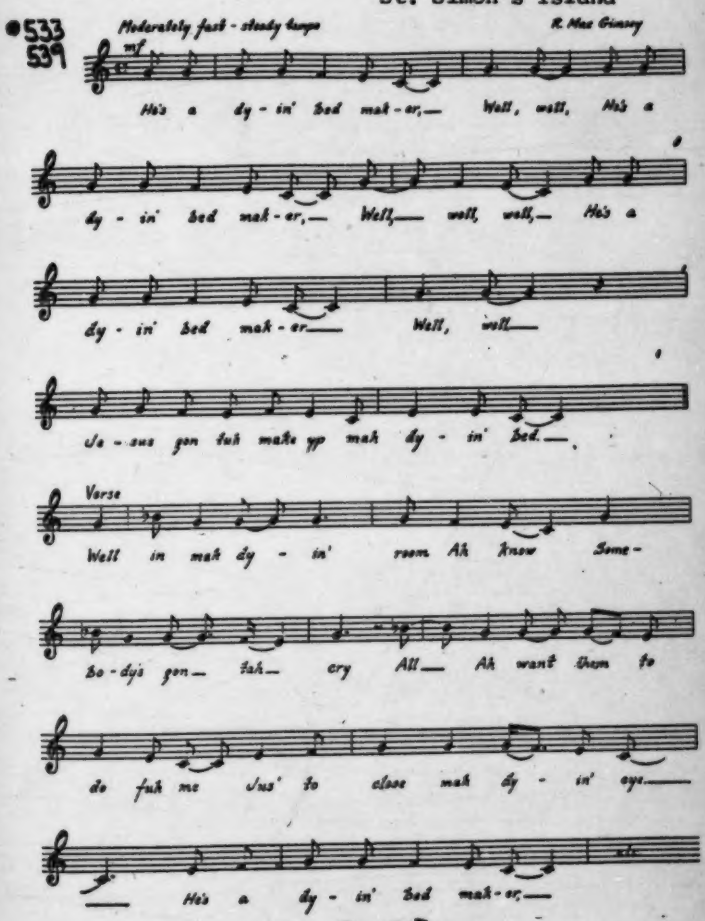


[p. 179]

91 Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## O DE ROBE

533 177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

[464] [567] [17] *In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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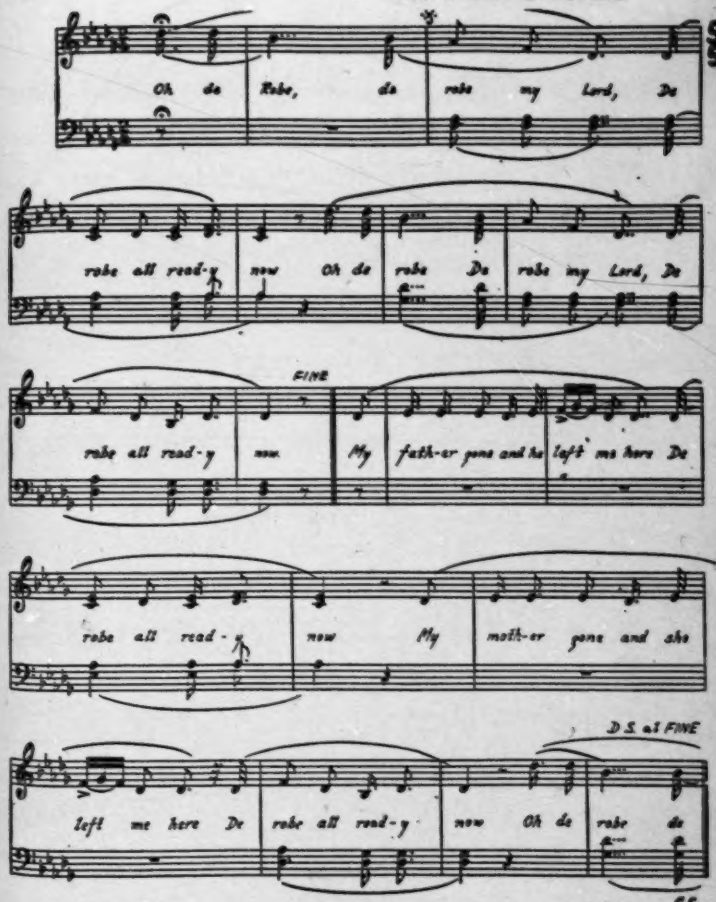

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533
539

AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NIGH

Good-bye Mother
Hmmh [19]
I'm goin' to leave you
Hmmh
For you can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

In the city of Jerusalem
Hmmh
An' Pentecos' Day
Hmmh
When the people got the Holy Ghost
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

Good-bye tattlers
Hmmh
Goin' away to leave you
Hmmh
You can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

[19] Sung by the basers with closed lips. This odd nasal tone adds attractive variety to a fine piece of melodic construction.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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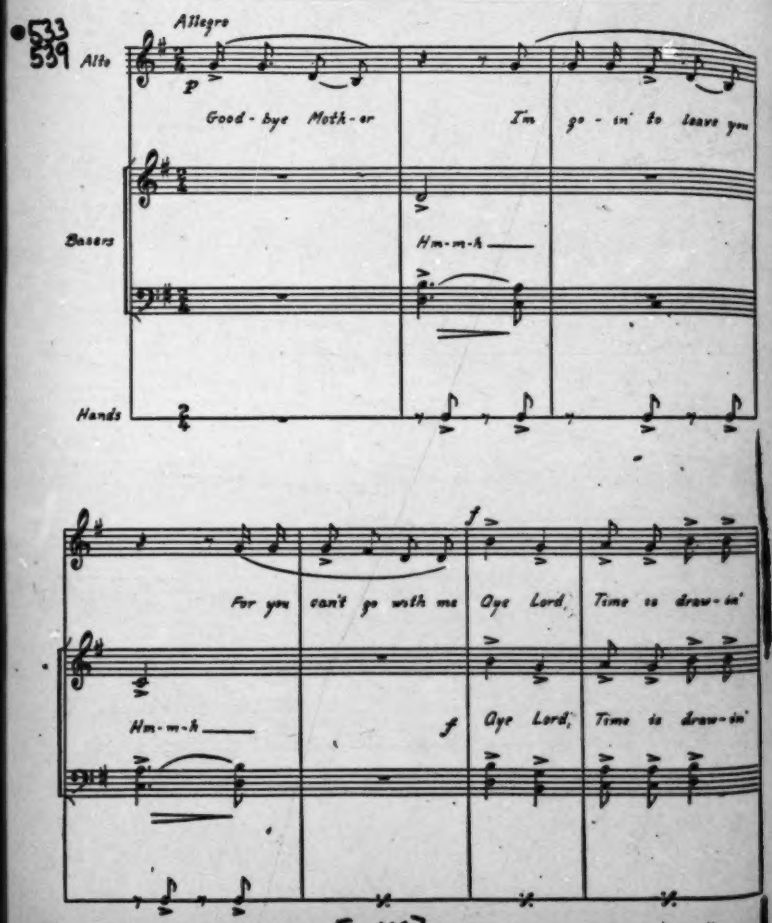
44 AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NICH




[p. 186]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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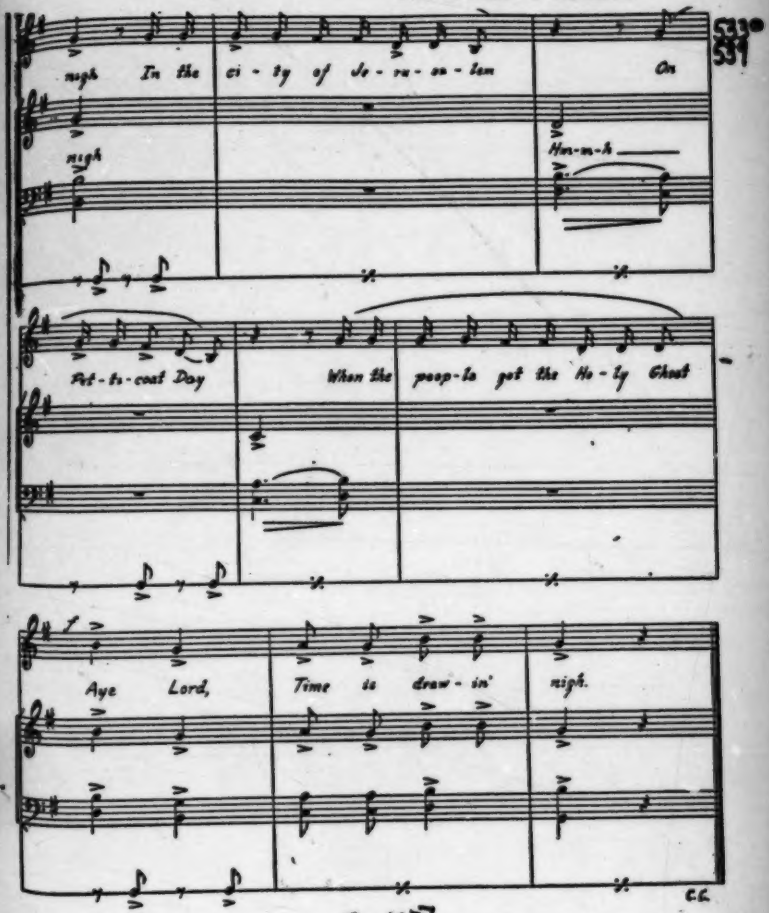


[p. 187]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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●533 It was interesting to find the tune of this song fitted out in M[illegible]
539 with an entirely different set of words. None but a Negro poet could [illegible]
the imagery of the following lines:

Loose horse in the valley
Aye
Who goin' t' ride 'im
Aye
Nothin' but the righteous
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Judgment's a comin'
Aye
How you know it
Aye
By the buddin' of the fig tree
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Don't you hear God talkin'
Aye
He's a talkin' through the thunder
Aye
Then people ona wonder
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

NUMMER ME ONE

Chorus: Nummer[20] me one
Nummer me one
Nummer me one
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

The song is prolonged by sending for the different [illegible].

[20] Number.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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45. NUMMER ME ONE

•533
539

*Andante*

Num - mer me ___ one, ___ Num - mer me ___

one, Num - mer me ___ one, I'm

goin' to the judge - ment bar

C.C.

[p. 189]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 764 [574] The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

[539]

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)[A] one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

[533] [539]

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months. In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

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St. John Teaching the St Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

523
82-2
829

[facing p. 192]

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## IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

533 In Charleston, where I was so ill-advised as to ask a member of the white Society for the Preservation of Spirituals why this work was not done by the Negroes, I was tartly told that they no longer sang the old songs. In spite of that statement, when a friend called her cook into the dining room, and summoned an old flower woman from the street, I heard the two sing songs which were perfectly familiar.

I asked for "In Some Lonesome Graveyard." They tittered and said: "You know dat one? Dat's real ole." After singing three verses, the cook, with an instinct for a dramatic exit, threw her apron over her head, and retreated sobbing to the kitchen. She probably remembered she had something in the oven that required her attention.

533 539 Willis tells me he learned the song as a small boy from his father, Adam Proctor, while planting corn.

U-m-h, u-m-h,[25] I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
In some lonesome graveyard.

U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Fathers are warned about their sons, preachers about their members.

[25] Sung with the lips closed.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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46. IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

533
539

Andante

Um - h — Um - h — I hear a might - y

p

mean - in' — Um - h — Um - h — I hear a might - y

mean - in' Um - h Um - h I hear a might - y

f

mean - in' In some lone - some grave - yard.

[p. 194]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## I GOT TO LAY IN YONDER GRAVEYARD

•533 539 It is a pity that the music of these touching lines is not available.

I got to lay in yonder graveyard
I got to lay there fo' myself
Nobody here can lay there fo' me
I got to lay there fo' myself.

I got to stan' my trial in the Judgment
I got to stan' there fo' myself
There's nobody here can stan' there fo' me
I got to stan' there fo' myself.

I got to give an account in the Judgment
I got to give it fo' myself
Nobody here can give it fo' me
I got to give it fo' myself.

I got to cross that river o' Jurden
I got to cross there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to cross there fo' me
I got to cross there fo' myself.

I got to pray in that lonesome valley
I got to pray there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to pray there fo' me
I got to pray there fo' myself.

I got to weep at Zion's Court House
I got to weep there fo' myself
My dear mother can't weep there fo' me
I got to weep there fo' myself.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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CHAPTER SIX

## *Work Songs*

In the old days, before Negroes rode to work in automobiles, they sang as they walked, and most of their tasks were lightened with song. One of my pleasantest memories is of hearing them singing in the early morning and at sundown, and—during the heat of the day—calling to each other across wide fields. The call was peculiar, and I always wondered how they came by such a strange form of vocal gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do anything like it. Years later I ran across a description of the trick in Natalie Curtis-Burlin's *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*. The author, in speaking of a Bantu rain song, calls attention to a passage which contains "an upward break in the voice, something like a Swiss yodel." Such field-calls are rarely heard today, although I am told they are still in use in the vicinity of the Okefenokee Swamp.

533 198 (461) 533 198 171

In the late eighteen-eighties, the Negroes in my home neighborhood—southern New Jersey—began to pattern their behavior after that of the silent white folk, and from that time on, little of their singing was heard. Farther south, this racial characteristic was later in disappearing. In 1901, Georgia Bryan Conrad tells us that, in her youth, "the Negroes were always singing," but adds regretfully: "Nothing is in greater contrast to that time than the quietness of the Negroes now." [1] However, there are remote places where they still sing at work. In factories where large numbers are employed in such monotonous jobs as shucking oysters or picking crabs and shrimp, rhythmic songs are used to relieve dullness. They are also sung wherever work is heavy, and concerted effort is required. In Brunswick, vessels are still loaded to the musical chant of "Sandy Anna"; freight cars at the sugar terminal are shunted for short distances to the rhythm of "Old Tar River," and the cabin in front of my house was moved on rollers from Kelvin Grove to the significant tune of "Pay Me My Money Down!"

533 171 533 461

[1] "Reminiscences of a Southern Woman," Southern Workman, 1901.

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as they hoisted and lowered the hogsheads and boxes of their cargoes; one man taking the burden of the song (and the slack of the rope) and the others striking in with the chorus. They would sing in this way more than a dozen different songs in an hour; most of which might indeed be warranted to contain "nothing religious"—a few of them, "on the contrary, quite the reverse"—but generally rather innocent and proper in their language, and strangely attractive in their music; and with a volume of voice that reached a square or two away. This plan of labor has now passed away, in Philadelphia at least, and the songs, I suppose, with it. So that these performances are to be heard only among black sailors on their vessels, or long-shore men in out-of-the-way places, where opportunities for respectable people to hear them are rather few.

Something of the African background of these "pure negro songs" may be gathered from a description of the work songs of West Africa, given by N. G. J. Ballanta, who tells us: "Music in Africa is not cultivated for its own sake. It is always used in connection with dances or to accompany workmen. The rhythmic interest of the songs impels them to work and takes away the feeling of drudgery." He goes on to say that work songs are "—mainly rhythmic—short phrases mostly of two or three bars; solo and chorus follow each other instantly; the chorus is in many instances composed of two or three ejaculatory words, answered by the workmen. Tempo moderate." This summary fits so many of the songs used by our stevedores that the connection is unmistakable.

The similarity between the songs of African workmen and those of their cousins in this country is also illustrated in some examples from the shipping docks of Beira, given by Natalie Curtis-Burlin. One of them, used by laborers in pushing or pulling heavy things, might have been sung on the docks of Brunswick. Another, like so many of the work songs of the American Negroes, was suggested by the particular job in hand, in this case, the literal translation runs: "Dawn—with freight—Yes, yes!—Dawn—with freight—Look for the label!"

Among the Negroes, any song with the proper rhythm is used to accompany whatever work requires its help. While those of a religious character have always been the greatest favorites in our section,[3] the type of work is necessarily the determining factor. It is unlikely that a shanty could be used for rowing, or a rowing song for beating rice. In the old days, if no suitable verse came to mind for a particular task, one was made up then and there out of slender material. Fanny Kemble,

[3] *It is interesting to notice that the religious songs used by the stevedores and other workmen are vastly superior to those heard in church and prayer meeting. The reason is self-evident: the latter have been dressed up to conform to the white folks' fashion.*

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in her *Journal*, gave several illustrations which show how anything was grist for the Negroes' song-mill. With the rivers affording the only means of travel, it was natural that she should hear rowing songs of all kinds; and on one occasion she had the unique privilege of hearing her own praises extemporaneously chanted by her two Negro boatmen. They described her personal attractions, and amused her intensely by their repeated references to her "wire waist."[4]

Today the Negroes are less inventive, and generally confine themselves to a substitution of names or familiar lines in the old songs, but we can still hear examples of the way they utilized incidents or phrases that struck their fancy. If a captain said: "It's rough going 'round the Horn," the Negroes made up a song about the statement, and we had: "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla gal, Go 'round the Horn!" "Ragged Leevy," a waterfront character of Brunswick, was described in the shanty that bears his name. "Little Johnny Brown, fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound," was so popular among the stevedores that he figured in one of their jolliest shanties; and "Yonder come that *Hessie*" always brings a regretful feeling to those of us who remember the "good old days" on St. Simon's when the *Hessie* was our means of communication with the outside world, and the captain obligingly did our errands.

In our machine age it is inevitable that these work-songs should pass. Before they have entirely disappeared, records should be made of the few examples that have survived.

## SHANTIES

If anyone needs more information about the use of these shanties, I suggest that he apply to either Joe Armstrong or Henry Merchant of St. Simon's Island. Both were at one time leaders of stevedore crews, and both have told me the uses to which the different songs were put. Since I am a land-lubber and more interested in music than in the mechanics of loading lumber and stowing cotton, details concerning the latter have not stuck, while the tunes have—to the last note. Any mistake in describing their application is mine, not Joe's or Henry's.

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In the early days of the lumber industry, great rafts of logs were nailed together, and—with two or three men in charge—were drifted down the Altamaha to the mills at its mouth.[5] Ships from everywhere came for the sawed lumber. Julia once

[4] *African explorers with more knowledge of the native dialect than their boatmen realized were often entertained in the same manner, but their defects—not their charms—were derisively enumerated.*

[5] *Fanny Kemble mentions in her Journal that on one of her boat-trips from Darien she saw "The river . . . covered with Ocone [river] boxes." She describes them as monstrous square*

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told me she had seen as many as thirty-five vessels lined up at The Mills in the days when the Hilton-Dodge Lumber Company was at the peak of its production. There was the *Waltham*, a three-masted schooner, under Captain Bartow—remembered as "the bad-luck ship." The *Annie Bishop* was also a three-masted schooner, the *Irene* was a brig, and there was one called the *Hope Sharewood* which brought forth many a pun. As many as twenty-five Negroes would "roll ballast"—which means, as can be imagined, that the stones with which the windjammers came loaded were landed at a temporary dock, and rolled in wheelbarrows to waste land. A geologist with a bit of curiosity might find it of interest to examine the contents of the small islands of ballast in the marsh between St. Simon's and Brunswick. They represent calling cards from all over the world. I have always wondered what the handsome white bark *Regina*, from Archangel—which I saw at The Mills in 1913—could have brought to these shores.

The *Waltham* probably came loaded with the New Engand granite that provided the owner of Hamilton Plantation with a rock garden in a rockless land. Some years ago chunks of flint from the chalk cliffs of England were plentiful on the banks of the river beside Fort Frederica, but Boy Scouts have no doubt found them useful —as my children did—for they are no longer abundant.

Floyd White and Henry Merchant, among others, have given me lively shanties, and they both employ the old-fashioned falsetto tones which are so effective when heard in the open. It is a curious fact that most dark-colored men now appear to be baritones; yet a hundred years ago Fanny Kemble said that tenors predominated on St. Simon's.[6] I remember from my youth the high tones of the Negro

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boxes, "made out of rough planks put together in the roughest manner possible to attain the necessary object of keeping the cotton dry. Upon this great tray are piled . . . cotton bags, to the height of ten, twelve and fourteen feet. . . . These Ocone boxes are broken up at Darien, where the cotton is shipped either for the Savannah, Charleston, or Liverpool markets and the timber of which they are constructed, sold." This chance reference to the sale of timber indicates the beginning of the lumber industry.

[6] "The only exception that I have met with yet among our boat voices to the high tenor which they seem all to possess is in the person of an individual named Isaac, a basso profundo of the deepest dye." The situation she describes holds to this day. We have only one true bass on the island, but he does not appear to enjoy hearing his voice as we do. I cannot get him to use it, although I try every means—praise, bribery, and the opposite tack are all of no avail. A pity; singing in unison needs the substance given by such a voice, as well as the variety provided by the interpolations of the "high tribble" and tenor. It was interesting to find in Northern Haiti that our yard boy would sing a verse in a high falsetto; the next would be in his natural baritone—from which I gathered that such a procedure might be traditional.

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533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers,"[7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe[8] (Illustration 31) calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

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There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

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What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.

[567] [8] In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.

A, [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

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O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

## CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

[461] [505] This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick" * in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

* This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.

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## 47. CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

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Andante Moderato

Tenors (2) — Solo

mp — f

Call me hang-in' John-ny O hang boys

Basses (2)

Solo

hang, You call me hang-in' John-ny O hang boys' hang

Solo — Solo

Yes, I nev-er hang no-bod-y O hang boys hang. I

nev-er hang no-bod-y O hang boys hang.

C.C.

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## 48. KNOCK A MAN DOWN

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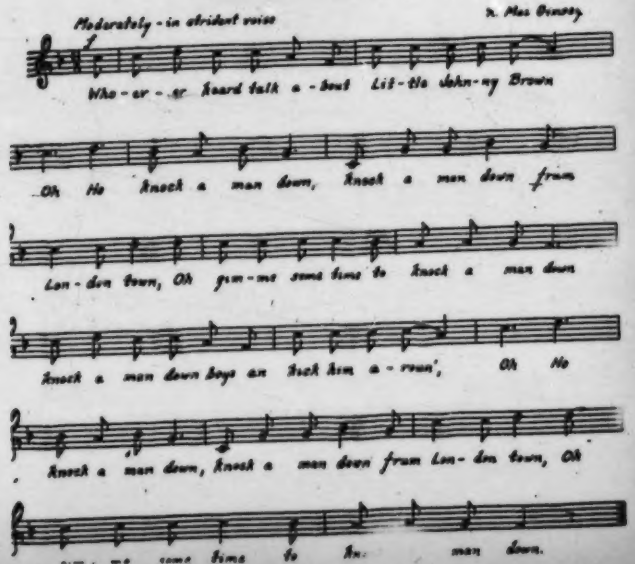
Johnny Brown was captain of a tugboat called *The Dandy*, which towed to open water the sailing vessels coming to Doboy Sound for lumber. The stevedores agreed he was "the fines' cap'n of 'em all."

Y'u never heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Knock a man down bullies an' kick him aroun'
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Y'u ever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.



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SANDY ANNA

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Seaman, what's the madda?
Hoo-ray 'o-ray
Seaman, what's the madda?
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray 'o-ray
He stole it in Savannah
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
He spend it in Havana
Hooray 'o-ray
I caught 'im in his colla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
I shake 'im till he holla'
Hooray o'-ray
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.

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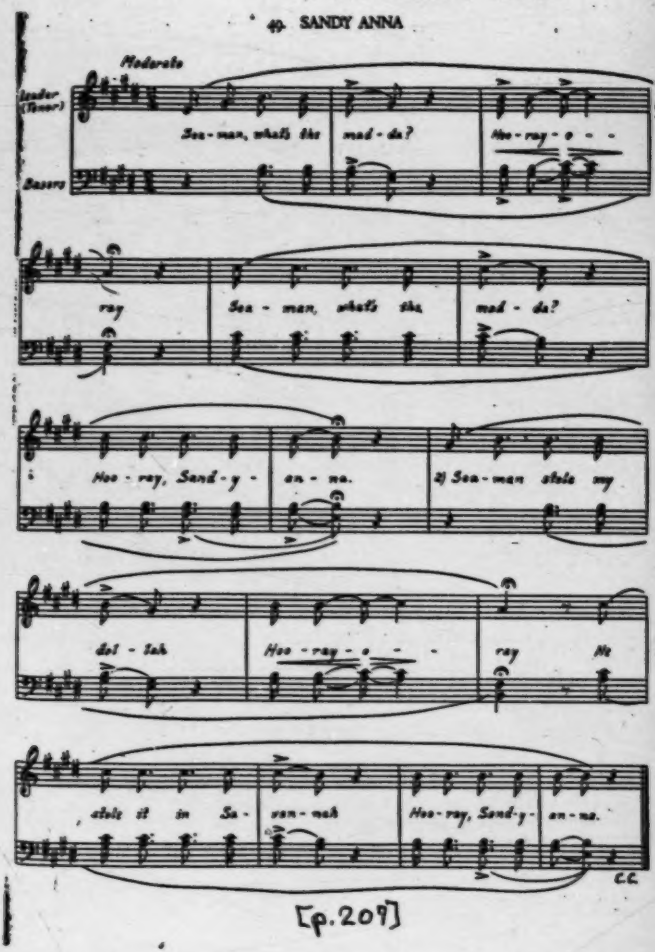


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Pay me my mon - ey down Think I heard my Cap - tain say

Pay me my mon - ey down Tmor - row is my

Sail - in' day Pay me my mon - ey down.

C.S.

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## DEBT I OWE

Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe in Brunswick sto'e[11]
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
O Mister Watchman don't watch me
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Watch that nig'ah right behine that tree
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe.

[11] To sustain interest the shanty leader always introduced an element of surprise into his lines. To this day we feel cheated when *Floyd* fails to include "Jewtown Sto'e" and "St. Simon's Sto'e" when he sings about the debts he "ain' gonna pay," but then, that may be part of the game.

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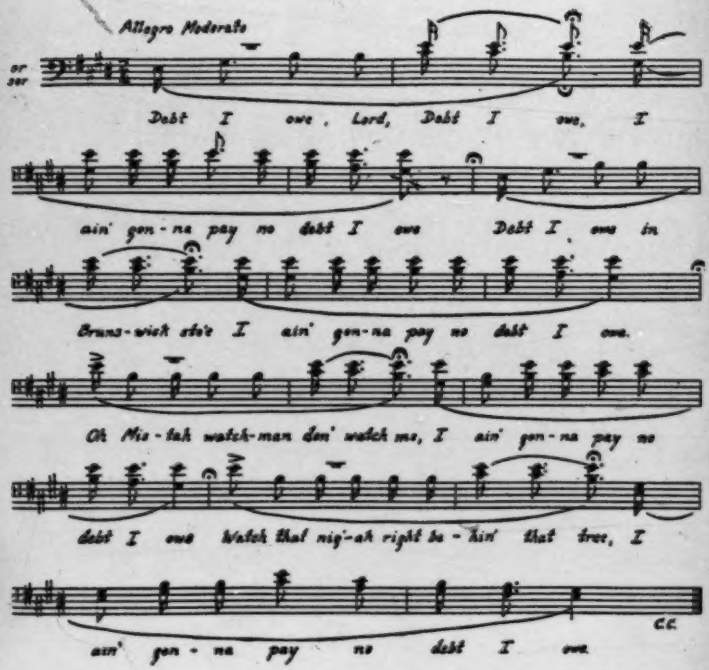
51. DEBT I OWE



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## RAGGED LEEVY

Ragged Leevy! Oh — Ho!
Do ragged Leevy
Ragged Leevy! O boy!
You ragged like a jay bird!
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence [12]
In the mornin'—Oh — Ho!
Soon in the mornin'.
Hos' an' buggy—Oh — Ho!
Hos' an' buggy
Hos' an' buggy—O boy!
Dey's no one to drive 'um.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
In de mornin'
When I rise
I goin' to sit by de fire.
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
O soon in de mornin'
In de mornin'
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.
Mauma Dinah Oh — Ho!
Do Mauma Dinah
Mauma Dinah
O gal I can't suppo't you.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Do Mr. Sipplin
Walkin' talkin'!
O buil' me a sto'e fence.
Sweet potato Oh — Ho!
Sweet potato
Sweet potato O boy
There's two in de fire.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.

Used when "blockin' heavy timber."

[12] Store fence.

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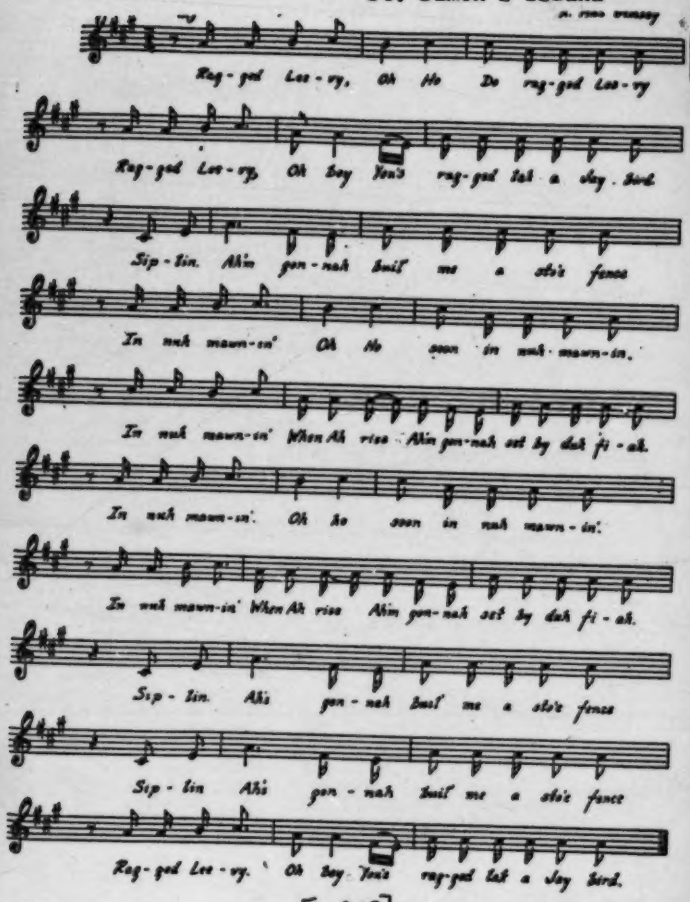

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## GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O

Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone an' I'm goin' too
Goodbye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone to Liverpool [12]
Good-bye my Riley O!
You Democrat Riley
O Riley, O man!
You Democrat Riley
Good-bye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
When I played that nine spot through
Good-bye my Riley O!

[12] London Town and Mobile Bay are the other spots where Riley is supposed to have gone.

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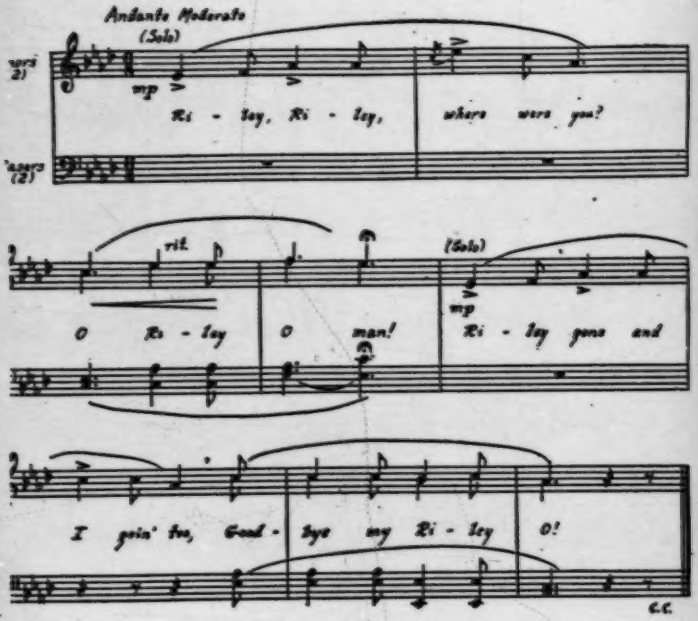
53. GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O

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## OLE TAR RIVER

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Chorus: O, On the ole Tar river
O—eee[14]
O, On the ole Tar river
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
O—eee
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Tar river run black an' dirty
O—eee
Tar river run black an' dirty
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' to water my horses
O—eee
Tar river goin' to water my horses
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Ole Tar river is a healin' water
O—eee
Ole Tar river is a healin' water
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
O—eee
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Chorus: Way down, way down in the country
O—eee
Way down, way down in the country
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

[14] In some sections such a refrain is called a howl. In Seaboard Slave States, Olmstead call it "Jodeling" or "The Carolina Yell" and describes its use by a group of Negro laborers. "Suddenly one raised such a sound as I never heard before; a long, loud, musical shout, rising and falling, and breaking into falsetto, his voice ringing through the woods, in the clear, frosty night air, like a bugle call. As he finished, the melody was caught up by another, and then another, and then by several in chorus." Olmstead goes on to say that a similar response was sung by this group of Negroes as they put their shoulders to a bale of cotton and rolled it up an embankment:

[461]

"Come brothers, come; let's go at it, come now, *exhal* roll away
ooeho-ooeho-weeicho-if"

A different example, sung by Negro boat hands, is given in another chapter by this observant gentleman:

"Ye see dem boat way dah ahead . . .
Oahoichim . . .
Dey's burnin' sut'n but fat [wood] an' rosin
Oahoichim."

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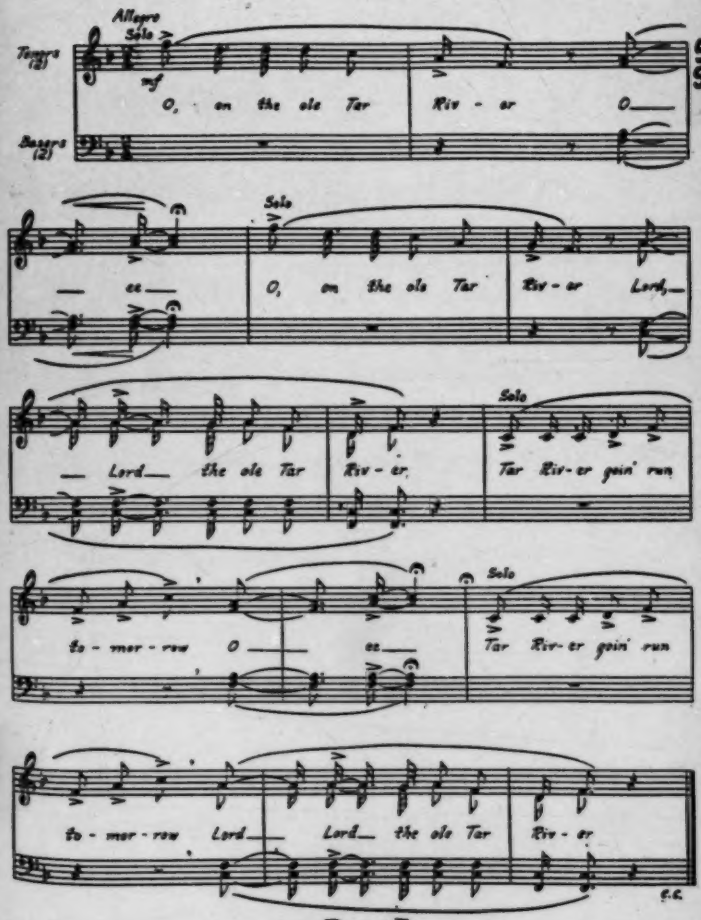


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### THIS TIME ANOTHER YEAR

This time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long!

Befo' this time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
Mind my sister how you walk on the cross
O Lord how long
Your right foot slip an' y'ur soul get los'
O Lord how long!

### HAUL AWAY, I'M A ROLLIN' KING

Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Yonder come a flounder flat on the groun'
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Belly to the groun' an' back to the sun
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Ain' but one thing worry me
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
I leave my wife in Tennessee
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.

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SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

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## ANNIEBELLE

533 461 Of all the shanties, this concerning Anniebelle appears to be adaptable to the most varied uses, and to be the most widely distributed. Joe tells me he learned it over forty years ago from the stevedores who loaded lumber on the vessels at the Hilton-Dodge mills, but its main use was for "spikin' steel" on the railroads. I notice, however, that he puts the song to equally good use in chopping wood or swinging the weed cutter. In the mines it is called a "hammerin' song."

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Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't weep
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't moan
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't go
Hunh!
Leave home.
Hunh!
When I throw
Hunh!
My head
Hunh!
In the bar
Hunh!
Room doo'
Hunh!
I'll never
Hunh!
Get drunk
Hunh!
No mo'.
Hunh!
Don't want t' hurt nobody
Hunh!

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O-h no
Hunh! 533
O-h no 539
Hunh!
Dis ole hammer [15]
Hunh!
Kill John Henry
Hunh!
Laid him low buddy
Hunh!
Laid him low.
Hunh!

At this point Joe interpolated rhythmically: "Stan' by for another verse."

Ain't no hammer
Hunh!
In this mount'in
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy.
Hunh!

Several years ago I heard the following version sung by Boogaloo, one of Darien's happy-go-lucky Negroes, as he cut weeds on the highway shoulders in front of Josephine's house. It was amusing to read in a recent issue of *Time* a letter from Mary J. Phillips telling of the explanation of the present war Boogaloo had given her husband. Mrs. Phillips quotes Boogaloo as saying: "Boss, I tells you what I thinks about this here war. Germany, some back, she starts a crap game, threw an eight, then falls off. Now she wants her money back and starts grabbing." I imagine that Boogaloo's speech was more consistent all through, but the thought is clearly his. 533 [461]

This is the hammer that kill John Henry
Tell 'im I'm dead, buddy, tell 'im I'm dead
Cap'n Smith what you reckon?
Ten-pound hammer kill John Henry
Kill' my buddy, Lord, but 'e can't kill me. [539]

[15] Sometimes he specifies "nine-poun' hammer."

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533
461
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32. St. Simon's Shouty Singers

[facing p 224]

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## 56. ANNIEBELLE

533
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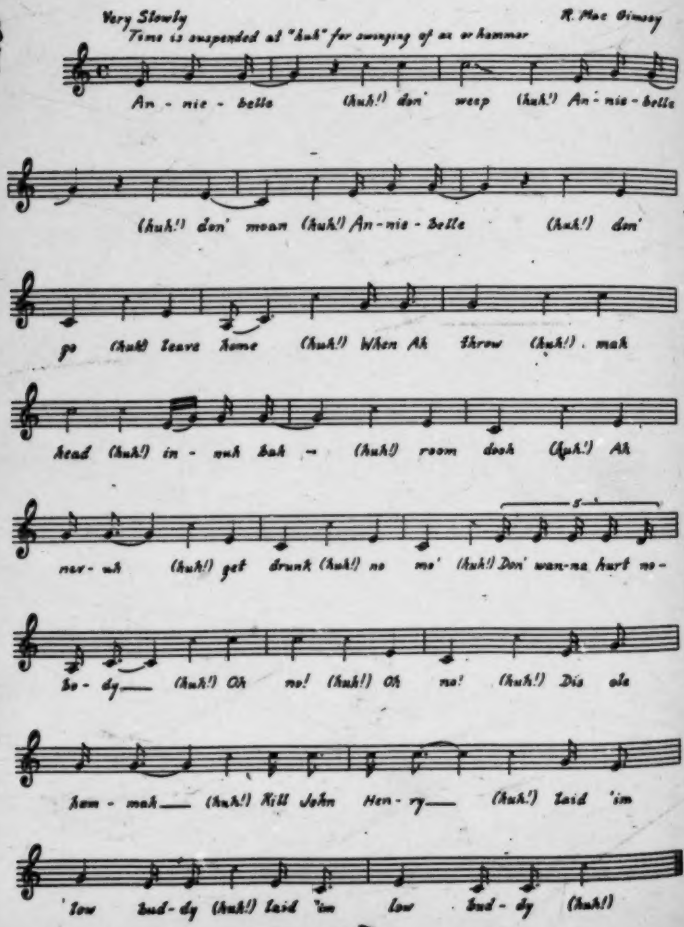


[p. 224]

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243 461 (535) Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quick and effective dance step, the outer husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work was done to a similar step, with these words:

● 533 539

Peas an' the rice done done
Higho—Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho—Higho!
How do you know—done heard it blow
Higho—Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okra—Nana—Nana! [18]
Eat some an' leave some—Nana—Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright worl'
Foo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me—Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'—Do Lord remember me.

(535) A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indicate how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a preliminary scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

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•533 539

You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have [412] seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting [461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243 171 [17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

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## PEAS AN' THE RICE

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[243]

In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

243
171

[18] James A. Grant in a Walk across Africa tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!" To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.

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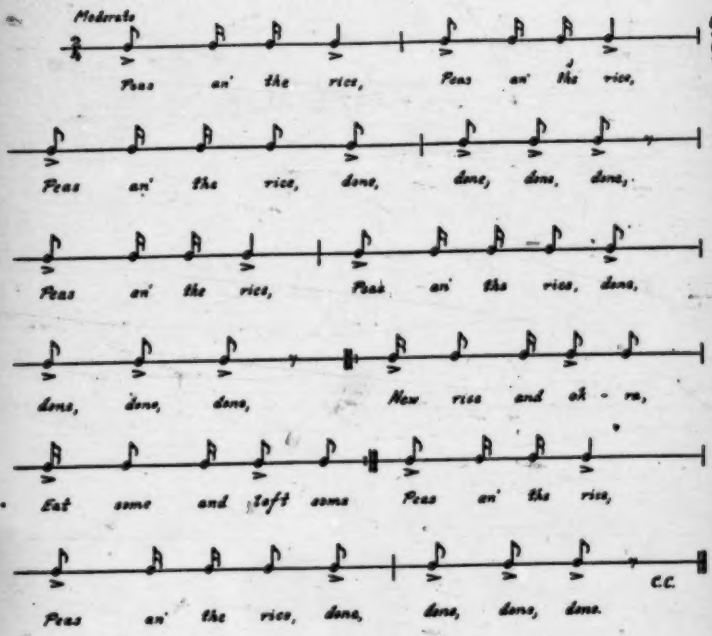
58. PEAS AN' THE RICE




[p.233]

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## HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest;[19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

243
533

533
539

Summer comin' again
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she let me free
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
  Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821] [19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

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## A. B. A. B. A.

243 533 461 The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

533 534

Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Gally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

[20] Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.

[21] The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion. [711]

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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[171] [22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
56 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
•533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
56 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
[342] their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
[114] with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children" —which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
175 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
56 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
243 all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
[164] for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

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are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" enabled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the minimum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the activity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced." The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina. The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
522 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
533 however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

533 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in Our Todays and Yesterdays, "there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.

[171] In A Walk across Africa, Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.

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## MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me (296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

[234] [539] She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

*Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long*
*Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.*

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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [191] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

(539)

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 528 461 412 533 On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

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539

What y'u gwine t' do fo' June month? Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
June month's a ha'd month—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Jersualem in de mornin'—Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Floyd sang several variations of the central theme, but as he said himself, "This is enough!" Janey's song was practically the same except that she substituted "Zion" for "Jerusalem."

You mus' pray ha'd—June a ha'd month
June month a sailin'—Oh, Zion O Zion.
What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

252
256
402

In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

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252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
559 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[199] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

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533 567 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was telling tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 533 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 533 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she explained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

533 539

Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud[20] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433] [248] [20] Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.

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## 60. FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

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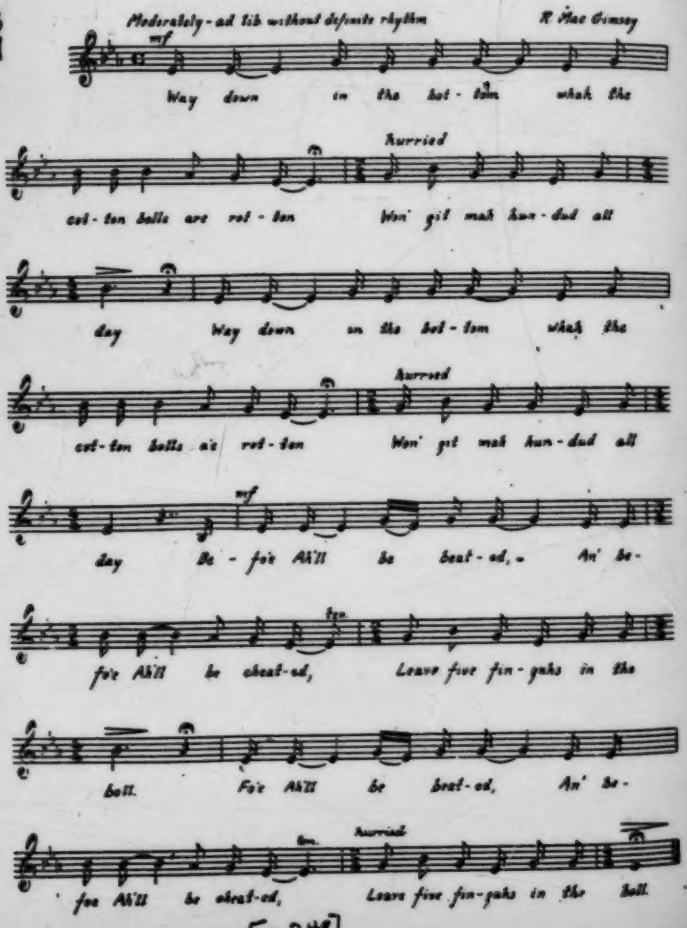


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## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 697 [461] The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 771 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently 577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea 673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that 685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.

[171] [31] In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."

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000 correspondent goes on to tell of the difficulties encountered by the Governor of Kenya in stamping out what we consider crime. "Imprisonment is found to be no deterrent. Nor among the Kikuyu does an ex-convict lose caste in the tribe. After he is released from jail the sacrifice of a single goat puts everything right. A new suit of a white tunic and shorts is thoroughly enjoyed by native prisoners for theft in East Africa. Fines are not always a success because the native, well-fed, housed and clothed at government expense, actually enjoys his term as a vacation."

697 Our own prison camp in Glynn County formerly offered an example of the same problem. A colored convict whose time was up pleaded with Mr. Higgenbotham—who was the court of last appeal at the camp—to be allowed to stay. A living being hard to get nowadays, he figured he could not provide for himself as well as the county did.[22] But the authorities were firm, and he was obliged to move on. Of course, he knew how to get back if times were too hard. It is the same with us, as in Africa, when it comes to any stigma being attached to a Negro who has served a [554] term in jail or spent time on the chain-gang. Ex-convicts assume the same status in their community as they enjoyed before the county forcibly detained them.

Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations. Of course there were abuses, but they also occur within prison walls—only there they are not so readily found out.

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Chorus: Drinkin' of the wine—wine—wine
Drinkin' of the wine
O—yes—my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

[22] My corner was for years the favorite resting-place at noon for the convicts when they worked on the island. I saw the substantial rations served them, and it is no wonder the discharged convict felt he could go farther and fare worse. I also observed that the model prisoners were well treated. One day I overheard a guard say very hospitably to one of my Negro singers, who was working for me: "Want to come back?" With a good-humored chuckle, the man replied: "No, thank you." It seems that he had been mixed up in a drinking affair in which a knife had figured. He told me he had run away, but had found the world a hard place to live in—so he had come home, surrendered, and taken his medicine. The guard said he had been a star prisoner.

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Eatin' of the bread—bread—bread
Eatin' of the bread—O yes my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If my mother ask for me
Tell her Death done summon' me.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If y'u get there before I do
Tell my Lord I'm comin' too.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

Ain' but one thing I done wrong
Stayin' in the wilderness mos' too long.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

## WHEN I'M GONE TO COME NO MO'

533 Nobody but a Negro could employ such entrancing elaborations as occur in the singing of "Gone—gone—gone," and no transcription could possibly give it. Our musical method is opposed to that of the Negro, and, try as we may, we cannot achieve his strange inflections, nor place emphasis as he does. A song may appear perfectly simple, but try to learn it, and the simplicity vanishes.

533 697 The first time I heard this song, a gang of Glynn County convicts was using its rhythm to heave great clods of black earth out of the tide-water creek behind my house. The leader was such an excellent singer that I asked the guard how soon he was due to be free. The man did not have much more time to serve, his record on the gang was good, and his last offense was nothing more than taking a stool he fancied from an office; but he was a repeater. He just could not leave other people's property alone. Even though I coveted his voice, obligation to the community would not permit me to encourage his presence on the island:

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## II

## FOLK SONGS OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

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THE FIRST collection of Negro folk songs ever published came largely from St. Helena Island.[1] The cultural and geographical isolation of the island, with its high proportion of Negro population, makes it a fruitful field for the study of certain scientific questions concerning Negro songs. Unfortunately, however, the field was neglected until 1925, when N. G. J. Ballanta, an African Negro, published his *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*.

The songs known as spirituals are easily the favorites of the islanders. They are sung on more occasions and by a larger proportion of the people than any other type of song. For this and other reasons, the present discussion will be devoted largely to the spirituals, and especially to certain scientific problems relating to their origin.

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### FOLK SONG PROCESSES AND TRAITS ON ST. HELENA ISLAND

#### *Secular Songs*

Secular songs are conspicuous for their scarcity on St. Helena Island. Something must be allowed, of course, for the difficulty involved in collecting seculars in a conservative community like St. Helena, but even then this kind of song is relatively rare. A few obsolete minstrel and vaudeville songs, a few insignificant songs brought in by World War soldiers, some phonograph songs of recent importation, and a dozen or more children's game songs of English descent are the only secular songs ordinarily

[1] Allen, *Slave Songs of the U. S.*, 1867. Of the 136 songs in this book, 55 were from St. Helena.

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533 sung on the island. The possession of banjos, guitars, and the like is not quite proper, so these aids to song are not frequently heard. Occasionally a quartet of young men will get together for an evening of "close harmony," while parties, ice cream suppers, picnics and other frolics afford opportunities for singing secular songs.

### *Religious Songs*

Three kinds of religious songs are sung: (1) the old standard church hymns, (2) new choir songs, and (3) spirituals. The hymns are known by most of the old people, who sing them in the same way their masters used to sing them. The leader announces, "number ninety-two, long meter," and reads out a line or two; the congregation sings this in double slow tempo, the leader reads again, and so on through stanza after stanza of Watts or Wesley. To one who is not accustomed to it, this manner of singing is little short of painful. In the old days the Negroes necessarily sang thus, but they retain the pattern now even when most of them know the hymns by heart and could sing them through in regular tempo if they wanted to. Each syllable, each tone, is prolonged to the breaking point, and when four or five words in succession fall on the same pitch, the effect is maddening to the uninitiated. Whereas it would take the ordinary church singer about fifteen seconds to sing the lines,

> Jesus, lover of my soul
> Let me to thy bosom fly,

it takes these people forty or more. As a rule, the hymns are sung in unison, although an occasional bit of bass, tenor, or alto is attempted. Whatever else may be said of

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the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals.

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression.

[214]

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later.

(177)

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533 try, and here there is felt comparatively little back-wash a time threatened to destroy the spirituals in the up-coun- from the recent exploitation of Negro songs. In such an area certain folk-song traits and processes may be observed more clearly than elsewhere. Some of these may be indicated in the following observations on the St. Helena spirituals.

[184] 1. The spirituals of St. Helena are not markedly different from the Negro spirituals as a whole. They are sung in the characteristic sea-island dialect, of course, and minor variations occur, but fundamentally they are one with Negro spirituals in other parts of the country.

2. The spirituals are sung in unison for the most part. There is very little singing in parts except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other quartets or groups which have practised their songs. Heard from a distance, the singing in praise house or church often gives the impression of multiple part singing, but this effect is more or less of an illusion caused by some of the singers varying the pitch of a given tone or attempting a bit of tenor or alto here, a bit of bass there. Those who look for some weird or new harmonic element contributed to American music by the Negroes of the Sea Islands will be disappointed, for such harmonies as they do use are in no wise different from conventional white harmonies.

533 191 3. There is apparently very little invention or improvisation going on among the island singers. Practically all of the spirituals sung on the island appear to have originated elsewhere and to have migrated to the sea-island region. Because of the continued survival there of many songs rarely heard outside the Sea Islands, it is easy

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to assume that the songs are indigenous. But recent investigation has shown that these island songs are found among Negroes west of the Appalachians and in an obsolescent state among individuals in the piedmont of Virginia and the Carolinas, which tends to show that the songs originated in the upper South, travelled southward and westward, and are now sung only in a few marginal places. 533 171

Perhaps this explains why there is so little mention of local names or incidents in the island spirituals. The St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* tells of "Brother Fuller settin' on de tree of life," referring to the Rev. Richard Fuller, a white Baptist minister who was much esteemed by the slaves. But the tune and stanza pattern of this song probably originated farther north, and the island Negroes merely inserted local names when they learned it. *Don' Let de Win' Blow Heah No Mo'* grew out of the severe storm of 1893, but it appears to have been composed by some individual in Savannah or Charleston. 533

Although songs were often attributed to local people, only one instance came to the writer's attention in which a person actually claimed authorship. This man frankly said, upon being questioned, that songs known as *his* songs were not his own compositions. He said that they were merely songs which he had "caught" from someone in Savannah or from little "ballets" which he had purchased at some church convention or celebration on the mainland, and had introduced to his church.

4. The secular tendency has not been weeded out of the island spirituals to the same extent that it has among more sophisticated groups. Often when spirituals were being recorded in the outlying schools, stanzas like the fol-

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•533 lowing were sung in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

[539]

See dat man gwine 'cross de fiel'
Kickin' up dus' like a automobile.

Oh, if I die in Tennessee,
Don' wan' my friends to grieve attah me.

That the line between religious and secular songs is not always clear was evidenced by the fact that a call for spirituals in the little island schools often brought forth such responses as *The Green Grass Grew All Around* and *Johnny's So Long at the Fair*. This sort of thing is, of course, not peculiar to St. Helena, but it is more apparent on the Sea Islands than elsewhere because of the relatively retarded cultural status there.

5. Several variations of the same song occur side by side. For example, *Mary Had a Baby* is sung in three ways, *You Better Run* in three ways, *Wrastlin' Jacob* in two, *Jacob's Ladder* in two, and so on. Of course, this trait is not peculiar to the Sea Islands. In fact the variants of this sort probably originated elsewhere, but they are more apparent on St. Helena because of their convergence and survival there. One rare instance of the origin of a local variant was observed on St. Helena during the past year. In one of the churches a spiritual entitled *You Better Live So Jesus Can Use You* was among the favorites. It was sung rather fast, with pronounced swing and syncopation, the tune being as follows:

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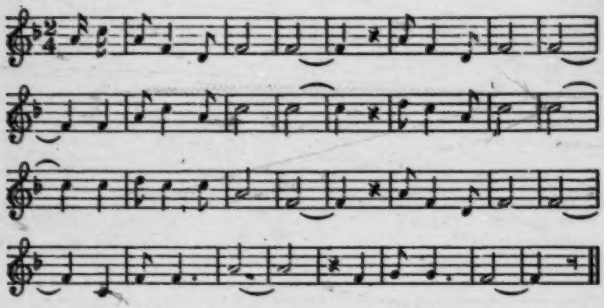
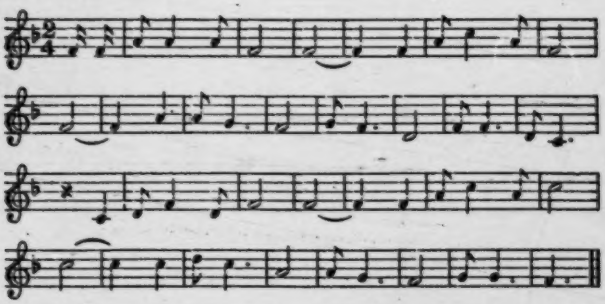


The pastor of another church liked the song, but considered it slightly undignified, so he set to work and revised it to suit his own church. He taught his people to sing it as follows:



6. The same *motif* is found in different tunes, regardless of words, to an unusual extent. This tendency is found in all music, whether it is folk music or art music, but it seems to be especially strong in the spirituals. The writer is convinced that a careful analysis of Negro spirituals will show that less than a hundred separate *motifs* have given rise to over five hundred tunes. The tendency

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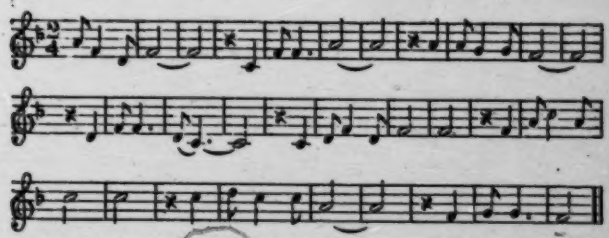
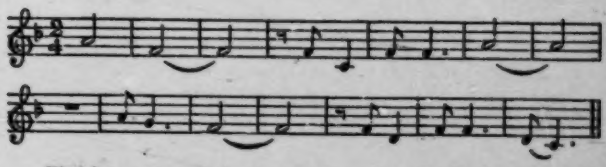
533 is especially observable on St. Helena because of the convergence and survival of so many types there. A thorough demonstration of this trait of the spirituals would require much space, but a few examples will show what is meant. Take, for example, the instance just cited, where a man consciously varied a tune. He probably realized that the derived tune was very much like the pattern, but it is doubtful if he saw that his revision is as much like the following tune, *Who's Gwine-a Lay Dis Body Down*, as it is the pattern:



And, to show how complicated this sort of thing may become, the same *motif* crops out again in a spiritual, *Cry Holy Unto de Lawd*, recently introduced from the upcountry. Its opening measures are as follows:



To cite one more instance, there is a similarity of *motif* in *Eagle's Wings* and in *My Mother Is Gone an' Lef' Me Behin'*, the opening strains of which are, in the order named:

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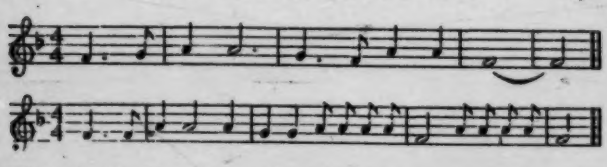

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The relationship does not end here, for many readers will at once see the same *motif* in an old white mountain song, *Careless Love*, and some may be able to trace it in still other songs. Anyone familiar with spiritual tunes can trace another striking sameness of *motif* in the choruses of the following spirituals: *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; *Ride on, Jesus*; *Lord, Remember Me*; and *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray*.

A certain St. Helena song leader, at the writer's request, sang a spiritual which the leader had composed. The tune was identical with another St. Helena tune, yet the composer was unaware of the similarity until it had been pointed out to him. Thus musical imagination works and thus new songs arise in old clothes.

7. There is a constant process of change going on among the spirituals. No song has a permanent lease on life, even in isolation. It may be passed on as a "new" song elsewhere, but in its old home it is an "old" song and must compete with newcomers. The collection made by Allen and others and published as *Slave Songs* just after the Civil War contained fifty-five songs from St. Helena. Of these, less than a dozen are commonly heard on the island today. The present writer returned to St. Helena a year after making his first collection of spirituals there and found several songs in vogue which he never heard once during his first visit. One of these was an old song

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revived, but the others had come in from "foreign" parts. Migrants and visitors coming back from Charleston or Savannah or "up North" occasionally introduce new songs.

## SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NEGRO SPIRITUAL IN GENERAL

### *The Problem Stated*

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The spirituals are too well known to Americans to need any further words of praise or appreciation. They stand on their own merits, and nothing that might be said here could add to the esteem in which they are generally held. Rather it is the purpose of the present essay to attack certain scientific questions, long neglected, centering around the relationship of Negro music to white music.

There are several points of view from which the spirituals can be studied. First, there is the point of view of appreciation. The majority of the work done on these songs has been devoted to preserving them and pointing out their poetic and musical beauties and their place in Negro life. Then there is the point of view of the artist or musician, whose motive is to develop the music of the spirituals by improved harmonic arrangements or by using that music as the basis for artistic compositions. Finally there is the scientific approach wherein the spirituals are treated as data apart from all considerations of art and appreciation. The existence of a large body of appreciative and even sentimental literature on the spirituals is something of a hindrance to those who would treat them dispassionately, for anyone who voices an opinion contrary to that which has been generally accepted is likely to be suspected of some ulterior design by certain well-meaning but hyper-sensitive folk. It should be emphasized here

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that the outcome of any scientific inquiry into the roots of American Negro music has nothing to do with the beauty of that music or with the respect which one has for it. No sensible person would quit drinking water because it was found to be composed of A-B-C-X instead of A-B-C-D.

In his *Primitive Music*,[3] Wallaschek, a German writer, expressed the opinion that the Negro spirituals were much overrated. "They are unmistakably 'arranged'—not to say ignorantly borrowed—from the national songs of all nations, from military signals, well-known marches, German student-songs, etc." This started a heated discussion, with the majority of American opinion favoring the opposite theory, namely, that the spirituals are original creations of the Negro. It became fashionable to speak of the spirituals as "America's only indigenous folk song," of the "miracle of their creation," etc.

The publication of Ballanta's *Saint Helena Island Spirituals* has increased the need for research into the origins of American Negro music. In the foreword to his book, Ballanta has discussed at some length the characteristics of African and American Negro music, his opinion being that "no one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem." Since the publication of his book, Mr. Ballanta has pursued his researches in Africa with a view to showing further the African parentage of American Negro music, but the results of this work have not been published to date.

[3] P. 61. *Cf.* Von Hornbostel's opinion that the spirituals are "songs made by the Negro in European style," in *International Review of Missions*, Oct., 1926.

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The problem may be stated as a problem in cultural anthropology: What happened when the Negro slave, possessing a system of music admittedly different from European or Western music, came into contact with the American white man's music? Did he retain the music of Africa? Did he adopt the white man's music? Did he invest a borrowed music with African characteristics? Did he build a distinctive music, a sort of synthesis, partaking of both Africa and America but unlike either? As was shown in the section on dialect, the low-country Negro dialect reflects the substitution of an English dialect heritage for African language traits. Does the same process hold good for music? St. Helena Island, representing a culture area where logically the African system of music should survive better than elsewhere in America, may throw some light on these questions.

### *The Comparison of Musics*[4]

The logical procedure necessary for studying these questions involves (1) an analysis of the music of the American Negro as represented in the spirituals, (2) an analysis of the white music with which the slave came in contact, and (3) an analysis of African music in those parts of Africa from which our slaves were recruited. The comparisons may be quantitative or qualitative. A given trait may occur in all three musics, but, if it occurred in one very rarely and in the other two very frequently, it might indicate a relationship between the two latter. Likewise a certain trait which exists in two but is absent in the third may indicate a relationship. Because of the lack of

[4] Some of the points presented here are discussed by Metfessel in *Phonophotography in Folk Music.*

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

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The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

I. Words of Songs
   A. General subject matter
   B. Specific lines
   C. Forms or patterns
II. Tunes
   A. Modes and scales
   B. Modulations
   C. Intervals
   D. Endings on other than keynote
   E. Melodic patterns
III. Rhythm
   A. Metre
   B. Syncopation

When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

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121 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying
177 the relation of African music to American Negro music
would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed
•533 to acquaint himself with the song environment of the
Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

### *The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual*

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

. . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

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000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

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Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

[113]

[14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

[113]

[16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

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taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

(113)

[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

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To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

### *The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs*

#### Words

*General Subject Matter.* The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the

[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.
[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

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song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

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*Specific Lines.* A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

---

O, there will be mourning.

---

O, Lord, remember me.

---

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

---

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

---

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

---

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

---

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

---

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

---

Come to Jesus just now.

---

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

---

I want to wear the crown.

[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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King Jesus is my captain.

Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

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Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

———

And Sabbaths never end.

———

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

———

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

———

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

———

Angels, roll the rock away.

———

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

———

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion,* and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

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In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes. The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited themselves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

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*Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

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refrain, "Comin' for to carry me home," while each stanza of four lines is followed by the chorus,

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.

The same type exists among the old white songs, of which *Canaan* is an example:[30]

STANZA: Together let us sweetly live,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
Together let us sweetly die,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

CHORUS: O Canaan, bright Canaan,
I am bound for the land of Canaan;
O Canaan, it is my happy home,
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

A slightly different pattern with first, second, and fourth lines the same is found in many Negro songs, typified by the following stanza:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble,
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Parallels also exist in the white songs. For instance:

Oh, Lord, remember me,
Oh, Lord, remember me.
Now in the bowels of thy love,
Oh, Lord, remember me.[31]

[30] One of the most popular of the revival songs, found in practically every religious songster in the ante-bellum period. See *Millennial Harp*, I, 38. This hymn is attributed to John Moffit, about 1829, according to White.

[31] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42.

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A still different variation of the repetitive pattern is that in which the first three lines of a quatrain are the same, as in

> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> Good news, the chariot's comin',
> An' I don't want her leave-a me behin'.

Parallel patterns are plentiful in the white songs in such stanzas as these:

> I'm on my way to glory, (3 times)
> Ye followers of the lamb.[32]

> There'll be no more sorrow, (3 times)
> When we all shall meet above.[33]

A further feature of the repetitive trait in Negro songs is the way in which numerous stanzas are built up by the simple insertion of such variations as *father*, *mother*, *preacher*, *deacon*, etc. This pattern existed not only in traditional English folk songs, but also in the white revival songs. In *My Brother, I Wish you Well*, a very popular white song, a stanza and chorus of fifty-two words are expanded into a song of eight stanzas totalling 418 words by the introduction of only nine new words, such as *sister*, *mother*, *neighbors*, *pastor*, *poor sinner*, etc.[34]

It can safely be asserted that there is no stanza form or repetitive pattern in the Negro spirituals which is not also found in the white revival songs.

It is customary for a spiritual to be begun with the chorus rather than the first stanza. This custom evi-

[32] *Ibid.*, II, 11. [33] *Ibid.*, I, 34. [34] *Millennial Harp*, I, 46.

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dently existed in the white camp meetings, for some of the tunes in the old books are printed with the chorus at the beginning. Certainly the custom is traditional among white revival singers today, as anyone who is familiar with rural white revivals can testify. 533 171

As for the custom of singing with a lead or solo part, the other voices joining in on refrain lines, there are several factors to be considered. First, the pattern is not as common in Negro songs as one might suppose. The leader, it is true, often sings the first few words or even the first line unaided. This is merely to indicate which stanza is to be sung next. As soon as the others catch the sign, they join in. This is different from the true solo-chorus pattern, which is found in such stanzas as the following: 533

*Solo:* Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise
*All:* Bear yo' burden in de heat of de day.
*Solo:* Tongue so sharp an' he will tell lies,
*All:* Bear, etc.

Now on St. Helena, where presumably, any African song pattern should have flourished and survived, this true solo-chorus pattern is rather rare, occurring in about 15 per cent of the spirituals sung there; whereas in the up-country spirituals, judging by the Hampton and Fisk collections, this pattern is more common.[88] Finally, there is the point that the leader-chorus pattern also existed to some extent in the white songs.[88] The extent of its use can 533 171

[88] In the latest Hampton edition, practically nine-tenths of the songs are arranged in this way. Much of this is due, I believe, to an effort to arrange the songs so as to be especially suitable for quartet singing. In ordinary singing, some of the "solo" sections are really sung *in unison*, which is a different matter.

[88] The arrangement of some of the tunes indicates this. See also some of the statements quoted above from Bellinger's *Stray Leaves*, where it was stated that

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533 171 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how* the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

533 171 177 The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pattern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least, a product of the cultural situation during the time the Negro was taking over the white revival songs. The pattern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new song was being taught to people who were nearly all illiterate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new

533 178 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the possibility that this style of singing represents a survival of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Ballanta, and other writers.

## Tunes

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[37] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[38] is as follows:

| | Negro Songs per cent | White Songs per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Major | 83.8 | 78.9 |
| Minor | 11.7 | 18.6 |
| Mixed or vague | 4.4 | 2.4 |

533 171 ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[37] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[38] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

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There is quite evidently no significant point of difference here. In fact, the only significant thing here is the remarkable agreement between the modal distributions of the white and the Negro songs. Krehbiel's figures showing that about one-tenth of Negro songs are minor were published years ago, yet the assertion that Negro music is predominantly minor is still heard.[29] Not only is Negro music predominantly major, but it is less in the minor mode than were the white revival songs of a century ago. Minors are practically extinct in ordinary white church music today, but many weird tunes in that mode are to be found in the old revival songsters. 533

*Deviations from the Conventional Scale.* Of more importance, however, is a comparison of the details of the distributions within the major and minor modes. While Western music in general is based on what is called the diatonic scale of seven tones, all tunes do not necessarily make use of all the possible tones in the scale. In a given tune, one or more tones may be missing or sharped or flatted. The presence or absence of such variations from the conventional scale is a significant point in the comparison of two musics. The following list comprises 533 171

[29] Persons untrained in music tend to identify any plaintive or weird tune as minor, ignorant of the fact that this term designates a specific musical trait which is determined by the tonal relations and which may or may not give an impression of sadness. It is possible to arrange major and minor chords or melodies so that even a musical person will confuse them. An interesting incident recently appeared in Reed Smith's *South Carolina Ballads*, p. 144. As good an observer as Smith described a certain song as "a peculiar minor air," yet the tune is major throughout. The mistake arose, I think, because the fourth and seventh tones are missing. This leads me to the point that the extensive use of the pentatonic scales in Negro songs (i.e. major with the fourth and seventh tones omitted) is responsible for the layman's belief that Negro music tends to be minor. The absence of the fourth and seventh in pentatonic tunes does often produce plaintive effects, and this, together with the customary minor-sad association, is sufficient to explain the error.

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all the variations of the major mode which occurred more than once in the two white song books mentioned above. The deviations are listed in the order of their importance, the most frequent one being at the head of the list. In the parallel column the presence or absence of these same deviations is indicated, the figures denoting the rank of the trait in Negro songs.

| Deviations in White Songs | Rank of Same in Negro Songs |
|---|---|
| 1. Absence of seventh tone | 2 |
| 2. Absence of fourth and seventh | 1 |
| 3. Absence of fourth | 3 |
| 4. Absence of sixth | 4 |
| 5. Flat seventh | 5 |
| 6. Absence of sixth and seventh | 6 |
| 7. Flat third | 7 |

Every variation in the white songs is found in the Negro songs, and none is present in the Negro songs which is not also found in the white songs. Furthermore, the only point of difference in the ranks of the traits in the major mode is that the absence of the fourth and seventh tones heads the list for Negro songs and comes second in the white songs.

Krehbiel thought that the tunes in the minor mode show the independence of the spirituals of European influence. He named the following deviations as significant: raised seventh, raised sixth, and absence of sixth.[40] These are exactly the same three most frequent deviations in the white minor tunes which I analyzed.

[40] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 83 et seq. Fisher, using a different grouping, gets the following: minor with flat seventh, 32; with sharp seventh (harmonic), 15; without seventh, 14; with sharp and flat seventh, 7; total, 68. See *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

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Taking up now more detailed comparisons between the white songs and the spirituals, we find the following distribution of traits for the songs in the major mode.[41]

| | Number | | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro‡ | White | Negro |
| Pentatonic | 23 | 111 | 9.6 | 25.1 |
| No seventh | 39 | 78 | 16.2 | 17.6 |
| No fourth | 10 | 45 | 4.2 | 10.2 |
| Flat seventh | 8 | 20 | 3.3 | 4.5 |
| No sixth | 12 | * | 5.0 | * |
| No sixth and seventh | 5 | * | 2.1 | * |
| Other major | 143 | 188 | 59.6 | 42.6 |
| Total | 240 | 442 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

‡ Figures taken from Krehbiel's study of 527 Negro songs. See *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, p. 43.

* Krehbiel did not list these at all. They are found in the spirituals to about the same extent as in white songs. A count of 200 of the same songs that Krehbiel used shows the absence of sixth in 6.3 per cent of the cases, and the absence of sixth and seventh in 2.9 per cent of the cases.

Several things stand forth in this table. First, the flat seventh, so often spoken of as a characteristic of American Negro music, turns out to be relatively rare. It will be discussed presently. Next, the table shows that the absence of the fourth tone and the absence of the seventh tone in the spirituals are actually more significant statistically than the flat seventh. But these are also present in white songs in sufficient proportion to prohibit their being listed as distinctive traits of the spirituals.

The proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is high—25.1 per cent of all the majors as against 9.6 per cent in the white songs. The pentatonic scale, with the

[41] For Fisher's data on spirituals, which are very similar to Krehbiel's, see his *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xx.

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fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

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Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

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for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 40 per cent of the total white population.[42]

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But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music?

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of

[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Song*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

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which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music.

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic

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the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[80] 000

This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[81]

Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[82] 533 171 With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa. (177)

[80] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.
[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.
[82] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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Perhaps it is no accident that the proportion of flat sevenths is so nearly the same in English-American folk music and the Negro spirituals. At any rate, the flat seventh should not be thought of as a peculiar trait of Negro music.

There is one more point at which the music of the spirituals is said to vary from white music, and that is on the third tone of the scale. Any collector of Negro tunes can vouch for the fact that a singer sometimes sings a third which is neither the regular tone nor its flat. It is as a rule midway between the third and its flat (in C-scale, for example, between E and E flat.) The term "neutral third" has been applied to this tone. It cannot be represented on our conventional staff, hence its frequency has never been actually noted down as has the flat seventh.[33] From experience I should judge it to be of about the same frequency as the flat seventh. In *Phonophotography in Folk Music,* Metfessel has pictured two or three actual instances of the neutral third. He discusses it as a possible African trait in Negro music, intimating that this is the probable explanation. However, I have heard white folk singers use exactly the same intonation of the third, and it was derived by them not from the Negro but from their English folk music culture. To quote Sharp again:

> It must be understood that the third is not a fixed note in the folk-scale, as it is in both of the modern scales. The English folk-singer varies the intonation of this note very considerably. His major third is never so sharp as the corresponding interval in the tempered scale, to which modern ears are attuned. On the other hand, it is often so flat that it is hardly to be distinguished from the minor third. Frequently, too, it is a "neutral" third,

[33] Strictly speaking, the flat seventh is not always flat enough to deserve that name, for it is sometimes intoned between the major seventh and minor seventh. It would really be more accurate to call it neutral.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[54]

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To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question?

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The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

[54] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.

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tunes! The frequency of the pentatonic in the 527 spirituals[55] studied by Krehbiel was 25.1 per cent. Thus the proportion of pentatonics was nearly twice as high in the spirituals from other sections as in those from St. Helena. The recent collection made on St. Helena by Ballanta, however, contains a very high proportion of pentatonic tunes—46 per cent.[56] Furthermore, as was pointed out in a previous connection, practically every song recorded by Allen sixty-two years before had been forgotten or was sung only rarely when Ballanta made his collection. In other words, a new crop of songs had come to the front since the Civil War, and the proportion of pentatonics had increased. Did this new crop originate on St. Helena? It is extremely unlikely that it did. In a collection of spirituals made by Miss Mary A. Grissom in Kentucky, about half of the songs are the same as those now sung on St. Helena.[57] If these originated on St. Helena since the Civil War, how does it happen that they got over to Kentucky without being picked up *en route* by some of the

[55] Including the Allen collection.

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[56] *Too* high, as the St. Helena folk would say. I am convinced that, while there has been an increase in the proportion of pentatonics on the island, it is not this great. Ballanta, a native African, must have been so accustomed to a pentatonic scale that he heard some of the spirituals as pentatonic when they were really not. In several instances I found that he had written without fourths and sevenths tunes in which I heard distinctly one of these tones. I have verified this by the phonograph records which I made on the island. In all my analyses I have used a very strict definition of the pentatonic. If either the fourth or the seventh tone occurs, even only once, in any way other than as a very light passing tone, I do not class a tune as pentatonic, but put it under another head, as "no fourth" or "no seventh" or "regular major." Krehbiel used a less strict definition, for I counted the pentatonics in half of the songs which he used and obtained 19.5 per cent where he obtained 25.1 per cent. Thus Krehbiel, if he had analyzed my white revival songsters, would have found a higher proportion of pentatonics than I did.

[57] Grissom, *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*, University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

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collectors of spirituals? And why are they not common 533•
property of the Negroes in the intermediate sections? The
simple explanation, I believe, is this: these songs origi- 533
nated further north than St. Helena, probably in the pied- 174
mont of North Carolina and Virginia, during the white revival period. By the usual process of folk transmission they spread out gradually from the area of origin, and, by the time they reached the outlying sections like the Sea Islands and the trans-Appalachian country, they had disappeared and had been replaced by other songs in the area of origin. It would be safe to predict that if collectors will look into the matter they will find in other communities on the fringe of the black belt and among individuals of the older generation in the piedmont a surprising number of these St. Helena spirituals.[58] Thus the percentage of pentatonic tunes on St. Helena increased after the infiltration of songs from the area which had felt strongly the folk music heritage of the Scotch-Irish. These con- [114]
siderations are all directly opposed to the theory that the [178]
scale peculiarities of the spirituals survive from African traits.

*Modulations.* Change from one key or one mode to 533
another within a tune is practically unknown in the Negro spirituals. Modulations are frequent in conventional church music, but in the plainer music of the white revivals of a hundred years ago as recorded in the songsters, modulations were exceedingly rare. This musical heritage was derived from English folk songs, of which Sharp has said,

[58] For example, recently a Negro woman from Chapel Hill, N. C., was comparing spirituals with a woman from St. Helena. Upon hearing the St. Helena version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, she exclaimed, "That's the way my folks used to sing it all the time." In the up-country the other version of *Roll, Jordan, Roll* has displaced this one, which is usually considered peculiar to the Sea Islands. [184]

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"It may be taken, as a general statement, that they never change their key or their mode."[59] Accidental sharps and flats occur occasionally both in the spirituals and in white revival songs, but they are nearly always auxiliary notes which call for no change of key or mode.

*Intervals.* The pitch distance of each note from the keynote or from a preceding note in a tune affords a basis of comparison of one type of music with another. When the interval is computed as of a certain number of steps below or above the keynote, it is called a keynote interval.[60] When it is computed with reference to the preceding note, it is known as a previous-note interval. A computation of intervals makes possible a statistical or composite view of a large number of tunes.

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A computation of keynote intervals in the first forty-five songs in *Millennial Harp* as compared with thirty-five spirituals, taken at random from Allen's *Slave Songs* and the Fisk and Hampton collections, is summarized in the following table.[61]

| Keynote Intervals | Frequency of Interval: White Songs | Frequency of Interval: Negro Songs |
|---|---|---|
| 1. P1 (keynote) | 396 | 413 |
| 2. Major 3rd above keynote | 388 | 358 |
| 3. Perfect 5th above keynote | 346 | 268 |
| 4. Major 2nd above keynote | 324 | 254 |
| 5. Perfect 4th above keynote | 194 | 117 |
| 6. Perfect 4th below keynote | 86 | 101 |

[59] Sharp, *English Folk-Song*, p. 68.

[60] In *C*-scale, for example, *D* is the regular second tone, and is therefore said to be a major second from the keynote; *F* is a *perfect fourth*; *G*, a *perfect fifth*; *B*, a *major seventh*; *B flat*, a *minor seventh*, i.e., a half-step short of a *major seventh*.

[61] Omitting a few rarely used intervals which occurred only three or four times. For a similar analysis of intervals in a score of mixed Negro songs, see Metfessel, *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 142 *et seq.*

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Major 6th above keynote | 100 | 98 |
| 8. | Minor 3rd below keynote | 59 | 63 |
| 9. | Octave above keynote | 79 | 51 |
| 10. | Minor 2nd below keynote | 52 | 37 |
| 11. | Minor 3rd above keynote | 39 | 36 |
| 12. | Minor 7th above keynote | 9 | 24 |
| 13. | Major 7th above keynote | 31 | 6 |
| | Total number of intervals | 2,103 | 1,826 |

The intervals are ranked in the order of their importance in the Negro songs. It will be noted that the white ranks correspond very closely with these. The comparison of ranks, taking the order of the intervals in the Negro songs as the basis, is as follows:

Negro: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11 - 12 - 13
White: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 6 - 9 - 8 - 10 - 11 - 13 - 12

It will further be noted that the first three intervals listed—incidentally, these form the major triad—occupy half of the entire number of tones in both white and Negro songs. To be exact, 54 per cent of the white song intervals and 57 per cent of the Negro are in the major triad. There is an interesting difference between the distributions of these three leading intervals:

| | Percentage Distribution | |
|---|---|---|
| | White | Negro |
| Keynote | 19 | 23 |
| Major 3rd | 18 | 19 |
| Perfect 5th | 17 | 15 |
| | 54 | 57 |
| All others | 46 | 43 |
| | 100 | 100 |

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The spread of these three intervals is rather even over the major triad in the white songs, while the Negro songs make larger use of the keynote and smaller use of the fifth tone. In other words, the Negro songs show a simpler melodic structure in the sense that they cluster more about the keynote than do the white songs. The comparison, however, develops no serious differences between the two types of song.[62]

*Endings on other than the keynote.* It is the usual thing for a song to end on the tonic or keynote, this being required to give a feeling of completion or satisfaction, but occasional deviations may be found. Of 205 spirituals in the major mode, thirteen end on the fifth tone rather than on the tonic; and, of 325 old white religious songs, six end on the fifth. Thus the trait is found in both types of songs, but is more frequent in the spirituals than in the white songs. The white religious songs, it should be repeated, are only partially representative of the musical environment of the colonial and ante-bellum period. The traditional ballads and other folk songs brought over from England by the white people had a considerably larger proportion of songs ending on the fifth. Several white songs end on the third, but I know of only one spiritual which ends on the third.[63]

*Melodic patterns.* Tunes can be grouped according to certain figures or patterns which they follow. Consider the opening phrases, for example. The most common

[62] The comparison of the other kind of interval, the previous-note interval, cannot be included in the present study. Metfessel, p. 142 *et seq.*, has some figures on previous-note intervals, but he analyzed blues and other songs along with spirituals. He found the minor third to be the most frequent previous-note interval.

[63] Allen, *Slave Songs*, No. 88, p. 68.

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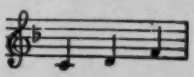
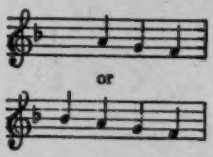
opening pattern in the spirituals, with variations in rhythm, of course, is:[68]



White folk songs and revival songs abound in the same pattern. As Sharp says, this beginning is found in "many folk-tunes, especially those of Celtic nations."[69]

Closing patterns are very diverse, but a sampling of fifty spirituals and fifty white revival songs shows that the leading pattern is composed of the last three, sometimes four, notes of the major scale in descending order. Thus




This type of ending occurs in a little over one-third of both white and Negro songs.

A tune, taken as a whole, can usually be divided into phrases which are related in certain ways. Most of the tunes of the spirituals, like the words, fall into four phrases, the patterns of which may be indicated by A - B - A - B, A - B - A - C, A - B - C - D, etc. In the familiar spiritual,

[68] See, for example, *'Raslin' Jacob; Old Ship of Zion; He Ain't Comin' Here to Die No Mo'; Oh, Freedom; I've Got a Mother in de Heaven; I'm a-Rolling; Old Time Religion; I'm Goin' to See My Lovin' Father When I Get Home; Go Round; Dere is Rest for de Weary Traveler; You Can't Find a New Hiding Place; I Am Hunting for a City; When I Lay My Burden Down; O Lord, Have Mercy on Me; I'm Going Down to de River Jordan; Fix Me, Jesus; Angel Rolled de Stone Away;* and others.

[69] *English Folk-Song*, p. 86.

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533 171 *I'm So Glad Trouble Don't Last Always*, for example, the pattern is A - B - A - C, that is, the first and third phrases are the same, while the second and fourth are different. This pattern is found in nearly fifty per cent of the spirituals. If the three patterns, A - B - A - C, A - B - A - B, and A - B - C - D, be taken out, only a handful of spirituals remain for other patterns. The same holds true for white revival songs and folk songs, and it cannot be argued that there is any particular melodic pattern which is peculiar to the spirituals.

533 *Harmony.* A thorough consideration of all the questions centering around the harmonies of the spirituals would involve a long technical discussion which would go beyond the limits of this treatise. In brief, it may be pointed out (1) that the testimony of the majority of the early travelers in Africa is to the effect that singing in harmony seems to have been rare or poorly developed in West Africa;[66] (2) that on the Sea Islands, where contact with white music has been limited and where the Negroes should have preserved their African harmonies if they had any, the spirituals are usually sung in unison[67]

[66] Consult Wallaschek, *Primitive Music.*

[67] The same observation was made by Allen in *Slave Songs* and by Miss Towne in her *Letters and Diary.* In *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, James Weldon Johnson says that Allen probably was mistaken, that the Negroes sang in harmony but that it was bizarre and Allen did not appreciate it. I am convinced that Allen knew what he was talking about, for I can vouch for the fact that during a residence of nearly four months on St. Helena, I never heard a single spiritual sung in full harmony by the ordinary untrained folk in the schools, churches, and praise houses. Sometimes I heard a girl attempting an alto part, but it was always the conventional alto of white songs. It was a revelation to listen to a member of the Penn School Quartet attempt to teach a quartet of boys from an outlying school the simple harmonies for a spiritual which they were going to sing in a quartet contest. To those who like to say, "Get four Negro boys together and you have a quartet," I would say, true of the Negro boys and true of white boys—*provided the boys are familiar with the old reliable harmonies.*

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except by the Penn School Quartet and a few other persons who have a rudimentary knowledge of sight singing; and (3) that the harmonies used by Negroes, when they use any, are exceedingly simple and are not different from conventional white harmonies. It is extremely doubtful whether the Negro has contributed anything new in harmony in the spirituals. William Arms Fisher, whose introduction to *Seventy Negro Spirituals* is a valuable essay on Negro music, recognized this when he wrote:[68] 533*

> The net result of the work of these two earnest seekers for the true Negro harmony is therefore disappointing to those expecting something unusual, for, as already stated, the harmonization in both cases is altogether conventional.

## Tempo and Rhythm

*Metre.* Williams Arms Fisher has pointed out the preponderance of duple time in Negro songs and the preponderance of triple time in other folk songs:[69] 533
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> Out of the 405 spirituals included in the three first published collections, only 13 are in triple metre. . . . In contrast to this, 53 of the 100 songs in Bantock's *Folksongs of All Nations* are in triple or compound metre, while an analysis of Florence H. Botsford's *Folksongs of Many Peoples* shows that in two volumes containing 368 songs nearly 44 per cent are in triple metre.

An analysis of 250 white religious songs from *Millennial Harp* and *The Christian Lyre* as compared with 250 Negro spirituals from the Allen, Hampton, and Fisk collections, is as follows:

[68] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xv. The two persons referred to are Miss Emily Hallowell, who edited *Calhoun Plantation Songs*, and Mrs. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, who edited *Negro Folk-Songs, Hampton Series*.

[69] *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, p. xvi.

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| | Per Cent | |
|---|---|---|
| | Negro Songs | White Songs |
| Duple Time | 96 | 70 |
| Triple Time | 4 | 30 |

Triple time is almost unknown in the spirituals, but is found in nearly a third of the white songs studied.[70] Two-part time probably predominates among Negro singers because it is so intimately connected with their habit of swaying the body, patting the feet, and clapping the hands while singing. These things fall naturally into two-part time beats, and I have observed over and over that when the untrained Negro attempts to sing without giving himself the benefit of these bodily rhythmic clues, he is a very poor time keeper. This habit may well represent the survival of African tempo patterns.[70a]

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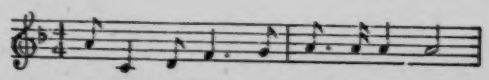
*Syncopation.* Syncopation is the very soul of the rhythmic patterns of the spirituals. The emphasis is often shifted from the strong to the weak part of a time unit as in the following measures from *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen:*



There were some unusual rhythm patterns in the white revival tunes, however, as the following extracts will show:[71]

[70] It is interesting to note, however, that, if the most folksy of the published revival songs be taken as a group, only nine or ten per cent use triple time.

[70a] It is not certain, however, that African metre is predominantly duple. Krehbiel and others seem to have assumed this. But note that C. S. Myers in Jekyll's *Jamaican Song and Story*, Appendix A, spoke of the "fondness for triple measure" in a group of African songs which he analyzed.

[71] From *Millennial Harp*, I, 40 and 47, respectively.

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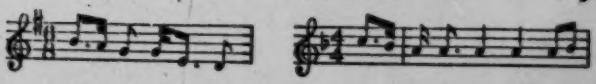

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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

*Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes* 121 533

Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

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white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus*, *Climb Jacob's Ladder*, and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning*, which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

*The Old Ship of Zion* is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

[72] *Slave Songs*, p. vi.
[73] *Millennial Harp*, Supplement, p. 4.

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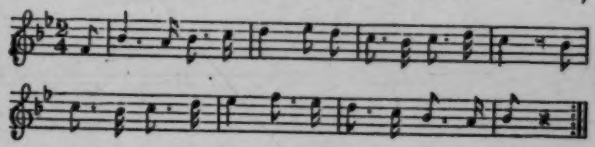
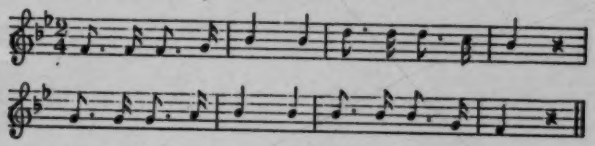
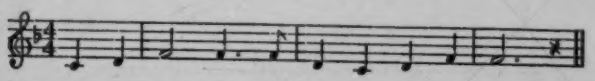


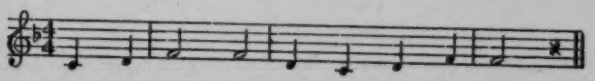
and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah*,[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,



is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island*,[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come*,[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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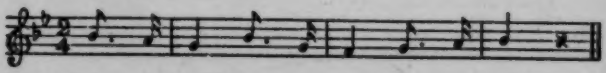
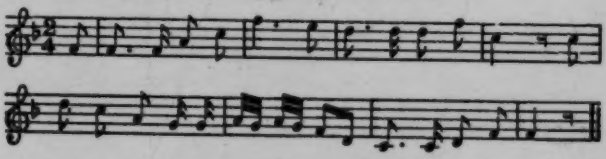
spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion, Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness, I Want to be Ready (Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John)*, and *Safe in the Promised Land (Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel)*.

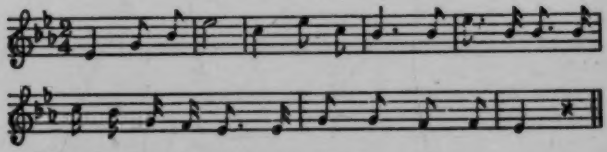
*Lord, Remember Me*,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is



The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*,[80]



[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.
[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.
[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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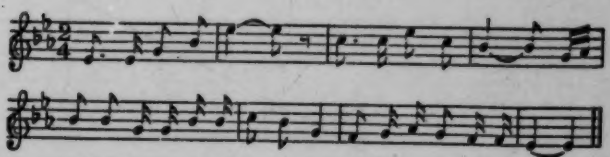
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81] 177 533



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-34.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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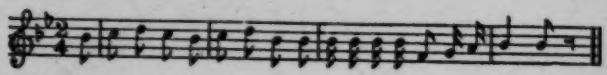
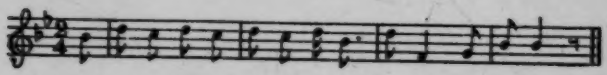
*Who'll Jine de Union*[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,



and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:



The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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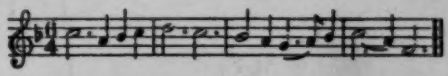
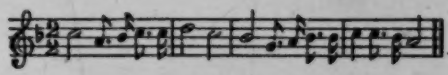
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

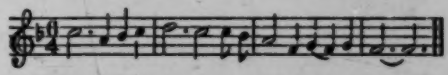
Hymn:



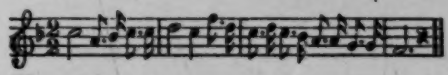
Spiritual:



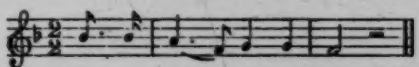
Hymn:



Spiritual:

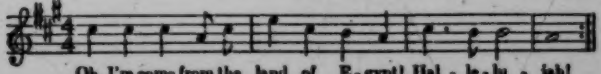


The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment*, although the final phrase,



is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn*,[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:

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[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp*, II, 39.

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177 • 533 Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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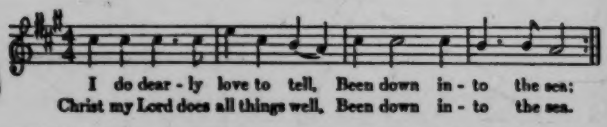


which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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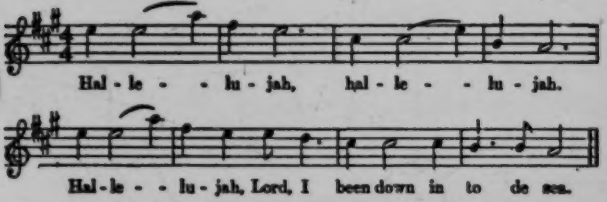


may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 623; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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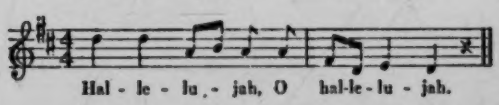
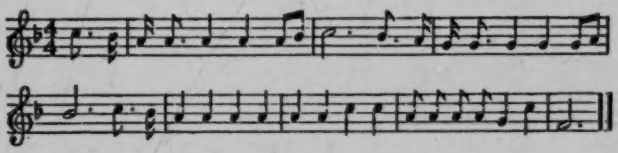
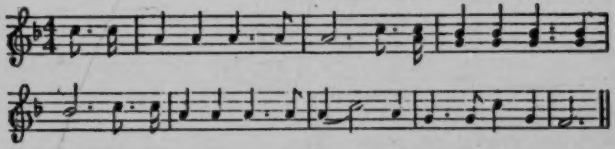



The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now*,[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus*,[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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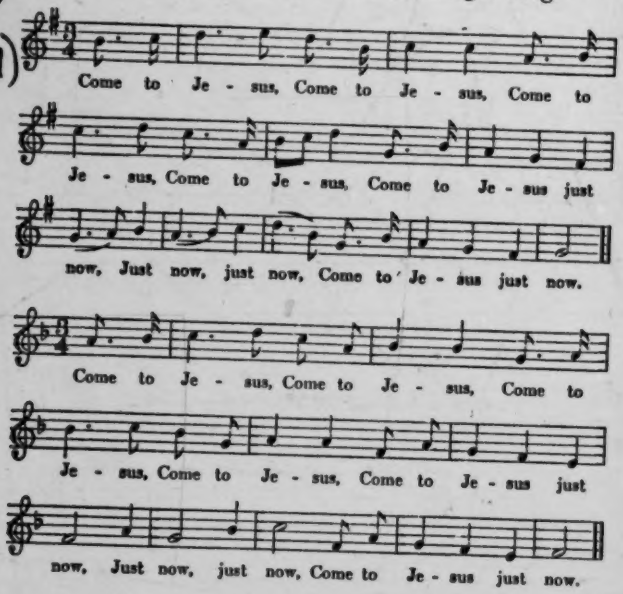
ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[97]




The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

[97] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away*.[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is

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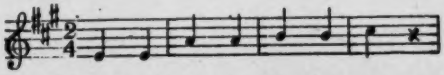
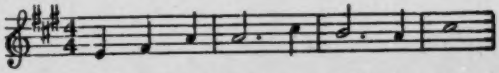
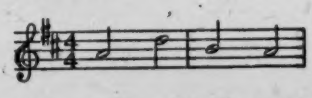


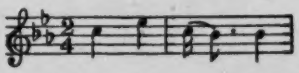
The spiritual begins in a very similar way:



and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]



The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]



[98] P. 117.
[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.
[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.
[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.
[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

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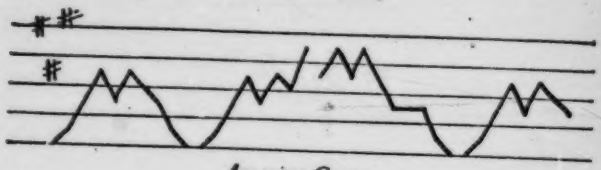
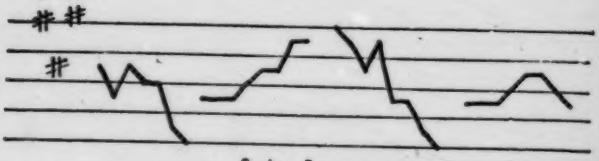
The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound*. The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



*Amazing Grace*



*Swing Low*

## Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low*. This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

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with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll, I'm a-Rolling, I've Been Down Into de Sea*, etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp*, ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green*; and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell*.

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songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

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[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This War-fare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

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based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two. 177 178 533.

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it 533

[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

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533 is found today among Negroes, it is indeed as unique, as distinctive as if it were unreservedly the creation of these people. As White has well said, "The white man would be both stupid and prejudiced if he failed to see that the Negro has long since made it his own."[108]

[108] *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 57.

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THE PARSON'S SHEEP

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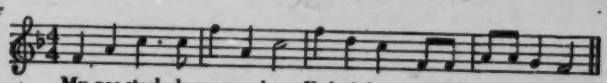
Once dere was a li'l boy, an' 'e paa stole de paa'son sheep, so de boy sing,

"My paa steal de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

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De paa'son yea'd um singin'. Say, "What dat you sing, son?" "Oh, nuttin', suh." "Well, you come heah tomorrow dis same time an' sing dat same song, an' I give you ten dollahs." "All right, suh."

So dat night de boy tell his paa, say, "Paa, man gwine give me ten dollah fuh sing tomorrow." Paa say, "Le' me hear you sing um, son." De boy sing:

"My paa stole de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa knock 'im down, *Bam!* Den 'e say, "Son, sing um ag'in." Boy sing um dat same way ag'in. 'E paa knock 'im down ag'in. "Sing um ag'in, son." So dis time de boy sing:

"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa say, "Now dat's de way to sing um, son. Anybody ax you fuh sing, you sing um same like dat."

Nex' day de boy go to de place whuh paa'son say come. Paa'son deh wid lots o' oddah mens. De paa'son say, "All right, son, sing dat song." So de boy sing:

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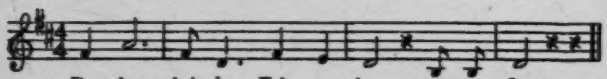
maid rise up an' say, "What you cry for, li'l gal?" "My 539
mudder die an' my fadder marry ag'in an' my step-mudder have daughter. Dey treat me bad an' won' give me 'nough t' eat." De mermaid say, "Come down wid me." She take her down under de water to de purties' place. Give her all kin' o' good t'ing t' eat. Den she bring her back up. Dat night, de gal not want a bite t' eat after de odders done eat, but she feel so glad.

Nex' day she go back to de water an' sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe."




(533).

An' de mermaid rise up an' take her down an' give her plenty good t'ings t' eat, den bring her back up. So dat night, dey keep wonderin' why she not eat. Fin'ly de step-mudder daughter say she gwine fin' out. Nex' day she follow de gal to de river an' hear her sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe,"

an' she see de mermaid rise up an' take de gal down. She run home an' tell her mudder an' de King what she see. So nex' day dey all t'ree went down to de river widout de King daughter knowin' it. De King sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. Den de step-daughter try it:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

an' up rise de mermaid. King shot de mermaid daid.

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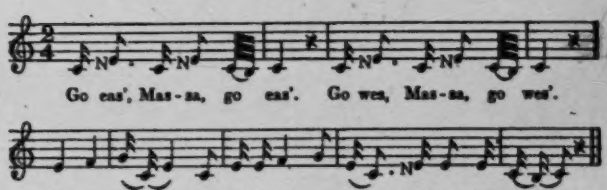


NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh obertake de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

## XV

## TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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539 it for him. Then he wanted somebody to bake the bread. When the bread was ready he wanted to know if somebody wouldn't feed him. His master said, "Any man that's too lazy to eat is too lazy to live. We'll just bury him."

They made a box and put the man in it and started to the graveyard. The man sang:

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Master sang,

"Car' [carry] 'im along, car' 'im along,"

Then the man,

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Then the Master,

"Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

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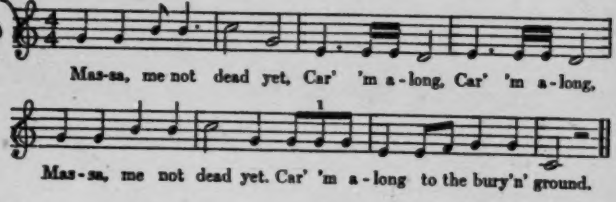


They carried the man on and on toward the graveyard.

"Massa, me not dead yet."
"Car' 'im along, car' 'im along.
Got more money to buy more slaves,
Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

They took him on to the graveyard and put him in the grave and covered him up and let him die.

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To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

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What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
*An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!*

*Game Songs*[25]

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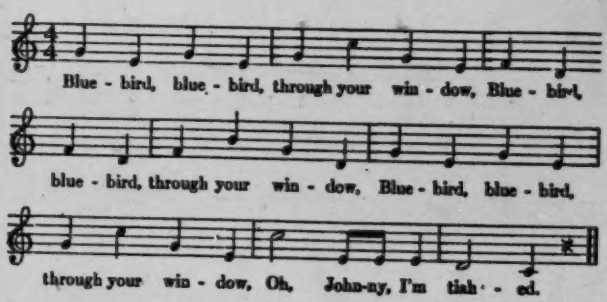


Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
   Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

[25] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[26] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

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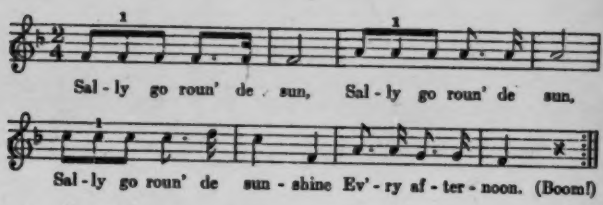
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

II[27]




1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'ry afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell.*

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III[28]

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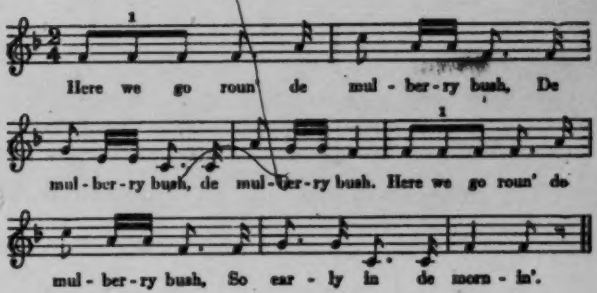


Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
   Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

[28] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

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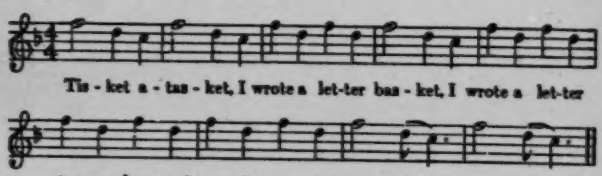
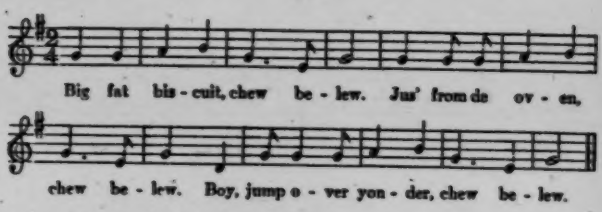
IV[29]




1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

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In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little barket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

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By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 223 652

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 585

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

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which they sang with evident delight."[40] Captain Basil Hall, who was rowed down the Altamaha in a cypress dugout by "five smart negroes," was impressed by the "wild sort of song" with which they accompanied their labor. He thought the song "not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen at Bombay."[41] Whitelaw Reid, who heard the Negroes singing at "Brick Church" on St. Helena in 1865, described their song, "Roll Jordan Roll," as having "a curiously monotonous melody."[42] Miss Towne thought that the St. Helena folk "in their lowest state . . . could always do one thing well—sing." "At first," she said, "they sang melody alone, but after having once been given the idea of harmony, they instantly adopted it."[43]

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A holiday was always the occasion for much singing, dancing, and general merrymaking. It was the custom on St. Helena Island to give the Negroes Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christmas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work. These were holidays which the master set aside for his people and instructed his overseer to observe. P. C. J. Weston clearly indicated in his "rules to the overseer" the holidays which he wished the Negroes on his South Carolina rice plantation to have:

No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except going for a Doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who

[40] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, p. 393.
[41] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 228.
[42] Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 103.
[43] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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567 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the planta-
346 tion where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[51] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[52]

567 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who
794 were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing,
796 pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members
•533 of a church.[53] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine
(782) one word 'ginst t'oder."[54] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[52] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[53] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[54] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*] at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

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Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the remains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer attended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and missionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 278; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune: 793 796 175 (533) (539)

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[3] (782)

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed- 175

[3] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, the English their ancestors had learned when they were "tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.

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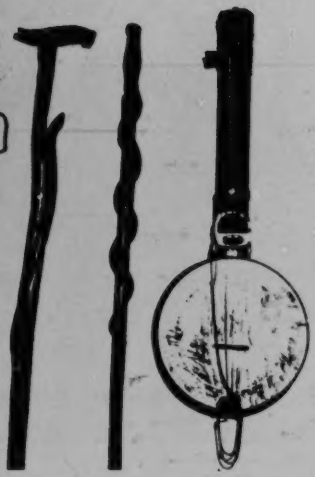

IIIa. Carved sticks and handmade banjo

IIIb. Carved sticks

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IIIc. Carved stone fig

[following p. xxxii-C]

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IVa. Carved head of man on stick

IVb. Painted wooden figure

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IVc. Carved wooden frog

IVd. Goatskin-covered log drum made by James Collier

[following p. xxxii-D]

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

• 534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us 764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral 533 ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave (764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and
262 continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh
[252] beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

"I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout
115 muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said, her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been
[757] familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[48b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of which her eyes suddenly narrowed.
304 "Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

•534 We asked about the use of drums.

[763] "Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[764] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at fewnuls too, dey beat it."

776 Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

115 "Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie* arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

[227] [286]

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 "Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh gran-
567 daddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

115 "Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh
533 music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use
534

* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

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534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we
[283] make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh
825 hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh
•534 duh drum.[23] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been tokl about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away." [8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too," [69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah." [26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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POSSUM POINT

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.'[30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come [795] git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. • 534 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, 202 dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [797] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[18] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
(789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
781 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."
797

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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533
534 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh
764 way." [24]

We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of
534 drums.

"We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry
[237] um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that
567 were real Africans.
829 "Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduh-
829 stan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue,
789 he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
• 534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
(237) skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI),[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius
[412] we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in common usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic
[124] picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um.
• 534 Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[23]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[40] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[775] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut[54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta.
115 Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[38] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh
782 funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 567 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he (192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. •534 Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle 533 em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope 535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way 789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front (351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

"Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
567 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a
782 great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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534 sho it wuz maple. He stretch em obuh it good. It wuz bout eighteen inches wide an fifteen inches deep wen he finish it. He beat it wid a stick. Ole man Okra he sho kin chase a drum. Ole man Jesse he frum Africa, too, an he make he own drum."

829 567 (192) When we asked Ben if he remembered any African words, he replied, "I know dat deah wuz a ole man, it bin so long I caahn relate his name, at duh plantation wut wehn roun wid ole man Okra an I membuh well he call all duh fish an ting uh duh ribbuh by duh name uh 'nyana' an den I heah pancake call 'flim.' Muh granmothuh Hettie, duh mothuh uh muh mothuh Bella, he come from Africa too an he huzbun come frum Africa. He name wuz Alex Boyd. Alex wuz bery small felluh but heaby an he hab dahk skin an shahp-feechuch. Yes, ma'am, he talk African but he stuttuh so he dohn talk much roun us chillun, cuz we make fun at im, an as I say befo, I wuz small lad den. Alex wuz knock-kneed an he tie he head up in a clawt."

829 Had his grandmother, Hettie, ever talked to him about Africa, we wanted to know.

Ben told us, "Many time. He tell some tings I membuh. He say he mus be bout tutteen aw foeteen wen dey bring im frum Africa. He say deah wuz great talk bout comin tuh dis country an some men tell em it would take only two aw tree days tuh git deah. Dey wuz all happy tuh come. Him an lot uh friens come tuhgedduh.

"Wen Hettie fus come, he say he feel worried cuz he couldn unnuhstan duh talk yuh an many udduh tings bein so diffunt frum he own country. He hab two sistuhs an tree brothuhs but dey couldn git a chance tuh come. He hab no refrence tuh he mothuh dan tuh he fathuh. An he say dat in Africa he lib in a 'groun house.' It wuz a squeah house, an he say dat he didn lib close tuh a salt ribbuh but weah deah wuz a lot uh wile swamp. Wen he fus come tuh dis country, he didn unnuhstan bout fish. But he tell a lot bout monkey

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
759 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
754 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick
789 wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

• 534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time.
535 Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
o long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days. He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken. They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em." Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX), A whose
342 little house (Plate XX) B sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
• 534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats
533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the
764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 527 535 534 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 535 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side, two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

142 291

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

(789) If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

(534) And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

(534) My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 869 869 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as 186 178 869 869 the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would [538] teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 533 [534] The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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000 excitement that may lead to such exaltation as few white people ever see. It is an unforgettable experience, rare in these days of practical religion when all miracles are scientifically explained.

633 I notice that men are particularly partial to the work songs, of which the shanties [16] of the black stevedores are the most amusing. When a plantation is near a navigable river or salt water, songs like "Stevedore's in trouble, Carry 'im to the Aly-mo," and "Sandyanna" may possibly be heard. Both carry in their titles the date of their inception, and obviously hark back to the period of the Mexican War. Others bring in Australia and Rio along with "Go 'round the Horn, Yalla Gal—Go 'round the Horn" and suggest the period of the windjammer.

At The Mills on the west side of St. Simon's—in the eighteen-eighties—the Inland Waterway was filled with sailing vessels from all parts of the world.[17] These were loaded with lumber that had been floated down the Altamaha; but, as Cap'n Joe, the crew leader, says, so little lumber moves these days that the songs that helped the stevedores to handle the great "sticks" are well-nigh forgotten. A pity to let one of them be lost.

[184] Then there are the "rags," the "fiddle" or "sinful" songs. These may be plentiful in the interior; but on the coast, where the Negroes are apparently more religious, they have been the most difficult to locate.

533 198 Where there are wide fields, musical half-yodeled calls often bring "'sponses" from laborers a mile away. When a field needs to be burned over, a sail is flapping idly, or rice is to be fanned, you may hear a Negro "calling the wind": "Co' win'! Co' win'! Co'! Co'!" A prolonged whistle follows:

—in the African manner of calling the rain.[18]

533 534 If a plantation is sufficiently remote, and the owner is ultra-modern in his taste, such a jazz band may be organized as has not been heard in many a year. It is only necessary to call for the services of those who can still "rap the bones" (real bones of a thickness and length suitable for manipulation between the middle fingers,

[16] Or chanteys—as some prefer to call them.
[17] Julia Armstrong tells me they were lined up "like sardines in a box."
[18] A gramophone record of a Togoland rain invocation is astonishingly similar.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned
534 and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were
(202) well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

(175) [21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

(171) [22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## FIDDLE SONGS—FRAGMENTS

533 Ten years ago, when I hunted up the local fiddler, Green Harris, who was already seventy-six, I tried to find out about the tunes he used to play for the "sinful" young Negroes on St. Simon's. He said: "You caught me without my studyin' cap—they jus' gone." He would not even bring out his fiddle.[15] Finally he admitted he [534] had loaned it: "They're holdin' a revival this week an' I don't want it around the house." The implication was that temptation might be too strong for him—besides, it was improper to have a fiddle in your possession at such a time. After two unsuccessful visits I heard him play old-fashioned dance tunes which had been favorites south of the Mason and Dixon Line in ante-bellum days. Here are the harmless, 533 539 fragmentary verses he gave me:

Tune my fiddle, tune it good
The little neighbor in the neighborhood.

I do I do I tries to do
Put on de silver slippers.
An' I do I do an' I do no mor'
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
My ole Miss' promis' me
Put on de silver slippers.
When she die she set me free
Put on de silver slippers.
She live so long till her head got bal'
Put on de silver slippers.
It look like she never die
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do I do no mor' my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
Oh how happy I feel
Put on de silver slippers.

[15] Joel Chandler Harris tells us in The Critic, December 15, 1883, that "The banjo may be the typical instrument of the plantation negroes, but I have never seen a plantation negro play it. I have heard them make sweet music with the quills—Pan's pipes; I have heard them play passably on the fiddle. . . . and beat . . . on the triangle . . . I have heard them blow a tin-trumpet with surprising skill; but I have never seen a banjo." Cable, himself, grants that the favorite instrument of the negroes of the Southern states is the fiddle.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
539
(534)

Old Jim Gardiner rapped the bones to the rhythm of the two similar jingles that follow:

Once I went out huntin'
I heard de possum sneeze
I holler back to Susan
Put on de pot o' peas.

I went down to Missy house
Missy was in bed
I took de marrow bone
An' beat her in de head.

Chorus: Ding dang me one
Ding dang.
Ding dang me two
Ding dang.
Ding dang me three
Ding dang.
Ding dang me four
Ding dang.

Toad frog sittin' on the railroad track
Train come along an' break his back.

Chorus:

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
114

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door: Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next: I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[797] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[60]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[61] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[60] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[61] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



754 powuhful spell.[6] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 789 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," interposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[38]

•535 [178] "We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

"Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

"We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

"No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

"We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

"Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping
[533] her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [39]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs
• 535 back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [38]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [33]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old
796 people informed us that they are still held in the section. Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us.
262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they
777

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# *Darien*

361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

36 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-
[351] gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[415] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water
[824] dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
• [535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh
567 much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
535 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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•535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We 764

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1933.*

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[50] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

795 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta.
115 Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We use tuh hab big time at hahves," [33] he began. "We pray an
• 535 sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh
782 funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[3] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[38] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
• [535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

535 "One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey go uh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
567 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle
533 em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope
• 535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way
789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

• 535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(795) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh
(783) ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time.
• 535 Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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## *St. Marys*

361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few
115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a
[351] packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz
527 young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance
[535] roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
o long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),[A] whose
little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, over-
342 grown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

•535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [38] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 567 794 796 797

At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

175 567 796 786 535 533

Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten."[39]

175 567 796 786 535 533

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

175 794 796 (869)

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

175 796

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

175 796 786 787

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

## WE IS HAD A DANCE

159 527 535 534 Dance! That's my favorite. In certain times of the year like Fourth of July or Labor Days, we is had a dance. Had guitar and all like that. First of all we used something called accordion, and we'd beat stick. Then after that we was enabled enough to buy something call tambourine. A man lived back in the woods used to play guitar. James White used to play fiddle. And another fellow and I used to assist him. When I don't feel like play awhile, I dance in on the set until it broke up. We didn't have this new style they got here now—hug together.

159 535 We dance eight in a group. Two on the head this side, two on that side, two on the side like that. The fellow who knock the tambourine, he teach the set. He says "swing to your left," then you come swing that. Then swing your partner, then swing home. Then he say "promenade all," they all hook hands, grab hands together and just soshay all around, 'til they get back to the place what they was.

Later on after these girls used to come from the city, then they used to dance hug together.

142 291

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

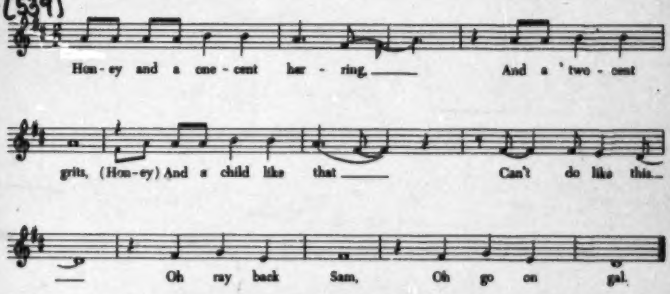
## WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

159
535

When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.

(533)
(534)




So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[159] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
[166] time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'."

[535] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";[a] also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[539] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance[b] of the primitive Negro Christians

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Whoza, whoga, whogabo, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Coo me sormber norty sundundilly indelarun.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Olawin! Olawin!
Oiatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

[a] "Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry bat-o home."
Bennett, II, 6.

[b] For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.
Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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192 [535]

marked by ecstatic motion and hysterical physical rhythms.

*Too* in the sense of "very."

*Sometime*, inconstant, unsure: "Dem nyoung gal is a sometime t'ing."

*Nyam*, in the sense of eat."

*Lahgin'*, and *swongger*, to assume self importance, to put on airs. Both of these seem pure Negro, unless the first is from 'largin', enlarging (?); and the second from swagger, compare swank.

*Mongkey-nut* for cocoa-nut, probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head.

*Soon* for early, as a *soon brukwuss*, a *soon staa't*, a *soon man*. Thence, as noted by Mr. Bennett,[33] arises the first division of the Negro's day; *soon er mo'nin'*; after which follows *fus' fowl-crowin'*, *day-clean*, *sun-up*, *fus' an' las' ho'n blowin'*, *fo'noon res'*, *attanoon*, *de sun duh lean*, *de sun duh lean fuh down*, *sun-down*, *deep-dus'*, *ebenin'*, *can'le-lightin'*, *night-time*, *platt-eye prowl*, and *hag-hollerin'*."[34]

### *Phrases*

*Crack 'e bret'* (or *crack 'e teet'*), crack his breath or teeth, i.e., say something.

*Long-mout'*, surly or contemptuous pushing out of lips.

*Shut-mout'* (adj.) or *tie up 'e mout'* (verb), secretive, ill-natured, not saying anything.

*Onrabble 'e mout'*, unravel his mouth, i.e., loosen up in conversation.

*W'ich en' w'y talk*, which and why talk, i.e., contradictory, inconsistent talk.

*She-she talk*, used of feminine loquacity. This phrase looks, by the way, like a correct use of the feminine gender,

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[33] Mr. Williams' suggestion is that *nyam* comes from *yam tetter* (yam potato) with intrusive *n* before *y* sound. Williams, *De Ole Plantation, VI*. An improbable derivation. Professor W. A. Craigie derives it from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food, and compares Portuguese African *igname*—the yam.

[34] I, 342.

[154] [175]

[35] Midnight. Hags are witches, and platt-eyes diabolical spirits of the mist. *Loc cit.*, 342.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

[12] *The late Howard E. Coffin.*
[13] *Mrs. W. E. Clifton*

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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8). The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require the aid of rhythmic songs.
[243] [412] [171]

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.
535 533 [177]

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]
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In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in
535 533 539

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival) which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's
535 171

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A, [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

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•535 171 island, called by the incongruous railroad term "Ball the Jack."[15] A few years ago I saw it demonstrated by an old resident of Eleuthera, in the Bahamas, and its portrayal in the film *Sanders of the River*—for which "background shots" were made in villages along the Congo—indicates the region from which it originally came.

These dances, and such plantation activities as beating and fanning rice in the 123 traditional African manner, provide effective material for those in the family group who are moving-picture addicts. It is also possible that such survivals persist on our plantations as are not to be found elsewhere in America this side of Haiti or Dutch Guiana; but do not be discouraged if they do not come when you call. It took years for me to see the ring-shout and the Buzzard Lope, and to see and hear the ring-play dances and songs, and the songs in an African dialect. It is a curious fact that the Negro rarely volunteers information—on the sound principle, perhaps, that if you tell nothing you have nothing to regret; and this is my reason for giving so many identifying titles and lines. If you know what to ask for, the work is half done.

000 For the plantation owner who cares to take the trouble, a barbecue provides the quickest route to results. If the procedure is not already known, an old resident will tell how one should be conducted, and who is competent to do the work. Both whites and blacks remember with nostalgic regret the days when a barbecue celebrated the end of the plantation harvest. For the sake of the picture, if dancing takes place after the feast instead of before, a generous fat-wood fire should be built as close to a spreading live oak as is safe, and a few prizes of old-fashioned white aprons, gilt hoop earrings, gay handkerchiefs for the heads of the women, and red bandanas for the necks of the men should be supplied. A temporary platform of broad boards laid—on two-by-fours or on any firm foundation—under the oak tree will repay the extra trouble. If the plantation is not too near a city, there is likely to be such dancing and entertainment as would make a Broadway producer green with envy. An occasion like this brings out the best—also the worst—in the way of talent, and gives an opportunity to evaluate what is to be found at the back door.

Old songs like "O de Robe" and "Norah Hist the Windah" are suitable for a restful evening; but let it end with shouting, as was customary at the old-time prayer meetings, and the whole atmosphere will change. There will be an inner

[15] *I am told that the action employed in "Snake Hip" is similar to that used in "Ball the Jack."*

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181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring
829 up trouble for yourself. In Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad-
181 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his
567 private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch
• [535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the
181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*,
177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of
567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[3] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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CHAPTER THREE

## *Afro-American Shout Songs*

•535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.) Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 197 198 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

[1] Records Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.



A. [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, piano facing p. 120--Analysis]

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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

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[123]

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

[2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

[175]
[529]

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536 27)A makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 792 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by (782) the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little 533 in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin'":

(539)

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A, [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analyst]

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10. Susy

[535]

11. Snooks Doing: "Juba Dis, Juba Dat"

[facing p. 65]

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## 10. DOWN TO DE MIRE

533 Of all the ring-shouts I know, "Down to de Mire" is in more ways than one
● 535 the most interesting. In the center of the ring, one member gets down on his knees and, with head touching the floor, rotates with the group as it moves around the circle. The different shouters, as they pass, push the head "down to the mire." The several arms reaching out to give a push make an unusually picturesque pattern. The refrain—repeated relentlessly—corresponds in its character and rhythmic beat to that of the drums in a song which accompanied an ominous ceremonial dance seen in *Trader Horn*.[8] One is apparently never too old or too fat to take part in this shout. I saw Quarterman, born in 1844, go "down to the mire" with satisfaction when he was ninety. Josephine, who weighs well over two hundred pounds, thinks nothing of getting down on her hands and knees and, with her head bobbing to the floor, proves the power of mind over matter:

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Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire

[8] I am told that, while the greater part of this film was made in California, "background shots" made in Africa were introduced, for obvious reasons. It is to these shots, naturally, that the above reference applies.

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## OH EVE—WHERE IS ADAM?

533 [126] In taking down a shout song, you are beset with the difficulty of reconciling the different versions. No leader sings a song twice alike, and no two ever sing exactly the same version; yet the beat, the accent, and the tune remain so stable that leaders are unerringly followed. The words are in truth only the vehicle for carrying along the complicated rhythm. This is beaten out by the heels of the McIntosh County group in a way not approached by any other that I know. Shouters sometimes clap their hands; on St. Simon's they always call for a broom handle, which, when knocked on the floor, provides an extemporaneous tom-tom. In McIntosh County, however, they are so proficient in tapping out the rhythm with their heels that they can dispense with both sticks and hand clapping. With their hands free, they are able to do things descriptive of the text which less skillful groups would not be at liberty to attempt.

• 535 [539] The shout:

> Oh Eve—where is Ad-u-m?
> Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
> Pickin' up leaves.

is a good example of the combination of dancing and pantomime. After swinging deliberately around the circle, singing the slower part of the chant, the dancers, when the time quickens, go through the motion of picking up leaves. With aprons gathered up and bodies bent, the women add greatly to the interest of the dance. All are amusingly industrious, but the men, without the assistance of aprons, are not quite so convincing in following the action indicated by the text.

533 535 Since the version I have encountered in Glynn and Camden Counties holds to "pinnin' leaves," I am inclined to believe that some McIntosh shouter took an artist's license and substituted "pickin' up" for "pinnin' " for the sake of more varied, more picturesque action. At any rate, the delightful result justifies the less usual interpretation of the Biblical text.

With "Lord called Adam—pinnin' leaves," the movement is faster. The feet are not supposed to leave the floor or to cross each other, such an act being sinful. The shouting proceeds with a curious shuffling but controlled step which taps out with the heel a resonant syncopation fascinating in its intricacy and precision. Over

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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam"
534 is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[177] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its
[178] form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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CHAPTER FOUR

## *Ring-Play, Dance, and Fiddle Songs*

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•536 Of the ring-play, dance, and fiddle songs, only those accompanying ring-play were countenanced by the church. However, certain solo dances like the Buzzard Lope evaded difficulties by using such religious songs as "Gimme Him" and "Throw Me Anywhere." These solo dances appear to have been "done for fun," and in our section bore no particular classification.[1] But the rags, reels, and fiddle or "sinful" songs were an entirely different matter. They were looked upon by church members with considerable horror as quite beyond the pale. Those of mature years would have nothing to do with them, and even today they are regarded with suspicion. In consequence, innocent as they appear to be, they have been the most difficult to uncover. Perhaps if I were a man or a godless colored woman I might find something as racy as was ever composed or sung in a "jook."

533 The ring-play songs were totally unknown to me for almost twenty years after I went to St. Simon's. Entirely by chance I learned about them in the Boston Public Library, when I happened on a short account of "Ring-Games from Georgia" by Loraine Darby,[2] and recognized one of the examples as a shanty used by our Negro stevedores in loading lumber. When I returned to Georgia, I asked Julia what that song had to do with ring-games. Again it was brought home to me that we learn from these people, who have no past, only what we first discover for ourselves. She said: "Dear me! It's a ring-play song, but it's so long since I sung one I'd forgotten we ever did." Later I found that I could not have escaped hearing inferior modern versions had I lived near a Negro school, for the children sing them at the top of their lungs.

With such a clue, I have unearthed various stray bits concerning these interesting game songs. Little has been written about them, and that little naturally classes

[1] Thomas W. Talley, in Negro Folk Rhymes, describes them as "star-danced" by one or two individuals at a time.

[2] Journal of American Folk-Lore, 1917.

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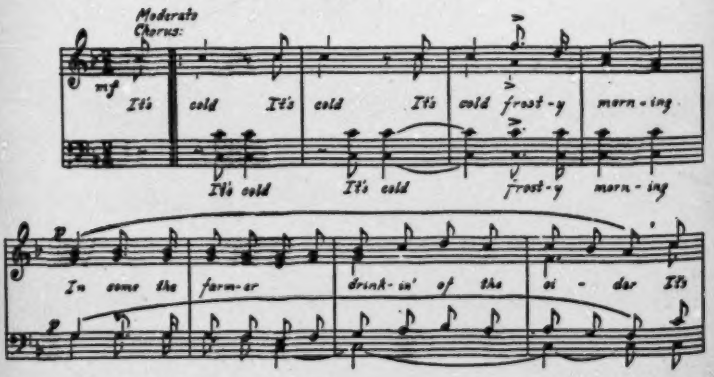
## 19. IT'S COLD FROSTY MORNIN'

The words of this "play," called "a marchin' piece," are clearly derived from an old English song. With "It's cold!" two and two march; with "There she stands right by your side" they change partners and march again:

It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold frosty mornin'
In come the farmer drinkin' of the cider
It's cold ray-me-oo
An' now where to find her
An' now I lost my lover
An' where shall I find her
(repeat)
There she stan's right by your side
Don't she look jus' like a bride
Hug her an' kiss her an' call 'er your own
Then she'll marry you.



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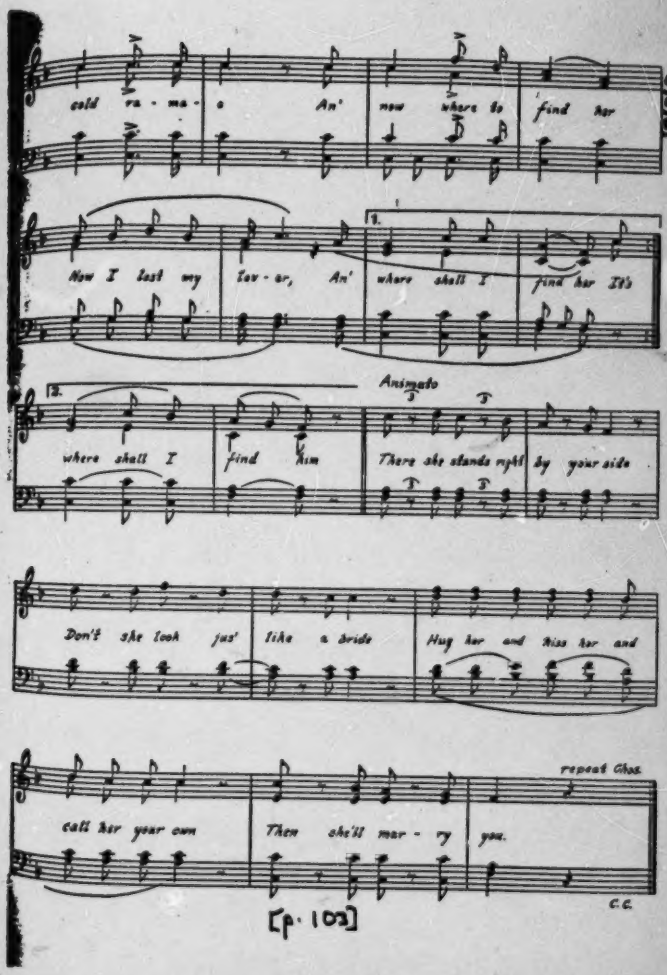

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## PRETTY GREEN SHAWL

From the verses of this "play" it can be seen that it is a "promenading piece" and is the Negro counterpart of "It's Cold Frosty Mornin'." Partners are changed after singing the chorus a second time:

Chorus: Farewell, farewell
Fare you well my darlin'
Farewell, farewell
I love you to my heart

---

Now choose in another one honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Choose in another one honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
So early in the mornin'.

Step gran' (or proud) wid y'r lover, honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Step gran' wid y'r lover honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

Repeat Chorus:

## FOUR AND TWENTY LAWYERS

535 The action is spirited, with much hand clapping that encourages those who "lead off." As far as I can see the figures are similar to those of the Virginia reel, with the exception of the beginning, where "Lead off one" is the signal for a man to walk briskly from the top of the line to the foot (men on one side, women on the other, as is usual). "Up and down" indicates the repetition of the short swinging jaunt; at "Lead off next," he takes the hand of the woman on the opposite end and

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535 they "Step in a hurry" and go "up and down" twice. The play then proceeds in the familiar way. Unless you have been told beforehand it is difficult to distinguish the words of the response "Lawyer's suit." When it is sung by all, as fast as it should be, and overlaps the leader's last word, a strange twist is given the tune. As can be seen, the words are no more than stage directions, but the rhythm is unusual, with the unmistakable stamp of Africa in the ominous cadence found in "Lawyer's suit."

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The chorus is repeated as well as each leading line with its refrain:

Chorus: There is four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
Four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
(faster) Lead off one[3]
Lawyer's suit.
Up and down
Lawyer's suit.
Lead off next
Lawyer's suit.
Step in a hurry
Lawyer's suit.
Turn that lady
Lawyer's suit.
Turn her loose
Lawyer's suit.
Don't you hurt that lady
Lawyer's suit.
You hurt my heart
Lawyer's suit.
She's a very fine lady
Lawyer's suit.
Just from the country
Lawyer's suit.
Basket of oysters
Lawyer's suit.

[3] When another man leads off, the verses change to suit the leader. In place of "Step in a hurry" I have heard "Get in a hurry," then:

Very fine gentleman
Lawyer's suit.

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## SHOUT JOSEPHINE SHOUT

533 539 Julia remembered this verse from her youth on St. Simon's—with a fragment of another from the same song:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear y'o' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes, ma'am.
Shout Josephine—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Get a hump on y'o'self you red-eye' devil
Get a hump on y'o'self you big-eye' coon!

[524] [535] Years later, at Broadfield, I found that the verse given above was the chorus of an amusing play song, with pantomime, which is related to both the ring-play and the solo dances. "Josephine! Ma'am?" is sung first as is usual; the leader then tells where the pain (or ornament) is located and the participants instantly try to place their hands on the spot named:

Pain in the head—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the back—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the neck—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the hip—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Josephine
Ma'am?
Want t' shout?
Yes ma'am
What time?
Right now.
Shout Josephine
Shout!

Pain in the toe
Shout! Shout!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## THE BUZZARD LOPE—A SOLO DANCE

•535 Since 1915 I have known that such a dance as the Buzzard Lope[6] could be found in the neighborhood of St. Simon's; but the Negroes of that section always told me it was done on some far-off island, such as St. Catherine's or Sapelo. Over ten years ago I asked the same question of a newcomer, as a matter of routine, which I had for years put to the other shouters: "Can you do the Buzzard Lope?" When she said: "Yes'm," I was a bit stunned . . . but she could, to perfection. To my surprise, however, I found that a number who had previously denied such a gift were close seconds. (Illustrations 23 and 26) A

53 This group used an old religious song with narrative lines of a suitable character. In ante-bellum days the slaves called the graveyard "the ole field":

### THROW ME ANYWHERE

Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere
In that ole field
Throw me anywhere, Lord
In that ole field
Members,[7] you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die, Lord
In that ole field
Members, you want to die
In that ole field.

(191) [6] Dances simulating the peculiar characteristics of animals are popular in Africa; and Mr. Herskovits tells me he has seen a similar dance in Dahomey.

[7] Deacons, preachers, brothers, sisters, and mother are all mentioned as wanting to die "In that old field."

A. [For Illustrations 23 & 26, see Categories 535 & 142, plates facing pp. 129 and 160 respectively--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



•535 On Sapelo Island, I found in the Johnson family a combination of the old dance form with rather more modern steps than the original African pantomime warranted. Of the twins, Naomi did the patting while Isaac did the dancing; [8] an older brother rhythmically called out the cues in a sharp staccato, and another one lay on the floor of the wide veranda representing a dead cow. Anyone who has seen turkey buzzards disposing of "carr'on" [9] will recognize the aptness of the following directions. Those who are at all squeamish had better skip this part. The bracketed asides were given for my information:

[533]
[539]

| | |
|---|---|
| March aroun'! | (the cow) |
| Jump across! | (see if she's daid) |
| Get the eye! | (always go for that first) |
| So glad! | (cow daid) |
| Get the guts! | (they like 'em next best) |
| Go to eatin'! | (on the meat) |
| All right!—cow mos' gone! | |
| Dog comin'! | |
| Scare the dog! | |
| Look aroun' for mo' meat! | |
| All right!—Belly full! | |
| —"Goin' to tell the res'." | |

And with an eye to the dramatic exit, Isaac danced into the house.

[8] *In later years I saw the Buzzard Lope done by Isaac's teacher, Reuben Grovenor—a descendant of the Sapelo Bilali who wrote a "diary" in Arabic. Many times have I seen others do this peculiar dance, but Reuben's performance is far and away the most finished. With effortless grace he gives a stylized pattern of the bird's awkward steps, without any attempt at realism. His is indeed a high form of rhythmic approximation, and those who have seen it at the Cabin are fortunate.*

[9] *Miss Kingsley tells us that in West Africa turkey buzzards are called "Jack Crows"—the natives call them "yubu." In the West Indies they are called either "John Crows" or "Carrion Crows."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Nex' come in wuz Mr. Snake
.....
Pattin' all round' dat weddin' cake.
.....
Nex' cum in wuz Mr. Bug
.....
Hoppin' all roun' dat whiskey jug.
.....
Nex' come in wuz Mr. Tick
.....
He ate so much till it made 'im sick.
.....

The youngster said he knew many more verses, but these are more than enough to show how lines of proper length can be utilized.

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JUBA DIS AN' JUBA DAT

Juba dis an' Juba dat
An' Juba kill d' yalla cat
An' get over double-trouble
Juba!
She served d' meal
She gimme d' husk
Cooked d' bread
She gimme d' crus'
She fried d' meat
Gimme d' skin
That's 'e way momma
Took me in
Now Juba! [13]

By rapidly crossing his hands to first one knee and then the other, Snooks pats out an intricate rhythm to the above staccato lines. When he gets to "Now Juba!" he does some clever footwork that matches the coördination of his hands.

(Illustration 11) A

[13] Maude Cuney Hare in Negro Musicians and Their Music says that the dance Juba is known to be over a century old. Cable in his "Creole Slave Songs" mentions that "The guiouba was probably the famed juba of Georgia and the Carolinas."

A. [For Illustration II, see Category 535, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## BALL THE JACK

53 Several of our Negroes "Ball the Jack," as well as the African performer who did a similar serpentine wriggle at a wedding ceremony in the moving picture, "Sanders of the River." [14] Some day, if I ask enough questions, I may discover the original name of the dance—if it had one. Just why it should have been called by a railroad term I can't figure out, unless its African name had somewhat the same sound.

Suzy's head and shoulders are stationary and so are her feet (Illustration 10), A but there is a flow of undulating rhythm from chest to heels, with a few rotations in the hip region, done to this rhythmic patter:

Ole Aunt Dinah
Sick in bed
Send for the doctor
The doctor said
Get up Dinah
You ain' sick
All you need
Is a hickory stick
An' I ball the jack on the railroad track.

And so on ad infinitum; the words are of no particular moment, only sounds for carrying the rhythm. A box and a stick would do as well.

535 "Ball the Jack" was brought to St. Simon's about fifty years ago by an "up-country" Negro, and has been performed ever since—to the accompaniment of shrieks of contagious laughter—by the little Negroes in Jewtown. Two white children and their nurse happened along one day. The children's attention was at once riveted, by the severe words of the nurse, on what was being done: "You stop dat while I have my chillen aroun'."

In later years Martha, who weighed over two hundred pounds, went through the performance for me—although, as a neighbor of hers said, "Martha didn't have the figure for it." You could scarcely call it a dance, and I don't wonder "Aunt Lou" did not want her white children copying the contortions which suggest the neck of a chicken attempting to swallow something too big for comfort.

[14] "Snake Hip" is a far more appropriate nickname.

A. [For Illustration 10, see Category 342, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

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(535)

A St. Simon's Negro called this a "Cracker Dance" and gave me the following verses:

Bile dem cabbage down
Bile dem cabbage down
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

Went to Susy's house
Susy wasn't home
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

My old Missus promis' me
Bile dem cabbage down
When she die she goin' to set me free
Bile dem cabbage down.

She live so long till her he'd got bal'
Bile dem cabbage down
She gib up de idea o' dyin' at all
Bile dem cabbage down.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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22. King Sland in the Cabin

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[facing p. 128]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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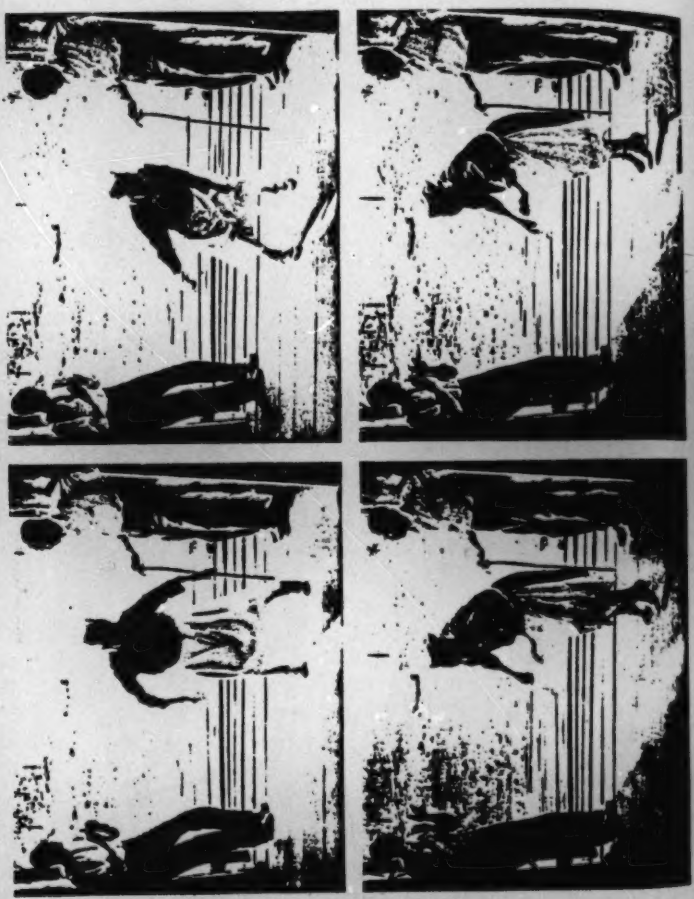
• 535



23. Action Pictures of the Buzzard Lope

[Facing p. 129]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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24. Margaret, on the Left, Demonstrates the Correct Position of Arms and Feet in Shouting

[Facing p. 144]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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26. *Julia—Who Does the Buzzard Lope*

[facing p. 160]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



243 Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain
441 was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quick
(535) and effective dance step, the ou'er husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work was done to a similar step, with these words:

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Peas an' the rice done done
Higho—Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho—Higho!
How do you know—done heard it blow
Higho—Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okra—Nana—Nana![18]
Eat some an' leave some—Nana—Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright wor'
Poo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me—Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'—Do Lord remember me.

(535) A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indic how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a prelimin scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hollowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

[412]

[461]

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[17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[28]
(164) fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
(533) rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
(535) way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
(178) all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
(177) by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
(184) shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
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[28] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 223 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 585

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 583

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after
•535 the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the
floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
535 by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of
533 some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*] at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[88]

Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
567 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything
796 so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony,
but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[89] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular
dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went
instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 27n; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[89] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Helena Island



out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[60]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[61] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[60] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[61] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 177 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experience that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in 159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the 186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not 178 many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

[191] The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having, [197] such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of [536] Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing [883] her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, wherewith shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and reasoning with his congregation. His voice would carry a pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



793 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the •587 area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to 796 keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does [871] not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

Heavenly Father
[539] Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a 533 good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. [793] Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought [794] to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the [786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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# 3

# The Texts

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## The Prayers

My knee ben down on cold cold floor!

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The prayers are the most creative and expressive form of Sea Island oratory. Like the tales, they are composed and delivered within a set tradition, but the success of the delivery is dependent not only on what the speaker says but also on the eloquence and rhetorical skill with which he says it. To the Sea Island congregation, outstanding rhetorical skills are attributes to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. The learned people, however, are frequently those without much academic background. Without a doubt, many of the best expositors of the prayer tradition have little, if any, formal education. Their prayers, nevertheless, are composed in a tradition of impassioned eloquence. They embody Ciceronian, Quintilianesque, and other ornaments of style capable of creating belief, inspiring, and passionately persuading a congregation to respond with raucous and joyous replies.[1]

Both men and women, but only those known to be carriers of the prayer-giving tradition, pray at specified times during the church service. The member called on will kneel and pray publicly without pausing, stuttering, or searching for words for as long as twenty-five minutes, depending on the occasion for the prayer. The ability to pray is considered a "gift" like the ability to sing or play the piano. Those gifted with the technique are singled out when they are very young and encouraged to practice speaking in the church at special feasts, weddings, or holidays, especially Easter and Christmas. As children they learn only to speak the words; as adults they know how to speak them with the compassion that comes only from experience. Others may

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 acquire the ability to join in the words of prayer, but only those who
•537 have the gift can move the congregation to shout out a response.

None of the prayers are written, and herein lies much of their inventiveness. Many rival T. S. Eliot's *Wasteland* in elaborate allusions to works of literature. The most effective ones are alive with imagery, maxims, puns, understatements, and cultural references which the audience understands and responds to enthusiastically. More important, the prayers are filled with devices used judiciously throughout to induce the rhythmic incantation that is imperative to the Sea Island prayer tradition. Alliteration, transplacement, interplacement, epanaphora (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses), and other features create pleasing recurrent sounds which stir, stimulate, and evoke verbal responses from the audience. Epanaphoric passages—for example, "I want to be the child of God! / and I want my sins forgiven / I want my spirit meek and mild / and I want to go to Heaven when I die"—add to the beauty of the prayers and also demonstrate the speaker's skill as a rhetorician. The echoes of words and phrases in the
[539] audience's responses attest to the community's respect and admiration for skillful and creative use of language:

> Master, it's no lower *No! No lower!*
> Could I come this evening
> Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*
> Guilty heart within
> Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned!*

Alliteration is used, as in "coax and call," "cold, cold hearts," and "Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," to help establish the rhythm, as well as to contribute to the enthusiastic and energetic tone of the entire delivery.

782 The strong rhythm and chanted delivery of the prayers accords with
533 the prayer traditions of many African and African-derived cultures, including those of West Africa, the West Indies, and South America.
537 The rhythmic chants are crucial to the developmental flow of the prayers.[2] Once the rhythm is established, it is maintained through various means, most important of which is the reply from the listeners. Some truly impressive prayer givers excite an audience to maximal response through their energetic diction and explosive tone alone. Others may intensify the rhythmic effect by drumming with a chair, tapping a cane against the floor, or just swaying back and forth in time to some inaudible sound.[3]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American
794 congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker
537 says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established
533 by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element
537 in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif
(539) asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

> Master Jesus, hear me
> Another one of you[r] servant
> Bow this evening, Jesus
>
> Sin anguished and bended
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Crying to you this evening, Jesus
> For Mercy
>
> While mercy can reach [us]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 As you say the foxes of the forest
•537 Got hole
[539] And then the birds of the air has nest
Master, we are poor son of man

Nowhere to lay down weary head

The rhythm and tone are usually set in the speaker's salutation to God, after which the speaker begins his appeal. This plea is in the form of an itemized list. The number of requests will depend on the occasion and the number of items concerning which the speaker is asking for consideration. If he makes an appeal for himself, he usually includes it as the very last item in his list. Each appeal will often begin with a traditional expression, such as "Then, then, my God! We ask . . ." or "O! You, you this evening, my heavenly Father, we ask . . ." The pleas are likewise concluded with a traditional expression, like "Have Mercy if thou on us so please!" In addition to clarifying the organization of the prayers, these phrases, perhaps more than others, help to sustain the increasing force and rhythm.

The peroration may vary. Most prayers, however, end with the quotation "Somewhere Lord, Job declare / The weak shall cease in trouble and the soul find rest."

782 The Sea Islanders have prayers for every occasion. They may range from a one-minute request for assistance in the completion of a hard day of labor to a twenty-five-minute eulogy for a lost loved one. The first prayer quoted below was delivered for the 1980 Usher's Anniversary at New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, and is typical of most Sea Island prayers for special occasions. In this case there was a scheduled prayer giver, but the person who actually spoke did so without notice when the scheduled speaker proved unavailable.[5] A brief outline of the prayer is included to demonstrate the smoothness and cohesiveness with which the parts develop into the whole:

I. Formal opening

II. The Lord's Prayer

III. Proem: speaker's personal prayer of humility

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 IV. Appeals

A. Father, we down here this evening
Heavenly Father
Asking for your mercy

B. We want you to come in this building
One more time

C. We ask you to please strengthen us
Where we are weak
And build us where we are tearing down

D. We ask you to look at the leaders
From one to another, Jesus
Make them ushers of sound judgment
Then truly devoted to God

E. I want you to bless each and every usher
Jesus
Help them to please hold out and hold on

F. Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time

G. Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus

H. Want you to look at Jerusalem one more time

I. [Look at] me too

V. Peroration

Somewhere, Lord, Job declare
The wicked must cease in trouble
And my soul have rest
'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

782 195 [193] The social setting in which a prayer of this sort is delivered contributes to the development of bilingual skills for many Gullah speakers. This prayer, like most others, contains few features characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech, such as the use of the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* and the omission of inflectional markers. There is a good reason for the absence of these and other features in this text. A prayer of this type is composed in a tradition of rhetorical [537]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[532] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
[533] of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and
782 stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
537 are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary
[782] Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## Chapter 3

782 •537 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

794

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

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## A SERMON: LET NOT THEM THAT EAT DESPISE

I'm not gonna tarry before you, Warriors. I'm glad to be here to mingle my voice among my sisters and brothers. I hope and trust that if this sermon don't do you any good, I hope it won't do you no harm.

You know you can go from one part of the Bible to the other. God say we should love one another. Let not them that eat despise them that eat not. Let us remember one another. Don't let us be like Dives now. Let us try to be just as Lazarus. Dives despised the poor. Lazarus went and ask just for a crumb that fall from the table, and before Dives had the passion on him to give, he call the dog on him. But the poor beast have compassion and lick Lazarus.

Time going pass and go on. Time come along when the poor man die. He went on home to God and been at rest. Rich man Dives die, and his home was in Hell. When he lift up his eye in Hell and saw Lazarus in Heaven, he began to memorize. He know he didn't do right, but he cries, "Oh Father, let Lazarus come and dip his finger in the water and cool my trials and trouble."

God says, "No. You had all the good times, plenty of money. You didn't need Lazarus at that time. You need him now, but it too late."

Dives say, "I got five brother. Just give me a chance that I may go back and tell them to get their heart right, that they may shun this torment place I'm in."

And He say, "No. I got Moses and I got the prophets; let them hear what they say. If they don't believe the prophets, they won't believe you, Dives."

Pray for me, Warriors. Let us sing like we singing for the last time. Let us pray like we are praying for the last time. Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow the sun may shine on your grave. Jesus told us to dig deep and lay your foundation on a solid rock, that when the storm of life blow against you, you're gonna find your Father rock. If you dwell upon Him, everythin' will be all right. The world can't do you no harm.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [23] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[23] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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763 spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents,
764 mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a
171 [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

793 Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of
796 spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the
•537 subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the
771 religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh
181 rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

175 When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me
567 the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves
191 of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few
175 words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves
567 and were prone to suicide,[35] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[35] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

533
•539
T.C.

This song belongs to the exhorting-sermon type which has an African counterpart. The old-time preacher rhythmically chanted his sermon; at effective intervals he broke into song, in which he was joined by the congregation.

533
539

Chorus: My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
My God is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop let me tell you 'bout the Chapter One
When the Lord God's work has jus' begun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Two
When the Lord God's written his Bible through
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Three
When the Lord God died on Calvary.

Chorus: An' Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Four
Lord God visit 'mong the po'
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Five
Lord God brought the dead alive
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Six
He went in Jerusalem and healed the sick.

(repeat chorus)

Stop and let me tell you 'bout Chapter Seven
Died and risen and went to Heaven
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Eight
John seen Him standin' at the Golden Gate
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Nine
Lord God turned the water to wine
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Ten
John says He's comin' in the world again.

(repeat chorus)

● 538

[For additional information on folktales, see Category 539.]

538

[For additional information on Sea Island texts, see Category 539.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[24] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[25]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

• 538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 567 829 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut [115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [69]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 776 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

•538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. •538 After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras 322 Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] 764 We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

•538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

262 Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly. The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

[538] 225 567 [262]

000 This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

262 223 224 The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds. Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

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# 2

# The Folk Literature

589 Some folk de gift fe lie.

*Some folks are gifted liars (storytellers).*

## Oral Presentation

• 538 During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century folklorists like Joel Chandler Harris, Charles C. Jones, Elsie C. Parsons, and Ambrose Gonzales were quite thorough in their collections of tales, myths, legends, and other forms of verbal art in the Gullah-speaking areas of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] Until very recently, little contemporary work had been undertaken on the Sea Islands in folklore and literature. Today studies in oral traditions have grown beyond the tales and the various ways in which their plots can be varied, improved, or altered for the worse to encompass communicative forces peripheral to the tales themselves.[2] The study of oral literature involves more than just the collection and classification of tales. It is expanding to include such things as proxemics and various pragmatic forces inclusive of atmosphere and audience participation which combine to help create a good tale.

As Western cultures are gifted with a long tradition of written literature, the Gullah performers are likewise gifted with techniques and methods of communicative interactions characteristic of a long tradition of African and African-American oral literature. Unlike the writer, who is often left to create his characters in isolation and solitude, and who is at liberty to take a few days, a week, a month, and in many cases years to fill up a page with words carefully selected to create a certain mood and elicit a certain response, the oral performer must be

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538 prepared to create and perform his entire tale within a reasonably short period of time.[3] He does not and cannot perform effectively in isolation. He is influenced immediately by the occasion of the tale, and the atmosphere in which and the audience for whom he is performing. His tale is designed not to be read but to be performed and heard. In written transcriptions of oral literature the words are captured on the page, while the real flavor of the tales and the real artistry of the teller—the actual narration, the actual "telling of the tale" by a gifted and skillful performer—are lost.

Because the many communicative techniques used in storytelling, both verbal and nonverbal, are outside the realm of written literature, until fairly recently they were not felt to be important in written interpretations of Sea Island or other oral traditions. Collections by Parsons and others are indeed excellent in the depiction of characteristic 538 201 features of plot, but they are devoid of the many kinesic communicative techniques that a teller uses to engage his listeners' attention and actually mesmerize them with gestures—hand movements, a turning of the head, a long pause, a shifting of the eyes, a long knowing stare. Yet kinesics are a part of the oral performance, and much that is communicated through gesture has not been accounted for in written transcriptions of Sea Island oral literature. Even obvious verbal techniques like mimicry, repetition, ideophones (words which convey images and meaning through their sound), and rhetorical questions often fail to be taken into consideration, an omission that subtracts substantially from the beauty of the tales even as it obscures cultural methods of communication and expression.[4]

121 While it is too much to expect one discipline to teach us to be linguists, ethnologists, folklorists, and anthropologists, the common element among these and other disciplines is the commitment to interpreting and understanding the human interaction in language and culture. The need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of human behavior is becoming increasingly more apparent. David DeCamp, for example, drew attention to this need for exchange of information and ideas between linguists and scholars in related fields as a result of his efforts to scale sequential language data to form what he calls a linguistic continuum. Though he was the first to apply the technique to linguistic data, DeCamp found that as a general procedure it has been known to psychologists and sociologists as the Guttman Scalogram Analysis for over twenty years.[5]

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1. Like other events in nature, no body movement or expression is without meaning in the context in which it appears.
2. Like other aspects of human behavior, body posture, movement, and facial expression are patterned and thus, subject to systematic analysis.
3. While recognizing the possible limitations imposed by particular biological substrata, until otherwise demonstrated, the systematic body motion of the members of a community is considered a function of the social system to which the group belongs.
4. Visible body activity like audible acoustic activity systematically influences the behavior of other members of any particular group.
5. Until otherwise demonstrated such behavior will be considered to have an investigable communicational function.
6. The meanings derived therefrom are functions both of the behavior and of the operations by which it is investigated.
7. The particular biological system and the special life experience of any individual will contribute idiosyncratic elements to his kinesic system, but the individual or symptomatic quality of these elements can only be assessed following the analysis of the larger system of which his is a part.[8]

Some familiarity with body movements is important to the discussion of Sea Island literature because the performances of the individual are related to the function of the community of which he is a member, and have meaning in that context. Body expressions otherwise unique to certain African ancestral patterns may remain in the Sea Island communities, just as there are parallels in the language itself and in styles of dance and worship.

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Included in this discussion are examples of individual performing styles which are variations on a larger system of community-expected and -accepted behavior patterns during a storytelling event. According to Richard Dorson, there is a "group repertoire." There are indeed patterns of movements characteristic of *inland* black storytellers which are directly related to the culture as a whole. It was once assumed that most people in a subculture told the same tales in the same way. There is a very definite repertoire of gestures common to southern black sto-

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121 rytellers; every storyteller has command of these particular gestures
201 and every southern black storyteller has these features in common with
538 other members of the group. On closer observation of individual performers, however, we see that there is much variation and individuality of style. Once the group repertoire has been established, we can more clearly see the distinctions among performers.[9]

538 Beyond the area of kinesics, other nonverbal communicative interactions include such intrinsic components as the setting and atmosphere for storytelling and the degree to which audience participation influences and is actually a part of a Sea Island tale. Lacking these essential elements, most written versions of Sea Island, Caribbean, and some West African literatures appear as short, loosely strung-together episodic tales. The tales alone are barren and incomplete. They do not show the frequent words and phrases interjected by the listeners, nor do they indicate the subtle manner in which the speaker calls on them actually to help him along in telling his tale. Phillip Noss elaborates on this point: "When one reads tales that are meant to be presented orally, usually in a language other than the original, with little awareness of the cultural setting or the aesthetic principles and assumptions underlying the tale, it is not surprising if he concludes that the tales are merely action-packed episodes involving stock characters whose only dimension may be comic."[10]

The Western reader has been conditioned to judge language and literature through preconceived notions of the content of what an author writes, the organization and degree of development, and the style of the writing. The words are not heard, but a good writer's fervent hope is that the impact of the words will be felt, and consequently much of the writer's effort must be devoted to this task. In oral literature the performance, inclusive of audience participation, is as important as and in most cases more important than the actual content of the tale. For not only are the words heard, visualized, and felt, the whole narrative is actually experienced as one experiences a play. The characters that the performer creates are only as vivid and lifelike as the teller is able to make them. And how vivid they are made is often dependent on how enthusiastic the audience is. An excellent performer, when he
538 slaps his hands together and says "Bam! That one stuck!" can make
201 the audience experience the impact of the blow that Ber Rabbit delivers to the tar baby. As the speaker gradually raises his hand higher and higher in the air to indicate the height to which the buzzard takes the

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538 (201) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

## The Setting

538 179 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (179) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

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538 517 subtropical location, one can find men, women, and children sitting in kitchens smelling the welcome aroma of "hoppin John and bone" cooking in a pot or just sitting, smoking pipes (men and women smoke pipes on the Sea Islands), and watching the torrential rain beat against the windowpanes. The best stories I collected on the Sea Islands and in Africa, however, were ones I heard at night in front of the fireplaces when all the daily tasks were completed, supper had been served, the children had been bathed, and everyone was relaxed, content, and gazing into the open fire. The fire had a hypnotic effect, and one's imagination could easily see forms amid the light and shadows of the flames while one listened to the teller unravel his tale.

During the cold season on the Sea Islands (*harmattan* in Africa), [264] yams (or *ji*, the Igbo name for a kind of potato) are often covered with the hot coals of the fire, baked, and offered as refreshments to the entertainer, who never seems to fail to make his tale more pleasing as a [273] result. Gin, homemade brews, and other warming drinks are often passed around if there is a good group of tellers and listeners. In Igbo, [171] Yoruba, and Ibebio villages fresh palm wine, chilled or served at room temperature, and cola nuts are always welcome refreshments during storytelling times.

538 Though everyone is potentially capable of telling a tale, I soon learned that not everyone can tell a *good* tale. Sea Island informants with whom I spent much time over several years often attempted to tell stories only in an effort to help me along with my work. Others felt a strong need to compensate me for coming such a long way to talk to them or to hear their stories. Thus they made efforts to tell tales even when the occasion was not conducive for a telling to begin. In this situation the teller was often tense, rushed, and unprepared to do his best; the tale would often be confused, lacking in plot, and generally uninteresting. But it is well known among the islanders and the Nigerians who the good storytellers are, and after some time I was directed to those tellers well known for their performances of the oral traditions and gifted in the oral technique. In the words of one of the islanders, "some people de gift for lie." The world *lie* has more than [196] one denotation on the Sea Islands: it not only means that one is not telling the truth; it is also a term associated with any kind of fictional tale told primarily for entertainment.

538 462 There are certain cultural taboos associated with Sea Island storytelling. More men than women tell tales. Men are expected to be

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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
[562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

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592 593 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his 538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 177 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 857 171 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 517 461 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories. But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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596 to their families and neighbors and appear to enjoy companionship and group cooperation more than solitude and isolation. This social sharing
• 538 and seeming congeniality is as vivid in their literature as it is in their daily lives. An overt expression of group participation is witnessed in the interplay between speaker and audience in folktales, speeches, and sermons. In Sea Island public speaking, the audience is as important for a good performance as the performer himself. As in Africa, the best audience is a lively audience: one in which the listeners participate actively in the narration by responding to certain cues from the performer. In really exciting performances speaker and audience become so intermeshed and such oneness is achieved that it may appear that the response is an actual part of the tale itself. This is particularly true, of course, for tales well known to both audience and performer.

538 Unless tales are told in the privacy of a home with very few lis-
171 teners, the speaker will rarely begin a performance without some "warming up." Among the Igbo and Ibebio, for example, formal folktales are preceded by songs and selected tales called (in Igbo) *akuko eji awake nti*, which means the first tale told to awaken or to enlighten the ear so that it absorbs the real meaning of what follows. Among the Igbo, before any tale begins, the speaker greets his listeners by saying "Chakpii [Are you ready?]." And the listeners respond, "Haa [We are ready to welcome your story!]." (These words are repeated at the end of each story, where they may be read as, respectively, "My story has ended" and "Thank you, storyteller, for your tale.") While the islanders do not seem to have any tale prescribed for the sole purpose of opening telling sessions, they do have some patterns for preparing to tell informal folktales.

538 The timing and atmosphere are very important to telling, hearing, and collecting good tales. If the audience is not properly prepared, the occasion is not conducive to good tales. The atmosphere must be relaxed; the teller not only must be willing to tell a tale but must have an audience and sufficient time to tell the story. The more listeners, the better the tales seem to be. In large groups, even when a storytelling event has been planned, it often takes quite a while for a session to begin. The pattern seems to be that everyone in the group will at first pretend not to know any stories, or even how to tell one. If it is known that one of the people in the group is a good performer, then someone may point him out and ask him to tell a tale. He of course refuses.

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538 Then members of the group may sit and tease each other for a while, telling jokes, playing the dozens, taking a little nip, or just sitting and enjoying one another's company. When I was there, after the group had kidded around until everyone was laughing and in a fairly congenial mood, I was usually granted permission to turn the recorder on, and it was time to tell some tales.

With older storytellers, the sessions often begin with a song, religious or otherwise. During the singing, the members of the group join in enthusiastically, singing, clapping their hands, or swaying with the rhythm. After the song ends, the audience is usually ready to hear a good tale. Regardless of the ages of the members of the group, the most impressive stories are always told after the group has had a chance to talk, kid around, play the dozens, sing, or just be "sporty." The friendly teasing and cordial verbal exchange relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the listeners so that they will participate in the telling of the tales by responding to certain cues given by the performers.

A speaker may begin his tale by indicating that he is going to tell a story about Ber Rabbit. The audience (or a given respondent) may clap their hands, laugh, and rock back and forth to indicate their interest and repeat, "Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit, Ber Rabbit!" This response demonstrates that the speaker has engaged their interest and attention and that they are now prepared to hear his tale. As the tale progresses, if the teller is entertaining and effective, the listeners will continue to respond to his every word, laughing and joking, clapping their hands, and urging him on with his tale. The audience is not a captive one; if the teller is not skilled in narrative technique, and his tale or delivery is uninteresting, then the listeners may wander away to get something to drink or talk to others and return only when a better speaker is talking. This response undoubtedly has an effect on the teller, who may try to hurry and finish his story so that someone else can have a turn.

Most audiences react to onomatopoeic words, repetitions, and chants. They respond as a chorus by repeating some of the speaker's words or phrases in unison or singularly. A practice very common both in Africa and on the Sea Islands is an interplay between the speaker and a given member of the audience. In an Igbo village, for example, Raphael Amaugo often called on his friend Cornelius Onunwa to help him remember the details of a story that Raphael knew quite well. The

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538 call for assistance is a device to keep the audience abreast of the details by pretending that some part of the tale has been temporarily forgotten. Often the member of the audience called upon will reply, "That's the way it happened" or "You are telling it right!" Even if the speaker is not telling a story in just the way a member of the audience remembers it, seldom will anyone openly dispute the manner in which the tale is told. This is apparently an unwritten rule of courtesy of both Igbo and Gullah cultures.

In addition to pretending to forget, a speaker may turn to a particular respondent, call him by name, and ask, for example, "You know what I mean, don't you, Doc?" The Sea Island respondent may then answer, "Ki! I know what you mean, man!" This is a reassuring device for both speaker and audience because the other members as well will usually answer, "I know what you mean! I know what you mean!" Likewise, in the narration of a historical event, members of the audience who are familiar with the event may inject a word of understanding or support by adding a personal comment, such as "I remember . . . I remember the place." The audience may encourage the speaker by calling out, "Tell the story . . . tell the story!"

[171] Another practice characteristic of Gullah and Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio speakers in particular is that of telling a tale seemingly for one individual. A speaker may single out a person whom he knows, or one whom he may not know well, and seem to speak directly to this person, ignoring all others. He has eye contact with this one hearer alone 538 and may even turn his back to other members of the audience sitting 209 next to him. This turning of the back is fairly common in some West [171] African communities and is apparently not a discourteous practice; I have never seen it offend any member of the groups observed. In fact, two informants on the Sea Islands who are close friends and avid storytellers often turn their backs to each other or sit sideways so that they are neither facing nor sitting directly next to each other. When they tell [201] tales, each one acts as a respondent for the other, yet they turn around only when some point to be stressed requires the use of the hands as a 209 visual aid. In most Western cultures, turning one's back to another person is an overt sign of disregard or disrespect. In Sea Island communities, however, one can observe this behavior in churches or other gathering places. Two men will often sit on each end of a church bench in such a manner that their backs are turned slightly away from each

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209 other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

538 171 The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expectations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions, perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

538 57 171 The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

538 For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

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• 538 audience participation and response in such communities helps in the understanding of their language and literature in its social context.

(121) It is to be hoped that more objective methods of describing communicative behavior in oral traditions will be included in future written versions of oral literature.

## The Storytellers

The performance of an individual within a culture is directly related to the expectations of the culture, and the individual performer usually respects these expectations. The Sea Island storytellers follow techniques for telling stories that have been passed on as tradition. The best storytellers are those who know how to evoke lifelike images in a listener's mind and create suspense and drama through the interactions of characters. How these goals are achieved is determined by the individual storyteller. The most common devices used to create intensity and excitement include repetition of words and phrases at strategic points in a story; mimicry, which may involve anything from the shrieking sounds of a hog or the loping motions of a running wolf to the twittering sound of a partridge as he inadvertently moves through an oat field; voice modulation, ranging from a very high-pitched, shrill tone indicative of nervousness, agitation, and excitement to a very low-pitched, quiet tone suggesting cautiousness and reserve; and various bodily gestures, such as placing the left hand in the right armpit and pumping the right arm up and down against the body to produce the sound of a large animal galloping in the distance.

Oral style, like written style, is idiosyncratic. The individual speaker will embroider his own style on certain features and thus add uniqueness to his performance. The tellers vary. Some are very fluent and the words flow with ease. Some hesitate and search for words and often resort to *ah, wime,* or other fillers to try to unify what they are saying. Some tellers are better at certain kinds of narratives than others. I found that Mr. Henry would not tell any tales about Ber Rabbit and his uncanny ways, but he could talk for hours about historical events such as the Garvey movement or the 1893 storm. His style, like his topics, was always elevated and serious. On the other hand, Mr. Oree would tell only humorous tales, and his preference for trivial

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•538 topics was reflected in his playful, jesting performances. Personality, however, is not necessarily woven into an individual's personal delivery style, because extremely reserved and nontalkative people may tell tales which are lengthy, raucous, and sometimes even bawdy. The ways in which various narratives can be treated and presented are best illustrated by discussing some individual storytellers, their personal histories, the types of stories they tell, and their method of presentation. From this information the reader may more fully appreciate the range of styles falling within the Sea Island tradition.

159 538 *Mr. Ted Williams,* in his late forties, is a family man and one of few blacks to own a substantial amount of land on Wadmalaw Island. Along with farming that land, he owns and runs a local grocery store. As a young man he left the island to try city work, "but I didn't stay. I always think about home. I always want to come back home. And I always wanted to work for myself."[12] Mr. Ted is an influential deacon in his church, and in this capacity he participates widely in fund-raising drives and other community activities. He is a very sociable person; he likes being around people and is a welcome visitor to any home. As a deacon he is a weekly speaker before the church congregation and knows well how to inspire and excite people. His seemingly natural public speaking skills are easily carried over to his skill and ability in telling a good tale. Mr. Ted has no preference for types of folk narratives; his repertoire ranges from the humorous exploits of a scheming buzzard to serious oratory on the design of the universe. He is known best not for a particular subject but simply for his ability to tell a story, a "good lie." I found his personal style probably the most effective of all in eliciting audience participation. Once he began a tale, he was an enthusiastic teller. He amused his listeners by walking around, joking, laughing, and inspiring everyone to become involved with his story. Because he seemed to enjoy performing, any tale he told was welcomed by his listeners. He was playful and constantly teased the audience by saying that this was his last tale, and he would not tell another one. Likewise, he was a catalyst to other tellers, who often tried to imitate his style and vied with him in trying to tell the best tale. Few matched his technique, though some told more intricate stories.

Mr. Ted usually stood when he began a tale and seldom sat down until it was finished. When he did sit, it was only for a moment, and even then some part of his body was in constant motion. His hands

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 49]

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A leading member of the community on Wadmalaw Island, Mr. Ted William, is known for his ability to tell a good story.

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159 were often spread to emphasize a point, or his leg would swing back
• 538 and forth like a pendulum to suggest the passage of time. When not emphasizing a point, he often rotated his hand at the wrist as if keeping silent time with the rhythm of the tale. Facial expressions and voice modulations were an important part of his personal delivery. For example, many informants told the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Tar Baby." However, when Ber Rabbit begged the man not to throw him in the briar patch, Mr. Ted gave meaning to the word *beg*. His voice became whiny and whimpering, and his face took on the appearance of one in great distress. He squinched his eyes, wrinkled his nose, and in a high-pitched voice said, "Ple-e-e-ase don't throw me in there." On the page
[201] these words are almost lifeless, but when he uttered them in conjunction with such movements as making faces, raising his arms to his chest, crooking his hands and fingers, and trembling as if in mortal terror, the listeners went wild with laughter. What he said in his tales seemed almost irrevelant when compared to the many movements, expressions, and exaggerations that he used in actually performing a given tale.

Most of Mr. Ted's tales ended with a moral; if one was not readily apparent, he made one up. He liked to do what he considered moralizing and philosophizing about life. The language of his tales was con-
[193] temporary Gullah, with such features as the preverbal markers *de, ben, bina,* and *don;* lack of inflections like *-ed* and *-ing;* and little of the subject-verb concord that one expects in standard English. These features, which among others distinguished his speech as contemporary Gullah and not black English or standard English (see Chapter 4), were part of what made his tales so appealing to other Gullah speakers. If he had approximated a form of standard English, as he sometimes did (see "Peter and the Rock," for instance—the switch is very obvious) he would not have been telling the tale in the language and style of the Gullah-speaking community.

*Mr. James Oree* is quite the opposite of Mr. Ted. He is approximately thirty-six years old. He seldom attends church; he drinks in excess; and he loves to be among the sweet ladies of the community who "like for have good time!" He enjoys his life immensely. He claims to have worked hard when he was able to work. Recently, however, he has been in failing health, and work has not "agreed" with him. Those who know him like him well. He is generally a very talk-

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ative person, once he decides that he wants to "waste" his time with you. During the period that I spent on the Sea Islands, he was always helpful but agreed to tell stories to me only at the request of the lady next door, whose encouraging words were, "You know some old-time story, so tell she some!" And some very excellent ones he told! He was quite the comedian, and all of his tales were humorous and lively (see "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter"). Even when he attempted a serious tale, it seemed to come out funny.

Like Mr. Ted, however, he had a unique personal delivery which captivated his audience and caused them to respond well to his style of expression. For example, he always took his time to tell a story, and the leisure and sheer idleness with which he spoke were part of his uniqueness as a good storyteller. As is characteristic of most Sea Island tales, his stories were series of action-packed episodes. Yet he never stood up, walked around, or moved unless he felt compelled to do so to emphasize some point. In fact, during most of his telling time, he sat with his eyes half closed, as if contemplating the character's next move. At times he seemed to be unaware of an audience; he seemed instead to be carrying on a dialogue as though he were one of the characters himself. For example, instead of introducing direct speech with the formulaic verb *say*, Mr. Oree often pretended to be the characters and simply spoke their dialogue. His ability to modulate his very deep bass voice to take on the character and speaking habits of various participants in a story seemed to be one of his most artistic techniques, adding life, zest, and interest to his tales. But even more effective was the deliberate casualness of his style, which kept the listeners hanging on every word.

There was very little actual description in Mr. Oree's tales—he used very few words, in fact, and thus even fewer long sentences. Yet the listeners were seemingly able to intuit the details of his story from the description that he did give and the slow, contemplative manner in which he told the tale. He used more ideophones than many of the other tellers, and he was also extremely adept at producing certain sounds. For example, this is the way Mr. Oree represented the caution in Ber Rabbit's steps as he tries to manuever past a hunter with a gun in an open oat field:

> Rabbit jump. . . . [He closed his eyes and contemplated, swaying back and forth as if counting to himself.] Rabbit jump. . . .

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> [Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy,* you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

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538 The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

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Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

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159 style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of
539 many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

159 During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his
• 538 delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point
[201] with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

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159 ingly in order to permit the listeners to reflect on the content of his
• 538 narrative; whatever his reason, it was a highly effective technique. During his long pauses, older members often offered a word of encouragement, such as "Tell em, Henry." Mr. Henry would reply, "Shore [sure]! I remember that good as yesterday!"

Like most good Sea Island narrators, Mr. Henry used a highly emotional oratorical method that tended to stimulate and excite his listeners. He frequently used repetition and parallel constructions, with mesmerizing effects. For example, he often spoke of the days of his youth, a time when he lived and worked on a plantation. The simple words "We ben living over there . . . on the white people place . . . the white people place" alone on the page can never capture the emotion of his phrasing or show his grave expression as he paused to reflect. The words had apparently brought to mind untold memories, so many that he felt compelled to repeat the phrase again softly and more deliberately, as if each word had history in itself.

In addition to his various uses of repetition, Mr. Henry would often actually shout out with passionate anger, joy, or excitement. To his exclamations, older members would respond with equal fervor. He would call out the name of a responding member and ask, for example:

> "Myma, you ain't know what I bina talk about, do you?"

The respondent (Myma in this case) would reply:

> "Yeah man! Shore I bina know!"
> "Huh?"
> "Yeah! Yeah!"
> "But this one here [pointing to a younger member] ain't de know. E [he] ain't even ben born yet."

Appropriately to his topics, Mr. Henry's language had formal over-
[193] tones even in casual utterances. Thus he retained the elements characteristic of a creolized Gullah speech: one pronoun for both masculine and feminine subjects, a range of preverbal markers, few if any morphological inflections, the introductory or formulaic verb *say*, and other features of the creole tradition (see Chapter 4).

159 *Miss Deeley* would not reveal her age, nor would she consent to being recorded or permit me to use her last name, but she is one of the most prolific women storytellers that I encountered. She is fifty or

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She is fifty or more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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some tobacco juice on the ground and told them that they had better be back home before the juice dried. She seemed to delight in playing with the children, however. One evening she told a series of tales about "raw head and bloody bone" and then retired to her room, leaving the children and me sitting, gazing into the fire. Shortly afterward she appeared in the open doorway, down on all fours with a sheet covering her body, her arm and hand outstretched as if she were reaching for one of the children. Everyone, including me, jumped up and ran to the back door calling her name. She then unveiled herself, overjoyed that she had frightened the children but delirious with laughter that she had actually frightened me.

Miss Deeley's telling style differed from most of the men's in that she usually kept her voice low and rather sedate, as did most of the other women who told stories. She did not tell many tales in the animal tradition of trickster. As noted, her favorite topics were "hants," hags, and unusual murders (see "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones"). Her subject matter may have been inspired by the proximity of a graveyard to her home; her belief that she had seen spirits of people buried there perhaps added realism to her tales both in her mind and in her listeners' minds. She was not a master of facial gestures as Mr. Ted was, but rather captivated her listeners through vocal expressions and voice modulation. Characteristic of her speaking style were low mournful moans, of varying durations and intensities, and subtle exclamations at strategic intervals. The low intensity and monotony of her voice contributed significantly to her ability to create suspense through an aura of intense dread and to communicate fear and even terror to her listeners.

The nature of her topics made Miss Deeley's audience a somewhat captive group, and she knew well how to keep them that way. She had a mastery of narrative devices used to test her audience to see if they were indeed abreast of her tale. For example, during a very intense part of a tale, she would often stop, spit tobacco into the fire, and ask one of the children if she had remembered to bring the clothes in off the line, knowing full well that the chore had been done. The child would quickly answer yes and beg her to go on and tell what happened. Satisfied that she held her listeners' total attention, she continued with her narrative. Given the nature of her topics, her audience communicated with her on a nonverbal level; rarely would anyone dare to make a sound. She seemed to enjoy the spellbinding effect of her narratives

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[NN1] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[NN4] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and be-
[NN6] come as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to par-
•538 ticipate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Further-
159 more, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she
797 finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was
126 patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
538 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.

159 *Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years, and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

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159 present wife. He admits to directing appreciating glances at a fine-looking woman even today, but says that a look is the extent of his appreciation.

Mr. Mickell attended elementary school on Johns Island, but because he had to work to help support his family, he was forced to quit school during the elementary grades. Yet he has done well for himself. He was in the navy and has worked on various jobs from handyman to longshoreman. He now lives a rather tranquil but satisfying life, with a degree of comfort slightly more sumptuous than that of many islanders.

159 Mr. Mickell is a gifted storyteller. Many of the tales I heard him tell have direct parallels with some told in Nigeria (see "Ber Rabbit
• 538 and the Lord"). His speaking style is as characteristic of Sea Island speech as the other informants'. He speaks very rapidly with a very high pitch and tone. In fact, I sometimes found it extremely difficult to understand him when he became engrossed in a narrative. The problem with interpretation was not with his vocabulary, though he knew many old words with African origins; the problem was primarily a phonological one. The rhythm, tempo, and stress with which he pronounced the English words is really one of the most outstanding characteristics of contemporary Gullah speech. Though I had difficulty adjusting to his delivery, the audience composed of speakers born and raised on the Sea Islands had no problem at all, as would be expected.

I found Mr. Mickell's most distinguishing feature to be his use of gestures and repetition. A rapid rate of speaking, sustained high pitch, and strong rhythm are characteristic of the community. Mr. Mickell, however, spoke more quickly than others. The rapid speaking style was enough in itself to create excitement, but the method by which Mr. Mickell used repetition, whether in words or phrases or in parallel structure, helped to intensify the excitement in his rapid series of action-packed episodes. In one tale, for example, he described how a king snake is able to kill other snakes. He conveyed the striking manner in which the king snake coils itself around its victim through a series of words repeated rapidly in succession, "Wrap up, wrap up,
159 wrap up." To illustrate this action, he made his hands into fists and rolled them rapidly over and over in front of him, completing the coil-
201 ing gesture with a "pssssup" to indicate that the victim is completely
538 immobile within the coils. To show how the king snake stretches its victim and shatters its spinal cord in one quick motion, Mr. Mickell

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159 20 538 slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying, "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

159 524 Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

159 123 342 Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

[365] [514] 159 123

159 Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

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159 then he is thrown into the bucket. In a good season one gets more crabs
123 than one can eat in a couple of hours. If the season is bad, one can stay
out in the creek all day in the sultry island sun and still have only a few
226 "po, skase [scarce]" little crabs. During the bad seasons it was usually I and not Miss Myma who finally had to come in. She could walk miles in those creek beds. One day, when we had come upon a pool of water deeper than the regular creek bed, and thus not emptied by the tide, she decided she would teach me to throw a net. She stooped, pulled out her net, stationed part of the midpoint in her teeth, stretched a portion along her arm, circled the net a bit for balance, let go of the string, and twirled the net up over the small but deep hole of water. The net circled, fanned out, and landed on the pool. "Good throw, Miss Myma," I cried out. She replied, "Got em, a mullet for sho, Pat." It was true, she had netted several mullet, but what she didn't know was that she had netted a snake as well!

Crabbing can be dangerous for those unfamiliar with "ocean
159 time." While one can bog for crabs when the tide goes out, one can net
123 a few when the tide starts back in. I learned that the trickling sounds
heard only at certain times are made when the nooks and crannies are
226 being filled with water. I also learned that the tide can be deceiving
133 because it comes in very slowly. Once we had been walking on the muddy creek floor for hours when I casually observed that the water was covering my shoes; a little later I noted that it was over my ankles. I thought I was just walking into deeper puddles and thus continued to practice my netting. Then I found that the water was beginning to hit me above my knees. Suddenly I became alarmed and looked back down the creek the way we had come. It was only then that I realized that the water was not only filling the creek bed but had covered the marshland, and there was no clearly perceivable way back to the higher ground. Frightened, I yelled out to Miss Myma that we were going to drown. She stopped, looked up and down the creek, pulled a bit of Day's Work chewing tobacco out of her pocket, took a good bite, offered me some, grinned when I passed on it, and finally said, "Guess time we fe go now." She had crabbed in that creek since she was a child, and she knew every bend and angle of it. Without her experience, however, I believe I would have panicked and perhaps drowned because it takes only minutes for the tide to rush in and fill the creek at any given point.

159 Miss Myma's presence was imperative at storytelling contests,
538

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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told
• 538 the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the
event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a
group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than
at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly
hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it
and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable
and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little
538 nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about
the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not
having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleep-
ing times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never under-
stand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But
then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways,
dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There
were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went
to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I
123 sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted
that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would
stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss
Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-
degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred
the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking
her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538] she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young
children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in
those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written
159 literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit
123 the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter,
who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I
757 had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw
Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

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159 was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down
[123] the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her
159 father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head
of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice.
596 Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for
[538] spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at playing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115 *Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy* (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [787] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 787 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 959 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

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115 759 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures, for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return [782] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sun- •538 days as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 761 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

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## Conclusion

538 Folktales, like languages, are not immutable. They are constantly changing: the plots vary, the characters change, new names are substituted for old ones, and the language of the tales generally takes on the flavor and style characteristic of the era; any given speaker may rearrange, improvise, or improve a plot, episode, or character to his own specifications. On the Sea Islands the teller may add such things as telephones, highways, automobiles, and even televisions in contemporary tales, yet these innovations are set within the framework of traditional themes. In the minds of some island youngsters, for example, Ber Rabbit may now live in a house instead of his traditional hollow in the briar patch. But plots remain essentially the same: Ber Rabbit still tricks Ber Wolf, but instead of returning to his den in the hollow, he returns to his house in or near a briar patch.

538 177

While the speakers may vary in their individual styles of delivery, there remain very distinct features characteristic of Sea Island folk telling:

538

The teller

1. will usually tease his audience when he has them thoroughly involved in his tale by pretending to forget or pretending that he will finish his tale at a later time;
2. will usually ask rhetorical questions of given members, and will expect one member or all members of his audience to respond;
3. will usually try to make his delivery as dynamic and emotional as possible through modulations in the pitch or tone of voice;
4. will usually speak louder and more rapidly when he begins to close his narration;
5. will usually make his closing as dramatic as possible;
6. will usually give a tale a moral if one is not already inherent;
7. will usually use a range of kinesic movements or gestures to help describe the events of a tale.

The audience

1. will usually respond or reply to questions or cues given by a speaker;

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• 538

2. will usually respond overtly to a good storyteller by injecting words of praise or understanding such as "Yeah," "That's right," or "I know what you mean" during the entire course of a tale;
3. will usually expect the performer to end with a dynamic closing and express their appreciation of his tale by saying, "That's all right" or "You sure enough know how for tell good tale";
4. will usually harmonize the rate, rhythm, pitch, and loudness of their responses to accord with those of the performer;
5. will usually communicate with people nearby either nonverbally, through head nods, handshakes, approving or disapproving glances, or other communicative techniques, or verbally, through words and phrases like "You hear what he de say," "Yeah, man!" and others.

[201]

The storyteller is only one of the ingredients necessary for seeing and hearing a good tale. The tradition dictates that the storyteller cannot perform alone. Not only must he be in a place conducive to telling a good tale, but he must have an interested and responsive audience in order to do his best performing. When all these ingredients are mixed in proportion, the performances of both the teller and the listeners are commensurate with traditional Sea Island social practices. The dependence of one on the other remains as apparent in everyday interactions on the Sea Islands as it does in the African cultures of the Igbo, Yoruba, Ibebio, and others from which the Sea Islanders are descended and from whose folktales their stories are said to have been derived.

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## A Sermon

793
•538

For true, the Lord ben give em silver trumpet,
and he shonuf know how for blow em!

The Reverend Renty Pinckney is minister of New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. His sermon is not presented in its entirety here, because it is very long. The Reverend Mr. Pinckney, like most island ministers, has memorized the Bible thoroughly; his creativity is revealed by his ability to join scattered allusions into a cohesive whole.[23]

53
796

### The Bread of Life

Rev. Renty Pinckney
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God is the Bread of Life
God will feed you when you get hungry *Oh yes! I know he will.*
*All right! Yeah. Amen! Yes sir!*

Look on the mountain
Beside the hill of Galilee *My Lord!*

Watch his disciple
Riding on the sea *Yeah! Uh huh!*

Tossing by the wind and rain *Yeah. Come up*

Going over the sea of temptation *Uh hum*

Brother, I don't know
But I begin to think
In this Christian life *Yes!*

Sometime you gone be toss *Yes, yeah!*

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53 Where all wicked *Wicked*
796 Shall cease *Cease, cease! Yes Lord!*
All weary soul *All weary soul!*
Shall be at rest *Rest!*
Jesus said
I am the Bread *I am the Bread. The Bread. I am the Bread*
Of Life
Let us Pray *All right! Yes sir! Yes Lord! Let us pray!*
. . . . . .

## • 538 Gullah Tales Exemplifying Audience Participation

(524) RIDDLER: Round like a top. Deep like a cup.
Mississippi river ain't full em up!

RESPONDENT: A sifter (strainer)

The reply from the audience is as germane to the Sea Island tales as it is to the prayers and sermons. However, the relaxed social atmosphere in which tales are told permits more exchange between speaker and listener than does the more orthodox surroundings of the prayers and sermons. The storytellers are not set apart from the group by a sacred podium or some other feature used to separate participating service members from the rest of the group. The listeners are therefore free to inject words and phrases, utter clarifying remarks, make gestures, or even help the teller along with his tale if appropriate. These interactions are very subtle and in no way interfere with the performance of a good tale. Likewise, no good tale can be told without the responses of an active audience, and no good tale can be told without the traditional "warming" period to create the right atmosphere. Like the prayers and sermons, the tales are usually preceded—if there is an audience present to act as respondents—by songs, spiritual or otherwise, and then by games, riddles, jokes, and dozens. As previously mentioned, the friendly teasing relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the group

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538 so that it will participate in the event by responding to certain cues given by the teller.

The teller's call and the audience's reply are often simultaneous. Clearly they must be distinguished on the printed page, and separating them formally as is done here helps clarify the degree to which the speaker and the audience rely on back-and-forth interplay to develop and perpetuate a rhythmic flow once the tale begins.[24]

128 The following notational conventions have been used to provide more information concerning the context in which these tales were told. Double exclamation marks indicate loudness, and triple exclamation marks, extreme loudness. Parentheses enclose indications of nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as long pauses, laughter, eye or hand movements, or meditations. Dashes indicate interruptions or pauses in thought or speech. Ellipsis dots show omissions. A series of hyphens indicates phonological lengthening, as in O-o-o-kay! Italics are used for responses and for emphasis on words or phrases. Square brackets enclose translations or interpolations of words or letters.

538 [264] These tales were told around a fire site at a local store just after nightfall on Wadmalaw Island. Approximately twenty or thirty people gathered, eating crabs and roasting hot dogs while they waited for the storytelling session to begin. The order here does not necessarily reflect the order in which tales were told. Further, some tellers were better performers than others and thus were asked to tell several tales before the session ended.

"The Man and the Skita [Mosquito]" is an extension of the Clever Slave Motif J1114.01 (more commonly known in the United States as an "old marster and John" tale) and Motif H961, Task Performed by Cleverness. It falls vaguely within Tale Type 920 III, Impossible Task.[25] In this tale the philosophical outlook of Ber Rabbit prevails: even when faced with almost insurmountable odds, one can survive not through physical strength but through one's own wit and intelligence.

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539 skita was done! *Um hum. Yeah! Skita been done!* And that was that one!!! *(Clapping) Yeah! (laughter) Kill em! Yes sir!*

O-o-o-kay! Another good one! O-o-o-kay, the next one. Tell another one! *(Laughter and clapping)*

• 538 "Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch" is classified as Type 1310 A, Motif 581.2, Briar-Patch Punishment for Rabbit. This tale is often the sequel to "The Tar Baby" (Tale Type 175), a tale still told and retold on the Sea Islands by young and old. The fact that the audience already knew this tale well only added to the excitement of the occasion. The teller's creativity was displayed by the variations in his facial expressions and the energy and enthusiasm with which he chose to tell his tale. A well-known and favorite storyteller, this man never disappointed his audience. He spoke very rapidly and thus did not wait for a response to every word or phrase.

539 Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch

Mr. Ted Williams

Ah—Anybody else? Anybody else? *You go ahead and talk!* I go—I gone tell a—a few short story. *Uh humm. Tell em!* About the rabbit and the—and the man. *Um humm. Ber Rabbit! Ber Rabbit!*

The man catch the rabbit in his um—in peanuts patch.
Trap em in he peanuts patch.
And he say, "Now, Ber Rabbit, you always sharp!
You always go a lot of scheme!
But now, you know what I gone do with you?
I gone punish you.
I gone throw you in that fire!! *(Laughter from audience)*

Ber Rabbit, O Lord! (Pausing as if to think)
I tell you what he do.
"I tell you what you do—old man (as if thinking to himself).
Throw me in the fire!" (shrugs his shoulders) *Throw me in the fire!*

The man say, "No, you too free!" (shaking his head).

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539 Say, "I ain't gone do that!
I tell you what I gone do with you.
I gone throw you in that river!" *The river!*
Ber Rabbit say, "I tell you what you do.
Throw me in that river! *Yeah! The river!* Let me drown there!
Just throw me in the river—let me.
I want a dead anyhow.
Throw me in the river!" *Um huh!*
Man say, "No-o-o-. I ain't gone throw you in there cause you too free! You too sharp!"
And he say (pausing as if to think),
"I know! You know what I gone do with you, Ber Rabbit?" *Yeah!*
(Unconcerned) "What you gone do? What you gone do?"
He carry em to the man briarwood patch. And boy!!!
(shakes his head). That briar ben about that high
(raises his hand above his head).
Say, "Ber Rabbit, I gone throw you in that briarwood patch."
(Moaning) "OOO-o-o-o Lord!!! *(Much laughter)*
(Wrinkling his nose and crooking his hand and fingers)
Ple-e-e-ase do-o-o-n't throw me in there!!! *(Much laughter from the imitation)*
*(Whining and shaking)* Dem briarwood stick me up! *(Laughter)*
Ple-e-e-ase" (whimpering).
And he take Ber Rabbit, say, "Oh! I got you now, Ber Rabbit!"
"OOO-o-o-o, don't throw me in there! *Got em!*
I rather you kill me!" (holding hands as if praying).
So, e take the rabbit and thow em in briarwood patch.
The rabbit say, "You fool you! This where I born and raise!" *(Much laughter and clapping among the audience). Born and raise!*
That's all now! I ain't coming back in! *Born and raise! (Laughter)*

• 538 "The Buzzard and the Hawk" is only one of many, many tales told of Ber Buzzard and his unsavory eating habits; yet the buzzard is revered

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538 [825] on the Sea Islands for his patience and faith in the Lord's salvation. The buzzard is not an animal that the islanders are ambivalent about. He keeps his distance and they keep theirs; they never kill him for sport but actually depend on him to help them locate dead dogs and farm animals which may have strayed away and got lost in the marsh. Variants of "The Buzzard and the Hawk" are numerous and can be found in just about any collection of African-American tales.[26]

Before beginning this tale the speaker had told a series of well-received stories. He paused at the outset to tease the audience into asking for more.

539 The Buzzard and the Hawk

Mr. Ted Williams

Y'all know—(pauses and addresses the audience)—I ain't taking too much time? *No! Uh uh!!*

Huh? *No!*

Y'all know about the buzzard? *Uh uh*

(Looking at the audience as if puzzled) Y'all didn't hear about the buzzard? *No! (laughing)*

(Again, acting even more surprised) Y'all ain't heard about the buzzard?!!! *(The audience laughs at his expression) Tell us!! Tell us about the buzzard?*

The buzzard and the monkey! *(laughing and clapping) Tell us about the buzzard and the monkey! (more laughing and clapping)*

Louis Jerden, Louie Jerden tell y'all about that now, y'all! (Looks at the older members of the audience.) The old people know about Louie Jerden and the buzzard! *(Elderly members nod and smile knowingly)*

You know the buzzard always was a—a nice educated animal, you know! *(Nods) Um hum! um hum!*

E take e time—(reflecting) just like he done with the hawk. *(Nods and um hums in unison)*

Him and the hawk was sitting down on the limb one day, and he said—Him and the hawk had a consolation [consultation].

Say, "I'm very hungry!!!"

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539 The hawk say, "I'm hungry too! (rubbing his stomach). Lord—O Lord! My stomach! I too hungry!"
The buzzard say (patiently), "Wait on the Lord—"
And e look up—Nothing for dead—NOTHING, you know
So the buzzard say (exasperated), "MAN!!!"

The hawk say, "I can't wait no longer!"

So when he look (straightens his back as if seeing something interesting), a little sparrow come along. And—and—and the hawk get up and run at the sparrow and hit a tree *Uh huh!*

And the buzzard sit on he limb and look the hawk, look at the hawk, when he run into tree. The buzzard say (nodding his head knowingly and pointing his finger), "I tell you wait on the Lord. Now I gone eat you now!" *(Much laughter and jovial responding among the audience)*

• 538 Though the buzzard is revered for his patience and intelligence, he is not, according to the islanders, as "smaat" in any way as the monkey. "The Buzzard and the Monkey" is an example of the syncretism of folk culture and pop culture. Louis Jordan, a prominent rhythm and blues artist, recorded the popular tune "Straighten Up and Fly Right" in the 1940s, basing the song on the situation portrayed in this folktale. Here one sees a direct reborrowing of the pop recording back into the folk tradition. The teller depends on his listeners' familiarity with the tale and the song to elicit their support in singing the chorus from the record. In this manner he transforms the old tale into a cante fable, or "singing tale."[27]

539 The Buzzard and the Monkey

Mr. Ted Williams

—So the buzzard done the same ting with the monkey! The buzzard got so-o-o-o-o hungry one day, he couldn't hold it (holding his stomach). So he went to the monkey.
(Aside to one of the listeners) Him and the monk was good friend, you know. *(Listener nods) Um hum!*

He say (loudly), "Brother Monk!!!"

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539

Say, "Ah—Monkey?"

"Ah? I ain't doing nothing!"

Monkey say, "Well-let-start-for-straighten-up-and-fly-a-little-right-now.
Yougettingalittledamnhighupinair—hear!!" *(Much laughter and cheering from the listeners)*

(Laughs) So e gone little higher (points upward). E choke em and e say, Ah! The, the monkey tell the buzzard. E say (confused), the buzzard tell the monkey, "Say, Monkey? Release your holt and I set you for free!!" *Yeah, release em!*

And the monkey say, "Well, got dang, let me tell you one ting now!! You tell me, say, you gone show me the view and do this and do that! Now you WAY UP HERE! I want you de straighten up and fly right!"

Tell em, say, buzzard tell, say,
"Well—well—ah! Release your holt and I'll set you free!!! *(Cheers from the audience)*

So (laughs) Louie Jerdon write that record, you know!! Right now, we can sing that! *Yeah! Yeah!*
(Stands and walks aroung the crowd) Straighten up and fly right!
(Asks members of the audience) Who understand what I'm say now? *(The audience joins in singing)*
Straighten up and fly right!
Straighten up and fly right!
Do long, papa, don't you blow your trump!

(Laughs) Ha! Ha! Aint that what e say?!!! *Yeah! (Much laughter and cheering)*

538 "Peter and the Rock" is classified as Type 774, Jest about Christ and Peter. It is only one of a series of tales told on the islands about how Peter is made to look ridiculous because of his greed or some other sinful trait.

This speaker adjusted his narrative style to a rather formalized language to tell a somewhat religious tale. As his tale progressed, his language became increasingly creolized and his audience showed a greater involvement with the content of the tale. Near the end, the speaker seemed more concerned with delighting the audience than with

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538 his language: his manner became more relaxed; he put more of himself into the tale; and the audience responded with tremendous enthusiasm. At the end his language reverted to the rather formal style ("That's it, now!").

## Peter and the Rock

Mr. Ted Williams

I going in the Bible now. *Okay. Okay. All right now.*
Now—he—you, everybody know the, the Scripture? *Yeah, Yeah!*
Ah—Peter—James, John, and—Christ all, all of em? *Yeah*
And, well, you know, Christ—always on a good mission. He always was doing good thing for people, you know, in his, eh, demonstration. *In demonstration. Yeah!*

So—ah—come a time when—when—when Christ want a—go to—from Jericho to Jerusalem. *Uh huh*
And he come out de his twelve disciple and ask them.
Say—"Now I want you, two disciple de go with me.
I want two *good* disciple for go with me." *Yeah, two good disciple for go!*

So you know Christ always want John de go with em. *Uh hum, want John de go*
Then Peter come—you know Peter was always was *slick*. Peter say, "Well, I go with you too." *Yeah! (laughing) go with you too.*

So when they go on the road de going de, ah, Jerusalem from Jericho, then Christ say, "Ahm, *everybody* pick up a rock! We want de demostrate the cross.
We want de tote a rock from here—from Jerusalem to Jericho—from Jericho de Jerusalem." *Jericho de Jerusalem*

So, Christ got a rock—
John got a BIG rock—
and then Peter got a li-i-i-sma-a-a-ll rock about the size of this

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•538 instrument here (holding up the microphone). *Um hum (whispers)*
That de Peter all right now. *(Quiet laughter)*

So (laughs), when he got al-l-l-most de Jerusalem, Christ say, "Everybody lay he rock down, and let e rest off a little bit a for e get in the city."

So Peter say, "Well, thank God!
Y'all tote that big rock, but I got this little one here.
I ain't tired!" *(Laughter from the audience)*
And de set the rock down—and rest and sleep.

So, when they wake up—then Christ say,
"Okay! I know y'all disciple hungry now."
Say, "I gone turn this rock in de bread." *Bread!*
So dey turn in John rock de bread. *Turn em de bread!*
John had a BIG rock—turn em de bread. *Um humm.*
So John had a BIG piece of rock, bread.
They turn e rock in de bread.
He had a big rock. *Big bread!*

Uh huh.
So Peter ben so chafe [vexed],
Peter turn e—he turn he Peter rock de bread, but Peter just had a li-i-i-piece of rock. *(Much laughter)*
Was a little read—(laughing) bread.
So—ah—and so when de ready, *(laughter)*
When they de finish
Done—eat—and start for walk off—

"So, okay! Let me—everybody get a rock now. See the city right over there. Everybody get another rock."

So John get a small rock this time. *Um hum, a small one!*
Christ get a small one.
Peter get a BIG old rock. *Big one this time! (Much laughter)*

And they get in Jerusalem, Christ say, "Everybody put e rock down."
And Christ walk up and look at the big beautiful city.

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And Christ step up and say,
"On this rock I build my church!" *Uh hum!*

And Peter say, "OOO! Hell no!!!" *(Much laughter, cheering, and clapping from the audience)*
"You bina make (laughing),
you bina—you bina make bread all the time on the other rock!!"
Tell em, "You gone make bread now cause I got a BIG rock!
You gone make bread with this rock!!!" *(Much clapping and urging from the listeners to tell another tale)*

That's it now—I got some more, but I'll tell y'all later!

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## Three Gullah Tales with African Parallels

Hear tell say Ber Rabbit ben come here from Africa.

The Gullah tales with African parallels that are included here are only a minute sampling of tales on the Sea Islands having roots in African literary traditions. The student of comparative literature can discover topics for extensive comparisons from the collections of Joel Chandler Harris, Elsie Clews Parsons, Ruth Finnegan, Florence Cronise and Henry Ward, and Richard Dorson, among others.[28] These topics manifest themselves through themes, plots, characterizations, and other conventions, all worthy of detailed exploration in themselves but by far exceeding the limitations of this book.

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I took certain precautionary measures in collecting the African tales to try to eliminate the possibility of receiving tales that might have origins other than African.[29] I made no requests, however, for particular types or kinds of tales: the stories recorded on each continent were collected at random on any subject that the informants chose.

The African tales in this book came from Uzoaba, an Igbo village near Owerri, Nigeria.[30] The Igbo culture was selected for study and comparison with Gullah because the linguistic features seemingly most prominent on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina (the island on which I have conducted most of my research), are traceable to the Igbo lan-

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guage. For example, the pronominal system in contemporary Gullah still reveals such features as the singular and plural second-person pronouns *unu* and *hunu*, respectively. These features correspond to the pronoun *una*, the second-person plural marker in contemporary Igbo. Likewise, one pronoun still expresses the range of third-person pronoun possibilities in Gullah for many speakers. Although Igbo does employ two pronouns—/o/, the vowel sound in *doe*, and /ǫ/, the sound of *aw* as in *law*—the two systems are similar in that the same pronoun may be used to refer to both male and female. While it is true that many West African languages do follow this undifferentiating practice, other linguistic features link the lexicon of Gullah and Igbo, including [də], the locative, and the form of the verb *to be*. (This subject is considered in greater detail in Chapter 4.)

In addition to linguistic features, there are similarities between the two cultures in hair-wrapping techniques, food preparation, child-rearing practices, and other social customs already discussed, enough similarities to suggest a concentration of Igbo ancestral background for residents of Wadmalaw and perhaps other islands as well. It is well known among the islanders that each island carries its unique pattern of language and culture, and these patterns may perhaps indicate carryovers from elsewhere in West Africa.

As Cronise and Ward have observed, some African tales have parallels in cultures in which there is only the remotest possibility of mutual influence. The tale of the "Tar Baby," for example, is found in various versions in most folklore. Certain themes may indeed be universal, just as some linguistic features are universal. The similarities between the Igbo and Sea Island tales cannot be dismissed as coincidental, however, because the genetic link between the African and the African-American people provides the basis for cultural and literary continuity.[31]

The evidence of literary continuity is most apparent in the handling of traditional themes and characters. Both cultures delight in imbuing physically insignificant and seemingly helpless creatures with extraordinary mental acumen. Their superior intelligence and discretion make these small beings not only godlike in powers but models for much stronger creatures to emulate. The "helpless" animal may take the form of the spider of the Gold Coast, the turtle of the Slave Coast, the rabbit of the Sierra Leone region, or the *hlakanyana* of South Africa.

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Regardless of the region, these animals are heroic figures in the same tradition as Ber Rabbit in Gullah and inland black literature, or Ananse the spider in Caribbean literature.

In attempting to explain why a weak creature like a rabbit was selected as a folktale hero in black America, traditional theories have posited the powerless being as the personification of the slave, who had to be extraordinarily clever to avoid and survive the wrath of the slave master. While this concept is theoretically sound and indeed operative, it loses validity in light of the evidence that physically insignificant creatures were revered for their intelligence in Africa long before the African-American was ever subjected to the cruelties of slavery. Seldom does one find massive or ferocious animals like the lion, the leopard, the elephant, or the hippopotamus depicted in African literature as shrewd and insightful. They are continuously portrayed as stupid and as perpetually duped and humiliated by smaller animals who must from necessity live by their wits, not by their strength. This concept of shrewdness and cunning embodied within a tiny animal is apparent, for example, in "The Spider, the Elephant and the Hippopotamus," a tale told to Finnegan by the Limba and also told to Cronise and Ward by the Temne speakers.[32] In this tale the spider uses his wit against the power of two larger animals. We can find a parallel in Harris's Sea Island tale "Mr. Terrapin and Mr. Bear." Likewise, an Igbo tale of Nnabe, the tortoise, making a riding horse out of an alligator and insulting him midstream finds a parallel in Parsons's Ber Rabbit making a riding horse out of Ber Alligator on the Sea Islands. This same tale has a parallel in the Caribbean, with Ananse, the spider, riding the tiger's back.[33] In another Igbo tale "Nnabe and the Fruits" (given here with its Sea Island companion tale), Nnabe is able to defraud a whole host of animals; there are similarities in the way Ber Rabbit outwits Ber Wolf in "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter."

The spider, tortoise, and hare are shown to be inferior to and answerable only to a higher immortal being, Chineke in Igbo and the Lord in Sea Island tales. Here, for example, Nnabe and Ber Rabbit seek more knowledge from their creator in "Nnabe and Chineke" and "Ber Rabbit and the Lord." While both animals are revered for their wit and ingenuity, both are kicked out of heaven when they attempt to cheat God. Both continue to bear the scars of God's wrath: Nnabe has a broken shell as a result of his fall, and Ber Rabbit has a white tail as a reminder that God threw a cup of milk at him as he was ejected.

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538 171 In the animal tales from both continents, the central characters nearly always function as though they were human beings. That they are lower animals personifying humans is secondary to the intent and purpose of the tales. The animals' roles are seldom comic in the style of American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, or Bugs Bunny. Tales of Nnabe and Ber Rabbit are designed to represent mature individuals reacting in adult situations of daily life. In tale after tale, the listeners are confronted with multifaceted personalities which they sometimes like, sometimes dislike. There are differences: Nnabe is far more vicious in his interactions, for example, than Ber Rabbit. In many tales he is consciously cruel and tyrannical. Ber Rabbit, on the other hand, is seldom depicted as self-seeking. He is known as a trickster, or one "smart too much," but he generally resorts to chicanery only to preserve his life.

While many favorite African and African-American tales involve animals acting like human beings, many tales are told of mermaids (*mama water* or *daddy water*), great hunters, chiefs, and the common person in struggles against the forces of nature. A frequent theme among the Igbo, Ibebio, and Yoruba involves crimes against the family: a member of one's family kills another member, and the ill deed is revealed by the murdered person's bones. Similar tales are also told on the Sea Islands. Here "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is compared with "The Flower, or the Singing Bones." Tales of this type are customarily accompanied by lyrics, which the audience usually participates in singing. These tales involve the audience fully and are usually welcome diversions from the traditional trickster exploits.

The Gullah and Igbo tales that follow demonstrate the similarities in plot and character that have been mentioned. Most of the African informants had little or no familiarity with the English language. Each tale was told in a familiar setting in the speaker's native tongue and then translated into English with the aid of a bilingual consultant from the village. The Gullah tales have been edited to eliminate stuttering, false starts, and constructions which are not confusing in speech but which, because they are distractions, would most likely make the text more difficult to understand, and ultimately would cause the similarities between the plots to seem more obscure. Features such as the formulaic or introductory verb *say* and the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* have been retained to aid in perpetuating the original flavor of the tales. (See Appendix 1 for a transcription of one story into

538 128 [193]

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 116]

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538 128 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however, no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 171 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

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538 171 2. "Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter" is Animal Type 15, The Theft of Butter by Playing Godfather, and Deception Motif K401.1, Dupe's Food Eaten and Then Blame Fastened on Him. Some previous commentators have made references to a fire-jumping scene in other versions of this Sea Island tale.[34] The African parallel for this tale, "Nnabe and the Fruits" does involve a jumping scene, where Nnabe is expected to jump to his death (Motif K891). However, being the sly, perceptive little animal that he is, Nnabe has made prior arrangements for his getaway once he completes his jump.

539 Ber Rabbit, Ber Wolf, and the Butter

James Oree
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Ber Wolf de tell Ber Rabbit, "Let's make some butter, okay?"

So Ber Rabbit and Ber Wolf, they got together. They decided to make some butter. Now, they both was married. And between the rabbit and the wolf, the rabbit thought he had a little more sense than the wolf. Okay?

*Um hum! Yeah!*

So what happen, the rabbit and the wolf, they decided de make the butter.

By and by Ber Rabbit tell the wolf that his wife was expecting a baby. And that he had de go check on the baby! Every now and then he had de go and check on the baby!

So they work in the field. They went in the field and they start de work. They was hoeing, de working they crop. They planted it together—you know, do everything together. They planted they crop. And rabbit said to the wolf, "Ber Wolf? Look a here, Ber Wolf!" Say, "My wife de call me! Say, I—Shah [a typical Sea Island exclamation]! I have for go check on my wife now. Shah!—My wife de expecting a baby, and—"

[Ber Wolf] say, "Okay! Okay, Ber Rabbit, go head."

When he come back, [Ber Wolf] say, "Did your wife had the baby?"

[Ber Rabbit] say, "Yeah!"

[Ber Wolf] say, "What the baby is?"

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The lion started first and jumped across. Each of the other animals jumped across until at last it was Nnabe the tortoise's time to jump. He sang the song and jumped, but fell into the pit. In the pit he denied that he had eaten the fruit. He said that he fell into the pit because he was overdressed and too heavy to jump. Reluctantly, the other animals agreed that maybe his shell was too heavy and that he should be given another chance to clear himself. So they pulled him out from the pit and let him put off his shell. When he finished, he sang the song again and jumped, but still he fell into the pit. This second time all the other animals were convinced that he was the culprit. For his punishment, he was buried alive in the pit and covered with dirt. However, the tortoise was indeed wise, for he had already had the rabbit dig a path from the pit to his house. So the tortoise went home quietly, laughing to himself and praising himself for outwitting the other animals.

Then the *eke* market day arrived, when the rabbit was to collect his money from the tortoise. So the rabbit went to the tortoise's house and told him that he came to collect his fee. The tortoise did not know what to do, since he did not have the money. So he set another day for the rabbit, explaining that his mother-in-law had died and that he had spent all his money for her funeral. On the newly agreed date, the rabbit went again to collect his fee, and this time the tortoise had conceived of a plan to kill the rabbit. He boiled a big pot filled with water and waited for the rabbit to come. When the rabbit came, the tortoise tried to grab him by his tail, but the rabbit was too fast, and pulled himself loose except for the outer cover of his tail, which was pulled off in Nnabe's hands. To this day that is why the rabbit's tail is whiter than the rest of his body.

Chakpii!! *Haa!*

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3. "The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones" is classified as Type 720, My Mother Slew Me; My Father Ate Me; and Motif E631.1, Speaking Bones of Murdered Person Reveal Murder. This tale was not as commonly told on the Sea Islands as it was among the Igbo of Nigeria. Many, many variations wherein crimes were revealed by the murdered person's bones were collected in Nigeria.

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[861] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

000 34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

825 538 35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

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825 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a
538 high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which
[805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the
[554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages
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on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

## Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

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3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

113

4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

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10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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000 19. 1 Cor. 15:53–54.

782 20. "Ain't gonna study war no more" is a reference from an old Negro spiritual. The concept itself comes from several references to war in the Bible, such as Ps. 46:9, Isa. 2:4, and Mic. 4:3.

000 21. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16–27.

22. Job 3:17.

128 23. I am again indebted to Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton, who assisted in transcribing this sermon from a recording made during the church service.

538 24. For further discussion of the call-and-response technique see Grace Sims Holt, "Stylin' outta the Black Pulpit," in *Rappin' and Stylin' Out*, ed. Thomas Kochman
113 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 189–204.

538 25. The Gullah and African tales given in this chapter are classified according to the scheme set out by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale*
128 (Helsinki: *Suomalainen Tiedeakatenia*, 1961). Motifs and the names and numbers as-
113 signed to tale types are from Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58).

In the search for systematic methods of presenting such paralinguistic features as voice quality and nonverbal expressive phenomena, Ray L. Birdwhistell proposed a system of notation for describing certain sound phenomena, for example, an arrow pointing upward or downward to indicate various pitch ranges. He likewise developed an elaborate notational system for analyzing body motions and gestures, a system that distinguished hip, leg, ankle, shoulder, wrist, arm, and other movements (see Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*). Some of these notations are quite complex, and they are not yet widely used. Here, because the language of the narratives is complex in itself for most English-speaking readers, I decided to eliminate reading handicaps by minimizing foreign symbols that would tend to interrupt the natural flow of the tales.

538 26. For example, Richard Dorson has a variant of this tale in *American Negro Folktales*, p. 114.

000 27. This observation was brought to my attention by Charles Joyner, who is a native of the South Carolina coastal area.

113 28. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands;* Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* Florence M. Cronise and Henry Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider and the Other Beef* (Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969); and Dorson, *African Folklore*.

000 29. The precautionary measures taken here do not assure that the Igbo tales collected were not influenced by other cultures. No culture can be totally without outside influence; I tried only to decrease the likelihood of obtaining tales with non-African origins. Accordingly, I collected the tales from children and adults only in their native tongue. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, those in remote areas have little reason to use it. I also did not ask to hear any particular type of tale, nor put any restrictions on the length or number of tales told by any one person. I asked simply to hear some of their stories.

30. I am indebted to the renowned Igbo writer Obi Egbuna for his observations concerning African folktales and their implications in Igbo society. Any misrepresentations that might remain are, of course, my own.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

**STORIES**

517
461
(533)
(524)
(538)

When we was small, we didn't 'low to go no place, but we have all we fun at home. On weekend when we do all work what told to us and after we finish work at night, we sit down and we all sing different old song, and parents teach us different game and riddles. We go and cut the wood and wrap up the house with green oak and muckle wood, then we all stays by the fire chimbley and listen to stories.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

## BARNEY McCABE

•538 We learn some these stories from my uncle, Harry Williams. He was kind of rough, but he really could tell some stories.

539 Once upon a time it was a twin sister and brother. The sister name was Mary and the brother name was Jack. One day they decided to go on a long traveling. But Jack was a wise child and he told Mary to go in the house and ask Mother could we go. Her mother say, "Yes, you could go, but take care." So Jack say, "Wait a minute, Sister," and went to the barn and get four grain of corn. And Mary said to Jack, "What you gonna do with that corn?" Jack said, "In a long while, you will see." So he put the corn in his pocket.

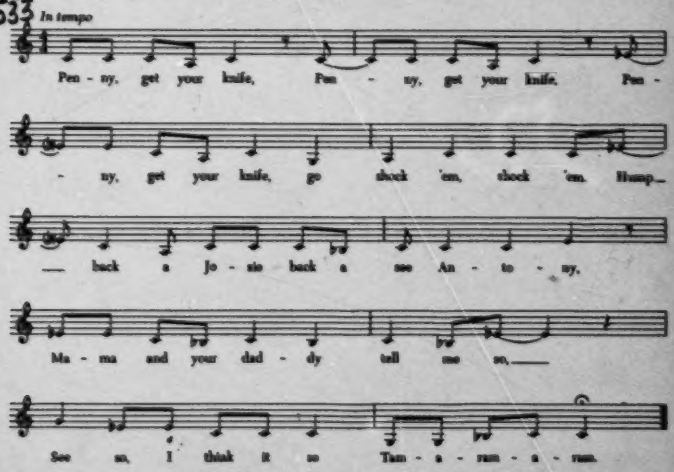
Then before he leave home Jack told his mother, say, "Mama, I got three dogs—Barney McCabe, Doodle-le-doo and Soo-Boy. I going to leave a glass of milk on the table. If you see that glass of milk turn to blood, I want you to turn my dogs loose."

So they went on traveling and all the time wondering what was the end going be. Pretty soon it come dark and they begin to get weary. They knocked at an old lady house. The old lady run to the door, say, "Who is it?"

Jack say, "Me, Mama. Could we spend the night here? 'Cause we far from home and we very tired." Old lady say, "Oh yes, come on in."

All that time she was a witch-craft and the children didn't know it. She fed them and put them to bed. She had a knife she call "Tommy Hawk." After she put the children to bed she began to sharpen it up:

539
533



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I TOO SCARED THEN

775 People say if you look over your left shoulder you'll see ghosts. Tell about hag and all kind of thing like that. I look back over my left shoulder all the time, I don't see no ghost. I never see none, but I believe in ghost. Some call 'em ghost, some call 'em spooks, boodyman. That's the way we is call 'em when we was little—boodyman.

538 That old man, Michael Brown, he's always be to our house. I guess he's 'round about seventy-five. He is come over every Sunday and he sit down
775 and talk about all these old-time thing. Talk about old-time ghost. He say when he go home nighttime he have to carry a stick and feel his way, 'specially if it dark, 'cause ghost is crowded in the path. He take stick go "whicha-whoocha-whoocha," clear his way. I be glad when he go home 'cause he talk about those thing and make me scared. Mama like to listen. Not me. I say, "Take your hat and go home." I too scared then. Ghost!

*Mr. James Mackey*

## 775 THEY'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FOOT

Some people died, their spirit walk around. If a person died happy, they don't bother you. But people died bad, well, they'll knock you off your foot.

775 One most knock me off my foot one night. I was coming out just about
781 dusk-dark and something come around me like a long black snake—tie around me. It shoot up and I ain't feel like I was onto the ground at all. Only way I came back in this world, a dog smell my scent and that dog bark. Didn't for that, I'd been *gone*.

When my foot touch ground, feel like I been off the ground. I go and curse 'em. They say if I pray I might of get off much better. The more I curse, the more I guess he try to knock me.

When the feeling get back to me, then I start to walk—taking my time just like when a person sick—and I could imagine he up behind me. My hair on my head just tauten up. I got back home, gone to bed that night with *all* my clothes on.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 869 869 186 178 869 869

When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would [538] teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 533 [534]

The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
•538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
888 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
538 or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



di lɔɪ

THE LIE

●538 1. hendəsɪn ɔd sʌm bɪgdɔg / hɔd sʌm bɪg dɔgdɛ / ... di tʃɪlɪn
*Henderson had some big-dog, had some big dog-there.*
*The children*

2. də ɸid də dɔg / ɛn mi ɛn də rɔgmiɛn də dɔg də ɹiɛs ɸə gɪt də hʌm mit
*(PrC) feed the dog, and me and the rog-me-and-the dog (PrC)*
*race for get-the-ham meat,*

3. ɸait / josi / jusi / ɛn aɪ kʌm dɪ dɔg kʌm bit mɪ /
ɸə gɪtə sʌm it
*for-eat, you-see, you-see. And I couldn't, the dog couldn't*
*beat me for get-the-some eat.*

Henderson owned some very big dogs, some huge dogs. Well when the children came to feed the dogs, the dogs and I would race to get the ham meat to eat. You see, I had to outrun the dogs in order to get something to eat.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•538

## di siniek[39]
## THE SNAKE

1. ɸɛl / ɒɪ ɑ̃ nuɔ dɪ bɪgɪs wɔn ɒɪ eɸə ɛɔ nɔ̃ / bʔɒɪ nuɔ / wɛndie /
*Well I ain't know the biggest one I ever saw now. But-I know one-day*

2. ɒɪ bɪnɔ pompʰ sɛm ɸɔrɔ otdɪ / ɛn mɔ lɪɛl gɛɛgɛɛn bɪn
*I (PAC) pump some water out-there. And my little great-grand (T)*

3. iɔ ɸɪdɛi / ɛn wɔn bɪn jiɔ bɔt dɛt lɔŋ / kɔm ɔ̃ɪ tɔ̃u dɛʰ dɔ dɛʰ...
*here with-me. And one (T) here bout that long. Come right through that door there...*

4. ɔ̃ɪ tɔ̃u dɛʰ / ɛn ɸɛn dɪtʃɜ̃ɪl ʰɔlɔ fɔ mɪ sie gɛɛnɛɛmɔ /
*right through there. And when the-child holler for me say 'Grandmama'*[40]

5. ɒɪ sie jieʰ / sie kɔmieh / sɔ ɒɪ kɔm / i sie ɔ bɪk siniek
*I say 'yeah' say 'come-here.' So I come. (Jɔ́ n) say a big snake*

6. bi njɔ hɔs / ɒɪ sie stɔ̃p jɔ lɔĩ / jieɔ gɛɛnɛɛmɔ /
*be in your house. I say 'stop your lie'; 'Yeah Grandmama.'*

7. ɒɪ sie ɸɛi bi / i gɔm ɔ̃ɪ intɛn tɔ̃u iɔ iniɸ wɔn ɛm bɪk tʃiɛɛ ju gɒʔn
*I say 'Where (Jɔ́ n) bo?' (Jɔ́ n) gono right in-and through here. (Jɔ́ n)-neath one them big chair you got-in*

8. di kɔnɔ / ɛn ɒɪ dɪʔn ɸiliɸ dɪ tʃɜ̃ɪl / ɒɪ sie stɔ̃p lɛɪ / di tʃɜ̃ɪl
*the cornor. And I didn't believe the child. I say, 'Stop lie.' The child*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina



•538 9. bɐɐ ɔut kɐɔɪ / ɛn ɐrə i bɐɐ ɔt kɐɔɪ / dɛn ɒɪ si ɪm nə lɒɪ dɛ nɔ /
*burst out cry, and after (3d n) burst out cry, then I see (3d n) na lie then now.*[22]

10. gɹɛn mɐmɐ ʔɒɪ ɛ̃ nə lɒɪ / ɒɪ sie ju ɔ̃nə lɛ̃ɪ nuə /
*'Grandmama I ain't na lie.' I say, 'You ain't na lie?' 'No.'*

11. ɒɪ sie kɐmɐn / so i ɸolə mi i kiɛ mi n di ɛntɹɪɸie /
*I say 'Come-on.' So (3d n) follow me. (3d n) carry me in the entry-way.*

12. ɛn ɒɪ ɸɐrn tatʃtʃtʃieɪ nɔ kɛ̃ ɒɪ bi ɸɹə djusi / ɒɪ sie ɸaʔ tʃieə
*And I wouldn't touch-the-chair now, cause I be afraid you-see. I say, 'What chair*

13. i gɐnɪn / dɪ siem wɐn dɛ ɪn dɪʰ kɐnə gɹɛ̃mɐmɐ / ɒɪ ɛ̃ nə tiel
*(3d n) gone-in?' 'The same one there in the corner Grandmama. I ain't na tell*

14. ju nə stoɹɪ / ɛn ɒɪ ʰblo ɸo kɛ̃ltɛ̃ bɐnɪ / ɛn ɒɪ sie /
*you no story.' And I holler for Carl-T-and Bonny, and I say,*

15. kɔ miə / dɪtʃɪlɹən sie ɸə ju ɸɛ̃ / ɒɪ sie kɐmɪə bɒɪ
*'Come here.' The-children say, 'What you want?' I say 'Come here boy!'*

16. unə de kɐm tu mi / ɒɪ sie dɪs lɪɹl tʃɛ̃ɪl de tiel mi sɔə bɪk
*'Una de come to me!'*[23] *I say, 'This little child (PrC) tell me saw a big*

17. siniek gɐn / n dɪ ɛntɹɪɸie / ɒɪ sie / tʃɪlɐn du ɔ̃n ɐm ɸo mi /
ɒɪ sie kaʃ ɒɪ kɛ̃ sinɛ̃ / ɛn kɛ̃l tɛk dio
*snake gone in the entryway.' I say, 'Children, do hunt (3ɸ o) for me.' I say, 'cause I can't see in there.' And Carl take the a*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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•538 18. kɑ̃l sie gogɪʔ di ho / ɔɪ gɔn gɪʔ dɪ ho ɸo kɑ̃l / ɛn kɑ̃l ʔuk
*Carl say, 'Go get the hoe.' I gone get the hoe for Carl. And Carl hook*

19. dɪ ho ʔɪn do tʃie / kɑ̃l sie mɪz mosi ɔɪ gɑ̃n bɪɔk jo tʃieo /
*the hoe in the chair. Carl say, 'Mis Mossi I gone broke your chair.'*

20. ɔɪ sie dɔ̃ skus mɪ ɸo dɪ wood / ɔɪ sie dɑ̃ jo bɪogɔm /
*I say, 'Do excuse me for the word.' I say drat you broke (3ɸ o).*

21. ɛn i pol dɪ tʃie to ɔm / ɛn ɸen i pold ɪ tʃie tuɔmɔm
di bɪk ol siniek
*And (3d n) pull the chair to (3d o) and when (3d n) pull the chair to (3d o)-(3d o) the big old snake*

22. dɔn iɸ dɪ tʃie lɛkdɛtkʷolɔp / wɔz bɪk ɪz mo ɔm /
kɛl sie o jizus /
*down neath the chair, like-that-coil-up was big as my arm. Carl say, 'O Jesus!'*

23. ɑɪ nuo jo gɔn silip nɪz hɔz di nɑ̃it iɸ ɔɪ ɔɪ ɸi dɪm kɔmɔ /
*'I know you gone sleep in this house the night if I, I, we didn't come-here.'*

24. ɛn i tɛk dɪ ho ɛn lɪkɔm kɪɔs ɔm lɛk dɛt / i stɛtʃ outʰ
*And (3d n) take the hoe and lick (3ɸ o), cross (3d o) like that. (3d n) stretch out*

25. nkɑ̃lɪkɔngin / i dui tiel ɛk dɛt / ɛn bɑ̃nɪ kɔm
*and-Carl-like-(3d o)-again. (3d n) do-(3d p) tail like that and Bonny come*

26. ziet dɔn ɔ i niek / ...
*right down on (3d p) neck...*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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South Carolina



di stɜ̃m
THE STORM

538 1. da wɔzə βə jʊ kɔl ə 'sɜ̃ɪklən / die ɸɪs kolem ɒrem stɔm /
That was what you call a cyclone. They first call-(3ɸ o)
autumn storm,

2. bərɪ də wɔzə sɜ̃ɪklən / die hɛd sieβɪl sɛnə dɛt / bə' dɛn 'i
But-(3ɸ n) that was-a cyclone. They had several since that,
but then (3ɸ n)

3. wɔzn lɛk dɛt / oɔɪ mɛmbə dɛt / ...ɒɪ bɪnəɛ̃ɡ ɪlɛ̃mɛɛz
wasn't like that. Oh-I remember that... I been-around
eleven-years

4. ol / di nɛɪndɪ tɛɪ stɜ̃m / də stɜ̃ ɔə sɛndɪ mɔnɪn / ɛnədə gɪɛl
ɒɪ ɒɪ ɒɪ
old. The ninety-three storm, (PrC) start on-a Sunday morning.
And-ah-well gɪl, I, I, I

5. kə tɛɪl / jə bɔut dɛt dʒɪs lɛkə gud ɪs jɛstɪdie / di βetə luk
ɦiezɪ
could tell you about that just like a good as yesterday.
The weather look hazy,

6. dʒɪs lɛk ə lɪɛl hiezɪ ni ɪz nɜ̃ / ɛn so mɒɪ mi mə mɔrə / hi βə ɪn
just like a little hazy than-(3ɸ n) is now.
And so my-mo my mother, (3ʔ n) was in

7. klɛtʃ... / dɪ ol mɛn tʃɒtʃ bɪn dɜ̃ ɛɪə bɛpitɪs tʃɒtʃ dɜ̃ ɜ̃ ɔə·dɛʰ...
ɒɪ wɔz də bɪgɪs
church... The old man church (T) down here-this Baptist church
down on road there... I was the biggest

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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538 8. boɪ dɪ tʃɪɪɪn / sieβəl ə βi bɪn drʰ / ɛn dɪn mɔɪə wɔn ə mi ɔggəl
boy the children. Several of we (T) there.
And then my a one of me uncle

9. ɸɔm oβə hɔ·t / βi bɪn lɪβɪn obə jɪ̃ / ...βɛ dɛm dieβiʃ
from over Hart, we (T) living over here...where them Davis

10. boi də βie ɔp ndə kɔnə / mə ɔggəl ɪ̃livə n bɪndʒi hʊt
boy (L) way up in the corner. My uncle Oliver and Benjy Hart

11. o·rɪsɔn lɔnzɪ̃ / die kɔm oβə dɛ ɡɔndə / ɛ̃ɔə dɪ ol pipl βɔɪntʃʊtʃ
oldest-son Lonza, they come over there Sunday. After the
old people were-in-church

12. ɸə spɛn di die βɪɸ mɪ / βɔl mɛ 'mɪ̃ lɛɸ mi ɸə kuk / dɪnə /
to spend the day with me. Well my ma left me to cook dinner.

13. βɛ 'βɛɪɪn ɔɪtɛɪl di piplɪ̃ / sɔmɪ̃ sɪ̃mɛ sie mɛnɔɪ βɪ̃ɪɸ ɪ̃ də ʌ̃m /
sie ɪ̃il stɔβ ɪ̃il stɔβ /
Where, whereas, I tell the people: Some, some-man say,
'man-my wife ain't (L) home.' Say, 'I'll starve, I'll starve'

14. sie ɪ̃il stɔβ / sie ɪ̃ nɔ̃rɪn hɪ̃ə fə kuk / bə' gjɛl ɔə ɔə
Say, 'I'll starve.' Say, 'ain't nothing here to cook.'
But gal, oh, oh,

15. sɔ ɔɪ kuk 'dɪnə / ɔɪ dɪɪn βie tiel die kɔm ɸɔm 'tʃɔtʃ / sied
So I cook dinner. I didn't wait til they come from church. Said

16. ɔɪ tʰɔk ɔp nɔɪ ɸid mi ɔɡkl ɛn mɔɪ nɛɸu ɛn mɪʃieɸ /
I took up and-I feed me uncle, and my nephew and me-self,

17. ɛn də lierə də gɪɪn gjɛl lɪ̃k βɛɪ dɛ də 'βɛrə də
and the later (PrC) getting, gal, look where the weather (PrC)

•538 18. 'kloznɪn / dɛk dɛ lɒɪ / dɛn də stɜ̃· ə lɪl dɪɪdɪlɪn 'ɪɪen /
*closing-in. Dark the light,*[26] *then (E) start a little*
*drizzling rain.*

19. dʒɪs ɛɸə jɛrə gɪt ho·m / a·aβə ɒɪ kɔl mɛ mɜ̃ jɛrə / i niem
*Just after Yatta*[27] *got home, that-what I call me ma, Yatta,*
*(3ᵊ n) name*

20. lɒɪzə boʔ dɛn / ñeʔ ju nuo / bʰɒɪ ɪiez ɔp βɪ di ol pipl
*Liza. But then, ha! you know, but I raise up with*
*the old people*

21. dɛn / 'βen die mɜ̃rə βə kɔ / so n so / ɒɪ kɜ̃ bɪɪŋ də βə ɪwɪt nɔ /
*then when their mother was call so-and-so. I I can't bring*
*the word right now*[28]

22. ɒɪ ɒɪ kɔl ɛm jɛrə / βel / hi gɪt hom lɪɪl ɸo dɪʰ
*I, I call (3ᵊ o) Yatta. Well, (3ᵊ n) got home*
*little before the*

23. ol mɛn / kɛm ɪn i sipɪɛŋkl ɪien i βə / din bɪ lɔŋ dɪ
*old man. Come in (3ᵊ n) sprinkle rain (3ᵊ n) was.*
*Then bit longer*

24. o mɛn kɛm on di hoɪs ɒɪ siɛm kɛmɪn / di ɜ̃mbɪɪlə oβəʰ
*the old man come on the horse. I see (3ᵈ o) coming,*
*the umbrella over (3ᵈ o)*

25. ɛn boɪ gjɛl / βen də i·βɛnɪn / ɛn də sɛn gɪtn 'loən loə /
*And boy, gal, when (E) evening, and the sun getting*
*lower-and lower*

26. də hieβiə ɛn hieβiə də wɛz gɪtn /
*the heavier and heavier (E) was getting.*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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That was what you call a cyclone. It was first called an autumn storm. But that was a cyclone. There has been several since that one, but none quite like that one. But I remember it well... I was about eleven years old then. It was the storm of (18)93, and it started on a Sunday morning. Still, Miss, I could tell you about it as well as if it happened just yesterday.

The weather looked hazy, just a little hazier than it looks right now. My mother, she was in church. My father was a member of the Baptist church down the road... I was the eldest boy of several children. We, in addition to one of my uncles from Hart, were living near where those Davis boys live now far in the corner section. My uncle Oliver, and Benjy Hart's eldest son, Lonza, came over Sunday after the old people ... to pass the day with me. Well, my mother left me home to cook dinner. Whereas, I told the visitors, I said: 'Some men say, "Man, my wife is not home." They often say, "I'll starve, because there isn't anything here to cook."' But, young lady, I cooked dinner for them. I didn't wait until they came from church. So I took charge; I prepared a feast for my uncle, my nephew and myself. And the later it became, Miss, the weather began to close in. The sun was shrouded with clouds and it began to drizzle rain.

Just after Yatta came home—I called my mother Yatta. Her name was Liza, but you know, I was reared by the old people then when one's mother was called such-and-such. I won't speak of it now. I called her Yatta. Well, she came home a little before the old man. She came in dripping from the rain. Then, a while later, my father appeared on the horse. I could see him coming with the umbrella over him. And young lady, as the evening wore on, the sun hung lower, heavier and heavier in the sky. (Narrative continues at length.)

000 himself understood.

539 •[538] 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naïf and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

538 1. *snake* [sinick] ∅ → V / C __ C
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] r → ∅ / C __
[pogɔm] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, [197] Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /nɔ/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /im dɔ lɔi/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /im nɔ lɔi/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /una/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

•538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Lisa* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes that most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

•538 551 Even among the younger generation, most children on the island are known by two names.

538 28. The phrase *I can't bring the word*, or *I can't bring that* means 'I can't remember at the moment', or, depending on the context, 'I will not speak of it at this time.'

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same year appeared Thomas Wentworth Higginson's essay on Negro Spirituals in the *Atlantic Monthly*, later included in his *Army Life in a Black Regiment*."

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One of the first serious attempts to reduce the Gullah dialect to writing was made by Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, of Beaufort, who, though a Northerner by birth, both caught the Negro's point of view and mastered the difficult dialect. Two or three years before the advent of Uncle Remus, she published a South Carolina Sea Island version of "De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Tar Baby," in the *Springfield Republican*, and followed it with several other similar tales in the *New York Independent*. Her book of fables, however, *Afro-American Folk Lore*, was not published till 1892."

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Meanwhile Joel Chandler Harris, encouraged by the cordial reception of his first series of Uncle Remus stories,[11] included in his second volume, *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881, a few Gullah stories put into the mouth of "Daddy Jack." These were not particularly successful, for Harris did not have the same intimate knowledge of the low-country darkey as he had of his up-country prototype, and

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[10]Boston, 1870, Chapter IX.

[11]Its full title is *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, J. G. Cupples Co., Boston, 1892. It consists of an introductory poem by John G. Whittier, "Song of Negro Boatmen at Port Royal," a six page preface dated November 1891, and eighteen animal fables, totaling 116 pages. A second edition was issued by the author in Boston in 1898, from 200 copies of which Whittier's poem was omitted.

In a personal letter of April 19, 1926, Mrs. Christensen wrote concerning her book: "The first edition was partly arranged for in 1882, with a Boston publisher, but before the illustrations, etc., were decided on, the advent of my fourth son delayed proceedings. Just then appeared the first volume by Joel Chandler Harris. Uncle Remus had forestalled me. For several years I had been occasionally publishing my stories in the New York Independent, so some friends amused themselves by calling me 'the original Uncle Remus'.

"Not till 1892 did I again arrange for publishing, this time with the J. G. Cupples Company, Boston. Only two hundred copies were published before the firm failed. Then, years later, Lee and Shepard published the same stories in small, less expensive style, bound in red cloth."

[12]In the Introduction to *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, 1880, Harris quotes (XIII, XIV) a coast version of B'er Deer an' B'er Cooter, taken from Charles F. Harrt's *Amazonian Tortoise Myths*, William Scully, Rio de Janeiro, 1875, p. 12, which took it from *The Riverside Magazine*, November, 1868. The story is included to show the difference between the dialect of the cotton plantations (which Uncle Remus speaks) and that of the rice plantations and Sea Islands. The same story is contained in *The Nation* (New York), Feb. 23, 1871, p. 127.

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
(197) dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

538 How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
171 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
178 her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.
(171) (178)

[10]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yeardy him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small lettle boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yearly way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.
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Negro life and character coming in for its full share of attention. Along with the stream of stories in the traditional vein and in the conventional Negro dialect of fiction," a trickle of Gullah stories and sketches has likewise been produced." Within the last few years in South Caro-

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"See Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, pp. 82-94.

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"Its literary appearances, listed chronologically by stages, are these:

I.

Mrs. Caroline Gilman, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, Charleston, 1837.

Edgar Allen Poe, "The Gold Bug," 1843.

William Gilmore Simms, "The Snake of the Cabin," "The Lazy Crow," and "Caloya: or the Loves of the Driver," in *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, New York, 1845, 1846.

*Slave Songs of the United States*. A. Simpson and Co., New York, 1867; collected mainly at Port Royal, S. C., between 1861 and 1865, by officers of the Federal army and mission teachers, with prefatory comment on dialect and music by W. F. Allen, C. P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison.

II.

Joel Chandler Harris, "Daddy Jack" stories in *Nights With Uncle Remus*, 1881.

Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1888; reprinted by The State Co., 1925. 192 pp., 41 fables, 8 page glossary.

Rev. John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, pamphlet reprint by Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co. of the "Brudder Coteny's Sermons" originally appearing in the Charleston News and Courier and Sunday News. 48 pp., 15 sermons, and 2 sketches, written down during 1896 in Allendale.

Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, *Afro-American Folk Lore, Told Round Cabin Fires on the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Boston, 1892. IX-XIV, 116 pp., 18 fables.

J. Jenkins Hucks, *Plantation Negro Sayings on the Coast of South Carolina in Their Own Vernacular*, pamphlet printed by Charles W. Rouse, Georgetown, S. C., 1899 or 1900. Afterwards withdrawn from circulation by the author; to be reissued in enlarged form by the author's son, Dr. Herbert M. Hucks.

F. M. Cronise and H. W. Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider, and the Other Beef: West African Folk-Tales*, Swan Sonnenschein & Co., London; E. P. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1903. Exemplary tales, with brief prefatory commentary, including remarks on the dialect in Sierra Leone. Valuable for comparison with Carolina Gullah.

John Bennett, "Gullah: A Negro Patois," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, Part I, pp. 332-347; Jan., 1909, Part II, pp. 39-52. A scholarly article on the dialect, in two parts.

III.

Within the last few years works have appeared, notable both in number and quality:

Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, The State Co., 1922. 348 pp., 12 page Foreword, 42 stories, Gullah Glossary, Appendix (The Tar-Baby Story as told by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., and by Joel Chandler Harris).

*With Camp Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. IX-XIV, 298 pp., 60 fables, animal silhouettes by John Bennett.

*The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. VII-XVI, 384 pp., 24 stories, 3 illustrations.

*Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. VII-XVI, 318 pp., 19 stories, 3 illustrations.

Mrs. Jane Screven Heyward, *Brown Jackets*, The State Co., 1923. 64 pp., 12 sketches.

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lina there has been a rather surprising re-awakening of interest in Gullah, resulting in a large amount of excellent work.

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Sadie E. Stewart, "Seven Folk-Tales from the Sea Islands, South Carolina," *JAFL*, XXXII, 394-396.

Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Tales of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Memoir XVI of American Folk-Lore Society, 1923. XXV and 218 pp.

J. Palmer Lockwood, *Darkey Sermons from Charleston County*, The State Co., 1925. 45 pp., 3 sermons. ("Not the unadulterated Gullah of the rice-fields, but the patois of the negro who occasionally goes to Town." (i.e. Charleston.)

Dollose Heyward, *Porgy*, Geo. H. Doran Co., 1925, 196 pp.

Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Pub. Co., 1925. V and 198 pp., 25 tales and sketches, glossary of 1500 words and 42 idioms; 5 songs with music; 8 illustrative sketches.

*Saint Helena Island Spirituals*, Recorded and Transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, by N. G. J. Ballanta of Frestown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925. Foreword V-XVIII, 98 pp., 113 spirituals.

IV.

Neither in dialect nor specifically and exclusively about the Negro, there are many books dealing with the history and background of the Carolina coast which are both interesting and useful as conveying the authentic low-country setting and atmosphere. Numbers three to eight are war-time pictures.

Charles Colcock Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (from their first introduction into this country in 1620 to the year 1842), Thomas Purse, Savannah, 1842. 277 pp. (The author is the father of the author of *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.)

Mrs. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *The Black Gauntlet: A Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina*, J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1860. 569 pp.

Lieut.-Col. Freemantle, *Three Months in the Southern States, April-June 1863*, William Blackwood & Sons, London, 1863. Pages 179-205 deal with the Carolina low-country.

J. T. Trowbridge, *The South*, L. Stebbins, Hartford, Conn., 1866. Pages 511-545 on Charleston and Sea Islands.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, Fields, Osgood and Co., Boston, 1870. 254 pp. Chapter IX on Negro Spirituals.

Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1883. This is an implicit comment, almost an *amends*, on the book of her famous mother, Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*.

Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands*, Boston, Lee and Shephard, 1893. 256 pp.

*Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War*, ed. by Elizabeth Ware Pearson, Boston, 1906.

*Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne, Written from the Sea Islands of South Carolina, 1862-1884*, ed. Rupert Sargent Holland, Cambridge, 1912. 310 pp.

"Patience Pennington" (Mrs. Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle), *A Woman Rice Planter*, Macmillan Co., 1913. 447 pp.

I. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumbling of the Chariot Wheels*, The State Co., 1923. 273 pp.

Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925. Incidental Gullah Songs pages 168, 175, 184, 190, 196, 254, 256.

James Henry Rice, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, R. L. Bryan Co., 1925. 133 pp.

Archibald Rutledge, *Tom and I on the Old Plantation*. Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1918; *Plantation Game Trails*, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1521; *Old Plantation Days*, Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921; *Heart of the South*, The State Co., 1924; *Days Off in Dixie*; Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924.

Herbert Ravenel Sass, *The Way of the Wild*, 1925; *Adventures in Green Places*, 1928, Minton, Balch & Co.

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The most important contribution in this field consists of the four recent volumes comprising the "Black Border Series," by Ambrose E. Gonzales, of Columbia, S. C.[113] This series contains a total of one hundred and forty-five sketches and stories and totals over thirteen hundred pages. Its chief interest for the general reader lies along literary lines, but in addition to its literary values, the series is an important contribution to philology. A large proportion of the narrative is related in authentic Gullah dialog, which Mr. Gonzales handles with a charm and mastery not attained by any other writer."

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[113] "*The Black Border, Gullah Stories of the Carolina Coast*, 1922. *With Æsop Along the Black Border*, July, 1924. *The Captain, Stories of the Black Border*, October, 1924. *Laguerre, A Gascon of the Black Border*, December, 1924. All four published by The State Co., Columbia, S. C.

See my review, *American Speech*, July, 1926.

Mr. Gonzales was peculiarly fitted to write Gullah. He is the grandson of a rice-planter. He was nursed by a faithful Negro mauma; as a child was waited upon by and played with Negroes; he hunted and fished with them. These long and familiar relationships have given him a rarely comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Negro temperament, which to the value of his work as literature add the authenticity of history and sociology.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Theodore D. Jervey in the closing chapter of his *The Slave Trade, Slavery and Color*, (The State Co., 1925), quotes from *The Black Border* in order to establish a desired argument. And the twelve sketches in *The Captain* (pp. 111-298), dealing with an attempted land settlement by Negroes in 1873, possess a charm and authenticity alike remarkable.

The flaw in many an otherwise good Negro dialect-story—and I am not now referring to those lamentable performances in which the crime is committed of making a darkey use the word "you-all" and mean thereby one person instead of a group of persons—but stories in which plot, setting and dialect are unimpeachably handled—the weakness is that the point of view is still Caucasian. The characters think, speak, and act like white people disguised for the nonce as Negroes; the hand is the hand of Ham but the voice is the voice of Japheth.

"To his skill in this respect, two fellow-writers of Gullah who have themselves successfully wrestled with its difficulties pay enthusiastic tribute. "As Ambrose Gonzales writes Gullah it is a dialect alive, full of graphic humor, and vividly grotesque; stripped and divested of its interior freight of fun, I think the text upon the page would still be humorous; the very type would go pranking by like the crowds at Mardi Gras." John Bennett, *Review of The Black Border*.

"Mr. Gonzales's Gullah is as perfect as it can be written, and he is easily the first honor man in that school. The low-country negro's description of a jackass to a negro who had never seen a jackass: 'E look same like mule, only mo' so,' is almost true of Mr. Gonzales's Gullah." John G. Williams, *De Old Plantation*, V, VI.

On July 11, 1926, since this article was written, death stilled the gifted pen of Mr. Gonzales forever. He achieved The Black Border Series under tremendous, well-nigh insuperable difficulties, the details of which are contained in a personal letter of his to a friend in Charleston, Dec. 30, 1924. The stroke which he refers to as slight was in reality severe: it impeded his walking, thickened his speech, and made writing a slow and laborious process. "As soon as I was up from a slight stroke I suffered in May, 1922," he wrote, "I set to work on the foreword and glossary of *The Black Border*, and brought out the book under handicaps that would have broken a spirit

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less inured to disappointment. As soon as the book was out—I had to give the proofs seventeen readings—I started to edit and bring out *In Darkest Cuba*. . . . . Realizing last January that my time was short, I promised myself that if I lived, I would publish three books this year and, thank the Lord, I've managed to do it.

"Of the thousand pages, more than nine hundred have been written since August of last year—written slowly and painfully, with a pencil on Sundays and at nights, while tired and worn out by my nine or ten hours at The State—duties I never miss.

"Now I'm through with dinkey for a while. Each of these four *Black Border* books has its place, and I think they will live because of their sincerity and simplicity—but time will show."

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192 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for
•538 an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

*Words*

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.[a] The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam, oona, swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du, goober, pinder, cooter, okra, geechy, cymbi, bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer, penepne, da, da-da. Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.[b] Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.[c] Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye. Stepney* is

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[a]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.

Bennett, I, 338.

George Philip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *roodoo, hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[191] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

[b]Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] [c]Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time, three-time,* etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chuesday, two T'ursday, two place,* the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

*Proverbs*

•538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Little axe cut down big tree.*

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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[554] *Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh my own."

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## CONCLUSION

178 Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.""

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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"Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'tons' ' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

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181 829 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring up trouble for yourself. In Macterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 567 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to advance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[2] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch [535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the 181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*, 177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of 567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[2] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the
567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa." [36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the Wanderer, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between
• 538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations
171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] *J. A. Tillinghast*, in The Negro in Africa and America, says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."

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195 In the employment of a single derisive word the Negro is indeed a consummate artist. I know a cook with a disarming smile who accomplished what lectures never could. All she did was to point humorously to a puddle of clothes left on the floor by an untidy child and say: "Snake." Anyone who knows the snake's habit of shedding its skin in any place where it feels the urge will understand why that child's clothing was ever after left on a chair.

Another example of this knack of using the one right word was furnished me when I gave a "lift" to a Negro going my way. I asked where he wanted to get out. He replied casually: "Oh, jus' let me out at Lord Bing's." Although I use a fictitious surname, there is only one Negro on the island who could possibly qualify for the title.

142 144 There is, I believe, a biological reason for Lord Bing's feeling of importance. He is the living image of one of several bronze heads dug up in 1938 at Ife in Southern Nigeria, and believed to be portraits of rulers, kept as a record.[38] William Bascom, who was in Ife at the time of the discovery of these heads, says (in an article in the *Illustrated London News* [39] which should be reprinted in this country): "It is possible to identify the exact counterparts of these heads among the people of Ife today. Also, interestingly enough, striking resemblances between some of the heads and individual Negroes of the United States have been noticed. A large proportion of the ancestors of American Negroes are, indeed, known to have come from this region of West Africa." Members of Lord Bing's own family exclaim at the likeness (Illustrations 18 and 19) and it is clear that he is a "throw-back" mentally and physically. In addition, the Yoruba tribe, to whom the people of Ife belong, are said by N. G. Ballanta, in "Music of the African Races," [40] to have the most highly artistic dance songs of all the tribes he investigated from the Senegal to the Cameroon. It is significant that this St. Simon's Negro is a good singer, and belongs to the family that has given me the most help in the preservation of the characteristic African rhythms. [533]

• 538 171 Although the West Africans were not supposed to have a literature because of their lack of a written language—except in a few tribes—the tales brought to America by the slaves have entertained old and young, black and white, whenever and

[38] Others of the bronzes (thirteen in all) are assumed to be likenesses of deities.
[39] "The Legacy of an Unknown Nigerian Donatello," April 8, 1939.
[40] West Africa, June 14, 1930.

A. [For Illustrations 18 & 19, see Category 142, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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538 121 (522) wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

538 (115)

*Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well*

539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mine!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis worl'—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

(191) In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!
But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:
What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da *fulafafa!*" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say *wulisāpāpa*." The joke lies in the fact that "*fulafafa*" and "*wulisāpāpa*" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

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# III

# FOLKLORE FROM ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

In the Sea Islands one may hear stories and superstitions that are rooted in the far distant childhood of the human race, folklore from Africa, Asia, Spain, England, and other parts of the globe. Story-telling is not a lost art with the Negroes. A stranger may have some difficulty in getting them started, but after he has lived among them for a while he meets with immediate response to any request for stories, riddles, "toasts," and the like. 538•

In her book, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina,* Elsie Clews Parsons has brought together nearly 200 stories, numerous riddles, proverbs, rhymes, etc., the majority of which were collected on St. Helena Island. Mrs. Parsons' stay in the Sea Islands was very brief, but she collected a remarkable amount of material. Such shortcomings as her book shows are insignificant and are due to the difficulty of getting accurate data without living for a longer period among the people. For example, she said of a certain opening rhyme used in the Bahama Negro tales, that there was no trace of it in the sea-island stories. I found this rhyme to be fairly common on St. Helena and on Ladies Island, but I had been there nearly two months before I ever heard of it. 114
538

Mrs. Parsons thought that song, as a part of the narrative, "is passing or has passed out" in the Southern States. She recorded only six or seven instances of stories with sung portions. I found about three times as many,

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114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
• 538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina."
This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent
book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient
538 here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

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## FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175 567

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000 them.

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171

An example of kinship is found in the habit of opening a story with

> Once upon a time, a very good time,
> Monkey chaw tobacco an' spit white lime,

or

> Monkey chaw tobacco an' goose drink wine,

or some other variant of this rhyme, which is found on St. Helena as well as in the Bahamas. Of this type of opening Mrs. Parsons said, "There was no trace in the Carolina tales." Its use is rather common, however, especially on Ladies Island, adjoining St. Helena. It is one of those things which are stored in memory and are not used unless some train of association sets them off. A group of boys were telling stories. All of a sudden, one of them recalled this old nominee and began his story with it. Immediately the others wanted to give their versions of it, and in less than a minute half a dozen variations of this opening rhyme had been contributed.

There are also many points of similarity between the sea-island tales and the African folk stories. For example, the hare or rabbit, an important animal in the folklore of many peoples, plays the same role in the African tales that he does in the sea-island tales. He nearly always outwits the other animals by his cunning, deceit, and trickery. No one could read works like Chatelain's *Folk Tales of Angola*, Dennett's *Folk-lore of the Fjort*, or Nassau's *Where Animals Talk*, without concluding that a great many of the African tales have come into our country with very little change except that which was necessitated by the adaptation to English culture.

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The charm of the stories told by the Negroes lies as much in the way they are told as in the stories themselves. As Mrs. Parsons has said, "The characteristic emphasis of Negro tales, the drawl, and the tricks of speeding up, are difficult to indicate on paper. Italics and exclamation points are but feeble indicators; and how can one express by printers' signs the significance of what is not said?—a significance conveyed by manner or by quietness of intonation, of which a good story-teller is past master." Stripped of the tricks of the story-teller and of the dialect in which they are told, and written down in good English, these tales make slow reading.

To the student of folklore, this vast body of stories is something to be collected, preserved, studied, compared, analyzed, something which it would be a shame to let die out. But to the Negroes these stories are like any other stories. They lie tucked away in memory most of the time. Occasionally they are called forth to do their bit toward entertaining the teller and his listeners. New stories, perhaps cheap stories, are constantly crowding in upon them, and if some of the old-time ones which go back almost to Adam slip out of memory through disuse, no tears are shed. Finding a rare tale may thrill the collector, but the islanders may think something else is far more valuable. To them a story of a stuttering slave's being beaten up by a stuttering Irish patrol because the Irishman thought the Negro was mocking him may be much more attractive than Buh Rabbit's victory over Buh Lion.

The folklorist may complain that the art of story-telling is dying, but he must admit that the old stories

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•538 are safe for some time yet among the Negroes of the Sea Islands. The older people rarely tell the stories to white people, it is true, but the children tell them naïvely and with plenty of skill. On the way to school, at recess time, at parties, at home around the fireside, or at work, the young folk tell stories and riddles. They may deviate from the traditional version of a tale, but they are good at supplying new incidents and at combining several stories to make a new one. If part of a story is supposed to be sung, they sing it rather than recite it as many adults would do. If Buh Rabbit is supposed to make a funny noise as he runs down the road, this is supplied with an ingenuity which attempts to outdo the other fellow.

In the following tales the language is, as a rule, that of a person who speaks a somewhat modified sea-island dialect. It happens that none of the stories given here was told me by the old-time mushy-mouthed type of speaker. This is fortunate for the average reader, for the pure dialect is quite difficult to read. Since different speakers have different peculiarities, the reader must not be surprised at the apparent lack of consistency in dialect.

I

539 DOG AND DOG HEAD[1]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Frog all-two go fo' hunt deah. Dey need some dog, an' a dog cost twelve biscuit. Buh

[1] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. This is one of the most popular stories in the Sea Islands. For other variants, see Parsons' *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, pp. 1-5. The following is the most common variant: Rabbit sees Frog's "t'roat gwine up an' down," and thinks Frog is eating his biscuits, so Rabbit decides to eat some of his. Frog arrives with all of his biscuits, but Rabbit has only a few left and has to be content with a dog head. Sometimes, Frog uses the mock plea and tricks Rabbit into admitting that his dog head did not catch the deer.

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XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

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There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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XIX

FAMILY AFFECTION[16]

539

Once upon a time there was an old lady and a old man and they were man and wife. The old man was at dinner and his wife and children were on the outside. It was a windy day and the wind blew the house down. The children cried out, "The house fell on popper." The old lady called, "I hope it ain't broke my pipe." The children said, "Wait till I done eat, then you will hear me cry." The end of the story.

XX

OPENING VERSES[16]

1.

Once upon a time, a wery good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco on de railroad line.[17]

2.

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de man drink wine.[18]

3.

Beef in de market ten cents a poun',
You never git a poun' till you lay yo' money down.

[16] Written by Lawrence Mingin, Lee-Rosenwald School.

[16] After hearing one of these at the beginning of a story, I began to ask each narrator if he knew any opening verses. Thereafter I found them to be quite frequent, although they tend to drop out of use as unnecessary embellishments unless something reminds the narrator of them. [538]

[17] Sometimes "on de street cyaar line," sometimes "an' spit white lime."

[18] Sometimes "cat drink wine." Other variations are made by interchanging the names and varying the combinations of the two lines.

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524 38. Somethin' open like a barn door an' shut like a trap. You guess every riddle but you never will guess this. *Ans.* An umbrella.

39. What is las' t'ing you take off 'fo' you go to bed? *Ans.* Take foot off o' flo'.

40. Black within, red without,
Four corners round about.

*Ans.* Chimney.

41. Scrooked as an arrow, busy as a bee. *Ans.* Creek.

42. As I was goin' 'cross a fiel' o' wheat
I pick up some'tin' good to eat.
It was neither fish, flesh, nor bone,
But I kept it till it walked alone.

*Ans.* Egg.

43. What goes up white an' comes down yellow? *Ans.* Egg.

44. Constantinople is a hard word to spell. Can you spell it in two letters? *Ans.* I-t, it.

45. Crooked as a rainbow, t'iefin' (thieving) as a cat. *Ans.* Snake.

46. Once I was going to London Bridge, I met a man and a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and I couldn't tell the ladies from the gentlemen. *Ans.* Ants.

47. Who always sit with his hat on before the queen. *Ans.* The coachman.

## PROVERBS

• 538 1. Take cyare mo' bettah nor be sorry.
2. 'Mos' kill bird don' make soup.
3. Singin' in the mornin', hawk catch you befo' night.
4. Young folks listen what old folks say when danger keep out of the way.
5. Everything good to hear is not good to talk.
6. Ev'ry grin-teet' don' mean laugh.
7. Ev'ry shut-eye don' mean sleep.
8. A good run is better than a bad stand.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538

10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de ccb.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

●539

[For additional information on folktales, see Category 538.]

539

[For additional information on Sea Island texts, see Category 538.]

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533
●539

[For additional information on the songs and musical texts of the Georgia Sea Islands, see Category 53.]

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant (324) item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc). The (789) grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been executed with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[3, 32, 34e]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in 532 contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carving.[70a-e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb), about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70e, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII), well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's 115 house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did 533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the (539) following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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•539

BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live
759 fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms
789 who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, c, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us
789 that she does an active mail order business as representative
472 of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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674
682 spired a ballad. Attributed to no single author but appar-
533 ently added to from time to time, the ballad now runs:

682
533
•539
674

On duh thuteent day ub May
Yuh could heah ole Bo-Cat say,
"Git muh deed an policy.
Tun it in duh ashes way."

Den ole Catherine she begin tuh inquyuh.
Didn know ole Bo-Cat had dem in duh fyuh.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Put uh in duh boat,
Dey begin tuh float,
Dey float tuh duh Raccoon Keys.
He knock uh on duh knees.
Catherine holluh, "Wa-Wan-Wa."
Bo-Cat make uh "Na-Nan-Na."
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh bres
An duh oah done duh res.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh back
An duh oah miss an crack.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Wen Bo-Cat wehn back home
He meet uh daughtuh all alone.
Uh daughtuh say, "Bo-Cat, Bo-Cat,
Weah my mama is?"
Bo-Cat tun right out he head
An he tro uh cross duh bed.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

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674
682
[533]
[539]

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674
682
764

"Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

"Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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759 789 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers," 754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a reglah doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a speli on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

• 539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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•539 way, Bruh Rabbit he steal duh hoe. He go tuh he own fiel an he stan duh hoe up an he say, 'Swish.' Duh hoe staht tuh wuk. It wuk and it wuk. Fo long duh crop is done finish. Den rabbit want hoe tuh stop, an he call out an he call out but hoe keep right on wukin. Bruh Rabbit dohn know wut wud tuh say tuh stop it. Pretty soon duh hoe cut down all Bruh Rabbit wintuh crop an still it keep on wukkin an wukkin. Bruh Rabbit wring he hans. Ebryting he hab is gone. Jis den Bruh Wolf come long an he laugh an he laugh out loud wen he see how Bruh Rabbit steal he hoe an how it done ruin all duh crop. Bruh Rabbit he keep callin out, 'Swish, swish,' an duh hoe go fastuhn fastuh. Wen he see Bruh Wolf, he ax um tuh make duh hoe stop. Bruh Wolf wohn say nuttn uhtall cuz he mad dat Bruh Rabbit steal he hoe. Den attuh a time he say, 'Slow, boy,' an duh hoe he stop wukkin. Den Bruh Wolf he pick up he hoe an carry um home."

115 By this time it had grown late, and the figures about the fire were shadows. From the direction of the marshes the wind was blowing more sharply and it was time to go home. Uncle Jack came up to say goodbye to us and said that he was going to spend the night on the river, shrimping. When we expressed surprise, he laughed and said that this was his usual custom.

Uncle Robert nodded in agreement. "We's at home in duh ribbuh," he said. "Bin out deah so many yeahs. Ain nuttn tuh be feahed ub."

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

[775] 764 782

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

776 787

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

• 539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

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SAPELO ISLAND

539 wuk fuh lizzud, an he wahn it bad. One day wen lizzud not at home, rabbit, he sneak up, an he steal lizzud sode. He laf tuh hesef cuz he got da sode. He take da sode tuh he fiel an he staht it tuh wuk. He tink he know duh wuds dat lizzud say tuh sode, an he call, 'Go-ee-tell.' Sode staht wukin. Pretty soon, sode finish duh crop, an rabbit wahn um tuh stop. Sode comin too close tuh noo wintuh crop wut rabbit got tuh hab fuh lib on. So rabbit he yell, 'Go-ee-tell' in loud voice, and sode he wuk all duh fastuh. He cut down ebryting rabbit hab an ain leab nuttn. Lizzud who bin hidin in bush, he laf an he laf tuh he sef at rabbit, cuz rabbit tink hesef so smaht wen he steal sode an now he ain got nuttn tuh eat all wintuh. Rabbit he see lizzud, an he call, 'Stop dis sode.' Lizzud he say, 'It my sode.' Rabbit he say, 'Dasso. It yuh sode, but stop it. It cut down ebryting uh got.' Lizzud say, 'Sode wuk fastuh ebry time he heah 'Go-ee-tell.'" Den lizzud he staht laffin an he calls out loud, 'Go-ee-pom,' an sode stop. Lizzud den go out an pick up sode an tak um home."

829 Knowing that Katie was a descendant of Belali, we asked her if she knew anything of him. She nodded and answered, "Belali Mohomet? Yes'm, I knows bout Belali. He wife Phoebe. He hab plenty daughtuhs, Magret, Bentoo, Chaalut, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, an Hestuh.

829 "Magret an uh daughtuh Cotto use tuh say dat Belali an
782 he wife Phoebe pray on duh bead. Dey wuz bery puhticluh bout duh time dey pray an dey bery regluh bout duh hour. Wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set, das duh time dey pray. Dey bow tuh duh sun an hab lill mat tuh kneel on. Duh beads is on a long string. Belali he pull bead an he say, 'Belambi, Hakabara, Mahamadu.' Phoebe she say, 'Ameen, Ameen.'

829 "Magret she say Phoebe he wife, but maybe he hab mone one wife. I spects das bery possible. He come obuh wid all he daughtuhs grown. He whole fambly wuz mos grown up.

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# Introduction

539 [i bɪnə dɹiŋk di βɔrə
ɛn i gɔt ɹait ɸə ste iə]

*She has partaken of the water,*
*and she has the right to live here.*

101 The life-styles, tales, and language peculiarities captured in this book were unearthed during more than nine years of research with the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina and three months of field work in Nigeria, West Africa. Like
121 most Americans, I was in total ignorance of the existence of the Sea Islands for many years—in my case, until 1972. Once I heard about them, no amount of library research and no amount of reading about the Sea Islanders could quench my desire actually to see for myself how they had managed to retain so many more remnants of their West African ancestry than African-Americans in other parts of the country.

133 On my first trip to the Sea Islands, in 1973, I remember crossing a bridge leading from Charleston to James Island, crossing another one
491 from James Island to Johns Island, and then another one from Johns Island to Wadmalaw. On Wadmalaw the scenery changed drastically, and the farther I drove along the narrow, winding road into the depths of this remote island, the more unusual my surroundings became: hanging moss; dense woodlands; flat, "boggy" swamps; and the musty, sweet aroma of ocean air. A person could get lost forever on these islands, I remember thinking. As I would later learn, it was this very remoteness which contributed to the continuation of the African-derived culture of the Sea Island area.

123 I turned around a deep bend in the road and continued on, ultimately

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# 1

# The Social History and Organization

•539

Me old building e de leak,
and me soul e got fe move:

*There is a leak in this old building (body),*
*and my soul has got to move:*

## Topography

131
133

The Sea Islands, commonly known as the Gullah- or Geechee-speaking communities, extend along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia to the tip of Florida. Isolated by expansive marshlands, turbulent streams, and massive rivers, some islands are several miles from the coast of the United States. Estimates indicate that there are as many as a thousand islands along the coastline, though many of them are small and unfit for human habitation.[1] The habitable ones vary in size. St. Helena, for example, covers only 15 square miles, while Wadmalaw extends for 43. Sandy Island, still not connected by bridge to the mainland, is estimated to be 50 square miles; Edisto is about 72; and Johns Island, the second largest island in U.S. waters, is approximately 100.[2]

131

The Sea Islands of South Carolina, on which most of this study is based, extend on the north from Sandy Island near Georgetown to Port Royal, St. Helena, and Daufuski on the south. Sandy Island is traditionally included among the Sea Islands of South Carolina because it is culturally similar to the coastal islands; it is, however, a freshwater

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793 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can
537 arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the
796 area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does
[871] not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

Heavenly Father
[539] Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing.
533 It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives.
[793] Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought
[794] to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the
[786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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# 2

# The Folk Literature

• 539 Some folk de gift fe lie.

*Some folks are gifted liars (storytellers).*

## Oral Presentation

538 During the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century folklorists like Joel Chandler Harris, Charles C. Jones, Elsie C. Parsons, and Ambrose Gonzales were quite thorough in their collections of tales, myths, legends, and other forms of verbal art in the Gullah-speaking areas of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] Until very recently, little contemporary work had been undertaken on the Sea Islands in folklore and literature. Today studies in oral traditions have grown beyond the tales and the various ways in which their plots can be varied, improved, or altered for the worse to encompass communicative forces peripheral to the tales themselves.[2] The study of oral literature involves more than just the collection and classification of tales. It is expanding to include such things as proxemics and various pragmatic forces inclusive of atmosphere and audience participation which combine to help create a good tale.

As Western cultures are gifted with a long tradition of written literature, the Gullah performers are likewise gifted with techniques and methods of communicative interactions characteristic of a long tradition of African and African-American oral literature. Unlike the writer, who is often left to create his characters in isolation and solitude, and who is at liberty to take a few days, a week, a month, and in many cases years to fill up a page with words carefully selected to create a certain mood and elicit a certain response, the oral performer must be

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159
538

> [Again he swayed back and forth as if counting to himself.] De dup . . . de dup . . . de dup, going in [a pause], going in that wood, you know. Bi-i-i-g oat field."

Likewise, he imitated the chittering sound of the partridge as he inadvertently follows Ber Rabbit into the open oat field:

> Partridge . . . Ha! . . . [He paused as if contemplating the partridge's character.] He *crazy,* you know! . . . He ain't know that Ber Rabbit done got him! He gone. . . . He gone out there. He kickeri, kickeri. [Suddenly he opened his eyes and slapped his hands together.]
>
> Bam!
>
> Dead!

At this point in the speaker's narrative, his listeners had become rather involved with the suspense of his tale. It is unlikely that he would have been more effective if he had been more prolix or more descriptive. He elicited a gasp of amazement from his listeners merely by slapping his hands together to imitate the blast from the gun (*Bam!*) and by conveying the partridge's swift and instant death in the simple word *Dead!*

[201]

538 The absence of very much description in Mr. Oree's accounts is typical of Sea Island tales. The language that is used, however, suggests to the mind far more detail than could ever be set down. For example, the mention of a big oat field evokes colors (shades of browns, beiges, and greens) and a sense of vastness and openness. By choosing not to describe every detail of a scene, the narrators permit the listeners to create in their own minds certain images and impressions which give the tale added dimension. This, then, may account in part for the usual description of Sea Island literature, in written transcription, as short, incomplete, and lacking in the characteristics of sustained literary work. These standards, of course, are standards by which Western cultures have traditionally judged written literature, and they just do not apply to the literature of a people whose tradition has always been oral.

159
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Again, as I noted, gestures were not an inherent part of Mr. Oree's style; rather, it was his whole body posture—sitting, half reclining, eyes half closed, his feet apart, his arms and hands turned slightly inward and resting on his lap—which seemed to communicate to his audience. But just as, according to Birdwhistell, all body movement or

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expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

*Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Islanders', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

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159 style does, however, represent a method of expression characteristic of
539 many Sea Island folk narrators, which is anything but comic.

During my stay, most of Mr. Henry's tales were told on his front
159 porch, with people gathered around him. One unusual feature of his
538 delivery was that, even at one hundred years old, he always stood when he was ready to begin a narrative, though unlike Mr. Ted, Mr. Henry seldom walked around as he talked. Amid his listeners, he stood erect and composed in one spot during the whole course of his narrative, which could go on for hours. Many times his wife (now deceased) came and asked him to eat lunch or dinner, or just to let the visitors go home; in the latter case he continued speaking as he followed us to the car.

Sometimes during a long narrative he would stop, take out his handkerchief, wipe his face, and seem to stare out across the open field in front of his home. At these times it was quite obvious that his narrative had brought to his mind memories of times gone past. His eyes, which he himself said would not see much that they had not seen before, became moist. But it was incommensurate with his manner to lose his dignity and composure. Thus, grasping his cane more firmly, he stood quiet, firm and serene, until the moment passed and he was ready to continue his narrative.

Like Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry seemed to command attention through his bodily presence. But in contrast to the casual style characteristic of Mr. Oree, Mr. Henry captivated his audience with seriousness. With his feet planted firmly on the floor, arms held at his side, he made few
[201] gestures. To stress a point, he would perhaps raise one arm and point with his entire hand, as opposed to one finger. The other arm generally remained immobile at his side, with the hand slightly opening and closing in a half fist. Little else moved. His face was expressive, but for the most part he told his narratives, one after the other, standing in the same spot.

His voice was strong and clear in spite of his age. While he spoke, silence pervaded the audience. Even children felt the need to whisper a complaint in his presence. His age was certainly a factor, in that the islanders have much respect for the elderly in their communities, especially a member as exalted as Mr. Henry. Nevertheless, his age was not the primary ingredient in his success as an oral artist. His descriptions were very detailed. He made exceptional use of pauses, seem-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
[855] ten children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this
[264] home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice
[262] cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
• 539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

539 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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# 3

# The Texts

## The Prayers

My knee ben down on cold cold floor!

The prayers are the most creative and expressive form of Sea Island oratory. Like the tales, they are composed and delivered within a set tradition, but the success of the delivery is dependent not only on what the speaker says but also on the eloquence and rhetorical skill with which he says it. To the Sea Island congregation, outstanding rhetorical skills are attributes to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. The learned people, however, are frequently those without much academic background. Without a doubt, many of the best expositors of the prayer tradition have little, if any, formal education. Their prayers, nevertheless, are composed in a tradition of impassioned eloquence. They embody Ciceronian, Quintilianesque, and other ornaments of style capable of creating belief, inspiring, and passionately persuading a congregation to respond with raucous and joyous replies.[1]

Both men and women, but only those known to be carriers of the prayer-giving tradition, pray at specified times during the church service. The member called on will kneel and pray publicly without pausing, stuttering, or searching for words for as long as twenty-five minutes, depending on the occasion for the prayer. The ability to pray is considered a "gift" like the ability to sing or play the piano. Those gifted with the technique are singled out when they are very young and encouraged to practice speaking in the church at special feasts, weddings, or holidays, especially Easter and Christmas. As children they learn only to speak the words; as adults they know how to speak them with the compassion that comes only from experience. Others may

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782 537 acquire the ability to join in the words of prayer, but only those who have the gift can move the congregation to shout out a response.

None of the prayers are written, and herein lies much of their inventiveness. Many rival T. S. Eliot's *Wasteland* in elaborate allusions to works of literature. The most effective ones are alive with imagery, maxims, puns, understatements, and cultural references which the audience understands and responds to enthusiastically. More important, the prayers are filled with devices used judiciously throughout to induce the rhythmic incantation that is imperative to the Sea Island prayer tradition. Alliteration, transplacement, interplacement, epanaphora (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses), and other features create pleasing recurrent sounds which stir, stimulate, and evoke verbal responses from the audience. Epanaphoric passages—for example, "I want to be the child of God! / and I want my sins forgiven / I want my spirit meek and mild / and I want to go to Heaven when I die"—add to the beauty of the prayers and also demonstrate the speaker's skill as a rhetorician. The echoes of words and phrases in the audience's responses attest to the community's respect and admiration for skillful and creative use of language: 539

> Master, it's no lower *No! No lower!*
> Could I come this evening
> Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*
> Guilty heart within
> Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned!*

Alliteration is used, as in "coax and call," "cold, cold hearts," and "Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," to help establish the rhythm, as well as to contribute to the enthusiastic and energetic tone of the entire delivery.

782 533 537 The strong rhythm and chanted delivery of the prayers accords with the prayer traditions of many African and African-derived cultures, including those of West Africa, the West Indies, and South America. The rhythmic chants are crucial to the developmental flow of the prayers.[2] Once the rhythm is established, it is maintained through various means, most important of which is the reply from the listeners. Some truly impressive prayer givers excite an audience to maximal response through their energetic diction and explosive tone alone. Others may intensify the rhythmic effect by drumming with a chair, tapping a cane against the floor, or just swaying back and forth in time to some inaudible sound.[3]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American
794 congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker
537 says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established
533 by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element
537 in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

(539)

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant
Bow this evening, Jesus

Sin anguished and bended

. . . . . .

Crying to you this evening, Jesus
For Mercy

While mercy can reach [us]

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537
[539]

As you say the foxes of the forest
Got hole

And then the birds of the air has nest
Master, we are poor son of man

Nowhere to lay down weary head

The rhythm and tone are usually set in the speaker's salutation to God, after which the speaker begins his appeal. This plea is in the form of an itemized list. The number of requests will depend on the occasion and the number of items concerning which the speaker is asking for consideration. If he makes an appeal for himself, he usually includes it as the very last item in his list. Each appeal will often begin with a traditional expression, such as "Then, then, my God! We ask . . ." or "O! You, you this evening, my heavenly Father, we ask . . ." The pleas are likewise concluded with a traditional expression, like "Have Mercy if thou on us so please!" In addition to clarifying the organization of the prayers, these phrases, perhaps more than others, help to sustain the increasing force and rhythm.

The peroration may vary. Most prayers, however, end with the quotation "Somewhere Lord, Job declare / The weak shall cease in trouble and the soul find rest."

782 The Sea Islanders have prayers for every occasion. They may range from a one-minute request for assistance in the completion of a hard day of labor to a twenty-five-minute eulogy for a lost loved one. The first prayer quoted below was delivered for the 1980 Usher's Anniversary at New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, and is typical of most Sea Island prayers for special occasions. In this case there was a scheduled prayer giver, but the person who actually spoke did so without notice when the scheduled speaker proved unavailable.[5] A brief outline of the prayer is included to demonstrate the smoothness and cohesiveness with which the parts develop into the whole:

I. Formal opening

II. The Lord's Prayer

III. Proem: speaker's personal prayer of humility

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[539] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
[533 of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting
both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
782 are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The
537 important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

• 539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary
[782] Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

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South Carolina



• 539 Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant
Bow this evening, Jesus *Bow, yes! My Lord!*

Sin anguished and bended *Bended knees*

Master, it's no lower
Could I come this evening *No! No lower!*

Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*

Guilty heart within
Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned*

Crying to you this evening, Jesus
For MERCY[6] *Yeah. Uh hum*
While mercy can reach [us]
As you say the foxes of the forest *Yes*
Got hole[7]

And then the birds of the air has nest *Yes!*
Master, we are poor son of man *Pray now!*

Nowhere to lay down weary head *Yeah!*

Father, we down here this evening *Oh yeah!*

Heavenly Father
Asking for your mercy
While mercy can reach us
Father, while traveling over the mortal *Yes, oh yeah*
Vineyard this afternoon[8]
We ask you to please drop water here *Yes*

Don't leave us alone to ourself *Uh uh*

Neither in the hands of the wicked man *Ah yeah!*

Lead us though in the tempting of old Satan[9] *Oh yeah!*
Have mercy if thou on us so please.
We are here this evening, Jesus *Oh yeah. Uh huh. Oh yeah*

We can't do nothing without you
Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove[10]
With all thou quickening power *Power!*

Kindle the flame of our Savior love *Yeah!*

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● 539 In these cold hearts of ours *Cold*

Master, look how we are groveling here below *Oh yeah! All right. Yeah*
Trying to find our earthly toys
Master, our poor soul can't find a goal
But we trying to reach an eternal joy[11] *Joy*

Have mercy, if thou only so please *So please*

And then, then, my God *My Lord*

While traveling from Jericho
Maybe going to Jerusalem *Uh hum*
We want you to come in this building *Yes*
One more time
Want you to touch us this evening, Jesus *Yes*
Realize this evening, Father *Oh yeah*
We are nothing but a chaff before the wind[12] *Before the wind*

We get raindrop in the morning
Just as bloom of the lily
By noon we cut off, wilt and die *Die! Oh Yeah*

Have mercy, if thou only so please
And then, then, my God *My God*

You know the purpose of our gathering
Jesus *Yes*

We ask you to please strengthen us
Where we are weak *Oh yeah*
And build us where we are tearing down[13] *Tearing down*

Here we are trying to celebrate this twentieth anniversary, Jesus *Oh yeah*
Give us faith that will not shrink *Mercy!*

But oppressed by every folding
And then, then, my God *Then, my God! Oh yeah!*

We ask you to look at the leaders *Oh yeah!*
From one to another, Jesus *Yes*
Make them ushers of sound judgment

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539 Then truly devoted to God
We realize, heavenly Father *Yes*
From, from July last gone *Oh yeah*

What trouble have I seen? *Yes. Oh yeah*

What conflict have I bear?
Sometime I ben fighting within[14] *Yeah*

And fear without
Since I assembled last *Yes!*
Then, then, my God *My God!*

I want you to bless each and every usher
Jesus[15] *Uh hum. Yes*

Help them to please hold out and hold on *Oh yes!*
Help them to follow building a household of God *Yes, Lord!*
And then, then, my God *Then!*

Help them not to wear a uniform
To be seen
But only to be a child of God *God!*

Help them to say
I want to be the child of God *Pure heart!*

And then, then, I want my sins forgiven *Oh yeah!*

Want my spirit meek and mild *Uh hum. Oh yeah!*

I want to get to heaven when I die
Do show me, Lord, thy way. *Oh yeah!*

And then guide me on thy road *Oh yeah. Oh Lord*

And then, then, my God
Never to let me go astray *Astray*

Until I get home to thee *Yes Lord!*

And then, then, heavenly Father *Oh yeah*

Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time *Oh yeah!*
Who is going [to] unfold the word of eternal truth *Oh yeah!*
Want you to please, dear Jesus

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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• 539 Give him a silver trumpet[16] *Uh huh!*
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold *Oh yes!*
And then, then, then, my Master *My Lord!*
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus *Oh yeah!*
Want you to plant her deep down in the soil, Master *Oh yeah!*
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[17] *Oh yeah!*
Then, then, my God *My God*

Want you to look at Jerusalem one more time *Oh yeah!*
Help them to say
Jerusalem my happy home *Yes! yes Lord!*
So never dear to me[18] *Oh yeah!*
And then, then, Jesus *Uh huh!*
Then, then, Lord *Amen!*
Then, Master Jesus *Oh yeah*

[Look at] me too got to pull off mortal *That what you got to do. Oh yeah!*

Put on mortality[19]
Because then, Jesus
Going down by the river of Jordan *Jordan*

Gonna stake my sword in the golden sand *Oh yeah*

Because, Master Jesus *Master Jesus!*

Wouldn't had to study war no more.[20] *Oh yeah!*

And then, Lord *Lord!*

I can hear her say *All right*
Must I be that judgment bar *Must I be*

Answer in thy day *Oh yeah!*

Every vain or idle thought
And for every word I say *Say now!*

For every secret of my heart *O yeah!*
Will shortly be made known

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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539 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myma introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[533] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

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## The Lord's Prayer

• 539
(782)

Most Revered Mr. Mike Simmons
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1976

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as was done in heaven.
Give us this day, O daily bread
And forgive those who art in trespass against thee
O heavenly Father!
We are meeting on worldly soil today
Calling on your name
And, heavenly Father, couldn't do nothing until you come
Come now, Jesus, if you please?
The revered thanks to you today, heavenly Father
O Lord, if you please!
Look upon me in the eyes of pity
In the heart of compassion
I be so please, heavenly Father
O Lord, from last August, the single
They told us at least
O heavenly Father, you know when fall down, get up
Ben calling on your name
And I couldn't do nothing until de come!
Come now, heavenly Father, please, if you please

Amen!

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782
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Tom Mack is an active member of the Wadmalaw church community. He is a professional singer and is considered well on his way to perfecting the prayer-giving tradition. Though he is in his early forties, he is, according to the islanders, still experiencing the "scalding water" of life, one of the primary ingredients in learning to chant the words of the prayers with emotion. When he heard that I was writing a book, he came by to see me and offered the following prayer for me to complete.

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## 539 Prayer for Patricia Jones-Jackson

[1982] Thomas Mack, Sr.
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God, the sun is almost down
And the evening shall appear
O may we all remember well
The night of death draw near
We lay our garment by
Upon our bed to rest
But soon death will soon rob of all
Of what we here possess
At this evening
Thy heavenly Father
Hear me a moment
A creature bowed

This evening, Jesus
I ask you this evening
My heavenly Father *Yes Lord!*
Remember Wadmalaw once more time
This evening, Jesus *Yes Lord!*
Remember our community
This evening, Jesus
Remember Jerusalem
This evening, Jesus
We need you
This evening, Jesus
We are down here
In the lonesome valley
This evening
And we cannot do nothing
Until you come
Come, Holy Spirit
heavenly Dove
With all thy quiverling power
Kindle the flame

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina



539 Of savior love
In these cold heart of ours
This evening, Jesus
O—O—O—You this evening
My God!
I ask you to remember
This young lady
If you only so please
This evening, Jesus
Remember sister Jackson
If you only so please
This evening, Jesus
Help her to write her book
This evening, O God!
That some might understand
This evening, Jesus
O—O—O—You this evening
My God!
Ride on the four corner
Of the world
This evening, Jesus
Ask you to remember
Her parents one day to the other
Help them up on every leaning side
This evening, Jesus
Build them up
Where torn down
This evening, O God!
Brace they back
Against the wall of Zion
And turn they head
Toward heaven side
If you only so please
. . . . . .
This evening, Jesus

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## •539 The Man and the Skita [Mosquito]

Mr. James Frazier

One upon a time, way back in the olden day—some part of Alabama—way down South. *Yeah!* Black man had done a crime. *Um huh!* And they put em in prison *Um huh!* —And those days they was punish you the way they feel like. *Yeah! Uh huh! That's right!*

So they put this man in a rice field, which was very low in the time a summer time. *Uh huh! Summer time* And mosquito was very bad. *Um hum. Very bad* And he told this man, say, "The only way you'll free, if you go in and plow, and don't knock no mosquito. Don't, Don't—Don't raise a hand at mosquito. Let skita bite." *Um hum, let skita bite! Yeah! Don't knock em!*

So, this young man went on and plow and plow and plow, and the skita de bite em so much, he stop—and talk to his master, bossman, or whatever he was. *Uh hum! Yeah, stop and talk!*

Say—"Ah, Master, look a here!! I see a pasture full of cow (peering into the distance). That cow yonder (points) with the (slapping his shoulder) the white here, (slapping his back as if to kill a mosquito), the black here (hitting leg), the brown here. That cow de yours?" *(Listeners laughing uproariously)*

Say (laughing), "Yeah! That cow de mine." *(Listeners laughing) Killing skita now!*

Yeah, killin the skita.

So he plow on, plow on, skita bite em again!!! *Um huh (still laughing)* So he call he master again. Say, "Master?" *Uh huh! Master?* I see another cow with white here (again slapping his face as if killing mosquitoes), black here (slapping his arm), brown here (slapping his back). That cow de yours?" *Yeah!*

Man say, "Yeah, that cow de mine." *Um huh (much laughter and clapping)*

And e keep on saying that until the days is done. *Um huh! Yeah! Donem!* After the days is done! *Um huh* Well, the

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•539 skita was done! *Um hum. Yeah! Skita been done!* And that was that one!!! *(Clapping) Yeah! (laughter) Kill em! Yes sir!*

O-o-o-kay! Another good one! O-o-o-kay, the next one. Tell another one! *(Laughter and clapping)*

538 "Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch" is classified as Type 1310 A, Motif 581.2, Briar-Patch Punishment for Rabbit. This tale is often the sequel to "The Tar Baby" (Tale Type 175), a tale still told and retold on the Sea Islands by young and old. The fact that the audience already knew this tale well only added to the excitement of the occasion. The teller's creativity was displayed by the variations in his facial expressions and the energy and enthusiasm with which he chose to tell his tale. A well-known and favorite storyteller, this man never disappointed his audience. He spoke very rapidly and thus did not wait for a response to every word or phrase.

539 Ber Rabbit in the Peanut Patch

Mr. Ted Williams

Ah—Anybody else? Anybody else? *You go ahead and talk!* I go—I gone tell a—a few short story. *Uh humm. Tell em!* About the rabbit and the—and the man. *Um humm. Ber Rabbit! Ber Rabbit!*

The man catch the rabbit in his um—in peanuts patch.
Trap em in he peanuts patch.
And he say, "Now, Ber Rabbit, you always sharp!
You always go a lot of scheme!
But now, you know what I gone do with you?
I gone punish you.
I gone throw you in that fire!! *(Laughter from audience)*

Ber Rabbit, O Lord! (Pausing as if to think)
I tell you what he do.
"I tell you what you do—old man (as if thinking to himself).
Throw me in the fire!" (shrugs his shoulders) *Throw me in the fire!*

The man say, "No, you too free!" (shaking his head).

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• 539 Say, "I ain't gone do that!
I tell you what I gone do with you.
I gone throw you in that river!" *The river!*
Ber Rabbit say, "I tell you what you do.
Throw me in that river! *Yeah! The river!* Let me drown there!
Just throw me in the river—let me.
I want a dead anyhow.
Throw me in the river!" *Um huh!*
Man say, "No-o-o-. I ain't gone throw you in there cause you too free! You too sharp!"
And he say (pausing as if to think),
"I know! You know what I gone do with you, Ber Rabbit?" *Yeah!*
(Unconcerned) "What you gone do? What you gone do?"
He carry em to the man briarwood patch. And boy!!!
(shakes his head). That briar ben about that high
(raises his hand above his head).
Say, "Ber Rabbit, I gone throw you in that briarwood patch."
(Moaning) "OOO-o-o-o Lord!!! *(Much laughter)*
(Wrinkling his nose and crooking his hand and fingers)
Ple-e-e-ase do-o-o-n't throw me in there!!! *(Much laughter from the imitation)*
*(Whining and shaking)* Dem briarwood stick me up! *(Laughter)*
Ple-e-e-ase" (whimpering).
And he take Ber Rabbit, say, "Oh! I got you now, Ber Rabbit!"
"OOO-o-o-o, don't throw me in there! *Got em!*
I rather you kill me!" (holding hands as if praying).
So, e take the rabbit and thow em in briarwood patch.
The rabbit say, "You fool you! This where I born and raise!" *(Much laughter and clapping among the audience). Born and raise!*
That's all now! I ain't coming back in! *Born and raise! (Laughter)*

538 "The Buzzard and the Hawk" is only one of many, many tales told of Ber Buzzard and his unsavory eating habits; yet the buzzard is revered

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538 [825] on the Sea Islands for his patience and faith in the Lord's salvation. The buzzard is not an animal that the islanders are ambivalent about. He keeps his distance and they keep theirs; they never kill him for sport but actually depend on him to help them locate dead dogs and farm animals which may have strayed away and got lost in the marsh. Variants of "The Buzzard and the Hawk" are numerous and can be found in just about any collection of African-American tales.[26]

Before beginning this tale the speaker had told a series of well-received stories. He paused at the outset to tease the audience into asking for more.

## 539 The Buzzard and the Hawk

Mr. Ted Williams

Y'all know—(pauses and addresses the audience)—I ain't taking too much time? *No! Uh uh!!*

Huh? *No!*

Y'all know about the buzzard? *Uh uh*

(Looking at the audience as if puzzled) Y'all didn't hear about the buzzard? *No! (laughing)*

(Again, acting even more surprised) Y'all ain't heard about the buzzard?!!! *(The audience laughs at his expression) Tell us!! Tell us about the buzzard?*

The buzzard and the monkey! *(laughing and clapping) Tell us about the buzzard and the monkey! (more laughing and clapping)*

Louis Jerden, Louie Jerden tell y'all about that now, y'all! (Looks at the older members of the audience.) The old people know about Louie Jerden and the buzzard! *(Elderly members nod and smile knowingly)*

You know the buzzard always was a—a nice educated animal, you know! *(Nods) Um hum! um hum!*

E take e time—(reflecting) just like he done with the hawk. *(Nods and um hums in unison)*

Him and the hawk was sitting down on the limb one day, and he said—Him and the hawk had a consolation [consultation].

Say, "I'm very hungry!!!"

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• 539 The hawk say, "I'm hungry too! (rubbing his stomach). Lord—O Lord! My stomach! I too hungry!"
The buzzard say (patiently), "Wait on the Lord—"
And e look up—Nothing for dead—NOTHING, you know
So the buzzard say (exasperated), "MAN!!!"

The hawk say, "I can't wait no longer!"

So when he look (straightens his back as if seeing something interesting), a little sparrow come along. And—and—and the hawk get up and run at the sparrow and hit a tree *Uh huh!*

And the buzzard sit on he limb and look the hawk, look at the hawk, when he run into tree. The buzzard say (nodding his head knowingly and pointing his finger), "I tell you wait on the Lord. Now I gone eat you now!" *(Much laughter and jovial responding among the audience)*

538 Though the buzzard is revered for his patience and intelligence, he is not, according to the islanders, as "smaat" in any way as the monkey. "The Buzzard and the Monkey" is an example of the syncretism of folk culture and pop culture. Louis Jordan, a prominent rhythm and blues artist, recorded the popular tune "Straighten Up and Fly Right" in the 1940s, basing the song on the situation portrayed in this folktale. Here one sees a direct reborrowing of the pop recording back into the folk tradition. The teller depends on his listeners' familiarity with the tale and the song to elicit their support in singing the chorus from the record. In this manner he transforms the old tale into a cante fable, or "singing tale."[27]

539 The Buzzard and the Monkey

Mr. Ted Williams

—So the buzzard done the same ting with the monkey! The buzzard got so-o-o-o-o hungry one day, he couldn't hold it (holding his stomach). So he went to the monkey.
(Aside to one of the listeners) Him and the monk was good friend, you know. *(Listener nods) Um hum!*

He say (loudly), "Brother Monk!!!"

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•539 (Aside)—eh—everybody tink monkey just like color, black man, you know. Could fool em! *(Unison) Yeah!* But e couldn't fool that monkey!! (shaking his head).

Ah—"Look here!!! Let's go—you want a go for a ride?"

E say, "Yeah!" Say, "Ah—I don't mind going for a ride. But you (scratching his head and hesitating), I can't fly. You know? I ain't got no wing. I can swing (swings his arm). But, I can't fly!"

E say, "Well (hesitates as if thinking about the monkey's situation). Now come on! I'll—I'll, I'll—I got the wing. I'll fly you!"

So the buzzard—the monkey jump on the buzzard back, sort of circle around and show em view, you know. (Looking up in the sky) And buzzard start de lie. Start de show em old man John farm—rice pond. Say, "See all that rice pond there?" (pointing downward).

"Yeah!"

"De mine!" He duck around (makes a rapid downward gesture with his wrist and arm). Monkey de hold! *(Laughter)*

"All that tata over there?"

"Yeah!"

"De mine!" *Yeah! De mine!*

"Yeah!"

Monkey de hold right on!

So e say, "Well, let's go a little higher, let's catch some breeze, brother monkey."

Buzzard shoot up! (makes a rapid swing with his hand and arm). Monkey de hold! *Yeah! (laughter)*

And e go up a little higher, e start de show em different ting. And show de the sun and moon.

Say, "See all them yonder? *Uh huh!*
You know I got de fight over them." *Yeah, fight over em!*

So e start—e say (in a whisper), "Well, getting hungry now—I go duck and throw monkey down, see?" *Yeah! Throw em down*

So e got a little higher! (raises his hand). Higher!! (raises hand and arm even higher). Higher!!! (raises arm straight up in the air). And e start de duck, and de monkey start de choke em. *De choke em!*

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Say, "Ah—Monkey?"

"Ah? I ain't doing nothing!"

Monkey say, "Well-let-start-for-straighten-up-and-fly-a-little-right-now.
Yougettingalittledamnhighupinair—hear!!" *(Much laughter and cheering from the listeners)*

(Laughs) So e gone little higher (points upward). E choke em and e say, Ah! The, the monkey tell the buzzard. E say (confused), the buzzard tell the monkey, "Say, Monkey? Release your holt and I set you for free!!" *Yeah, release em!*

And the monkey say, "Well, got dang, let me tell you one ting now!! You tell me, say, you gone show me the view and do this and do that! Now you WAY UP HERE! I want you de straighten up and fly right!"

Tell em, say, buzzard tell, say,
"Well—well—ah! Release your holt and I'll set you free!!! *(Cheers from the audience)*

So (laughs) Louie Jerdon write that record, you know!! Right now, we can sing that! *Yeah! Yeah!*
(Stands and walks aroung the crowd) Straighten up and fly right!
(Asks members of the audience) Who understand what I'm say now? *(The audience joins in singing)*
Straighten up and fly right!
Straighten up and fly right!
Do long, papa, don't you blow your trump!

(Laughs) Ha! Ha! Aint that what e say?!!! *Yeah! (Much laughter and cheering)*

538 "Peter and the Rock" is classified as Type 774, Jest about Christ and Peter. It is only one of a series of tales told on the islands about how Peter is made to look ridiculous because of his greed or some other sinful trait.

This speaker adjusted his narrative style to a rather formalized language to tell a somewhat religious tale. As his tale progressed, his language became increasingly creolized and his audience showed a greater involvement with the content of the tale. Near the end, the speaker seemed more concerned with delighting the audience than with

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538 128 an older Gullah spelling and syntax.) As I have emphasized, however, no transcription can fully capture the aura of the nonverbal interplay which is a dynamic aspect of any oral tradition.

538 171 1. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" and its Igbo parallel, "Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]," are classified as Type 2 tales, which are concerned with how the various animals received their physical characteristics. "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" is classified as Motif A2231.1, Animal Characteristics: Punishment for Discourteous Answer to God. "Nnabe and Chineke" is Motif A2231.1.4, Discourteous Answer: Tortoise's Shell. These are two of the few tales where Ber Rabbit and Nnabe are actually punished for their mischievous deeds. It is important to note, however, that their punishment is meted out not by mortals like themselves but by a supreme being.

## • 539 Ber Rabbit and the Lord

Mr. Jonas Mickell
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina

Once upon a time Ber Rabbit went de the Lord for get more knowledge, more wisdom. And the Lord tell Ber Rabbit, "All right! I want you de bring anything white de me. Anything white."

Rabbit went out in the field, and he went out meet [happened to meet] Ber Partridge there. [Ber Rabbit] had a bag, and [he] tell Ber Partridge: "I betcha all you, all couldn't full this bag [I bet you aren't big enough to fill up this bag]."

Partridge say, "How you mean?"

[Ber Rabbit told Ber Partridge], "Run in here, see if you can full this bag."

All the partridge full up [spread his wings], run in, full the bag. Ber Rabbit put that on he shoulder and carry em de the Lord. [The Lord said], "All right!" [But the Lord] gone send em back. Ber Rabbit, he send em back.

"Well, I want you now, Ber Rabbit, de bring me a

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539 rattlesnake!" Danger!!! [The Lord was going to] put Ber Rabbit where all the danger [was]!

Ber Rabbit tell em, "All right!"

Ber Rabbit gone out in field and find a rattlesnake, and he have a cane and tell Ber Rattlesnake: "Ber Snake, you ain't long as this cane!" Ber Rattlesnake run alongside the cane.

Ber Rabbit say, "No! I don't mean that way. I want you run in!"

Ber Snake run in—rattlesnake run in Ber cane. Tshhht, Ber Rabbit stop this hole up, carry em de the Lord.

He say, "Now, all right now, Ber Rabbit, you put in five [you did well]! You good! You good enough! Now I want you, Ber Rabbit, I want you de bring a gator tail de me—from the water."

Rabbit say, "I can bring that!"

Rabbit drank up heself [got up his nerve], and he gone down de the river, and he tell Ber Gator, say, "Ber Gator???"

Ber Gator say, "Ber Rabbit, where you going?"

De say, "I going over here to Adale—and ain't no way I can get there. Ain't got no boat."

Ber Gator tell Ber Rabbit, say, "Jump on my head. I'll carry you over there."

Ber Rabbit jump on Ber Gator head. When Ber Gator get cross to other shore, Ber Rabbit knock the Ber Gator in e head and knock all he teeth out, and carry em to the Lord. All right!

Ber Lord [Rabbit] say, "All right, Ber Rabbit [Lord], what you want de do again?"

[Ber Lord] say, "I want you de bring me some cow milk."

Rabbit say, "All right!"

Rabbit bex [vex] the cow and the cow run around, run around, run around and twirl around, around, around, he feet. Rabbit snatch em! The cow fall down! The Rabbit got em up between the leg and milk that and carry milk to Ber Lord.

"All right," Ber Rabbit say, "Now Lord!"

[The Lord said], "I want you de bring me some bull milk."

"All right!"

Ber Rabbit jump down there de bex, de get out the bull, de bex the bull. Say, "Bull, you can't do the same ting [as the cow]." Say, "I want you to run around this tree."

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Igbo FF26



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The bull run around this tree and the bull fall down! The rabbit get between the bull de start to pull them two leg.

He gone back de the Lord and he call, "Lord—e got e milk."

[But the Lord] tell Ber Rabbit, say, "where the hell you see a bull give milk?"

The same milk what he carry, de the cow milk, the Lord take that milk and sling em behind Ber Rabbit tail, cause em de [become] white. And tell Ber Rabbit, "Go head, [rabbit] and dog will be condition [enemies forever]. If the bush crack you got to go!!!"

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## Nnabe and Chineke [The Tortoise and the Lord]

Song story sung in Igbo by Samuel Onunwa,
Bartholomew Amaugo, Kevin Chiedusie,
and Francis Mbah
Translated into English by Victor C. Ihejetoh

Chakpii? *Haa!!!*
Once upon a time *And a time there came!*
As God was going *Amanye**
And the tortoise was returning *Amanye*
They met on the way *Amanye*
The tortoise ask God for wisdom *Amanye*
God dug his hands into his pocket *Amanye*
And pulled out a hard rock *Amanye*
And gave it to the tortoise to break *Amanye*
To break its kola shell *Amanye*
The tortoise took it *Amanye*
And tried to break the shell *Amanye*
In the process *Amanye*
He wounded his hand *Amanye*
The tortoise went to the fence *Amanye*
And dug some soil *Amanye*
And said, "My dear Father God *Amanye*
Please grow for me *Amanye*
The soil of wisdom *Amanye*
In my head" *Amanye*
God shouted *Amanye*
"Oko-ko-ko-ko *Amanye*
My son tortoise *Amanye*
Who told you *Amanye*

*[an agreement chant like *Amen* or *Right on*]

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So they went for lay in the sun. So by and by Ber Wolf fell sleep. Okay?

*Yeah!*

And after the wolf fell sleep, then the butter that de melt out Ber Rabbit, he smear all over Ber Wolf. When the wolf wake up he tell Ber Rabbit, say, "If I didn't eat the butter, Rabbit, who ate the butter?"

"You ate the butter, Ber Wolf! Because de all de come out of you!"

The wolf didn't had sense enough to know that he didn't ate the butter. You see? The rabbit cheated him (laughs). You see what happened. The rabbit outsmart the wolf!

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## Nnabe and the Fruits

Told in Igbo by Raphael Amaugo
Translated into English by Chinere Ihejetoh

Chakpii!! *Haa!!*

Once upon a time, *And a time came* all the animals decided to do collective farming on a special day. That day was on a market day called *eke* in Igboland. That morning the town crier, who was called informant, took a bell and went ringing through the city telling everyone where the farm was to be. All the animals came out in answer to the bell call and went to the farm. There they agreed that if any of them cut or hurt himself while working, that one would be permitted to go home. On their way to the farm, they saw some delicious fruits which they agreed that none would pick separately, but all would pick and share when the farming was done. It was agreed!

Now Nnabe the tortoise was up to his usual tricky ways. So while the other animals worked and thought of the fruits, he sneaked away and ate them. On his way back to the farm, he killed a baby antelope and spread some of its blood on his hand and showed it to the other animals saying that he had injured himself, and that he should be permitted to go home. The animals agreed.

On the way home, he stopped and finished all the fruits that

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## The Three Pear[s], or the Singing Bones

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Miss Deeley
Yonges Island, South Carolina

A woman had two children. And e want for make a pie for she husband before e come home from field. He bina plow. So she tell e children, say, "I de go store for get sugar for make pie." Tell em, say, "Don't eat the three pear I leave on the table. I make a pie out em when I de come back."

When she leave for go get the sugar, the girl child de get hungry. E get hungry too much, man! So e gone and look on the pear—look on the pear—look on em—look on em. Finally, she get the pear and eat em. When the woman come home, look, see the pear ben gone, e ask e children, say, "Who eat the pear I ben leave on table here?"

The boy say, "Sister, Mama, Sister. Sister ben eat em." [Then the woman] ask Sister, say, "Who ben eat the pear, Sister?" Sister say, "Brother, Mama, Brother. Brother ben eat em."

"Brother?"

"Sister, Mama, Sister!"

"Sister?"

"Brother, Mama, Brother!"

They go on—go on—go on.

The woman tell Sister, say, "Sister, go lay head on the chop block out there."

Sister gone and lay e head on the chop block out by the woodpile. By and by, the woman come and pick up the axe and de chop Sister head off and bury em in the onion patch. Chop she leg and bury em in de hen house. Chop she arm, bury em in the barnyard. Li [little] bird ben see where e bury em.

When de evening, the daddy come home and ask he wife, say, "Where Sister?" Woman say, "She over the other side de stay with the grandma awhile." By and by, the daddy ben go over de other side for get Sister. The grandma say, "ain't see em." So they de look, de look—and de look for Sister. The woman tell em, say, "Sister run away."

By and by, spring de come and time come for plant onion

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.539 again. Woman grow em, get fine mess of em. One evening, they bina eat supper and woman tell Brother, say, "Go out there in the onion patch and pull some onion for eat with the peas." So Brother gone in the onion patch and de start for pull up onion. But when he de start for pull em, e yeddy [heard] somebody de sing:

Brother, Brother, Brother
Don't pull me hair
Know mama de kill me
Bout the three li pear

The boy ben so scare, e gone, run, tell e mother. The woman didn't believe the child. Tell em, say, "Go out there for get me some onion, boy!!!"

The boy gone back and try for pull up onion again. He yeddy somebody de sing and de sing:

Brother, Brother, Brother
Don't pull me hair
Know mama de kill me
Bout the three li pear

So this time the child de run, de cry, and e de holler. He daddy ask em, say, "What ben matter de you?" The child tell em what he de yeddy in de onion patch. So the daddy go for heself for see what Brother bina talk about. He get de de onion patch, boot up [stooped down] for pull up onion, and he yeddy Sister de sing and de sing:

Daddy, Daddy, Daddy
Don't you pull me hair
Know Mama de kill me
Bout the three li pear

The man ben so bex, he go back in the house and ask he wife again. Ask em, say, "What ben happen de Sister?" Woman say, "I ain't know. You know she ben run away—long time now." The man tell she, say, "Go in onion patch and try for pull up onion." The woman gone in the onion patch. E boot up, try for pull up onion. Soon e start for pull, e yeddy Sister de sing and de sing:

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Mama, Mama, Mama
Don't you pull me hair
You know you kill me
Bout the three li pear

The woman ben so scare, e run, run, run til e knock e head against a tree. Knock em and kill eself.

By and by, the li bird what see em all happen, e sit on the fence and sing de de daddy where e find Sister bone. Say:

Look in onion patch
Find e li head
Look in barn yard
Find e li leg
Look in hen house
Find e li arm
Po dog suck e bone

The end of that one!

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## The Flower, or the Singing Bones

Told in Igbo by Holda Akuchie
Translated into English with the help of Victor C. Ihejetoh

Once upon a time there lived two people born of the same parents in a village. In Igboland it has long been customary for one man to have more than one wife. Thus it is important for bonds of kinship to be shown with the phrase *by the same mother, same father.* As it was, these two persons had a very rich father. This rich man went to a bush in the forest and brought a flower and showed it to his children. He told them that the name of the flower was *okoko anuii,* meaning "something of joy." Above all, he told them that whosoever went to that bush would have half of his wealth and the remaining half would be shared by the two of them, if they would look for that which is alive and is not seen.

They entered the forest from different directions in search of the flower, and while they were looking and looking for it, the

# Conclusion

• 539

[di lɔd ẽ bɪnə muβ mi mɔŋtɪn
bət i bɪn giβ mi siçɹɛt ɸə klɒɪəm]

*God didn't move my mountain,*
*but he gave me strength to climb it.*

177 178 During my search for Africanisms in the Sea Island culture over the past ten years, I have seen that some of the old traditions are dying out while others remain intact. Each year I see something different, hear more old tales, and learn another old word. It is hard to measure the precise impact of new pressures on the islands. But the islanders are beginning to lose their geographical isolation, and they are thus being forced to alter a culture which has existed and served them well since the first importation of African slaves to the island shores.

177 178 596 Some elements are resistant to change. The extended family is remaining intact because the islanders are still in a majority. Though their communities are being diluted by outsiders, their family norms are less open to invasion. The islands are still sectioned off into family communities where all persons remotely related to the family have the right to live. This housing tradition will be difficult to disrupt, though it may be easier to displace. The pressure of nearby resort areas has encouraged land take-overs at some spots, and taxation and other legal means have been used to force homeowners to leave (see Appendix 4). A However, when the islanders are obliged to move, most often they relocate at a place where relatives offer them a piece of land on which to build. Thus the cohesiveness of the family structure continues to prevail.

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

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# Appendix 2

## Buh Rabbit en' de Lawd

539 197 [178] What follows is the tale "Ber Rabbit and the Lord" from Chapter 3, reconstructed in the Gullah of a century ago. A comparison of the two versions will show how the language has changed in the interim.

128 I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Mixon Geraty, who suggested and prepared the transcription, for her time, willingness, and patience.

539 One time Buh Rabbit gone tuh de Lawd fuh git mo' ecknowledge, mo' wisdum. En' de Lawd tell Buh Rabbit, "Awright! Uh wan' you fuh fetch me ennyt'ing wuh w'ite. Ennyt'ing w'ite."

Rabbit gone een de fiel', en' 'e gone en' meet Buh Paa'tridge dey dey, 'e hab uh bag, en' 'e tell Buh Paa'tridge: "Uh betchuh all ub you, all ub you ent able fuh full'up dishyuh bag."

Paa'tridge say, "How you mean?"

Run een de bag en' see kin you full'um up."

De paa'tridge 'pread 'e wing, run een de bag en' full'um up. Buh Rabbit pit'um 'cross 'e shoulduh en' cya'um tuh de Lawd. "Awright!" 'E gone sen'um back. Buh Rabbit sen' Buh Paa'tridge back.

"Well, now, Buh Rabbit, Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—Uh wan' you fuh fetch me—uh rattlesnake!" Dainjus!!! 'E pit Buh Rabbit weh 'e dainjus, fuh true!

Buh Rabbit tell'um, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit gone een de fiel' en' fin' uh rattlesnake, en' 'e hab uh cane en' 'e tell Buh Rattlesnake: "Buh Snake, oonuh ent—oonuh ent long ez dis cane." Buh Rattlesnake run 'long 'side de cane.

Buh Rabbit say, "No! Uh yent mean fuh do'um so. Uh wan' oonuh fuh run een'um."

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•539 Buh Snake run een de cane—tshht, Buh Rabbit stop up de hole en' cya'um tuh de Lawd.

'E say, "Awright, now, Buh Rabbit, you pit een fibe. You good! You good 'nuf! Now Uh wan' you, Buh Rabbit, Uh wan' you fuh fetch me uh 'gatuh tail tuh me—f'um de watuh."

Rabbit say, "Uh kin fetch dat!"

Rabbit drunk-up 'ese'f en' 'e gone down tuh de ribbuh, en' 'e tell Buh 'Gatuh, say, "Buh 'Gatuh???"

Buh 'Gatuh say, "Buh Rabbit, weh oonuh gwine?"

'E say, "Uh gwine obuh Adale—en' uh yent hab no way fuh git dey dey. Uh yent gots no boat."

Buh 'Gatuh tell Buh Rabbit, say, "Jump 'puntop me head. Uh gwi' cya' oonuh obuh dey."

Buh Rabbit jump 'puntop Buh 'Gatuh head. W'en Buh 'Gatuh git 'cross todduh sho', Buh Rabbit knock Buh 'Gatuh een 'e head en' knock out all 'e teet', en' cya'um tuh de Lawd.

Buh Lawd say, "Awright!"

Buh Rabbit say, "Wuh you wan' me fuh do 'gen?"

Say, "Uh wan' you mus' fetch me some cow milk."

Rabbit say, "Awright!"

Rabbit bex de cow en' de cow run 'roun', run 'roun', run 'roun', en twu'l 'roun', 'roun', 'roun' 'e foot. Rabbit graff'um! De cow fall down! De rabbit git 'tween 'e laig en' milk'um, en' 'e cya' de milk tuh Buh Lawd.

"Awright!" Buh Rabbit say, "Now Lawd!"

"Uh wan' you mus' fetch me some bull milk."

"Awright!"

Buh Rabbit jump down dey dey en' bex de bull, 'e bex de bull—bex de bull. Say, "Bull, oonuh cyan' do same lukkuh de cow." Say, "Uh wan' oonuh fuh run 'roun' dis tree."

De bull run 'roun' de tree en' de bull fall down. De rabbit try fuh milk de bull. 'E gone back tuh de Lawd—'e call, "Lawd, Uh gots de milk."

De Lawd say, "Buh Rabbit, weh de hell you see bull gib milk?"

Buh Rabbit, de same milk wuh 'e cya', de cow milk, de Lawd tek dat milk en' 'E fling'um behime Buh Rabbit tail, en' cause'um fuh w'ite. En' 'E tell Buh Rabbit, "Go 'head, [rabbit] en' dog condishun sameso. Ef de bush crack you haffuh gone!!!"

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# Appendix 3

# Phonetic Text: The Soul and the Spirit

539 128 19 The following text is included in this study primarily to show the language in context. It manifests many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of creole languages.[1] The English version following the transcription obscures many of the creole patterns; consequently, a word-for-word translation accompanies each line of phonetic script to illustrate underlying creole constituents such as the complementizer [fə], the introductory verb [sie], the future marker [go], and many other constructions.

This passage reveals specific segmental phonological phenomena, for example, vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for, such English phones as /β/ for /w/; /ɸ/ for /f/; /ɪ/ for initial /ð/ and /ɵ/; and /ç/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts, deviant words, or stuttering. It is extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of interference of birds and other outdoor noises on the tape. In such cases ellipsis dots indicate that a short passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a slash (/).

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline ( ∿∿∿ ).

Hyphens join two or more words run together in the transcription.

193 539 128 English translations of the preverbal markers and the third-person pronominal forms often misrepresent the creole utterance. The following notations are accordingly used to symbolize these forms:

(3 ♂ n) third-person masculine nominative
(3 ♀ n) third-person feminine nominative

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193 (3 ∅ n) third-person neuter nominative
•539 (3 ♂ o) third-person masculine objective
128 (3 ♀ o) third-person feminine objective
(3 ∅ o) third-person neuter objective

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | present continuative | /də/ |
| (PaC) | past | /bɪnə/ |
| (T) | tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (L) | locative | /də/ |

539 di soəl ɛn di speɪt

775 1. lɪsn mi gʊd nɔʊ / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wɔ̈l / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
19 *Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see, the, the, the soul*

2. əβə män go fiom dʊ di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔʔt / ɛn ɪɸ ju βədɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɒl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days,*

4. juə speit /ätə jʊ died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing, your spirit.*

5. juə soəl ɔ̈p dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛʔ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɒri / ɛn däs də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də ɸɛk tu jʊ / jʊ si nɔ nɔ
*the body. And that's the one gone, gone do the effect to you. You see now now*

7. das das βɒɪ ɒɪ sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɒs ä pipü
*that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

8. dõn biliɸ / sie sie sieiz no guos / iz guos dɛə /bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

9. di ʔärəmobil n tiŋ kɔm / n gɪt dɪ hɒɪβie nɔ / jʊsidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now, you-see-these, these thing*

10. käɪnə tɛk tu wʊd / äɪ mɛmbə wɔnäɪt / βi βi bɪn ɔʊt
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we, we (T) out*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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11. n di ɹəβə / wɔʰɒnʔ wɔ wɔɪʃɛkɪn ʃiβɪms / ɛnəβɛn ɒɪ lʊk / wɔ ɒ̃
*in the river, was-hunt, was, was-catching shrimps. And-ah-when I look, was a*

12. mɪn mi ɸös közn ɹɛɾɔpdil / βi bɪn ɪn kɹɪk / ɛn βɛn ɒɪ lʊk bɛk
*me-and me first cousin, right-up-the-hill, we (T) in crick. And when I look back*

13. bəʔɒɪn βi / i wɔ̃z ə kɔɸɔm bɪn bəhɒɪn βi / dɛ nätʃəl
*behind we, (3 ø n) was a coffin (T) behind we. The natural-*

14. bɔn kɔɸɔm gɛl ʃɑin dɔŋ dɪ kɹɪk /
*born coffin, gal, shine down the crick.*

15. ɛn βɛn βɛn i gɛt ɔpə kloə tʊ βi ɸä ju tʊ da kä jõna / i tek'
*And when, whn, (3 ɔ̃ n) get up-a close to we far you to the car-yonder, (3 ɔ̃ n) take*

16. daʔma·ʃ / ɛn daʔ maʃ bɪnə lie dɔŋ dis / lie dɔŋ dʒɪs lɛk dät /
*that-marsh. And that marsh (PaC) lay down just, lay down just like that.*

17. ɛn ɒɪ bɪnə sɪɾɔŋ ɛn ɒɪ ẽ nõ ɒɪ bɪnə ɪnəsi / si . . . /
*And I (PaC) sit-down and I ain't know I (PaC) in-a-seat. See . . .*

18. jie / də nɛ·tʃal kɔɸɪn / də nɛ·tʃəl kɔɸɪn kɔmɪn dɔŋdiɹɪβə / siβɪm
*yeah, the natural coffin, the natural coffin coming down-the-river, swim.*

19. dasəspeɪt nɔu / jie / kɔmɪn dɔŋ də ɹɪβə / ɛn βɛn / ʔɒʔə βi / dɪsbɔi
*That's-a-spirit now. Yeah. Coming down the river. And when—after we, this-boy*

20. tɔk βiɾəm / hidis / çɪɸ wɔn sɛid oβəndə mäʃ jusi / ɛn hi sitɛt
*talk with-(3 ø o), (3 ø n)-just shave one side over-in-the marsh, you-see. And (3 ø n) start*

21. tʊ lie da maʃ dɔŋ / ɛn lɛɸ da maʃɛn gönɔpnɪiedʒ ədawʊd /
*to lay that marsh down, and left that marsh-and gone-up-in-the-edge of-that-wood,*

22. ɛn laʔ da wʊd bɪn bɛut ɸɔ ɸɔm βi·z də kɹɪk /
*and Lord, that wood (T) about far from we-as the crick.*

23. ɛn ju kədə jɛɾi ɔu i kieɔntɔpida ɪn da wʊd /
*And you could-have heard how (3 ø n) carry-on-top-of-that, in that wood.*

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24. βiel nɔdiztinɪzdɛ nɔ / nɔ ɛβibodi ḳẽ çö̃əm /
*Well now-these-thing-is-there now. No, everybody can't see-them.*

25. bɔt ju gɒt φiłɪn ju ʔkŋ çö̃əm / βiel ɒɪ äd wɔn dɔrə . . . no ɒɪ ɦäd wɔn dɔrə /
*But you got feeling, you can see-them. Well, I had one daughter, . . . no, I had one daughter*

26. ɪnnu jɔk ɹäit nɔu / n hi kuɾə stɛnɛni iβinɪn / ɛn ʃuə ju /
*in-New York right now, and (3 ♀ n) could stand-any evening and show you,*

27. n ʃuə ju dɪ dɪ də pɔsn / ŋgə ʃö̃ ju tuəɻi pɔsn / çɔᵊm ɹɛit çjɔndə
*and show you the, the, the person, and-could show you two-three person./ "See-(3 ♂ o) right yonder,*

28. dëdɪ də stɛnɔp / ɛn ɒɪ kʊdn ʃɔəm φə çieβ mɒɪ dɒiŋ lɒiφ
*Daddy, (PrC) stand-up," and I couldn't see-(3 ♂ o) for save my dying life,*

29. ɛndä gjel bɪn dä βie bɪn dä βie til / dëm tɪŋ justə φɹɒɪdem /
*and-that gal (T) that way, (T) that way til them thing use-to frightened-(3 ♀ o),*

30. ɛn dɛn ɒɪ kiɛm tʊ dɪ / ɒɪ kiɛm
*and then I carry-(3 ♀ o) to the, I carry-(3 ♀ o)*

31. tə de ɦɒsipɪrɪ / ɛn βɒ nëm pipl du βirəm nɛ / ɒɪ dö̃ no /
*to the hospital. And what them people do with-(3 ♀ o) there, I don't know.*

32. bɔ φö̃m ɔpdä tɒɪm ɪn ɔpnɔ / ʃi neβə dɪ si nɔn nɔmo / . . .
*But from up-that time and up-now, (3 ♀ n) never did see none no-more. . . .*

33. hi mɔs bi bön βɪd sɔmp φə ʃɔəm /
*(3 ♀ n) must be born with something for see(3 ø o).*

34. φə si ʃi kuɾə ʃɔəm ple·en / juno / iʔ i ʃɔəm nɛ·tʃəl juno /
*For see, (3 ♀ n) could see-(3 ø o) (it) plain, you-know, (3 ♀ n), (3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o) (it) natural, you-know.*

35. didɪs də sitanɔpdʰɛi ʃö̃m / jie ɛndɛnɒm / βiel ə o əlɒtsa pʰipl ə
*Just-just (PrC) stan-up-there-(3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o). Yeah. And-then-ah, well, a, oh, a-lot-of people, a,*

36. əholɒ·tsa pʰipl jugoβɪdnɔ kẽ ʃö̃m / kɛ ˈʃö̃mɛn tʰɛ / ju ˈtʰuə /
*a-whole-lot-of people you-go-with now can see-(3 ø o), can see-(3 ø o)-and tell you too!*

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37. si si da pɔsn jɔna / jieə / jieə /das ɹɛ̈it / jiə ju ku
*"See, see that person yonder." Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, you could*

38. ɸiləm / jiə . . . mũʔ / das di ol dɛβəl / βiel nɔnɔ / ju no
*feel-(3 ð o) Yeah . . . muh, that's the old devil. Well now-now, you know*

39. βɒɪ ɒɪ tɔk bɔʔ sɔ̈mtʊɪm ju go bəjəsɛɸ / ɪɸ ju dis wɒk /
*why I talk but sometime you go by-yourself. If you just walk.*

40. n sɔ̈mtʊɪm ju ɸɪl 'timəɹɪdʒ / sɔ̈mtɒɪ jʊ ɸil lʊka jʊ fiiə /
*and sometime you feel timeridge, sometime you feel like your hair*

41. lʊklʊi / ju ɸil / ju gɪt 'timə,ɹɪdʒ . . . / das ɹeit /
*look-like you feel you get timeridge . . . that's right.*

42. βiel ju si ə / jʊəspeɪt hɪt da iβəl ɸɛla / ɛn jʊə speɪt kɔm bɛk tʊjʊ /
*Well, you see, ah, your-spirit hit that evil fellow. And your spirit come back to-you.*

43. dʒɪs läk ə βɛn ju go ɪn bed dɪ nʊit ɸə silip
*Just like a, when you go in bed the night to sleep,*

44. βɛnjugoɪnbedinʊit / ɸə tiek ə ɹɛs / βel də speit
*when-you-go-in-bed-the-night for take a rest, well, the spirit*

45. lɛɸ dɪ bɒɹɪ / si βɛn juə speit lɛɸ dɪ bɒɹl / jʊə
*left the body. See, when your spirit left the body your*

46. speit go ɪn dlɸɔ̈n pät ə dɪs kɔntʃi / ɔloβə / ɛn dɛn sɔmtäɪm
*spirit go in different part of this country. All-over. And then sometime*

47. βen də fiɪt dä iβəl speit / βen ju çiəm ɹɔn / kɔm bɛk də ju
*when (PrC) hit that evil spirit, when you see-(3 ø o) run, come back to you*

48. ɛn mɛk̨ ju skie njoə bed / sɔmtɒɪm ju mäʔ fiɒlə sʊirəsɔ̈mlɛkdɛt
*and make you scare in-your bed. Sometime you may holler beside-some-like-that.*

49. si juo speit kɔm bɛk nju ɸɹäin /
*See, your spirit come back an-you frighten.*

50. no ju kẽ silip si / ɛn dɛn ju k̨ẽ βiekɔ̃p / dispeit dõ
*No, you can't sleep, see, and then you can't wake-up. The-spirit don't*

51. kɔ̈m bɛk tʊ jʊ / nɔ ɪɸ də speit dõ kɔm bɛk tʊ jʊ / jʊ nuo ju

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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*come back to you. Now if the spirit don't come back to you, you know you*

52. dɛ / ɪn ɔrə wʊd / ju ẽ die oβə fiɪə / nɔdä tʃuɸ / nɔ /
*there. In other word, you ain't there over here. Now that truth, now.*

53. nɔ däs tʃuɸ / ju gɪt dɪ bɒɪbl ɛn ju ɹiɪəm / däs tʃuɸ /
*Now that's truth. You get the Bible and you read-(3 ɸ o). That's truth.*

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Listen well now: when you die, you see, the soul of a man goes home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit remains here on earth. And if you were an evildoer all of your life, then after you die, your spirit can continue doing the same kind of evil. Your soul is in heaven, but your spirit remains here on earth with the body, and that's the one that will harm you.

You see, I speak of this now because a great many people don't believe. They say that ghosts do not exist. But they do exist. But now, since the automobile and other transportation has overrun the highways, these spirits have sought refuge in the woods.

I remember one night we, my first cousin who lives up on the hill and I, were out in the river catching shrimps. And when we looked behind us, we saw a coffin, a natural coffin, Miss, shining down the crick. And when it came as close to us as the distance between you and that car, it disappeared into the marsh. The marsh separated from the burden and lay open. And I found myself sitting down without knowing when I became seated. . . . Yes, it was a natural coffin swimming down the river. Now that was a spirit coming down the river. Well, after [my cousin] spoke with it, it turned sharply to one side, flattened the marsh, and went up in the wood's edge only a distance as far as from us to the crick, and Lord, you could hear the confusion as it carried on in those woods.

Well, these things do exist. No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. "See it standing right there, Daddy!" But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital, and I don't know what the hospital

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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539 775 personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more. . . . She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. "See that person over there." Yes, yes. . . . That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge . . . that's right. Well, you see, your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

[774] [513] For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

159 735 There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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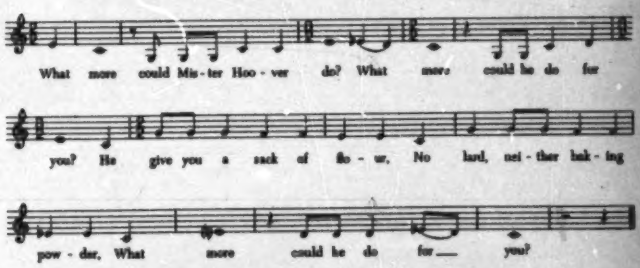
159 735 132 434 435 We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em--a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

159 735 657 Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

[533] [539]




[252] Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it--sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*The Bligen Family*

**ROW, MICHAEL, ROW**

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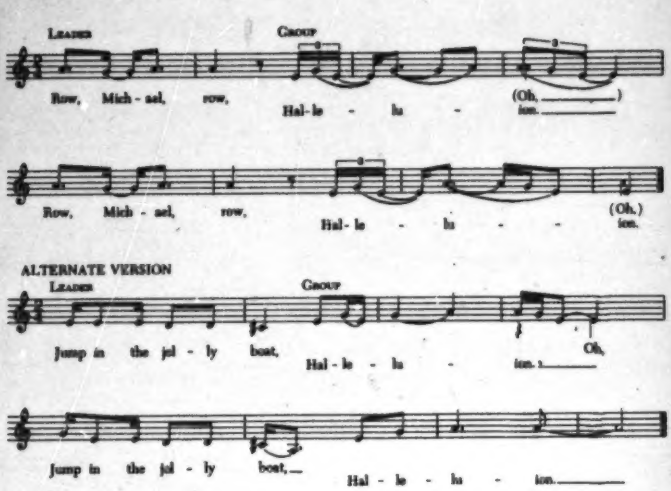


Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Halleluion.
Leader: Let's row the boat ashore,
Group: Halleluion.

Oh see how we do row . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row . . . etc.

Let's row the boat ashore . . . etc.

Just gimme a living chance . . . etc.

Sister Mary, row your boat . . . etc.

Everybody try their chance . . . etc.

Row, Michael, row,
Halleluion.
Row, Michael, row,
Halleluion.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE DIDN'T 'LOW TO GO OUT AFTER DARK

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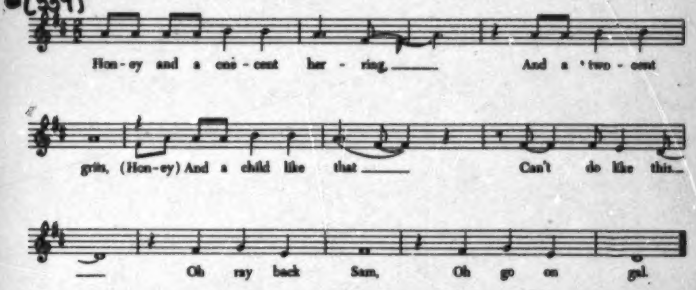
When I was a young girl, we just used to go talk with friends, we didn't 'low to go out after dark. So the first time I went to a dance—that was 1932 when I first met my husband which is Willie Hunter—my mother tell 'em to have me back in the house by sundown. He took me to a dance at Miller Hill, right over there where that water hole at. Mr. Charles Clemmens used to have a dance call a trap dance. It be drums and be washboard and all such music like that.

Used to have dances called Charleston, Pick Cherry, Alligator—get down on floor and do 'gator tap-tap, tap on your heel and toe—"One-Cent Herring, Two-Cent-Grits." Sometime two hook hand and go around. Call that a waltz dance. Some of these dance now is old-time dance, but they just change and give it a different name.




So when we get to the dance, the dance music was so good that we stays until about nine-thirty, and the water come across the road. The water come so high and I get scared. He have to put me on his back and tote me across the water. When we get back to the house, my mother smoke a pipe.

I was scared to go in. I said, "Willie, you best go in, 'cause I ain't going get a beating." My mother won't lick you before company.

So he went in, he says, "Mama, I'm sorry because we late. The tide was high across the road."

And my daddy, he is the first one to give in. He said, "Well, I know 'cause I go to the creek, and I know how that tide run."

I didn't say "good night." I sloop right in my bed. I was seventeen then.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends pr[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[38] 17 197

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[39] 175

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication: 175 197 175 197 539.

*BUDDY QUOW*

Was matter Buddy Quow?
I ble Obesha bang you,
You tan no sabby how,
Dah Backrow Man go wrong you,
Buddy Quow,
Dah Backrow &

A Key to Buddy Quow

What is the matter Brother Quow?
I believe the overseer has beaten you,
You look I don't know how,
That White Man has wronged you,
Brother Quow,
That White Man &

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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2

No hawte bun morrowgo,

Nusso grandy hungry do you,
I hab some Barbaracco,
I bring dem all for you morrowgo

I bring dem all &

Don't let your heart be troubled Country Man,
Nor great hunger distress you,
I have some Barbaracco's*
I will bring them all for you Country Man.

I will bring &

*Horse Beans

3

No hungry nor so dry
For true now no me yerry
Make vawter for me yie
I cry so, tell me vary vipe me yie

I cry so tell &

I am not hungry nor dry,
Indeed now only hear me,
It makes my eyes water,
I have cried so, until I am tired wiping my eyes.

I have cried so &

. . .

5

Dah time Quasheba tell,
De Pickney he bin coming
I gow go for to sell

De hog me mommo gibe me, berry well

Dah hog &

When Quasheba said,
She was with child,
I went immediately and sold very well,
The hog my mother gave me.

The hog &

6

Von coat I buy um new,
Von ropper I bin bring come
Von new hankisha too
I nebo bin go tink um nusso true.

I nebo bin &

I bought a new coat,
A wrapper I bought also,
And a new handkerchief too,
I thought of nothing but that it was true.

I thought &

7

When Unco Quaco say,
De Pickney he was come now,
I no go morrow stay
My harete bin knock pum pum on true grangie

My harete &

When Uncle Quaco said,
The child was just born,
I did not stay till the morrow,
My heart beat pum, pum for great joy.

My heart &

8

Gor Mighty da nah Buf
See how Quasheba do me
Dah Backrow Man he luf
He bring molatto for me Gor nah Buf

He bring &

God Almighty above!
See how Quasheba has used me!
She loved the White Man,
And has brought a Mulatto for me,
God above!

And has brought &

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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9

He yie, he nose, he mout,
(I bin good mine for hit um)
Tun ebery mossel bout
Lak Obesha bin pit um out he mout.

Lak Obesha &

Its eyes, its nose, its mouth,
(I had a great inclination to strike it.)
Take every part of it together,
'Tis as if the overseer had spit it out
of his mouth.

'Tis as if &

The poem, "Buddy Quow," is a fascinating example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect and demonstrates the contribution of various ethnic groups in the formation of pidgin. The names Quow, Quasheba, and Quaco are derived from the Tshi language (Ashanti and Fanti), Africans of the Gold Coast region. Gold Coast Africans, as noted previously, were the first black Carolinians. They were not imported in as large numbers as other groups, but were preferred by South Carolinians, and represent a continuous contribution throughout much of the slave-trade era. Hence their early presence and reinforcement made a strong base. The word "pickney" is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish "pequeno nino" (small child), and barbaracco means horse bean in both languages. This may be a Kongo-Angolan influence since Portuguese ports were in Kongo-Angola and many Africans from that region were imported to South Carolina. The masculine pronoun used to refer to both genders may indicate Upper Guinea influence, where such usage was common among Africans learning English on their native coasts from Methodist missionaries or traders, as previously discussed. Since Gullah is a spoken rather than written dialect, the interpreter of the poem may have lost some of the meaning. Yet most of the interpretations correspond to what is known of Gullah dialect and offer a sense of what Gullah was like when it was a true dialect. Writers who believe that there is no sharp break between Gullah and general black vernacular may not fully consider the historical Gullahs and their creative means of communication in an isolated setting. While there are obvious similarities between twentieth-century black vernacular and Gullah as recorded in the twentieth century, the geographical isolation in which Gullah was originally created points to a dialect peculiar to the Sea Island region, where Africans made their own language adjustments with minimal acculturative influences.[40] In any case, the adoption of a means of communication common to all the slaves in the area was a significant community-building mechanism, and previous African language orientations played an important role.

In addition to a language barrier, ministers realized that the black pop-

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and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 533 539

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the leaders of the intended insurrection. The slaves held secret meetings on one of the islands near Charleston and the "proceedings were opened and closed by the singing of this "Hymn of Freedom":

*Hail! all hail! ye Afric clan*
*Hail! ye oppressed, ye Afric band,*
*Who toil and sweat in Slavery bound;*
*(Repeated)*

And when your health & strength are gone
Are left to hunger & to mourn.
Let *Independence* be your aim,
Ever mindful what 'tis worth.
Pledge your bodies for the prize
Pile them even to the skies!
*Chorus*
Firm, united let us be,
Resolved on death or liberty
As a band of Patriots joined
Peace & Plenty we shall find.

*Look to Heaven with manly trust*
*And swear by Him that's always just*
*That no white foe with impious hand*
*(Repeated)*

Shall slave your wives & daughters more
Or rob them of their virtue dear.
Be armed with valor firm & true,
Their hopes are fixed on Heaven & you
That truth & justice will prevail
And every scheme of bondage fail.
*Chorus*

*Arise! Arise! shake off your chains*
*Your cause is just, so Heaven ordains*
*To you shall Freedom be proclaimed.*
*(Repeated)*

Raise your arms & bare your breasts,
Almighty God will do the rest.
Blow the clarion! a warlike blast!
Call every Negro from his task!
Wrest the scourge from Buckra's hand,
And drive each tryant from the land.
*Chorus*

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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
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> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
248 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed
a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when
461 the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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hymns were adopted by the Gullahs and other slaves. Francis Asbury traveled the seacoasts of Georgia and South Carolina frequently. While he gained few white converts, he was impressed with the black response to his preaching. During the Civil War, musicologists and others, fascinated by Gullah songs, noted that what was sometimes called a "Negro song," was of white origin, especially the so-called religious songs. But to these white melodies, the Gullahs added their own "spirit and relish," giving a "peculiar individuality and nationality" to the music. Thus it is pointless and probably inaccurate to insist that whites and blacks did not create sacred music together when they worshipped together. Such was the case at camp meetings and revivals. Still these gatherings were not as common in the Lowcountry as they were elsewhere. Some writers argue that the camp meeting was distinctly a pineland and upcountry institution. Although evidence indicates that a few camp meetings were held in the rice communities—the hinterlands of the Sea Islands—we find no record of its presence on any of the Islands. The influence of the domestic slave trade, black-white cultural borrowing, and diffusion were all factors in the creation and development of African-American music. Nevertheless, a unique continuity in religious songs can be found in the Sea Islands and coastal lowlands. There were indeed two types of religious music among the Gullahs who adopted Christianity: those songs and hymns learned from white religious instructors and mainly Methodist in origin, and those representing the product of the Gullah's own creativity and imagination, generally referred to as spirituals or prayer songs.[64]

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The primary influence of Methodist preachers on the development of spirituals was in providing Gullahs with raw material for their songs. From past spiritual traditions these African-Americans inherited a mysticism, sense of drama, and creative antecedents that aided them in expressing and interpreting through song the apocalyptic and miraculous elements of biblical narration already rich in symbolic imagery. Also, New Testament biblical lore was not unlike the Gullahs' own oppression and suffering. From the Sea Islands in 1843, A. M. Chreitzberg provides examples of the spontaneous creation of spirituals. In delivering his message, the missionary enforced the concepts of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the meeting, the group was "much affected" by a "soft female voice" singing:

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539]

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[65]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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175 764 533 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poignant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers. He considered it "the most-poetic of all their songs."

•(539)

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
  Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
  To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
  To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
  Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
  When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
  When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 771 797 567 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubtedly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even
more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a
181 clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to
these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations. Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also
17 a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong
567 related by Sam Polite:
533 I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we
(539) wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:

> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[58]

17 Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt.
567 John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never "licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman, Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging. Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for kindness.[59]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

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CHAPTER 8

# *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

•539 782 Do not pass we by, My Jesus, as you go on de road from Jericho to de new Jerusalem, but tarry at de door and speak de word of hope to we heart and blow de breeze of blessing upon us. Almighty and eternal Father, we de prisoners of Hope, turn to de stronghold and begs oona (you) fur give we de long look and de over-coming patience dat we could have 'couragement fur go forward and see de truth dat will make us free. Do God, if it so please you, Massa Jesus, Gib me de long look like Moses, so I could see into de Promised Land from de mount, if my weary feet ain't neber guine to walk in de New Jerusalem with my people. . . .*

"Let me lib wid de musket in one hand an' de Bible in de oder,—dat if I die at de muzzel ob de musket, die in de water, die on de land. I may know I hab de bressed Jesus in my hand, an' hab no fear."
"I hab lef' my wife in de land o' bondage; my little ones dey say eb'ry night, whar is my fader? But when I die, when de bressed mornin' rises, when I shall stan' in de glory, wid one foot on de water an' one foot on de land, den, O Lord, I shall see my wife and' my little chil'en once more."**

793 Sam Polite lived to become senior elder on the Benjamin Fripp plantation. Polite did not know his age, but had "ben a man fore 'gun shoot'" (Battle of Port Royal, November 1861), and became the most respected and sagacious elder on St. Helena Island. Those who knew and observed

*Prayer of Sam Polite, "The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, SHC.
**Gullah soldier's prayer, in Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48.

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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175 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the
771 Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "Gen-
eral Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the De-
777 partment of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:

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Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
O Lord, yes my Lord
. . . . . .
In de mornin' when I rise,
Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
. . . . . .
I would not let you go, my Lord,
I would not let you go,
. . . . . .
I can't stay behin' my Lord,
I can't stay behin'[4]

175 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their
771 attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude to-
ward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood
779 the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a
joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh
795 meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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dition to Florida, one of the black preacher's exhortations was reportedly "worthy of a place in 'American Oratory.'" He urged the men to seek the post of danger and fight bravely. "He who is de fust man to get on de boat," he rallied, "and de fust to jump on shore, him, if he fall, will be de fust to get in heaben." Then, as if himself in the midst of battle, and aroused by the occasion, he added fervently: 17 701

'An' when do battle comes—when you see de Kunn'l put his shoulder to de wheel, and hear de shot and shell flying all around like de rain drops, den remember dat ebery one ob dose shot is a bolt of de Almighty God to send dem rebels to deir eberlasting damnation.[16]

Sacrifices for freedom were not only made by Gullah soldiers, for the war effort was a community enterprise. The men's absence from the plantations placed the burden of breadwinning solely on the women, who shouldered it admirably. Gullah men had at first objected to the women working in the fields because this labor had taken such a heavy toll on female health. But women insisted on working "fur pay," and did so "with a will," sometimes working two tasks in one day. Thus, while the men went off to fight or to work as laborers for the army, field work continued. Women, boys, and girls worked side by side, planting, hoeing, picking, sorting, ginning, and packing the cotton. They also raised vegetables and poultry for consumption and to sell. The women were ambitious and disciplined, laboring with "tireless energy" when working for themselves and their families. Sometimes they even managed to attend newly established schools in order to "catch a lesson." As a way of further supporting loved ones away with the regiment and the army, the women wrote letters. Many of the Northern women's "spare time" was spent writing words of love and encouragement dictated by the freedwomen.[17] It was a period of optimism, when social relations knitted over generations proved tenacious and steady. This was also a time when the faith of the bondspeople seemed to bear fruit. 17 722

The subject of freedom was often symbolically and thematically expressed in Gullah spirituals. While these "prayer songs" appear to be a portent of the future in a Christian context, they contain ambiguity that implies otherwise. Double meanings and surrogates abounded, and Gullah spirituals could often be interpreted in several ways. For example: 17 533 (539).

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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

175 533 771 When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the 175 song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder 701 we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that 533 it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. 175 181 Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus 701 affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to 533 credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that 175 their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" 533 for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had devel- 186 oped over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 175 533

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusalem": (186) (539)

De Talles' tree in Paradise
De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my new Jerusalem!

Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!

Paul and Silas jail-bound
Sing God's praise both night and day,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume: 175 527 533

The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil-War attest to Gullah creativity and further demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 175 533 539

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000 Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761 sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware 533 that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539] children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought [787] to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of [567] the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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761 533 (539) Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior attitude toward death:

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 761 177 790 775 567 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal position. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven, where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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# Epilogue

539•

*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Broke at last! Broke at last!*
*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Gonna praise God till I die!*

*Way up in that valley,*
*Pray-in' on my knees,*
*Tell-in' God a-bout my troubles,*
*And to help me if He please.*

*I did tell him how I suffer,*
*In the dungeon and the chain;*
*And the days I went with head bowed down,*
*An' my broken flesh and pain.*

*I did know Jesus heard me,*
*'Cause the spirit spoke to me,*
*An' said, "Rise, my chile, your children*
*An' you too shall be free."*

*I done 'p'int one mighty captain*
*For to marshal all my hosts;*
*An' to bring my bleeding ones to me,*
*An' not one shall be lost."*

*Now no more weary trav'lin',*
*'Cause my Jesus set me free,*
*An' there's no more auction block for me*
*Since He give me liberty.**

The Thirteenth Amendment, which ended all slavery in the United States, barely slipped through the House of Representatives with the necessary two-thirds vote on January 31, 1865. But for the Gullahs, the "Year of Jubilo" was January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared them "forever free." It was the first truly Happy New Year the Gullahs ever had, and they marked it with a festive occasion organized by General Saxton. The celebration took place in Beaufort. The multitude consisted of the "First South" Regiment, many "white visitors," superintendants, officers, dignitaries, and the band of the Eighth Maine. From the Islands and surrounding mainland came the now for-

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* Quoted from Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 167.

[p. 323]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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APPENDIX D

# The Deity

776 [533] The Gullahs' concept of the deity was not that of a God of wrath, but one of love and mercy. In Gullah music, phrases such as "Kind Jesus," or "In the mornin' when I rise, tell my Jesus Huddy ho," indicate that for these slaves Christ was a warm personal friend, as well as a fellow sufferer. Similarly, the Gullahs' prayers also express how they viewed 776 782 their relationship with God. Prayer was considered actual communication with Jesus, and He was expected to listen and hopefully answer the appeal in some way or another. In such verbal expressions the supplicator reveals inner ideas of the deity. In a study done among the Gullahs in the 1930s, it was observed that by far the most prominent attribute of the deity in prayers was merciful, being mentioned 189 times as opposed to a total of 119 times for all the other attributes ranging from loving to glorious. No description suggesting wrath or vengeance was among the characteristics attributed to the deity.[1] In the following prayer, recorded during the Civil War, one is able to observe the Gullahs' poetic imagery, spirituality, sense of community, and their attitude toward the deity:

### *Aunt Jane's Prayer*

782 539 776 Der Maussuh Jesus, we all uns beg Ooner (you) come make us a call dis yere day. We is nuttin' but poor Etiopian women and people ain't t'ink much 'bout we. We ain't trust ask any of dem great high people for come to we church, but do' you is de one great Maussuh, great too much dan Maussuh Linkum, you ain't shame to care for we African people.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. De sun, he hot too much, de road am dat long and boggy (sandy) and we ain't got no buggy, for send and fetch Ooner. But Maussuh, yo' 'member how yo' walked dat hard walk up Calvary and ain't

[p. 342]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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weary but t'ink about we all dat way. We know you ain't weary for to come to we. We pick out de torns, de prickles, de brier, de backslidin' and de quarrel and de sin out of yo' path so dey shan't hur Ooner pierce feet no mo'.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. We all luns ain't got no good cool water for give yo' when yo' t'irsty. You know, Maussuh, de drought so long, and de well so low, ain't nuttin' but mud to drink. But we gine to take de 'munion cup and fill it wid de tear ob repentence and love clean out ob we heart. Dat all we hab to gib yo', good Maussuh.

An' Maussuh Jesus, you say you gwine stand to de door and knock. But you ain't gwine stand at we door, Maussuh, and knock. We sets de door plum open for yo' and watch up de road for see you.

Sisters (turning to the other women in the church), what for you'all ain't open de door so Maussuh know He welcome? (One woman rose quietly from her knees and set the church door wide.)

Come Maussuh Jesus come! We know you is near, we heart is all just tremble, tremble, we so glad for hab yo' here. And Maussuh, we church ain't good 'nuff for yo' to sit down in, but stop by de door jes' one minute, dear Maussuh Jesus, and whisper one word to we heart—one good word—we do listen—Maussuh.[2]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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had been buried in jars. It was said that these jars also had human bones either beside them or under them, "and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner returned, the spirit of the slave, as a 'sold baka,' remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge." Nassau, *Fetishism in West Africa*, 71; Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 242–43.

### *A "Ghost" Story*

A certain negro church in the country was noted for its strange procedures during the late hours of the night. It was said that at one time a man was driving down the road about midnight, and as he approached the church he saw to his surprise that it was all lit up and the benches filled with people. Just as he drove up the lights went out, and all the people came out, crossed the road in front of him, and went into the cemetery which was just opposite the church on the other side of the road.

Another man was passing the church one night. Just as he got between the church and the cemetery, a ghost came out, caught his horse by the bit and stopped him.

These and similar stories were repeatedly heard throughout the neighborhood, so a young Negro man was not surprised when passing by the church one night to hear voices in the cemetery.

One would say, "You take this one; I take that one."

Then the other, "I take this one; you take that one."

So on they went over and over. The young Negro ran across the field to the Negro preacher's house. After waking the aged preacher, the young man told him "de good Lord an' de devil are in de cemetery a'dividin' up de people." He insisted that the old man go with him to the cemetery to see about it. Reluctantly, the old man consented.

Sure enough as they reached the gate, they heard, "You take this one; I take that one." "I take this one; you take that one." After this was repeated several times, one voice was heard to say, "Well, is that all?" the answer came, "Yes, all except those two at the gate."

That was enough for the two listening ones. The young Negro tells

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 (775) [226]

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery.

*Truss Gawd*

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle swampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: "Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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(533)

"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

> 'Gawd will take care ob me.
> Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
> Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he vanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm. I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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"Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulphur. Dey is say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. No'm. Dey ain fer trubble me sense dat one time. Uncle Murphy he witch doctor, en he bin tell me how fer fend em off. Dat man full ob knowledge. He must hap Gawd mind in em. So I totes meh powder en sulphur en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd." 539 776 825 789

[p. 354 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Bertha Smith and*
*the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**LAY DOWN BODY**

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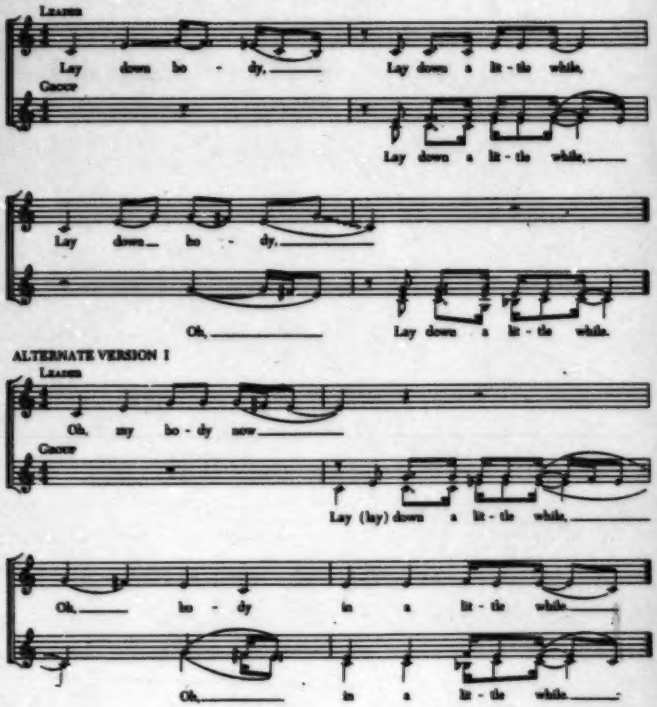

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1980) 1989
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South Carolina
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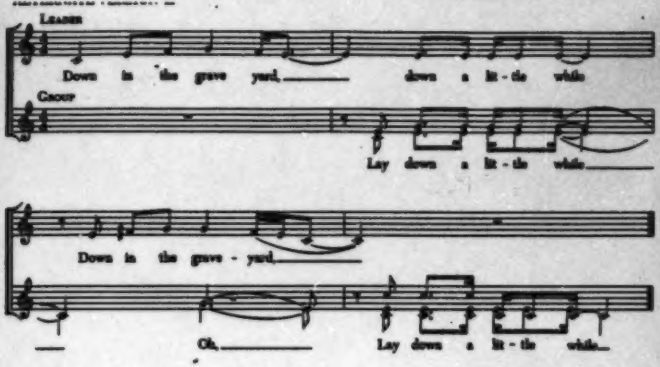


Leader: I know you tired,
Group: Lay down a little while,
Leader: I know you tired,
Group: Lay down a little while.

Come from a distance . . . etc.

Oh body now . . . etc.

Ain't you had a hard time? . . . etc.

Last December . . . etc.

Tedious was my journey . . . etc.

Rocky was my road, Lord . . . etc.

Ain't you got somebody gone? . . . etc.

I got somebody gone . . . etc.

Oh my body now . . . etc.

Just keep a-rollin' . . . etc.

Body, ain't you tired? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you lonesome? . . . etc.

Body, ain't you weary? . . . etc.

Lay down body,
Lay down a little while,
Lay down body,
Lay down a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

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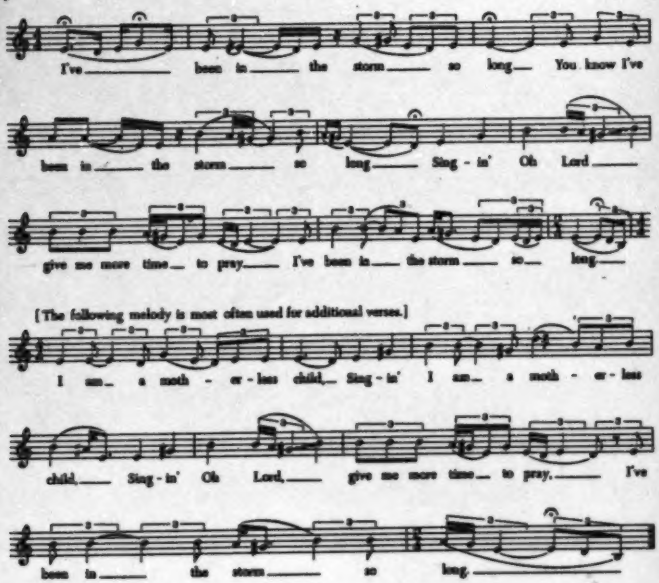
## BEEN IN THE STORM SO LONG




This is a needy time,
This is a needy time,
Singin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

Lord, I need you now . . . etc.

Lord, I need your prayer . . . etc.

Stop this wicked race . . . etc.

Stop all my wicked ways . . . etc.

Somebody need you now . . . etc.

My neighbors need you now . . . etc.

My children need you now . . . etc.

Just look what a shape I'm in,
Just look what a shape I'm in,
Cryin' Oh Lord, give me more time to pray,
I've been in the storm so long.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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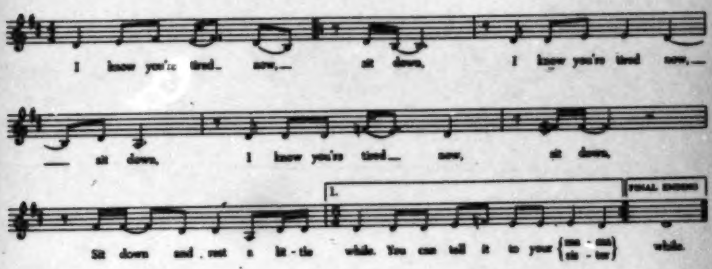
533
●539 *The Moving Star Hall congregation*
**I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED**




You can tell it to your {mama, / sister, } sit down,
You can tell it to your {mama, / sister, } sit down,
You can tell it to your {mama, / sister, } sit down,
Sit down and rest a little while.

You come from a distance, sit down . . . etc.

I know you weary, sit down . . . etc.

Oh sit down servant, sit down . . . etc.

I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
I know you're tired now, sit down,
Sit down and rest a little while.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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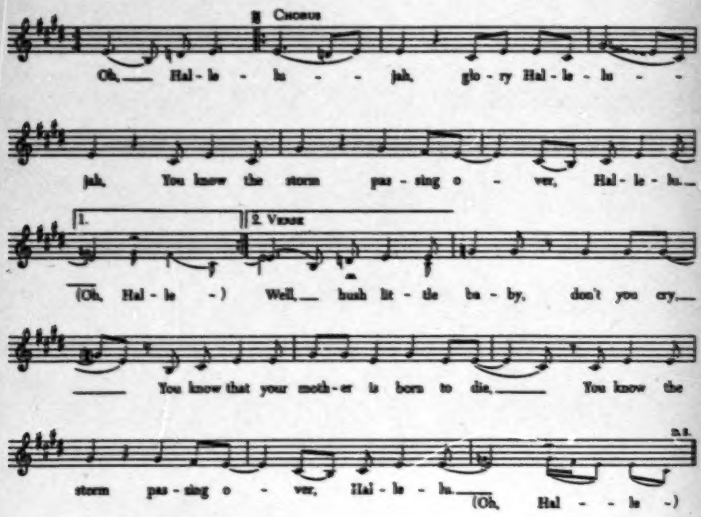
*Mrs. Bertha Smith and*
533 *the Moving Star Hall congregation*
•539 THE STORM IS PASSING OVER




Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down,
Sometimes I'm almost to the ground,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus—2 times)

Some say Peter, some say Paul,
Ain't but one God for we all,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

The tallest tree in Paradise
Christians call the tree of life,
You know the storm is passing over,
Hallelu.

(Chorus—2 times)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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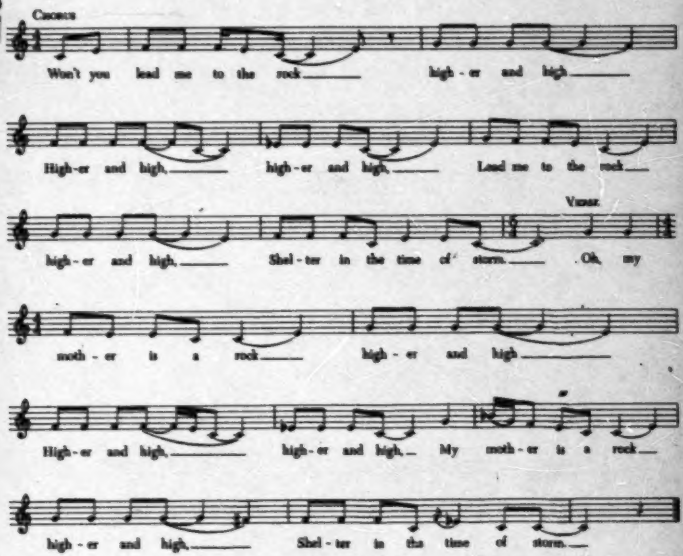
*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## LEAD ME TO THE ROCK HIGHER AND HIGH*




*Also sung elsewhere in the South "Lead Me to the Rock Higher Than I."

(Chorus)

Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Won't you lead me to the rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh King Jesus is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

(Chorus)

Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Higher and high, higher and high,
Oh my God is a rock higher and high,
Shelter in the time of storm.

Variant of verse:
Oh my God is a rock in a weary land,
Weary land, weary land,
God is a rock in a weary land,
Shelter in a time of storm.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

*Mr. John Smalls*

## EVERYBODY HAS A TURN

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In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. We put him in the front to take the text. Then take myself, I follow. Then whosoever I wanted to assist—Eli Smith or any other leader. And we go on that way. Everybody has a turn.

We have prayer service the first Sunday night in the month; and the second Sunday night let the brothers preach; then the third Sunday night we let the sisters testify; then we go right back on the fourth Sunday night the brothers will preach again. We used to had it just how it come. We feel like prayer meeting tonight, we have that. But later days, we decided we would mark it out, that every person would know where he going.

That way we trying to do it now. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

(533) Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you wanted to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody. They can't sing long as you're talking; wait 'til you finish talk.

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*Mr. John Smalls*

## TURN THESE BIG FISH LOOSE

Now friends, we still moving on.
I'm not going to linger with you
'Cause I want to turn these big fish loose.

Brother Deas will come and set the foundation,
The road we going to travel by,
That all of you could know the way to go.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

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## TONIGHT YOU GOT A BLESSED CHANCE

I thank you for this great privilege I have before you.
You know from last January '64, I didn't have to been here.
My face could have been under the clay.
But at this same particular hour I have a chance
To rub shoulder to shoulder with you,
I can speak language to language,
I can look face to face.
It is a great joy.

Now we started on a new task, started a new race.
From the twenty-fifth morning we been running,
We been wrastling to behold this very hour of the night.
How many haven't lived to been able to see the day?
Some gone by car,
Some pass away with fire,
Some gone by water.

All part of the world is stirred up now.
Tonight you got a blessed chance to go to the house of God.
Some want to come out tonight and can't come,
And some can come that wouldn't come.
But the day will come.
The day will come.

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

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## YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF

You can feel yourself in that hall. You have a chance to explain yourself —anybody who want to. But in church on Sunday, we just have one preacher talk. And you might get a chance to raise a song or pick out one person to make a few remarks. But to that hall, everybody could have they way, tell your own story. That's the difference it makes.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. John Smalls*

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## GOOD MORNING WARRIORS

Good morning Warriors!
How y'all feel?
I'm feeling special alive.

I just rise to tell you all my aim
And whole heart's desire.
My desire is to go the whole way.
I give thanks for being brought
Not from just last December
But from an infant birth.

I can say, "Are we yet alive
To see each other's face."
Thank God for His redeeming grace.

Since last January
Rocky was my road,
Tedious was my journey.
What troubles have I seen,
What conflicts have I passed.

If I had ten thousand tongues
It wouldn't be enough
To give thanks to Thee
Who took my feet out of the miry clay
And put them on a solid rock.

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[p. 80]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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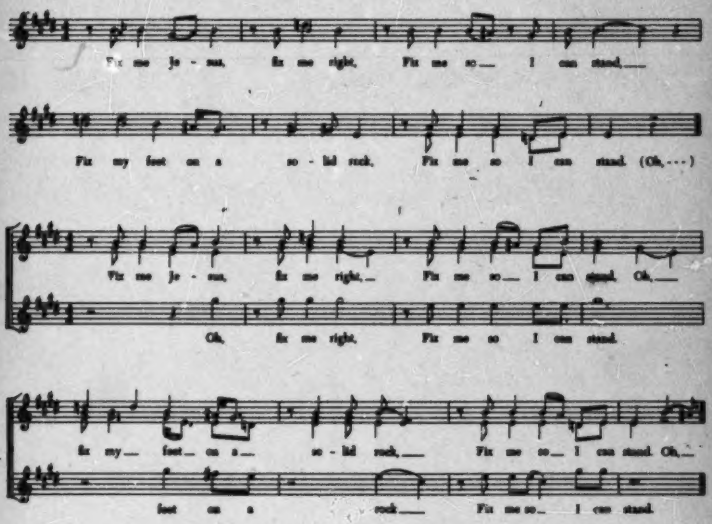
*Mrs. Mary Pinckney and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**FIX ME JESUS**




My tongue tired and I can't speak plain,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand.

Fix my home, Lord, fix it right . . . etc.

Fix my family, Lord, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix my neighbor, fix them right . . . etc.

Fix me warrior, fix me right . . . etc.

Fix me Jesus, fix me right,
Fix me so I can stand,
Fix my feet on a solid rock,
Fix me so I can stand.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

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## A SERMON: LET NOT THEM THAT EAT DESPISE

I'm not gonna tarry before you, Warriors, I'm glad to be here to mingle my voice among my sisters and brothers. I hope and trust that if this sermon don't do you any good, I hope it won't do you no harm.

You know you can go from one part of the Bible to the other. God say we should love one another. Let not them that eat despise them that eat not. Let us remember one another. Don't let us be like Dives now. Let us try to be just as Lazarus. Dives despised the poor. Lazarus went and ask just for a crumb that fall from the table, and before Dives had the passion on him to give, he call the dog on him. But the poor beast have compassion and lick Lazarus.

Time going pass and go on. Time come along when the poor man die. He went on home to God and been at rest. Rich man Dives die, and his home was in Hell. When he lift up his eye in Hell and saw Lazarus in Heaven, he began to memorize. He know he didn't do right, but he cries, "Oh Father, let Lazarus come and dip his finger in the water and cool my trials and trouble."

God says, "No. You had all the good times, plenty of money. You didn't need Lazarus at that time. You need him now, but it too late."

Dives say, "I got five brother. Just give me a chance that I may go back and tell them to get their heart right, that they may shun this torment place I'm in."

And He say, "No. I got Moses and I got the prophets; let them hear what they say. If they don't believe the prophets, they won't believe you, Dives."

Pray for me, Warriors. Let us sing like we singing for the last time. Let us pray like we are praying for the last time. Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow the sun may shine on your grave. Jesus told us to dig deep and lay your foundation on a solid rock, that when the storm of life blow against you, you're gonna find your Father rock. If you dwell upon Him, everythin' will be all right. The world can't do you no harm.

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Mrs. Dorson Smith

# I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR I'M GOING

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Good morning, Warriors,
I'm sitting down right now,
I feel like singing and shouting, Jesus,
But I got to be very careful.
I don't know how far in '65 I'm going,
For my heart pump me from one side to the other,
And then it hurt me from one side to the other.
I don't know when my awful day will surely come
And then my appointed hour.

I can say this new brand morning
In another January,
"Are we yet alive to see each other's face."
Oh glory, and praise Jesus,
Give us of His dying and redeeming grace.
I know from last January,
Many days have I looked up on the highway
Wondering which way I must go.
Lord, you know I thank you for this hour of
The morning,
For I know it's none of my goodness,
I know if justice had plumb the line
All my daily travels would have cut off
And then never no more return.

If I shall cut off from God
I don't want to have no gathering to do.
I want to live so that I shall pass from
Life unto death.
I don't know if I going to be in my bed,
And then I don't know if I going to be on the highway.
I know this hour of the morning
I got peace with everybody,
And then I got peace
With all my neighbors' children.
I can say this hour of the morning,
I am just what I am.

Thank you, Jesus,
I don't know how far I'm going,
Got a pain racking the body right now.
And then I got to be very careful, Jesus.
I ask you all to pray for me
So I may be able to run on.

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*Mrs. Junie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

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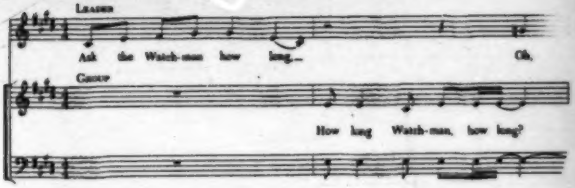
**ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG**




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.

Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

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Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

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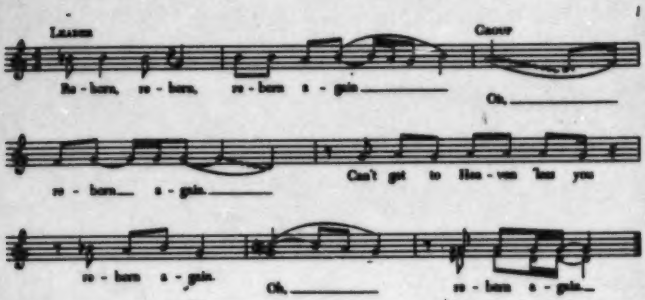
***Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation***

**REBORN AGAIN**




Leader: Won't you reborn Member, won't you reborn again,
Chorus: Oh, reborn again.
Leader: Well, you must keep a-rollin', get to reborn again,
Chorus: Oh, reborn again.

Oh, reborn warriors, won't you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Yes you can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh, goin' to the river, gonna take my walk,
Oh, reborn again.
Meet Jesus mother, gonna stand and talk,
Oh, reborn again.

Just let me put on my travelin' shoes,
Oh, reborn again.
I'm goin' to Heaven, gonna carry the news,
Oh, reborn again.

Let me tell you the natural fact,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven, ain't comin' back,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sing and shout,
Oh, reborn again.
There ain't nobody there gonna turn me out,
Oh, reborn again.

When I get to Heaven, gonna sit right down,
Oh, reborn again.
Ask Jesus mother for my starry crown,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan is mad and I'm so glad,
Oh, reborn again.
Lost the soul he thought he had,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh Satan he walking like a snake in the grass,
Oh, reborn again.
He always walk in a Christian path,
Oh, reborn again.

Wonder what Satan keep growlin' about,
Oh, reborn again.
He chained up in Hell and he can't get out,
Oh, reborn again.

Oh one of these mornings and it won't be long,
Oh, reborn again.
I'll see some grapes a-hanging down,
Oh, reborn again.

I pick a grape and I suck the juice,
Oh, reborn again.
Sweetest grape I ever taste,
Oh, reborn again.

Reborn, reborn, reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.
Can't get to Heaven 'less you reborn again,
Oh, reborn again.

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*Mr. James Mackey*

**MORNING**

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Here am I again once more, Heavenly Father,
The worm of the dust
Ready to bow this hour of the morning
On my bruised and bending knee.
Thank you, My Father, for your guardin' angel,
That guard me all night long
Until morning light appear.
And before he went from his watch,
He touch my eyes this morning with a finger of love,
And my eye become open
And behold a brand new Monday morning.
Oh, God, if you so please
Give us that holding out spirit,
That you may own us all
When we done trod across the many street of Charleston.
Oh God, what I say for our neighbors,
And the neighbors' children around in this vicinity,
Oh please, Our Father,
Make them more patient, more acknowledge,
May we love each and one another.
Help us to help each other.
And each other's cross to bear.
And Our Father, if you please,
Remember the President of this United States,
Oh, remember the officials.
And Our Father, once more I say
For the President of the N.A.A.C.P.,
Throw thy arms of protection around them,
May they achieve victory in whatever they may undertake to do.
Lead them, Our Father,
Through the unfriendly world where there's no friendly grace.
We know we must fight to increase our courage
That we may be able to endure the pain.
I ask you to please remember mankind far away,
Whatever his town may be.
Make him realize, that awful day will surely come.
And then have mercy, My Father,
When I done walk the last mile of the way,
Done all that you 'signed my hand to do,
When I shall come down off the stage of action,
Must surrender under the black banner of Death,
Ask you, Jesus, give me a resting place
Somewhere in your Kingdom
Which Job declare
The wicked cease from troubling.
Amen.

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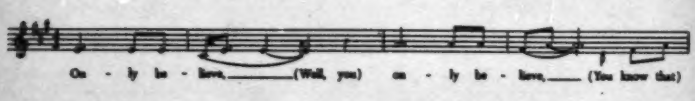
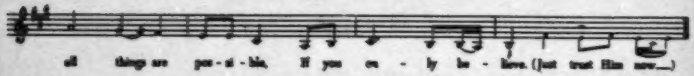
*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

**ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE IF YOU ONLY BELIEVE**




ALTERNATE VERSION

Only believe, (well, you) only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Just trust Him now) only believe, (well, you) only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Keep on prayin', if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

(Tell the warriors, if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

Only believe (never doubt Him now), only believe,
(You know that) all things are possible,
If you only believe.

(He'll be your {mother, / father,} if you) only believe, only believe,
All things are possible,
If you only believe.

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## JACK AND MARY AND THE DEVIL

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This is a old story. Very old. Way back in the time I heard my old parents talk about. Slavery time. Time when the Yankee beat the Rebel. They said it was a true-life story of Jack and Mary.

Jack and Mary was brother and sister. Mary was old enough to keep company, so a young man come to Mary mother house one day, and ask Mary mother could he keep Mary company. Mother ask Mary, "Do you love him?" And she said yes. So mother tell him, "Yes, I don't mind."

So after a while Mary mother tell this young man that he could take her out. But Mary didn't know who this young man was; this young man was the Devil. He had horse feet and he had horn on his head, but he had all of 'em cover.

Jack heard his mother tell Mary she could go, so he went and say, "Mama, could I go with my sister?"

She say, "I don't mind if Mary don't mind." But Mary tell Jack, "No, I don't want you to go with me; you is too young."

The old Devil had a high-top buggy and horse. And Jack had a horse. Well Jack was a very wise boy, so he study a plan, and full his pocket with corn. Then Jack went on ahead, and he get in a store and turn into a gold ring. All that time Mary and her boyfriend get in the cart and began traveling. When they get to the store Mary said, "Oh, I love that ring."

The old Devil—young boyfriend—say, "Jump out and price it."

The man say, "Nine thousand dollar."

Devil say, "Well that just my pocket change." So he got it. All that time Mary didn't know she brother turn to a ring in the store, and that's the very ring Mary have love. She put her brother on her finger and didn't know. And all that time they travel until they get to this young man home. And when they go in, oh he had a beautiful home.

Then when time come to eat she ask what they are going have for supper. He say, "Oh, pull out one of them drawer and cook one them dead man in there."

And then Mary began to get trouble in mind. She realize she was down in Hell. She said, "Lord, when my brother have want to come with me, I should of saw right and let him come."

And then, Jack disappear off Mary finger, say, "Oh Sister, when I ask to come with you, you run me back, but how now?" And then Mary was so happy. Then when time come for go to bed that old Devil put her to bed and fall on the floor and start for sleep. Mary knew that Jack was on her finger. As soon as the old boy got fast asleep, Mary and Jack began to travel.

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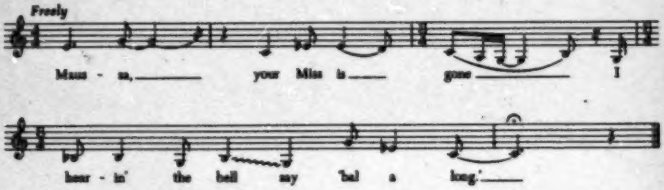
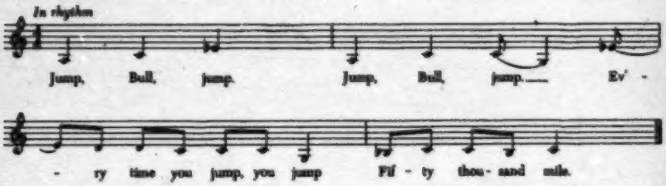
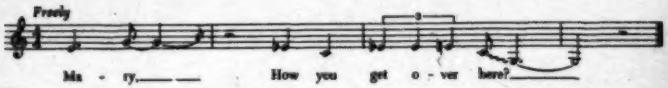
Well the old Devil had a rooster; he was a teller. And as they began to travel, old Rooster get in the Devil face and spur 'em. Say:




Devil say, "How long gone?"
Say, "Long time."
Then he tell the rooster, "Go down yonder and get my old bull that jump fifty mile away." And the Devil get on the old bull back, say:




Well, he made one jump, he jump right by Jack and Mary, and Jack drop one grain corn, and it turn a ocean of water. And all that time it take for that water to dry up, Jack and sister was far away. Then the Devil made a loud cry, saying:



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Mary say:

*In rhythm*

I drink,_ My horse drink,_ My broth - er drink,_

*Freely*

Til I_____ Get o - ver here._____

Old Bull say:

*In rhythm*

You drink, I drink. You drink, I drink. You drink, I drink.

He drink, and bust the bull belly loose, and when he think the bull was going fifty thousand mile an hour, the bull couldn't make but five mile an hour. And old Devil take some string and tie the old bull belly up. And all that time Jack and Mary was far away. Then he get on the old bull back and say:

*In rhythm*

You jump, I jump. You jump, I jump. You jump, I jump.

Ev' - ry' time you jump, you jump Fif - ty thou - sand mile.__

And jump right by Mary and Jack. Then Jack drop another grain of corn, and it turn a whole mountain, 'cross and 'cross the world. Old Devil say:

"Mary,
How you get
Over here?"

• 539

Mary say:

"I climb,
My brother climb,
My horse climb,
'Till I get
Over here."

Bull say:

"You climb, I climb,
You climb, I climb,
Every time you climb,
You slide back down."

Now he couldn't climb. Every time the bull climb to catch Mary and Jack, he slide back down. And when he did climb the old mountain down, then Jack and Mary was across a bridge another three miles away, and he was about getting given up in mind. He say:

"Mary, tell me how you
Get over here?"

Mary say:

"I root, my brother root,
My horse root,
'Till I get over here."

Bull say:

"You root, I root,
You root, I root,
You root, I root."

Then old Devil and old Bull root beneath the pine tree, and that pine tree fall 'cross the bridge, the bridge bend, and that's the way that story end.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## THE RABBIT AND THE WOLF AT THE DANCE

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The Rabbit and the Wolf been going to a dance one night, and the Rabbit tricky, you know. The Rabbit was in love with the Wolf girlfriend, and the Rabbit want to get close to she. So after they went to a joint, and the music start to play, Rabbit ask Wolf girlfriend to dance. It was a fast dancing record, but Rabbit walk up and tell Wolf, "Wolf, this music call for close dance." He tell Wolf that music call for close dance that he would get a chance to talk with the Wolf girlfriend. Well, the Wolf see him dancing close with the girlfriend, Wolf wouldn't take it for no harm. That was cut and dry, see. Cut and dry.

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THE RABBIT AND THE PARTRIDGE

Everybody think that a rabbit have the most sense, but one day the Partridge outsensed the Rabbit. This day the Partridge went out on a walk, come back home with his head under his wing. On the way back he stopped at Bunny Rabbit's house and say, "Oh Rabbit, how you like my head?" And all the time he had he head under he wing.

Rabbit say, "I like it fine; where *is* your head?"

Partridge say, "You old fool Rabbit, you ain't got no sense. I leave my head home for my wife shave."

The Rabbit take off and went home to his wife, say, "Old Gal, I got a job for you. Come on and chop my head off. I want you to give me a haircut."

She say, "Oh Rabbit, no! I not supposed to cut your head off. If I cut your head off you'll die."

Rabbit say, "No I won't die either, 'cause the Partridge cut he head off, leave 'em home for he wife to shave. I don't see why I can't cut mine off."

So he argue and argue until he make his wife get the knife, and the wife chop the old Bunny head off. And then the Bunny die. The old lady cry. Then she skin the rabbit and eat him.

The old lady went to the Partridge and say, "Partridge, why you did that?" Say, "Why you take your head under your wing and fool the Bunny that you leave your head home for your wife to shave, when you know it wasn't true?"

Partridge say, "Well, you ain't no fool, and if you'll only keep that up, we sure will get along." After that the Partridge have two wives—have his wife and then the Bunny's wife.

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## BARNEY McCABE

538 We learn some these stories from my uncle, Harry Williams. He was kind of rough, but he really could tell some stories.

• 539 Once upon a time it was a twin sister and brother. The sister name was Mary and the brother name was Jack. One day they decided to go on a long traveling. But Jack was a wise child and he told Mary to go in the house and ask Mother could we go. Her mother say, "Yes, you could go, but take care." So Jack say, "Wait a minute, Sister," and went to the barn and get four grain of corn. And Mary said to Jack, "What you gonna do with that corn?" Jack said, "In a long while, you will see." So he put the corn in his pocket.

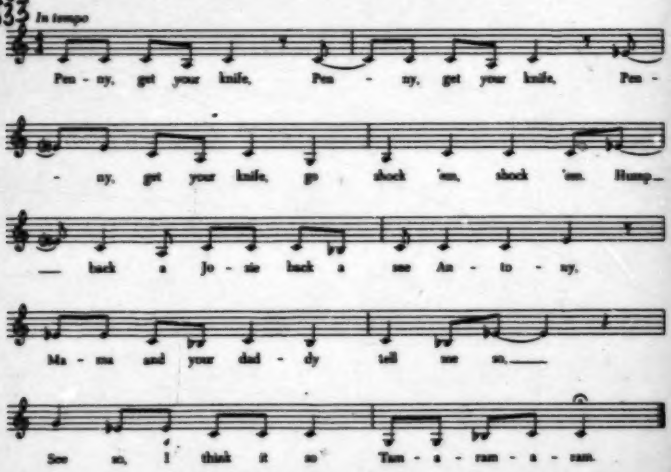
Then before he leave home Jack told his mother, say, "Mama, I got three dogs--Barney McCabe, Doodle-le-doo and Soo-Boy. I going to leave a glass of milk on the table. If you see that glass of milk turn to blood, I want you to turn my dogs loose."

So they went on traveling and all the time wondering what was the end going be. Pretty soon it come dark and they begin to get weary. They knocked at an old lady house. The old lady run to the door, say, "Who is it?"

Jack say, "Me, Mama. Could we spend the night here? 'Cause we far from home and we very tired." Old lady say, "Oh yes, come on in."

All that time she was a witch-craft and the children didn't know it. She fed them and put them to bed. She had a knife she call "Tommy Hawk." After she put the children to bed she began to sharpen it up:

539
533 *In tempo*



● 539 Children say, "Grandma, what's all that noise? We can't sleep."

She say, "That ain't nothing but your grandma frock-tail switchin' to get your supper hot. You all go back to sleep."

So Jack begin to wonder how they can get out of there. Then he remember the old lady have a room full of pumpkin. Jack takes two pumpkin and put 'em in the bed and cover 'em over, pretend it was he and his sister. Then Jack throw one grain of corn to the window, and it turn into a ladder. Jack and Mary climbed the ladder down and they start traveling for home.

The old lady sharpen her knife faster:

"Penny, get your knife,
Penny, get your knife,
Penny, get your knife, go shock 'em, shock 'em.

Hump back a Josie back a see Antony,
Mama and your daddy tell me so,
See so, I think it so
Tam-e-ram-e-ram."

She didn't hear no noise, so she sneak in the room and chop up the pumpkins in the bed. Then she ran in the kitchen and got a dishpan, and pull back the cover. And when she think she putting the meat in the pan for cook for breakfast, she drop the pumpkin in the pan. And Jack and Mary was long gone.

She get mad, grab Tommy Hawk and flew down on those children. The children drop another grain of corn and it turn a tall pine tree. And Jack and Mary flew up in that tree. The old lady start cut on the tree, say:

(533) *In tempo*

A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block, A

chip on the old block, a chip on the new block.

Then Jack drop a grain of corn down from the pine tree, and back home that glass of milk turn to blood. Them dogs begin to holler. Jack's mother (533) ran in the yard and turned the dogs loose. Jack say:

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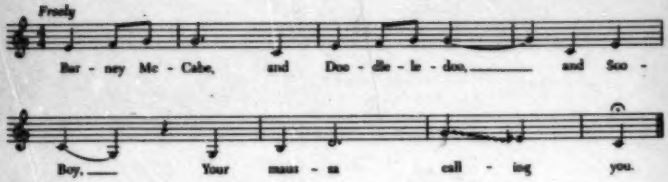
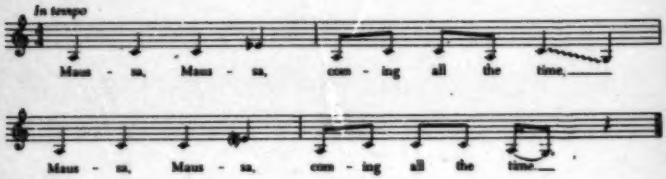



Dogs say:




Old witch say:

"A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block,
A chip on the old block, a chip on the new block."

Every time she chip, the tree lean and lean. Jack call:

"Barney McCabe, and Doodle-le-doo, and Soo-Boy,
Your mausa almost gone."

Dogs say:

"Mausa, Mausa, coming all the time,
Mausa, Mausa, coming all the time."

539 Jack drop another corn, the last corn, and it turn a bridge. And then when the old witch pull the ax up for take the last chop and chop Jack and Mary in the head, the dogs ran up. Barney McCabe cut her throat, Doodle-le-doo suck her blood and Soo-Boy drag her on the bridge, the bridge bend and that's the way that story end.

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*Mr. Joe Hunter*

**WHAT YOU GONNA DO?**

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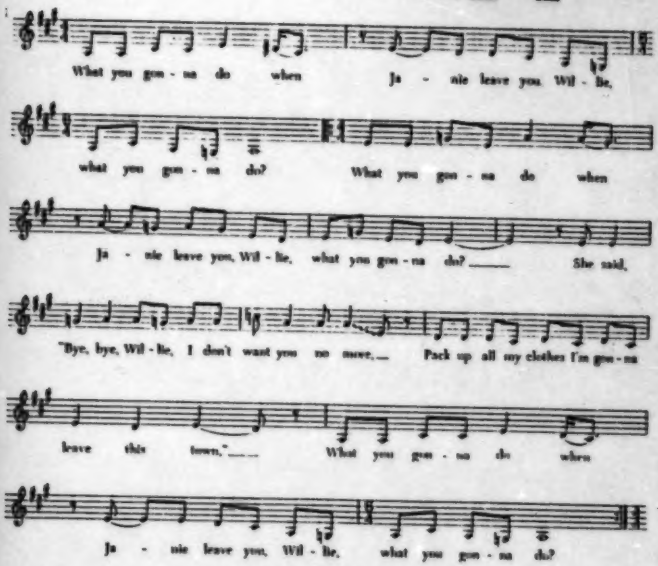



What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, baby, I don't want you no more",
Sitting here crying, Janie, please don't go,
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

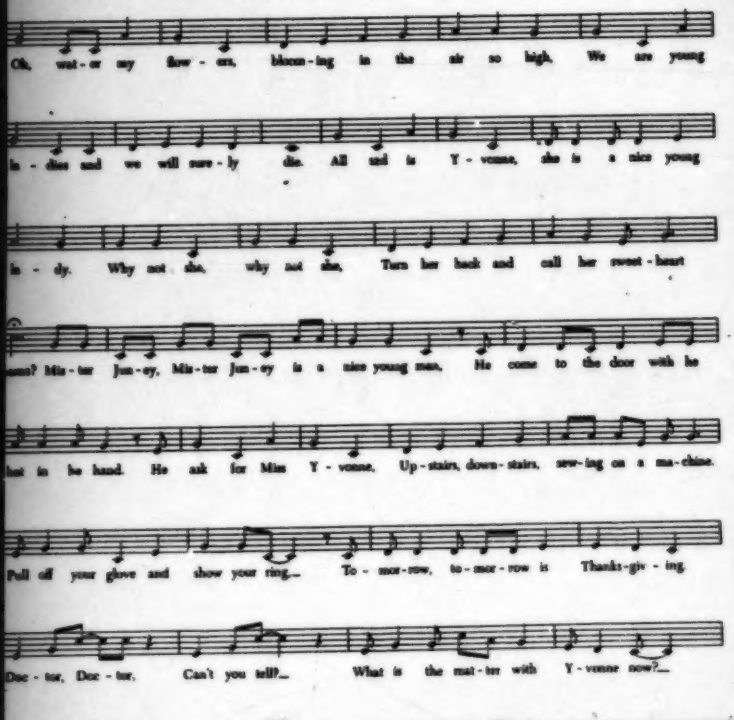
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?
She said, "Bye bye, Willie, I'm putting you down,
Pack up my clothes I'm gonna leave this town",
What you gonna do when Janie leave you, Willie, what you gonna do?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

**WATER MY FLOWERS**

533
539



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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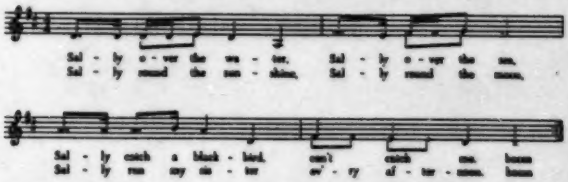
*The Hunter and Pinckney children*

**SALLY ROUND THE SUNSHINE**



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children*

**OLD LADY COME FROM BOOSTER**

533
53%

Old la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter, The roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't get egg like she use - ter. Oh, Ma, you look so, Oh, Pa, you look so. Who been here since I were gone?— Two lit - tle boy with the blue cap on.— Hang 'em on a— hick - 'ry stick, Rank - y tank - y— down my shoe, The Buf - fa - lo Boy gon - na buy it back. Pain - y me hip, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me knee, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me leg, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me el - bow, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me shoul - der, Rank - y tank - y. Pain - y me neck, Rank - y tank - y. On— — up to me head,— Rank - y tank - y. Don't— leave me here, Rank - y tank - y.— Old — la - dy come from Boos - ter, She had two hen and a roos - ter. The roos - ter died, the old la - dy cried, She could-n't tell the news like she use - ter.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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●539

*Mrs. Janie Hunter, Mrs. Mary Pinckney, and their children*

**SHOO TURKEY SHOO**

SOLO

An - nie? You see my tur - key? Which

CHOIR

Ma'am?___ Yes, ma'am.

side he go - in? Will you help me catch him?

So and so and,

Get read - y let's go.___ Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo,

Yes, ma'am. Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo,

Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo.

Shoo tur - key, shoo, shoo, Shoo tur - key, shoo.

Clapping pattern often used

I. II. III.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**TALKIN' 'BOUT A GOOD TIME**

533
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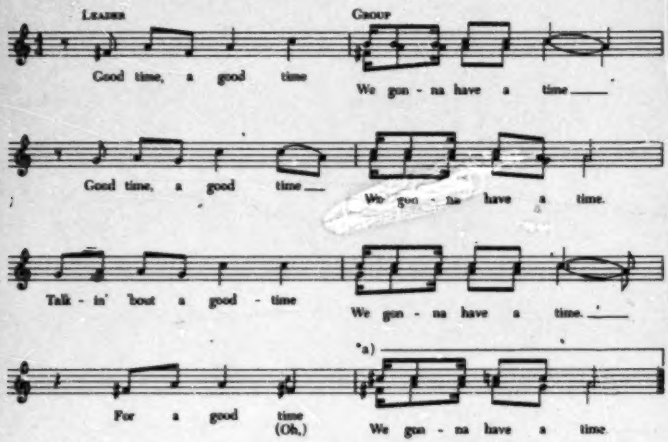

Leader: Singing for a good time,
Group: We gonna have a time,
Leader: For a good time,
Group: We gonna have a time.

Praying for a good time . . . etc.

Let's have a good time . . . etc.

Talkin' 'bout a good time,
We gonna have a time,
For a good time,
We gonna have a time.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Miss Laura Rivers*

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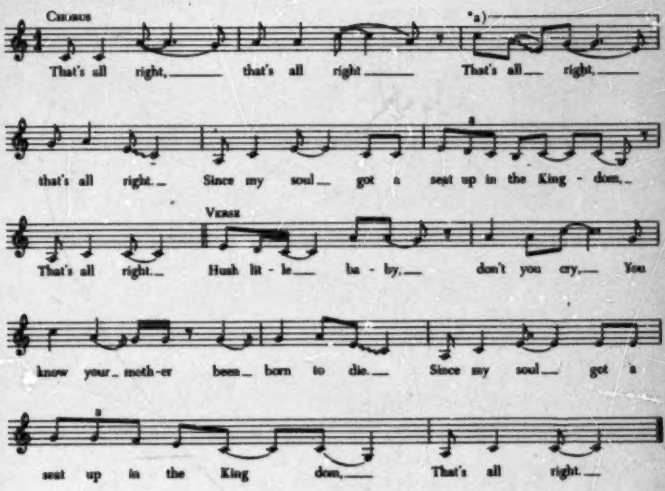
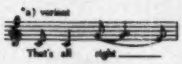
•539

## THAT'S ALL RIGHT




You go brute me, you go scorn me,
You go scandalize my name.
Since my soul go a seat up in the Kingdom,
That's all right.

(Chorus)

One of these mornings, it won't be long,
You ask for me and I'll be gone.
Since my soul . . . etc.

Two white horses side by side,
One of those horses Jesus ride.
Since my soul . . . etc.

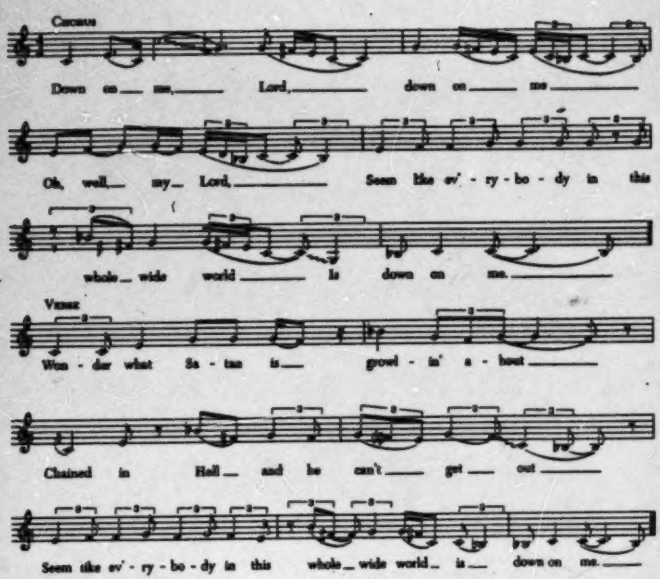
(Chorus)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

**DOWN ON ME**

533
539




I been baked and I been scorned,
I been talked about sure as you're born.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

When I get to Heaven going to sing and shout,
Nobody there going to put me out.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

(Chorus)
Down on me, Lord, down on me.
Oh, well, my Lord, seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

You can talk about me just as you please;
The more you talk the more I'll bend my knees.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

One of these days and it won't be long,
You go look for me and I'll be gone.
Seem like everybody in this whole wide world
Is down on me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter and*
*the Moving Star Hall congregation*

**YOU GOT TO MOVE**

533
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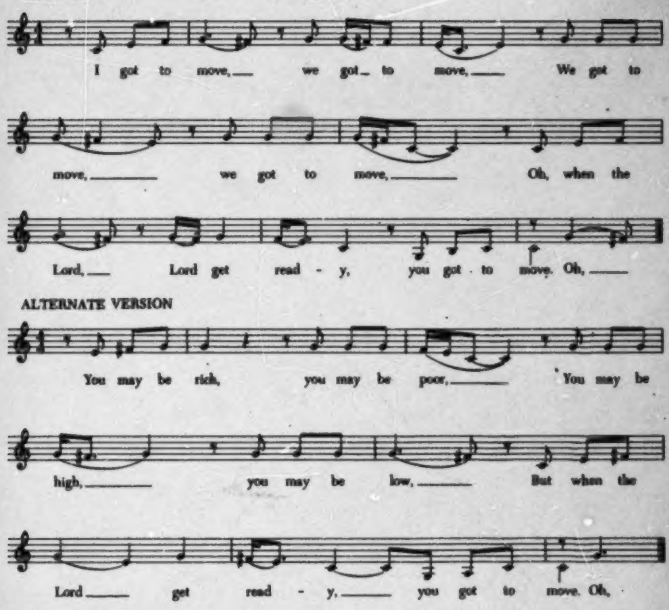



My brother move, my brother move,
My brother move, my brother move.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

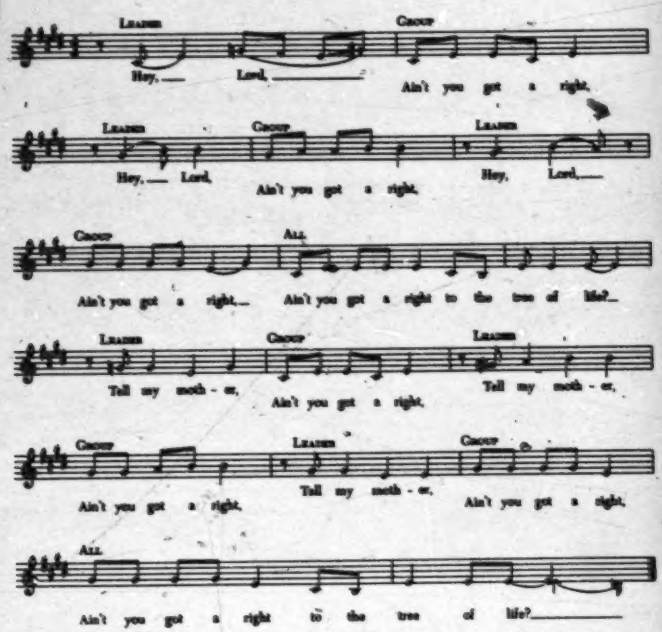
O sometime I'm up, sometime I'm down,
Sometime I'm almost to the ground.
Oh, when the Lord get ready, you got to move.

Oh we got to move, we got to move,
We got to move, we got to move.
When the Lord, Lord get ready, you got to move.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*The Moving Star Hall congregation*

533
539 **AIN'T YOU GOT A RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE?**




Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
Leader: Tell my father,
Group: Ain't you got a right,
All: Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

Tell my children . . . etc.

Tell the world . . . etc.

Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right,
Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right;
Hey, Lord,
Ain't you got a right,
Ain't you got a right to the tree of life?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

533
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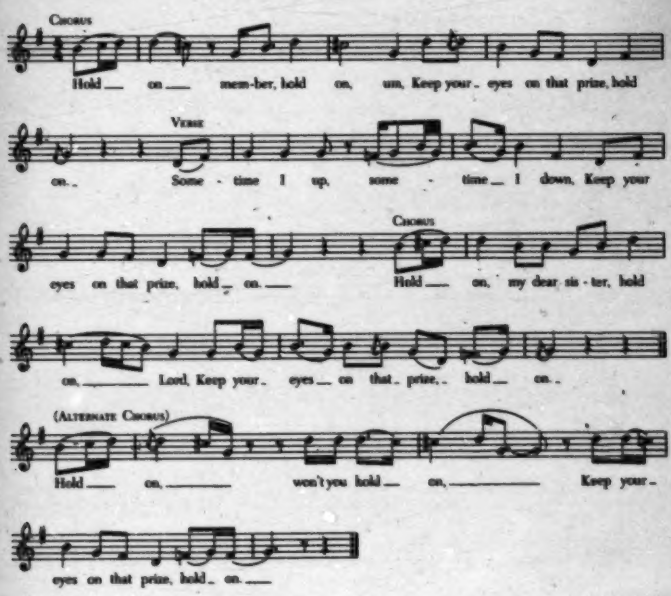


♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(Chorus)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(Verse)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(Chorus)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement. [114] [668]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I WILL OVERCOME

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•539

I want to be like him, I want to be like him, I will be like him some -

day (hay), Hon-ey, down in my heart, Lord, I do be - lieve, Oh,

ALTERNATE VERSE

I'll ov-er-come some - day. Oh, I will sing a song, I will sing a song, Oh,

I want to sing a song some - day (hay) (hay), Down in o-my heart, Lord,

I do be - lieve, Oh, I want to sing a song some - day. Oh,

ALTERNATE VERSE

I do be - lieve, Oh, I do be - lieve, Yes, I do be - lieve some -

day, Down in my heart, I do be - lieve, Oh,

I will ov - er - come some - day.

I want to be like him . . . etc.

I will sing a song . . . etc.

I want to walk like him . . . etc.

I want to pray like him . . . etc.

I'll see the king . . . etc.

Oh, I will overcome, I will overcome, I will overcome someday.
Lordy, down in my heart, I do believe, I will overcome someday.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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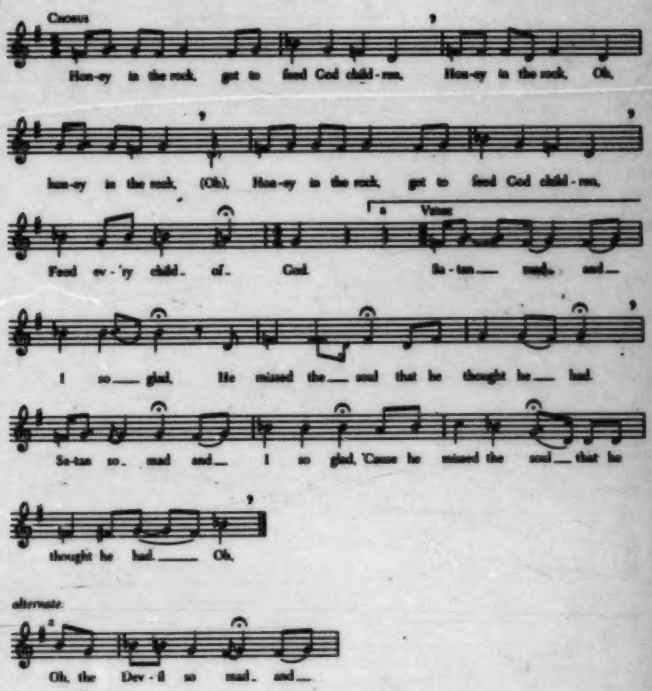
• 539

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HONEY IN THE ROCK



4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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•539

(Chorus)
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

Satan mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.
Oh, the Devil so mad and I so glad,
He missed the soul that he thought he had.

(Chorus)

Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.
Oh, 'member, hush little baby don't you cry,
You know that your mother is born to die.

(Chorus)

Oh, children, one of these mornings I was walking 'long,
I saw the grapes was a-hanging down,
Lord, I pick a bunch and I suck the juice,
It's the sweetest grape that I ever taste.

(Chorus)
Oh, honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Honey in the rock, honey in the rock,
Honey in the rock, gat to feed God children,
Feed every child of God.

142
291
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7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

● 539 /i bine dziŋk di βore en i got zait ϕe ste ie/

---0---

*She has partaken of the water*
*and she has the right to live here.*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



194 /z/ The voiced alveolar fricative is a reflex of English /z/: [hɔz] 'house', [ɸziz] 'freeze'.

4.3. The Texts

128 The following texts are included in this study prim-
539 arily to show the language in context. The selections offer a range of speech styles and topics which manifest many phonological, syntactical, and morphological constructions characteristic of Creole languages. The English version accompanying each transcription obscures many of the Creole patterns. Consequently, an attempt is made to present a word-for-word translation which corresponds with each line of phonetic script. This procedure is more
[193] amenable for illustrating underlying Creole constituents such as the complementizer /fɔ/, the introductory verb /sie/, the future marker /go/ and many constructions other than those specified in this study.

[194] The selected passages reveal specific segmental phonological phenomena such as vowel epenthesis, consonant reduction, assimilation, and various phones corresponding to, or substituted for English phones such as /β/ and /w/: /ɸ/ and /f/: /t/ for initial /ð/ and /θ/: and /o/ and /ʃ/ for /s/. No effort has been made to eliminate false starts,
[126] deviant words, or stuttering. Occasionally, it has been extremely difficult to hear certain sequences because of

128 outside interferences in some tapes made with a group or
539 outside in open fields where birds and other natural noises
126 interfered with the clarity of the recording. In such cases the notation (...) is used to indicate that a shorter passage, usually no more than a few words, has been deleted because of unintelligibility.

128 Terminal junctures and pauses have been indicated by a single bar: /

Creaky voice is indicated by a wavy underline: ~

English translations of the preverbal markers and the third person pronominal forms often misrepresent the Creole utterance. The following notations are used to symbolize these forms:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (3 ɗn) | third person | masculine | nominative | |
| (3 ʔn) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕn) | " | " | neuter | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | possessive |
| (3 ʔp) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ɗp) | " | " | masculine | objective |
| (3 ʔo) | " | " | feminine | " |
| (3 ϕo) | " | " | neuter | " |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | Present continuative | /da/ |
| (PAC) | Past " | /bɪna/ |
| (T) | Tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (C) | Completive | /dɔɡ/ |
| (E) | Existential | /da/ |
| (Eq) | Equative | /da/ |
| (L) | Locative | /da/ |

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•539

di hɛg hɔs[14]
THE HAG HOUSE

1. ɔɪ wɔɛtə·n / ɔɪ lɪβɪnɪfhɔɛ bə mɔɪsɛɸ / ɛn ɔɪ wɔz β̈ɪs ɔɪ wɔz stə·n
in i hɔ̈z bə mɔɪsɛɸ / dɛz ɛd / dɪ ɔldɪtɔpkɔmdɔɡ / ruɸ
*And I was while I was staying in the house by myself, they had, the, all-the-top-come-down*

2. dɪstɔm tɹɔditɔpdɔɡ / bɛinɛβə ɪdmi / sɔizhɛ̈ dɔɡdɛɛzlɛdɛt / ə ɔl dɪ ɔl dɪ dɪ ɔrə biloɔ
*The-storm throw-the-top-down. But-(βə)-never hit-me. So-(βə)-hang down-just-like-that. And all the, all the the other board*

3. dɪboɔd / dɪ βɛɛro boɔd / junuo βə? drɔpoɸdɪ hɔs / ʔɔɪt /
*the-board, the weather board, you know 'ba' drop off-the-house. All-right.*

4. βə? ɔɪ wɔz bindɛ[15] / ɛnɛzjunuodɔd̈hɔno ɸzizn̈ / bɔtdɛttɔɪm
*'ba' I was (T) there. And-as-you-know-they-don't-have-no freeze-now, but-that-time,*

5. jɔnɔdɔhɔɸziz / ɛnβɔɪwɔɛtə·ndɪhɔs / ɛnɸziz / hɔrə ɔl mɛtɪɛs /
*yonder-they-had-freeze. And-while-I-was-stay-in-the-house and-freeze. (I) had-a old mattress,*

6. ɛndɪɸziz sɪtɪk mi d̈ɔɡ d̈ɔɡ drjɔsi / ɛn ɔɪd̈ mɔ̈ɔ̈lɛ̈rɪ /
hɪβɔwɔnkɔmdɛ nβɔɪmɪ ə pulmɪɔp / ɔɸdɪɔl mɛtɪɛs / lɛkdɛt /
sd̈·m wɔnd̈ɪt
*and-the-freeze stick me down down there-you-see. And I-had my-old-auntie, (βə)-was-one-come-back and 'wime' and pull-me-up off-the-old mattress, like-that. Some one-night*

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



•539 7. sɔ·m p̈ɪ: ɒi bɪnə liedɔɡɪnsɛ̃n bɪn ɔn mɒɪ hied /
*some while, I (PAC) lay-down-and-some (T) on my head.*

8. ɛn ɒɪ ɛ̃ nuo β̞ə i wɔz / ɛn β̞ɛn ɒɪ β̞iekɔp wɔz iʰwɔz ə big kun / bɪn
*And, I ain't know what (3ϕ n) was. And when I wake-up, was (3ϕ n) was a big coon (T).*

9. ɔnmɛ̃: hied / si / β̞ə β̞elɪβ̞ɪn lɪβ̞ɪn ɔmi / si / ɛn k̈ɛ̞tə dɛ
*on-my head, see, was was-living living-on-me, see. And after that*

10. ɛnɛ̃ɛ̞tə dɛɛ̃ ɒɪ kɔm ɔut dɪ hɔs / ɛn ɒɪ wɔz / kɔmɔutdɪhɔsɛ̃ɛ̞tə̞ɒɪl /
ɛn wɔ 'bɪnɪɔɡdɛ / bʰɒɪbʰɒɪ
*and-after-that I come out the house, and I was come-out-the-house-after-while and-was-(T)-around-there. But-I-but-I*

11. gɒɪə gɔn bɛkɪnɛ go-silipɪn dɪ hɔs / jusi / ɒɪ β̞ɛhɪnoβ̞iedigo /
ϕə 'silipɪndihɔs / ɛwɔn
*got-to gone-back-in-there go-sleep-in the house, you see. I would-have-nowhere-to-go for sleep-in-the-house. And-one*

12. nɒɪt ɒɪ goɔnɪnɪ hɔs / ɛn β̞ɛn ɒɪ kɔm ϕə ϕ̈ɪn gɒɪndɪ hɔs /
*night I gone-on-in-the house, and when I come for find, going-the house.*

13. sɔ·m stɪnɔpndɪdodɪɛs lɛk dɛi ɛ̃ ɒd no ñiedɛ̃n ə nɔrɪn lɛkdɛ /
ɛn ɒɪ ϕol ɛ̃dɪϕɛɒɪt sɒɪrə di hɔs / ɛntokmɒɪnɪoϕ
*some stand-up-in-the-door-just like that-(3ϕ n) aint had no head-on or nothing like-that. And I fall on-the-right side-of the house. And-took-my-nerve.*

14. ɛnɒɪgoɔnrə di hɔs ɛn kɔl mɒi pɑ̈pɑ̈ / ɛnmɒi pɑ̈pɑ̈ kɔm bɛk /
ɛnlukɪndihɔs
*And-I-go-under the house and call my papa. And-my-Papa come back, and-look-in-the-house,*

539 15. ðɪɪ lɛrɛn / ɛn kɪɛ dɪ lɛnɛn bɛk / ɛnɛ: ɛnɛɪgɛnɪzɛt bʌðɪɪm /
jɛsɪ / ɛnɛɪgɛnʌðɪnɪm
*With-the lantern, and carry the lantern back. And-I and-I-gone-right behind-(3d o),*

16. ɛnrɛdi 'tʃɪmli kɔnɛ / ... junuɛdie ɛrɪm klɪɛ tʃɪmli kɔnɛ /
*under-the chimney corner. ...You-know-they had-them clear chimney corner.*

17. ɛn ɛɪgɛn ðie· bɛ'ɛniθjɔnɛ / ɛnɛilip dɪ̈ nɛɪt /
*And I-gone way back-underneath-yonder and-sleep that night.*

I was living in a house alone. And while I was living alone, the roof was blown off by a storm. And all the weather strippings blew off the house, but none of them hit me. Well, I continued to live there. And, as you know we don't have hard freezes now. But, during the old times past we really had hard freezes. Well, I slept on an old mattress in the house and (one morning I woke up and found that) I was frozen to the mattress. Finally, my old aunt came and pulled me off the old mattress.

Another night, I was lying down and I felt something on my head, but I didn't know what it was. And when I woke up I found a big coon resting on my head.

After that episode, I left the house for awhile, but I had to go back there to sleep because I didn't have anywhere else to go. So another night I entered the house and upon entering, I saw something standing in the door without any head or any resemblance of a head. I lost my nerve and ran under the house and called my father, who came and looked in the house with a lantern and carried it back. He didn't see anything. Well, I followed close behind him and finally decided to rest under the open chimney corner. And that's where I slept that night.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



bɹɔ ɹɛbɪt[16]
BROTHER RABBIT

539 1. ə mɛn ɛdə βĕɪl / ɛndə ɹɛbɪt ɔldətĕɪn də dɹɪŋk di wɔrə /
wuʒ diə (3) /
*A man had a well, and the rabbit all-the-time (PrC)*
*drink the water out-the,*

2. wut dĕ̃ mɛn βɛɪl / sɔmɛ̃tə βĕɪt dɪ mɛn pɪt ə tɛɪ biebi
*out the man well. So-and-after awhile the man put a tar baby*

3. ɔpdɛʰ / ɛn ɛ̃ɹə i pɪt ə tɛɪ biebi ɔp dɛʰ / di rɛbɪt gɔn
*up-there. And after (3ɛ̃ n) put a tar baby up there*
*the rabbit gone*

4. ɛ̃ɹə̃ dɹɪŋk / wɔrə gien / ... so i tiel di tɛɪ biebi gud mĕ̃nɪn
*for drink water again. ...So (3ɛ̃ n) tell the tar baby,*
*'good morning*

5. bɔrəgɛl / gud mĕ̃nɪn bɔrəgɛl / ɪ̃ wɪ tak' dɪə hɛn ɪn
*brother-gal'*[17] *'good morning brother-gal.' If I take*
*this hand and*

6. sitɹɔp ju wɔn / jut tiek mi mɔnɪn / so i tak' ɔnɪn /
*strap you one, you'll take me morning. So (3ɛ̃ n)*
*took (3ɛ̃ o) and*

7. βĕn ɪn sitɹĕ̃ɪ kɔm lɛk dɛʰ / bɔn / ...dĕ̃hɛn fɛsɪn / sie
*went and strike (3ɛ̃ o) like that. ...'Ram' that-hand fasten.*

8. sie bɔligɛl bɔɔligɛl / ju kã̃ tiel mi mɔnɪn / ku kã̃ tiel mi mɔnɪn /
ju kã̃ tiel
*Say, say, 'Bro-Ligal, Bro-Ligal you can't tell me morning*
*you can't tell me morning you can't tell*

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639 9. mi mɔnɪn / ɔɪ betʃə ɪθ ɔɪ aitɪ̃ʌpju wɔn tɔrn / ɑɪ bɛ̃ jut tiel mi
mo morning. I bet-you it I strap-you one time, I bet you'll
tell me

10. mɔnɪŋ / θɛl bɔə ɹɛbɪə ɹɛbɪt tə k'ʌm n bɛn ɑgɪn / θeldɪ
morning. Well brother rabbit brother rabbit took (3d o)
and 'ban' again. Well-that

11. θel dɪə ɖɛsɪn / θelə / junuə wɔn tiŋ / ...tθ ɔɪ krk' ju wʌn /
Well that's fasten. Well, you know one thing, if I kick
you one

12. ɔɪ betʃə betʃə də betʃə jut tɛɪlmi mɔnɪŋ / tiel bɪə ligɛl
I bet-you, bet-you, (PrC) bet-you you'll tell me morning,
tell brother Ligal.

13. iɜ̃ ɑie nɔrn / i tak' dɪ̃ ɖutn / θɔrmi i lɪkʌm iə nɔu /
so so da da da da dawɔnθɛsn / so so gɔ̃nɪnɑie / bɪəligɛl /
bɪəligɛl / ɔɪ tieljumɔnɪŋ / n ɜ̃l ɔɪkɪ̃tieljumɔnɪn /
jukɜ̃ kukɪ̃tiel mi wɜ̃nɪŋ / so i k'ikʌmɔn /
(3d n) ain't say nothing. (3d n) took that foot and 'wime'
(3d n) lick (3d o) here now. So, so, that, that, that,
that-one-fasten, so, so gone-and-say 'brother-ligal, brother-ligal
I tell-you-morning and all-I-can't-tell-you-morning, you-can't-you
can't-tell-toll-me-morning. So (3d n) kick-(3d o)-one

14. dɪ̃θut ɖɛsn / soə soə ɛθrə dɪt / i ɑie θel o θɛl θel ɔɪ
that-foot fasten. So, so after that, (3d n) say,
'well oh well I

15. gɔn gitʃu nɔu / ɔɪ gɔn gɪɛju nɔu / θɛn θɛn i ʌ̃ bɛk n θɔrmi
gone get-you now. I gone get-you now. When, when (3d n)
halt back and 'wime'

•539 16. ntak'itdn bɛn / dɛ̃wɔn ɸɛsn / so ɔl ɸɛsnɔ̃ /
*and took (3d n)-head and 'ben' that-one fasten.*[19]
*So all fasten-now.*

17. idɣɛs ɛ̃ro tiel nɔ / ɛn βɛni lɪkɔp dɔ̃ tiel lɛk dɛt n i
*(3d n)-just had a tail now, and when (3d n) lick-up*
*that tail like that and (3d n)*

18. dɪɔpum gien / ɔl fɛsn / soɔ tɸtɔ dɛt ro mɛn kɔ̃m /
*drop-(3ϕ o) again, all fasten. So after that the man come*

19. di mɛn kɔ̃m sie βɛl ɔje juzdɔ wɔn bɪnɔ bɪnɔ dɪɪgk mɔɪ
*the man come say 'well aha, you-the one (PAC) (PAC) drink my*

20. wɔrɔ ɔl dɔ tɔɪm / sie ʃɛ̃ɪ βɛ̃ju tigk ɔɪ βidjudu / βɛl sie
*water all the time. Say, 'why, what-you think I with-you-do?'*
*Well say*

21. ɔɪ gɔn bɛ̃ ɔɪ gɔn 'tɔ̣ɔ je ɪn dɔ ɸɛ̃ɛ / ɔɪ gɔn tɔ̣ɔ /
sie ɔɪgɔntɪɔjundɪbɪɪɔptʃ / jusi /
*'I gone "ba", I gone throw you in the fire, I gone throw*
*say I-gone-throw-you-in-the-briar-batch, you-see.'*

22. isie βɛl dɔ̃ trodɔtɪɔmɪ bɪɔ bɪɔ rɛbit / sie tɪɔmɪndɪndɪ /
plistɪɔmindɪndɪ
*(3d n)-say well don't throw-(PrC)-throw-me brother brother*
*rabbit. Say throw-me-in-the-in-the, please-throw-me-in-the*

23. ɔ ndɪbɪɪɔptʃsie / bodɔ̃tɪɔmɪndɔɸɛ̃ɛ /
*ah, in-the-briar-patch-say but-don't-throw-me-in-the-fire.*

24. jusi / so i dɔ mɛn gɔn 'tɔkɔmin tɔ̣ɔɪm ɪn dɪ
*You-see, so (3d n), the man gone took-(3d o) throw-(3d o) in the*

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•539 25. bro pɛtʃ / so isiə u diz di pliəs ɔiz ziərn bɔ̃n / soə soə
*briar patch. So (Jə̃ n) say, 'Oo, this the place I-was raise-and born. So, so,*

26. soə hi gɔ̃n /
*So (Jə̃ n) gone.*

A man owned a well, and a rabbit often drank water from the man's well. So after a time, the man decided to place a tar baby near the well. So when the rabbit went to get another drink of water, he spoke to the tar baby saying, 'Good moring, brother gal.' He spoke again, 'Good morning brother gal. If I take my hand and slap you, maybe then you will tell me "Good morning".' So he slapped the tar baby, 'Bam!' and his hand stuck to him. The rabbit said, 'Brother Ligal, brother Ligal, you refuse to tell me "morning"? I bet if I slap you again, I bet you then you will tell me "morning".' Well, brother rabbit took his other hand and 'Bam!' hit him again. That hand stuck. Well now, he said, 'Brother Ligal, you know something? If I kick you, I bet you, bet you, bet you, you will tell me "morning" then.' The tar baby still didn't say anything. So the rabbit raised his foot and kicked him. His foot stuck.

So he said, 'Brother Ligal, brother Ligal, I said "morning" to you. Now, why can't you say "morning" to me?' So, he kicked him again and his other foot stuck. Finally, he said, 'Well, oh well, I will get you now. So, he reared back and hit him with his head: 'Bam!' his head stuck. The rabbit was stuck firmly to the tar baby now. Everything was stuck except his tail. So, he raised his tail and dropped it, and it stuck.

Finally, the man came and said, 'Well, aha! You are the one who has been drinking my water all the time. Now what do you think I should do with you? I think I will throw you in the fire, or maybe I'll throw you in the briar patch.' The rabbit said, 'Well don't throw me...throw me in the briar patch, but don't throw me in the fire. So the man took the rabbit and throw him in the briar patch. Then the rabbit said, 'Oh, this is the place where I was born and raised. Then he ran.

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## dɔ bɛzɛd ɛn dɔ mɔŋgɪ[19]
## THE BUZZARD AND THE MONKEY

1. so dɔ bɛzɛdɔnɪsiɛmtiŋ ɒɪdi mɔŋgɪ / dɪ bɔzɔ gʌ̃so ʌ̃ŋgɪ wɔndie /
*So the buzzard-(C)-the-something with-the monkey.*
*The-buzzard got-so hungry one-day,*

2. hiknolɪt / so hi ɒɪtudɪ mɔŋgɪnɔmʌ̃ŋ wɔz gud ɸɪɪn jɔ nou /
*(3ɖ n) couldn't-hold-(3ɸ o). So (3 ɔ n) went-to-the monkey-*
*(3ɖ n) and-the-monk was good friend you know.*

3. i sie bɔmɔŋk / ɛ̃ / ɛbibɔdi tiŋk mʌ̃ŋkidʒis lɛkɔkɔʔblɛk mʌ̃n ju nou /
kɖ ɸulɔm
*(3ɖ n) say 'brother-monk' — eh — everybody think monky-just-*
*like-color-Black man you know, could fool-(3ɖ o)*

4. bɔɔi kudn ɸulɛ mɔŋgɪ / a·m / lukjie lɛɔgoʔ ju ɒʌ̃nɔgo ɸʌ̃e wɔɪd /
*But (3ɖ n) couldn't fool that monkey. Ah — 'look-here,*
*let's-go, you-want-to-go for-a ride?'*

5. isie jie sie ɔ / ɔɪ dʌ̃ mɔin gɔɪ ɸʌ̃e wɔɪd / botjuˑ / ɔɪ kɛ̃ ɸlɔɪ
*(3ɖ n) say 'yeah', say, ah I don't mind going for a ride.*
*But-you, I can't fly.*

6. ju nɔu / ɔɪ ɛ̃ gaʔnɔɒi / ɔɪ kɛ̃ ɛɒiŋ / bɔɔɪ kɛ̃ ɸlɔɪ /
*You know, I ain't got no wing. I can swing, but I can't fly.*

7. i sie ɒelnʌ̃ / kɔmɔn ɛɛlʔɛɛlʔɛɛlɸ / ɔɪ gaʔ dɔ ɒiŋ ɛɪl ɸlɔɪ jɔ /
*(3ɖ n) say 'well-now come on I'll, I'll, I'll I got the wing.*
*I'll fly you.'*

8. so dɔ bɔzɔd i mʌ̃ŋgɪ dʒɔmp ɔni bɔzɔd bɛk / sʌ̃rɔ sɔkl ɪɔŋ ɛnʃoum
*So the buzzard the monkey jump on the buzzard back.*
*Sort-of circle round and-show-(3ɖ o).*

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•539 9. vju ju nou / ɛn bɛzəd sɔrə lɔɪ / sɔrə ʃoum ɜ̃ mɛn ʃɔ̃n
*view you know. And buzzard start to lie. Start to show-(3d o) old man John*

10. ɸɔ̃m ɹuiɛɸɔn / sie si ɔlɛt ɹɛɪs pɔ̃n dɛ / dɔ mɔɪn /
i'dɛkɹɔŋ / mɔ̃ŋgɪdoo·l / ɔ̃lɛta·mtiɛɹeoβadɛ /
*farm rice pond. Say 'see all that rice pond there.' '(Eq) mine.' Ne-duck-around, monkey-(PrC) hold. 'All-that-tata-over-there,'*

11. / ɜə mɔɪn / jiɛɜ / mɔ·ŋg dɔ ol ɹɛtɔ̃n / sɔ i sie ɸɛlɛs goɛlitl .
ɸie lɛkɛtsɔm
*'(Eq) mine.' 'Yeah.' Monkey (PrC) hold right-on. So (3d n) say 'well-lets go-a-little higher, let-catch-some*

12. bɹiɪ bɛmɔŋgɪ / bɛzəd ʃuɹɔp / mɔŋgɪ dɛhol /
*breeze brother-monkey.' Buzzard shoot-up. Monkey (PrC)-hold.*

13. ɛn i gɛɹɔp lɪɹl ɸie / isɔrə ʃɔ̃m dɪ ɸɔn tiŋ /
*And (3d n) got-up little higher, (3d n)-start-to show (3d o) different thing,*

14. ɛn ʃoum dɛ di sɔ̃n n mun / sie siɔ̃l ɪm jɔnɔ /
*and show (3d o) the sun and moon. Say, 'see-all them yonder',*

15. ju nuo ɔɪ gɔrə ɸɔ̃ɪ oβɛdɛm / sɔistɔ isieβɛl gɪm ɸɔŋgɪnɔ /
*'you know I got to fight over-them.' So-(3d n)-start, (3d n)-say-well getting hungry-now.*

16. ɔɪ go dɔ̃k n tʃoi mɔŋgɪ dɔŋzi / sɔ igo ʔɛlɪl ɔɪə ɔɪə ɔɪə /
*'I go duck and throw-monkey down-see.' So (3d n)-got a little higher, higher, higher,*

17. ɛni sɔrə dɔ̃k / ɛni mɔŋg sɔrə tʃokɔ̃m / isic ɜ̃ mɔŋgi
*and (3d n) start to duck, and monkey start to choke (3d o). (3d n)-say, ah, 'Monkey'*

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•539 18. ɜ̃ ɒɪɜ̃ duɪn nɔm / mɔggɪ sie βel lɪsɔɔrɔ ɸɔɔltsɜ̃nɔp
*ah, 'I ain't doing nothing.' Monkey say, 'well let-start for-straighten-up*

19. n ɸlɔɪ ɔ lɪl ɜɪt nɔ jugɪm ɔlɪl dɛm ɜ̃ɪ ɔp nio / io
*and fly a little right now you-getting a little dam high up in air, hear.'*

20. so i gɜ̃n lɪl ɜ̃io / itʃokɜ̃m / tisie ɔɔdidimɜ̃gkitieldibozɔd / isie / di bozɔd tiel dɪ mɔggɪ /
*So (3d n) gone little higher. (3d n)-choke-(3d o) and-(3d n) say, ah-the-tho-monkey-tell-the-buzzard (3d n) say, the buzzard tell the monkey,*

21. sie mɔggɪ ɪɪlisjohot$^{h}$ / ɛn ɜ̃ɪsttju ɸɔɸɪi /
*say, 'monkey release-your-holt and I-set-you for free.'*

22. ɛn di mɔggɪ sie βɛl gɔ$^{?}$ dɔg lɛmɪ tiel ju wun tig nɔ /
*And the monkey say, 'well got dang let me tell you one thing now,*

23. ju tiel mi sie ju gɛn ʃo mi dɔ vju / ɛn du dɪs ɛn du dɛt /
*you tell me say, you gone show me the view and do this and do that.*

24. nɔ ju βie ɔp ɪɔ / ɔɪ βɜ̃ tʃu dɔ sitɜ̃en ɔp ɛn ɸlɔɪ ɜ̃ɪt /
tielɛm / sie
*Now you way up here. I want you to straighten up and fly right.' Tell-(3d o)-say,*

25. bozɔd tiel sieβel βelɔ ɪɪlis ɪɪlis jo hot nɜ̃ɪl sttʃu ɸɪi / sɔ lui /
*Buzzard tell, say 'well-well-ah-release-release-your holt and I'll set-you free.' So Louie,*

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.539 26. lui djəðin ɹɛt dɛ ɹɛkəd ju nuo / ɹɛt nɔ ðikn siŋ dɛt
*Louie Jordon write that record you know. Right now we can sing that.*

27. sitʒənɔp ɛn ɸlɛ: ɹɛ̃it / ʌundəstɛn ðɛ̃ ɛm sie nɔ /
*'Straighten-up and fly right.' 'Who-understand what I'm say now?'*

28. sitʒənɔp ɛn ɸlɛ: ɹɛ̃it / sitʒənɔp ɛn ɸlɛ: ɹɛ̃it /
dulɔŋ pɔpɔ dõ̃ ju blo jo
*'Straighten-up and fly right, straighten-up and fly right, do-long papa don't you blow your*

29. tʒɔmp / ɛ̃ dɛ ðɛ̃i sie /
*trumpet.' Ain't that what (Jd n) say?*

So the buzzard did the same thing to the monkey. The buzzard got so hungry one day that he was unable to restrain himself. So he went to his good friend the monkey. The buzzard, like everyone else, thought the monkey was like a colored or black man, you understand, easily fooled. But he couldn't fool that monkey!

The buzzard said, 'Look, do you want to go for a ride?' The monkey said, 'Yes, I don't mind going for a ride, but you see, I can't fly. I don't have any wings. I can swing, but I can't fly.'

The buzzard said, 'Come with me, I have wings and I will fly you around.'

So the monkey jumped on the buzzard's back. He began to circle around and show him the view, you see. Then the buzzard began to lie. He began to show him old man John's rice farms and other things. He said, 'See all those rice farms: they belong to me.' He ducked, but the monkey held on to him.

The buzzard said, 'You see all of those potatoes: they belong to me too.'

The monkey continued to hold on to him. So he said, Well let's go a little higher and get some more fresh air, brother Monkey.' The buzzard shot up!

•539 The monkey still held on.

So he flew higher and higher and began to show him different things. He showed him the sun and moon. He said, 'See all of those; you know I have to fight to maintain my rule over them.'

Then the buzzard began to get hungry. He said to himself, 'I am going to duck and throw this monkey down.'

So he flew still higher, higher, and higher. Then he started to duck. But the monkey choked him. He said, 'Monkey, I am not doing anything.'

The monkey said, 'Well let's straighten up and fly right. You are getting a little dam high up in the air.'

So the buzzard flew even higher. The monkey began to choke him again. So the buzzard said, 'Monkey release your hold and I will set you free.'

The monkey said, 'Well got dang, let me tell you one thing now. You told me you were going to show me the view and do this and do that. Now you have flown all the way up here. I want you to straighten up and fly right.'

The buzzard said, 'Well release your grip and I will set you free.'

Louie Jordan wrote that record you know. Right now we can sing it. [Sings:] 'Straighten up and fly right. Straighten up and fly right. Straighten up and fly right. Do long papa don't blow your trumpet.' Isn't that how it goes?

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di soəl ɛn di speɪt[24]
THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT

1. lɪsn mi gud nɔʊ / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wɔ̈l / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
*Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see, the-the-the-soul*

2. əβə mɑ̈n go ɦom du di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔ̈t / ɛn ɪɸ ju βɛdɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɔl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days*

4. juə speit / ɑ̈tə jo died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your spirit*

5. juə soəl ɑ̈p dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛ̈ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɔri / ɛn dɑ̈s də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də ɸɛk tu ju / ju si nɔ nɔ
das das βɔɪ ɔr sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɔs ɑ̈ pipl
*the body. And that's the one gone gone do the effect to you. You see now now that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

7. dɔ̈n biliɸ / sie sie sieiz no guoə / iz guoə dɛə / bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

8. di ʔɑ̈tomobil ɛ tiŋ kɔm / ɛ gɪt dɪ hɔɪβie nɔ / jusidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now. You-see-these these thing*

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9. käinə tɛk tu wud / ä: mɛmbə wənäit / βi βi bin out
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we we (T) out*

10. n di ɹəβə / wəʰənʔ wə wɔtʃɛkin fiβiŋ / ɛnəβɛn ɔi luk / wə ä
*in the river, was-hunt - was was-catching shrimps.*
*And-ah-when I look, was a*

11. min mi ϕäs köɛn ɹɛɹɔpdil / βi bin in kɹɛik / ɛn βɛn ɔi luk bɛk
*me-and me first cousin, right-up-the-hill, we (T) in crick.*
*And when-I look back*

12. bəʔɔin βi / i wäz ə koϕɔm bin behəin βi / dɛ nätʃəl
*behind we, (3 ϕ n) was a coffin (T) behind we. The natural*

13. bɔn koϕɔm gɛl ʃoin dɔŋ di kɹik /
*born coffin gal shine down the crick.*

14. ɛn βɛn βɛn i get ɔpə kloə tu βi ϕä ju tu da kä·jäna / i tek'
*And when when (3 ϕ n) got up-a close to we far you to the*
*car-yonder, (3 ϕ n) take*

15. daʔma·ʃ / ɛn daʔ maʃ binə lie dɔŋ dis / lie dɔŋ dʒis lɛk dät /
*that-marsh. And that marsh (PAC) lay-down just, lay-down*
*just like that.*

16. ɛn ɔi binə sɹɛɹɔŋ ɛn ɔi ä nö ɔi binə insi / si ... /
*And I (PAC) sit-down and I ain't know I (PAC)*
*in-a-seat. See...*

17. jie / də nɛ·tʃəl koϕin / də nɛ·tʃəl koϕin kɔmin dɔŋdiɹiβə / siβim
*yeah the-natural coffin, the-natural coffin coming*
*down-the-river, swim*

18. dasɔspɛit nɔu / jie / kɔmin dɔŋ də ɹiβə / ɛn βɛn / ʔə·ʔə βi / dɹəboi
*That's-a-spirit now. Yeah. Coming down the river.*
*And when After we, this-boy*

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•539 19. tɔk βiɹɔm / hidis / çɪɸ wɔn avid oβɔndə mäʃ jusi / ɛn hi aitɛt
*talk with-(3ɸ o), (3ɸ n)-just shave one side over-in-the marsh, you-see. And (3ɸ n) start*

20. tu lie da maʃ dɔŋ / ɛn lɛɸ da maʃɛn gönɔpnɪiedʒ ɔdawud / ɛn laʔ da wud
*to lay that marsh down, and left that marsh-and gone-up-in-the-edge of-that-wood, and lord that wood*

21. bɪn bɛut ɸɔ ɸɔm βi·z də kɪɪk / ɛn ju kədə jɛɹi ɔu i kiɛmtɔpida ɪn da wud /
*(T) about far from we-as the crick. And you could-have heard how he carry-on-top-of-that, in that wood.*

22. βiel nɔdiɪtinɪɪzdɛ nɔ /
*Well now-these-thing-is-there now*

23. nɔ eβibɔdi ɣɛ oöɔm / bɔt ju gɔt ɸiɪɪn ju ʔkɒ oöɔm / βiel ɔɪ äd wɔn dɔrɔ ... no
*No everybody can't see-them. But you got feeling you can see-them. Well I had one daughter, ... no,*

24. ɔɪ äd wɔn dɔrɔ / ɪnnu jɔk xäit nɔu / n hi kurɔ stɛnɛni iβinɪn / ɛn ʃuɔ ju /
*I had one daughter in-New York right now, and (3ʔ n) could stand-any evening and show you*

25. n ʃuɔ ju dɪ dɪ dɔ pɔsn / ɡɡɔ ʃö ju tuɛtɪi pɔsn / ɔɔᵇm ɪɪit ojɔndə
*and show you the, the the person, and could show you two-three person, 'See (3d o) right yonder,*

26. dädɪ dɔ stɛnɔp / ɛn ɔɪ kudn ʃɔom ɸɔ çieβ mɔɪ dɔɪŋ lɔɪɸ
*daddy, (PrC) stand-up,' and I couldn't see (3d o) for save my dying life,*

.539 27. ɛndæ̃ gjɛl bɪn dæ̃ βie bɪn dæ̃ βie til / dɛ̃m tɪŋ justə ɸɹʊɪdɛm /
ɛn dɛn ʊɪ kiɛm tʊ dɪ ... ʊɪ kiɛm
*and-that gal (T) that-way, (T) that way til them thing use-to frighten (3ʔ o) and then I carry (3ʔ o) to-the, I carry-(3ʔ o)*

28. tə de ɦɔspɪtɪ / ɛn βʊ nɛ̃m pipl du βiɛm nɛ / ʊɪ dɔ̃ no /
*to the hospital. And what them people do with-(3ʔ o) there, I don't know.*

29. bɔ ɸɔ̃m ɔpdæ̃ tʊɪm ɪn ɔpnɔ / ʃi neβə dɪ si nɔn nɔmo / ...
*But from up-that time and up-now, (3ʔ n) never did see none no-more. ...*

30. hi mɔs bi bɔ̃n βɪd sɔmp ɸə ʃɔɔm /
*(3ʔ n) must be born with something for see (3ɸ o)*[23]

31. ɸə si ʃi kurə ʃɔɔm pleˑen / juno / iʔ i ʃɔɔm nɛˑtʃəl juno /
*For see (3ʔ n) could see-them (it) plain, you-know (3ʔ n), (3ʔ n) see-them (it) natural, you-know.*

32. didɪs də sitanɔpdʰɛi ʃɔ̃m / jie ɛndɛnʊm / βiel ə o ɔlʊtsa pʰipl ə
*Just-just (PrC) stan-up-there-(3ʔ n) see-them. Yeah. And-then-ah, well, oh, a-lot-of people, a*

33. sholoˑtsa pʰipl jugoβɪdnɔ kɛ̃ ʃɔ̃m / kɛ 'ʃɔ̃mɛn tʰɛ / ju 'tʰuə /
*a-whole-lot-of people you-go-with now can see-them, can see-them-and tell you too!*

34. si si da pɔsn jʊna / jieə ... jieə ... / das zɛ̃it / jiə ju kʊ
*see, see that person yonder. Yeah ... yeah ... that's right ... Yeah, you could*

35. ɸɪlom / jiə ... mɔ̃ʔ / das di ol dɛβəl / βiel nɔnɔ ... ju no
*feel (3ɸ o) Yeah ... mah ... That's the old devil. Well now-now ... you know*

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539 36. ðɔɪ ɔɪ tɔk bɔʔ sʌ̃mtɪm yu go bɔjɔsɛɸ / ɪɸ ju dɪs wɔk /
*Why I talk but sometime you go by-yourself. If you just walk*

37. n sʌ̃mtɪm ju ɸɪl 'timəɹɪdʒ / sʌ̃mtɪ: ju ɸil lɔka ju ɸio /
*and-sometime you feel timeridge, sometime you feel like your*

38. luklɪ / ju ɸil / ju gɪt 'timə,ɹɪdʒ ... / das ɹwit /
*look-like you feel you get timeridge ... that's right*

39. ðiel ju si ə / juəspeɪt hɪt da iðəl ɸclə / ɛn juə speɪt
*Well you see your-spirit hit that evil fellow. And your spirit*

40. kɔm bɛk tujɔ /
*come back to-you*

41. dʒɪs lʌ̃k ə ðɛn ju go ɪn bɛd dɪ nɪt ɸə silip ðɛnjugoɪnbedinɪt /
ɸə tiek ə ɹɛs /
*Just like a when you go in bed the night to sleep, when-you-go-in-bed-the-night for take a rest.*

42. ðel də speɪt lɛɸ dɪ bɛɹɪ / si ðɛn juə speɪt lɛɸ dɪ bɛɹɪ / juə
*Well the spirit left the body. See when your spirit left the body your*

43. speɪt go ɪn dɪɸɔ̃n pʌ̃t ə dɪs kʌntɹi / ɔloðə / ɛn dɛn sʌmtʌ̃ɪm
*spirit go in different part of this country. All-over. And then sometime*

44. ðen də ɸɪt dʌ̃ iðəl speɪt / ðen ju siəm ɹɔn / kɔm bɛk də ju
*when (PrC) hit that evil spirit, when you see (3ɸ ə) run, come back to you*

45. ɛn mɛɸ ju skie njoə bɛd / sʌmtɪm ju mʌ̃ʔ ɸola seiroʊʌ̃mlɪkdɛt /
si juə speɪt kɔm
*and make you scare in-your bed. Sometime you may holler beside-some-like-that. See your spirit come*

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•539 46. bɛk nju ɬɪ̃ɪ̃in / no ju kɛ̃ silip si / ɛn dɛn ju ɭɛ̃ ɓiekɔ̃p / dispeit dɔ̃
*back an-you frighten. No, you can't sleep, see, and then you*
*can't wake-up. The-spirit don't*

47. kɔ̃m bɛk tu ju / nɔ ɪɬ dɔ speit dɔ̃ kom bɛk tu ju / ju nuo ju
*come back to you. Now if the spirit don't come back to you,*
*you know you*

48. dɛ / ɪn ɔrɔ wod / ju ɛ̃ die oɬɔ hɪɔ / nɔdɔ̃ tɹuɬ / nɔ /
*there. In other word, you ain't there over here.*
*Now-that truth, now*

49. nɔ dɔ̃s tɹuɬ / ju gɪt dɪ bɔɪbl ɛn ju ɹiɹem / dɔ̃s tɹuɬ /
*Now that's truth. You get the Bible and you read (3ɬ o).*
*That's truth.*

539
775

Listen well now, when you die, you see the soul of a man goes home to the Kingdom of God. But, your spirit remains here on earth. And if you were an evil-doer all of your life, then after you die, your spirit can continue doing the same kind of evil. Your soul is in heaven, but your spirit remains here on Earth with the body and that's the one that will harm you.

You see, I speak of this now because a great many people don't believe. They say that ghosts do not exist. But, they do exist. But now, since the automobile and other transportation overruns the highways, these spirits have sought refuge in the woods.

I remember one night we, my first cousin who lives up on the hill and I, were out in the river catching shrimp. And when we looked behind us, we saw a coffin, a natural coffin, Miss, shining down the crick. And when it came as close to us as the distance between you and that car, it disappeared into the marsh. The marsh separated from the burden and layed open. And I found myself sitting down without knowing when I became seated... Yes, it was a natural coffin swimming down the river. Now that was a spirit coming down the river. Well, after (my cousin) spoke with it, it turned sharply to one side, flattened the marsh and went up in the woods' edge only a distance as

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539 775 far as from us to the crick, and Lord you could hear the confusion as it 'carried on' in those woods. Well, these things do exist.... No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening, show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. 'See it standing right there, daddy!' But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital and I don't know what the hospital personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.... She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them.. They can see them and point them out to you. 'See that person over there.' Yes.... Yes.... That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge...that's right. Well, you see (774) your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

539 774 [513] For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ʊ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses
539 the English past tense marker along with the Creole *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

000 himself understood.

539 [538] 16. The speaker repeats words and whole phrases for narrative effect.

17. *The Tar Baby* was told to the speaker in the manner in which he retold it, and he does not know why the tar baby is called *Brother Ligal*. In fact, he seemed surprised that I asked, though no version that I had heard before mentioned the tar baby by name.

[538] [193] 18. The narrator consistently used *that one* to refer to the rabbit's limbs and head. He apparently repeats the phrase to avoid using the pronoun *it*, which is not yet an established vocabulary item in Gullah.

[538] [171] 19. *The Buzzard and the Monkey* is in the genre of the Ananse and other animal tales told on the Sea Islands and throughout the Caribbean. The monkey personifies the Black man who is THOUGHT to be naïf and unsophisticated by the socially mischievous Buzzard. The Buzzard is the trickster and personifies anyone who must be taught a lesson on Black ingenuity.

538 193 20. Gullah contains few consonant clusters, and speakers maintain the CVCV pattern by epenthesis or by deleting consonants; this pattern also occurs in Jamaican Creole:

538 1. *snake* [sinick] $\emptyset \rightarrow v$ / c ___ c
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] $r \rightarrow \emptyset$ / c ___
[pogɛm] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, [197] Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /no/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm dɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /unɔ/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

• 539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier do was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Liza* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes tha most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

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•539 /di lɔd ɛ̃ binə muþ mi mɔ̃ntin

bət i bin giþ mi siɔ̃rzt ʧə klaɪm/

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*God didn't move my mountain;*

*but, he gave me strength to climb it.*

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695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account* of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

695 "That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."
•539
197 The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

"You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; *too* long buffo' me shum, me yerre um.'"

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh.'"

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah.'"

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonäh konnou oonah?'"

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

*Bennett I, 340, 341.

"'I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); too long before I saw him (them); I heard him (them).'"

"I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear me; ears hear yonder same as hear here."

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192 538 In connection with *nutten-aigs* Mr. Bennett vouches for an anecdote which is almost too good to be true: In a certain house in Charleston, dessert came on the table, looking and tasting peculiar. "Judy," said the mistress, "What is the matter with this pudding? Did you put three eggs in it?"

"Yas, missus, me yiz. Yo' tell me fuh tek t'ree aig; dey yunt bin no hen-aig, so me yiz tek de nutt'n-aigs."

*Words*

192 There are curiously few survivals of native African words in Gullah, a fact that has struck most students of the language.* The commonest are the exclamation *ki* (or *kai*) to express wonder or to add emphasis to a statement, and *buckra* for white man, both, however, being widely found elsewhere. To these may be added *nyam*, *oona*, *swanga* (or *swongger*), *du-du*, *goober*, *pinder*, *cooter*, *okra*, *geechy*, *cymbi*, *bakalingo* (obsolescent), *guffer*, *penepne*, *da*, *da-da*. *Malafee* for whiskey has been noted on St. Helena Island.* Mrs. Christensen records several African phrases or formulas in her stories.* Two words that have not been traced to any known source, and which may be African in origin, are *Stepney* and *Plat-eye*. *Stepney* is

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*Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, Intro., XXI.

Bennett, I, 338.

George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, June, 1924, p. 193.

In Professor Krapp's opinion the English of the Negro has not retained a trace of native African speech, and has added only a few words to the language, such as *voodoo*, *hoodoo*, and *buckra*. "Generalizations are always dangerous," he continues, "but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."

[197] Of Gullah in particular he says: "The Gullah dialect is a very much simplified form of English, with cases, numbers, genders, tenses reduced almost to the vanishing point. Many of the grammatical and phonetic characteristics that appear in other jargons, Beach-la-Mar, Pidgin English, and Chinook, are found also in Gullah. Very little of the dialect, however, perhaps none of it, is derived from sources other than English. In vocabulary, in syntax, and in pronunciation, practically all of the forms of Gullah can be explained on the basis of English, and probably only a little deeper delving would be necessary to account for those characteristics that still seem strange and mysterious."

*Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, Intro., XXI.

[539] *Sarsey Bey cum blunda!
Tung cum blunda!
(From the story of the "Cooter an' Deer".)

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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial
[195] wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'." *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfangleety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";* also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance" of the primitive Negro Christians

[539] Whoga, whoga, whogabor, da humbarnorta, sundundilly?
Con me sormber sorty sundundilly indelarun.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Oiwia! Oiwia!
Oiatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

*"Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry bal-o home."
Bennett, II, 6.

[533] "For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.
Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

533 Here are some of the most characteristic:
539

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been for-
178 tunate in having two distinctly preservative influences
814 exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

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197
•539

As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted in conclusion Mr. Gonzales' record of a colored husband's description of the way the woman manages the man. It is a fable in lighter vein. The devil acts as interlocutor.

"One time, Debble meet 'Ooman duh paat'. Debble is uh berry mannussuble man wid 'Ooman, so, w'en 'e shum 'e t'row 'e tail obuh 'e na'm, same lukkuh 'e bin cloak, en' mek'um uh berry stylish bow. De 'Ooman tuss 'e head, 'e grin, 'e ketch 'e frock by de bottom wid alltwo 'e han', 'e hice'um up to 'e knee, en' 'e drap'um uh low cutchy, 'cause him en' Debble git 'long berry well, *berry* well!

"Attuh de time uh day done pass, de Debble ax de 'Ooman how 'e mek'out 'long de man; w'edduh 'e done l'aa'n how fuh manage de man, en' fetch'um to 'e han'. De 'Ooman laugh. 'Budduh,' 'e say. 'Hukkuh you kin ax me dat? Enty you l'aa'n me how fuh 'seitful? Enty you show me how fuh do 'um? Enty Uh folluh yo' exwice? Uh got de man gwine! 'E dunno w'ich way 'e duh gwine—but 'e gwine my way, enty?"

" 'Tell me how you do'um,' de Debble say.

" 'Uh got good ecknowledge how fuh fool de man. Uh got 'tring tie 'pun de man, en' w'en we git to de fawk uh de road, weh one de road lean one side, en' t'odduh road lean t'odduh side—w'en Uh git to da' place, ef Uh gwine one road, Uh pull de 'tring fuh lead de man een de t'odduh road. W'ichebbuh road Uh want, Uh pull de man een de road wuh Uh *yent* want, 'cause de stubbunt creetuh so cuntrady en' haa'dhead, ef him see me foot lean fuh one road, him foot fuh lean to de t'odduh one, 'cause him t'ink man fuh hab 'e own way. Him eegnunt to dat! So dat how Uh gitt-um fuh trubble my road, en' de man nebbuh know weh 'e duh gwine, but 'e beh' 'e neck en' pull de load, jiz' ez sattify ez ox wuh done bruk!' "[20]

[20] The Captain, pp. 280, 281.

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175 533 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

• [539]

> Narrow road is Heaven road
> Believer I know
> With here and there a traveller
> Believer I know
> The broad road is Hell road
> Believer I know
> Thousand walk together there
> Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy. 533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to 123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") — and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New
[243] Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for
[412] beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require
[171] the aid of rhythmic songs.

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of Afri-
535 can play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the
533 action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to
[177] an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is often found in the religious songs.

533 One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and water.[14]

535 In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-
533 religious survival of African dancing—not a vocal performance as the name implies—
539 is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the sim-plest of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

> O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve—
> Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations border-
535 ing on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival)
171 which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

[14] "Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.

A. [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49—Analyst.]

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533 in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the
545 rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not
787 broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was
• [539] strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

> My God is a rock in a weary lan'
> A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
> A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
> Shelter in a time of storm.[22]

000 What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

[22] An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.

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538 wherever heard. The humor [41] and keen knowledge of human nature they display
171 indicate clearly enough that the Negro realized the necessity of keen wits if the little
(522) man was to survive in a world governed by brute force. Ages ago, apparently, the
race learned another valuable lesson: to convey an idea by inference rather than to
538 state it baldly. The stories given me by Peter Davis—who learned them from his
[115] Uncle John—illustrate this fact, and demonstrate the way scanty training in the sea-island school-rooms was supplemented by older members of such families as had the story-telling gift:

*Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf in deh Well*

• 539 One day Buh Rabbit wuz walkin' thru de woods an' 'e met an' ole well. Deh wuz two buckets in it—one went up when de udder went down. Buh Rabbit say to hese'f: "Deh's nice water in dat well. Believe I'll go down an' get me a drink—some ole fool'll come alon' an' pull me up." By an' by Buh Wolf come whistlin' down de road. Buh Rabbit call: "Hey, Buh Wolf, want some cool watah?" Buh Wolf say: "I wouldn' mind!" Buh Rabbit say: "You jes' git in de bucket an' come right on down heah." Buh Wolf was hebbier dan Buh Rabbit, so when he got in de bucket an' start down, he meet Buh Rabbit half way comin' up. Buh Rabbit say: "O boy, dat's de way in dis wor'l—some comin' up an' some goin' down. Well, I'll be seein' y'u some mo'."

[171] In her chapter on "Folk Art," [42] Martha Beckwith gives an example of the "so-called animal talk . . . often reported from African fields." Bessie Cuyler, of St. Simon's, gives a good illustration of this talk. She explains that, when the preacher comes for a visit, the poultry gets very excited, the rooster most of all:

He say: Preacher comin', Preacher comin'!
The guinea hen say: I knowed it, I knowed it!
The goose say: Tell it, tell it!
The duck say: Hah, hah, hah!

But the turkey gobbler is a wise old bird, an' he got fussed at all de noise an' when de rooster keep sayin' Preacher comin', Preacher comin', he sputter: "Schu-u-uw!" an' say:

What de hell do I care
You betta look out fo' you' neck!

[41] An example of Afro-American humor runs true to form: A child calls to its mother "O mamma look dat da *fulafafa!*" The mother with a superior air says: "Gal, you bin in dis buckle country [buckra is white man] so long, an' can't say *wulisāpāpa.*" The joke lies in the fact that "fulafafa" and "wulisāpāpa" both mean woodpecker in an African dialect.

[42] Black Roadways, a Study of Jamaican Folk Life.

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539 Miss Beckwith is evidently right in assuming that this form of amusement represents "the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts."

192 Discovering an unsuspected connection with Africa in words which sound as though they might be English, but really aren't,[43] provides almost as much satisfaction as finding new songs or dances. Conservative Negroes still retain many of these words—particularly in the old songs—and such are passed on to Dr. Turner in the hope that he may know their meaning. From his *West-African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah* I have learned much that has been an enigma to me in the past, but even Dr. Turner is puzzled by "giffy," which on Sapelo means damp. Years ago I heard the great blue heron in the marshes called "Poor Joe," and judged his lean body had given him his name. Not at all. *Podzo* is the name of a similar heron in Africa. We call a certain type of southern tortoise a "cooter." In the neighborhood of Timbuctoo its near relative is called a *kuta*. When I first visited the Georgia coast I heard the name "tackies" applied to the small wild horses found on the salt marshes of the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia.[44] Now I find that *taki* is the West African name of a horse. The same with the "tabby" houses built for the slaves out of old oyster shells, sand, and cement (made from burning live oyster shells in pine cribs built for the purpose). In Africa the name for a house of similar construction is *tabax*. When a Southerner hears the word "tote" he knows that it means to carry; a very similar word, *tota*, from the Congo, means to pick up. Southern children know the "joggle board," or see-saw, but they do not know that the name comes from the West African word, *dzogal*, meaning to rise. In the old days you asked a colored woman where to find her husband. If she said at the "jook," it meant that he was in the rather ungodly place where drink was sold and good women were not supposed to go. According to the Vocabulary, *dzug* means "to misconduct oneself" and it is easy to see how "jook house," in the Gullah dialect, derived its name. In *Gentlemen, Be Seated*, Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth tell us that Africa possessed an instrument known as the *banjar* made of a large gourd

[43] *By this time I should be wary of laughing up my sleeve when the Negro uses such words—but white people are like this. My last nugget was found through Mrs. Cate's keen sight. I had told her of the amusing application of the horse breeder's term "in foal" to the condition of one of my singers. With a fresh eye, she spotted in Dr. Turner's* Gullah Vocabulary *the word "en(in)fo le" meaning "pregnant."*

[44] *These hardy little horses are said to be descendants of those left by the Spaniards in the* [136] *sixteenth century.*

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121 583 (177) from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

## 2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she [2] shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

[2] One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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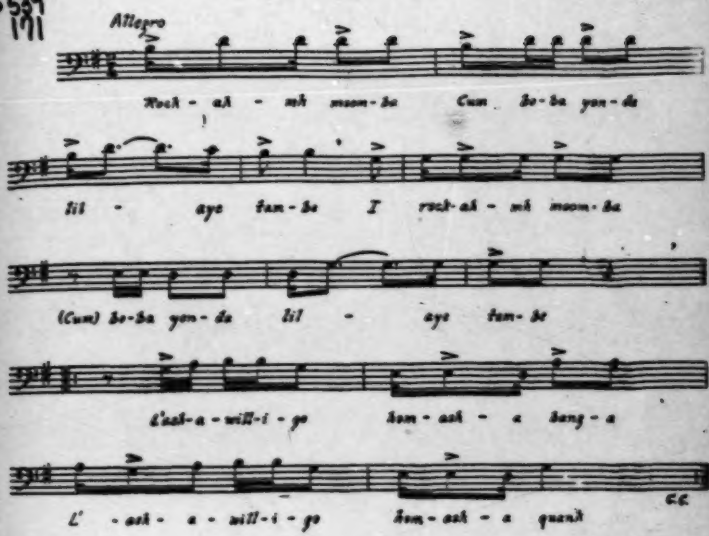


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This song and the one following evidently had a common origin. Perhaps "Ole Dublin" and "Gullah Ben" came from the same part of Africa, or were friends in Liberty County. Both songs are suggestive of the rhythm of the "ring-play":

Wa'k[53] Bil-le Au-ba
Be bul-o
Pretty fine lady
Be bul-o

I WOK OM A MO-NA

The following song was sung by Gullah Ben, who—like Dublin—came from Africa. He taught it to Ben Delegal, who in turn taught it to Amelia Dawley:

Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wok om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa williigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa williigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa williigo sehowyh bunga
Lilli hassa williigo dwellinda quenk.
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quam-be
I wock om a mo-na
Cum bul-le al-le
Lilli—quank.
Hassa williigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa williigo dwellinda quenk.
Hassa williigo sehowyh quenda here
Hassa williigo dwellinda quenk.

[53] Pronounce "Wa'k" to rhyme with "rock."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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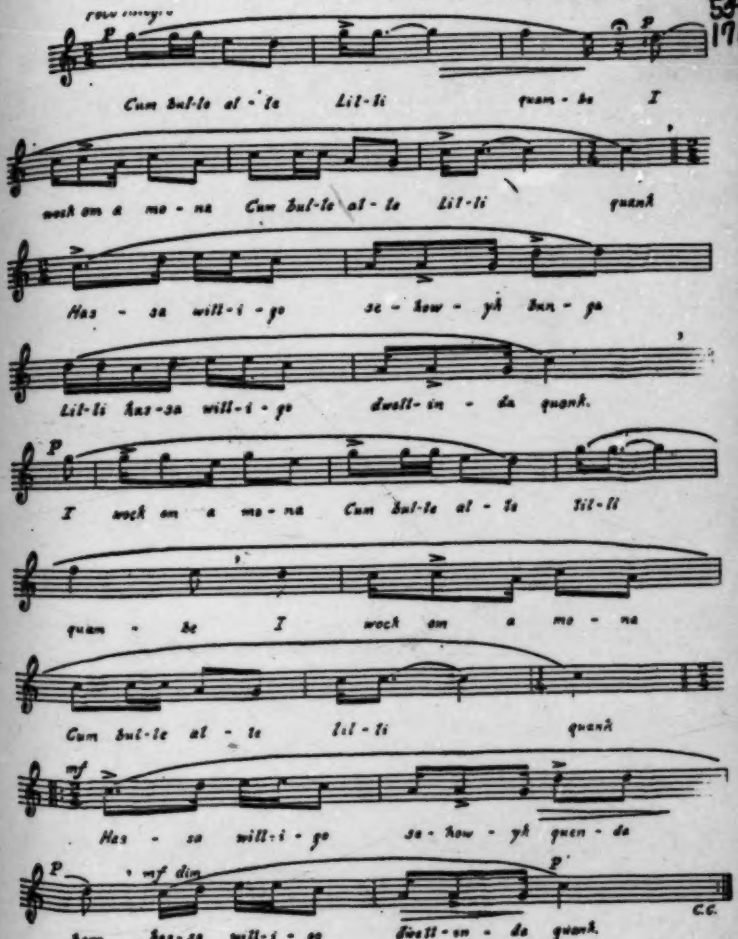


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## BYUM BY-E

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The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(763) The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

• (539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

[54] The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

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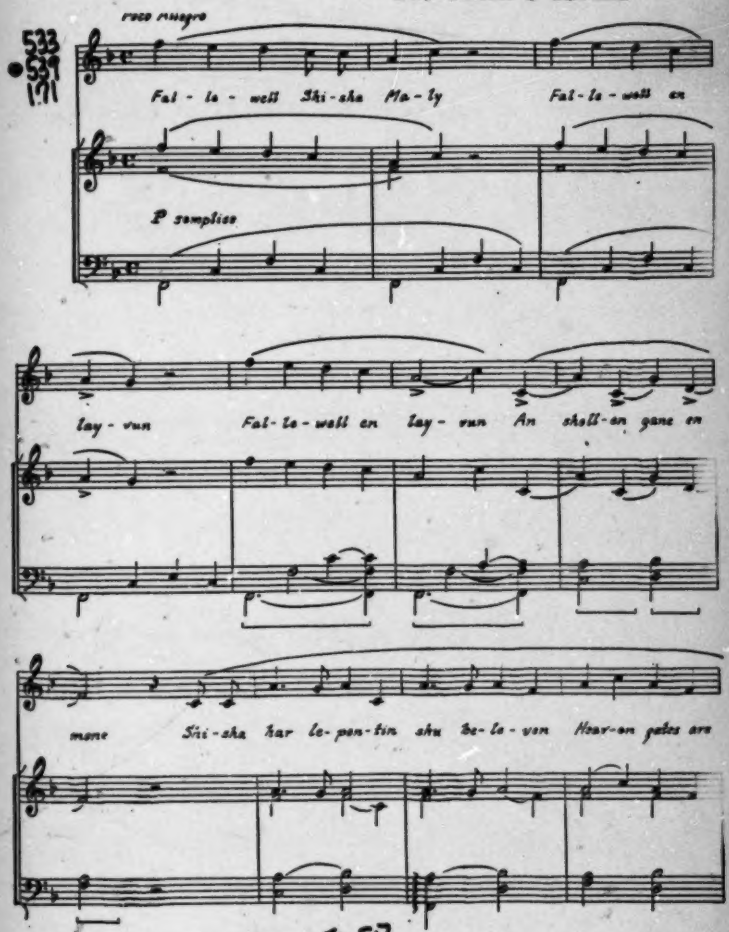


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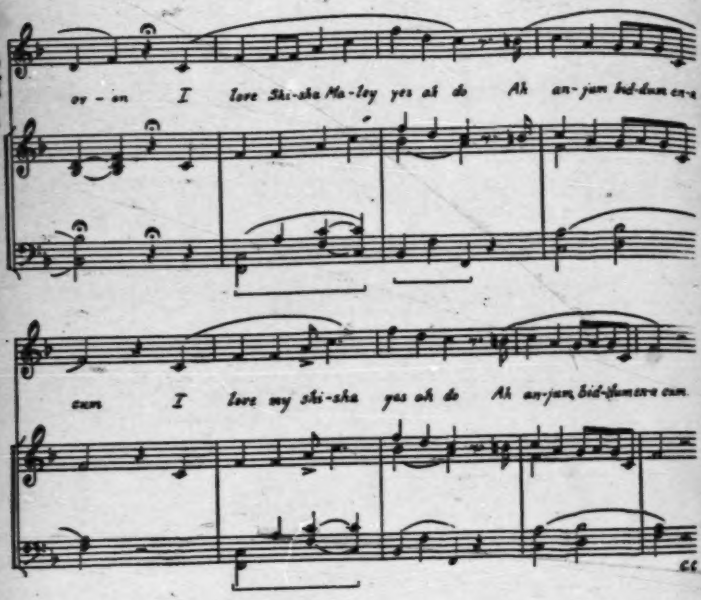


[143]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[55] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[55] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

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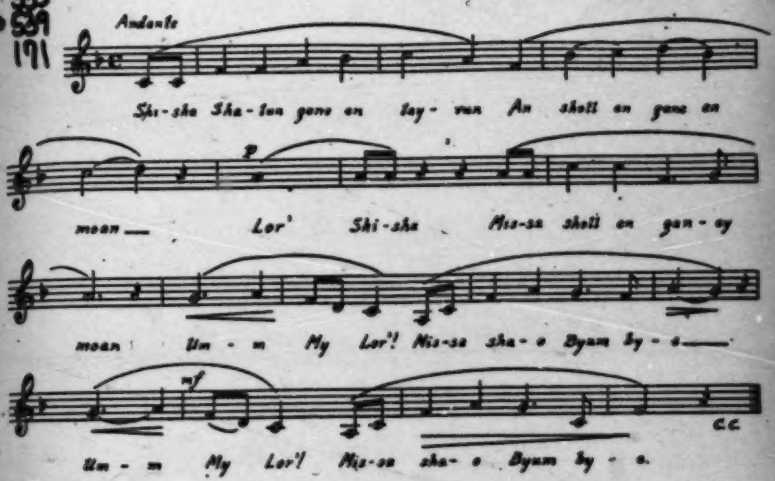
## 5. BYUM BY-E

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"U-m-m," [33] hummed with the lips closed, is a strangely moving tone (rightly named a moan), and in conjunction with the exclamatory words, "My Lor'! Missa-shao!" followed by the roll of the African word, "Byum by-e," gives emotional depth to this unusual song.

"Maum Kate" Wilson of Darien used to sing the following phrase: "Sumanar kusi luki tu," over and over, but no one ever learned what it meant. There are other songs in which half the words are African, but without the music it is useless to give them.

[33] An Anglo-African official tells me that the African side-drum (often called "the hypocrite" from the many different tones it is capable of producing through change of pressure of the arm under which it is held) makes a sound very similar to the hummed "U-m-m-m" so frequently employed in the slave songs. This humming is evidently another African survival. Its use is mentioned by the Denis-Roosevelts as common to the Belgian Congo. Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent, says it is popular among the Zulus: "sometimes'. . . a whole chorus will hum together with closed lips."

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536 27)A makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 796 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by (782) the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little 533 in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin'":

•(539) Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A. [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analysis]

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•539

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Oh look at day (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
See day's a-comin (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Call my mother (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Throw off de covah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Start that a-risin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Who that a-comin' (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord
Ha'k 'e angels
Look out de windah (ha'k 'e angels)—Oh Lord

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6. HA'K 'E ANGELS

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Recitatif (Allegro)

Tenor

Basses (Sopranos + Altos)

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k a an-gels

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k a an-gels

Day day Oh see day's a com-in', Ha'k a an-gels

Allegro molto

Day, day Oh see day's a com-in', Oh Ha'k a an-gels

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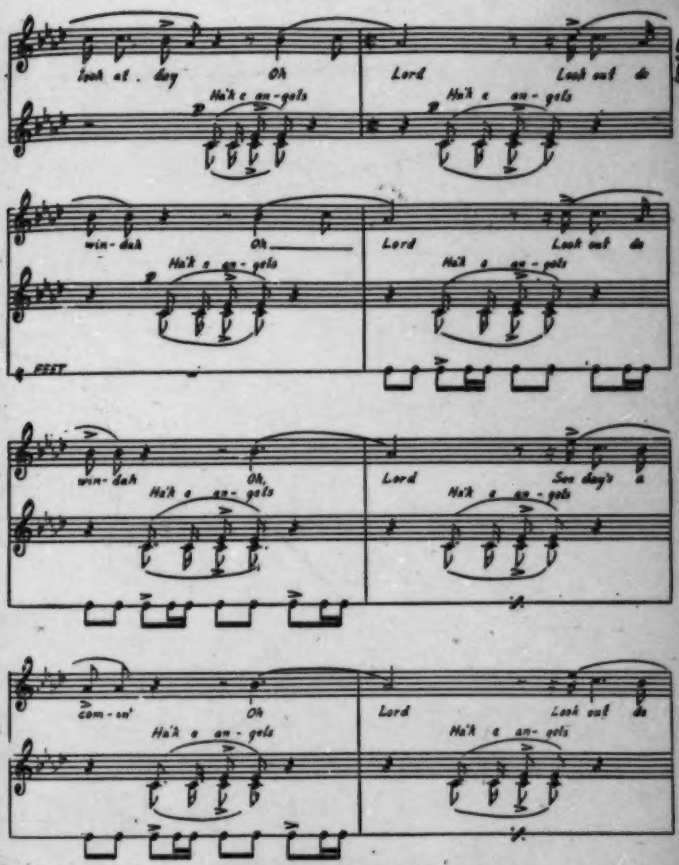


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win-dah Oh Lord Look out de win-dah Oh
He'l e an-gels He'l e an-gels He'l e an-gels

Lord Call my moth-er Oh
He'l e an-gels He'l e an-gels

Lord Throw off de co-vah Oh
He'l e an-gels He'l e an-gels
cresc.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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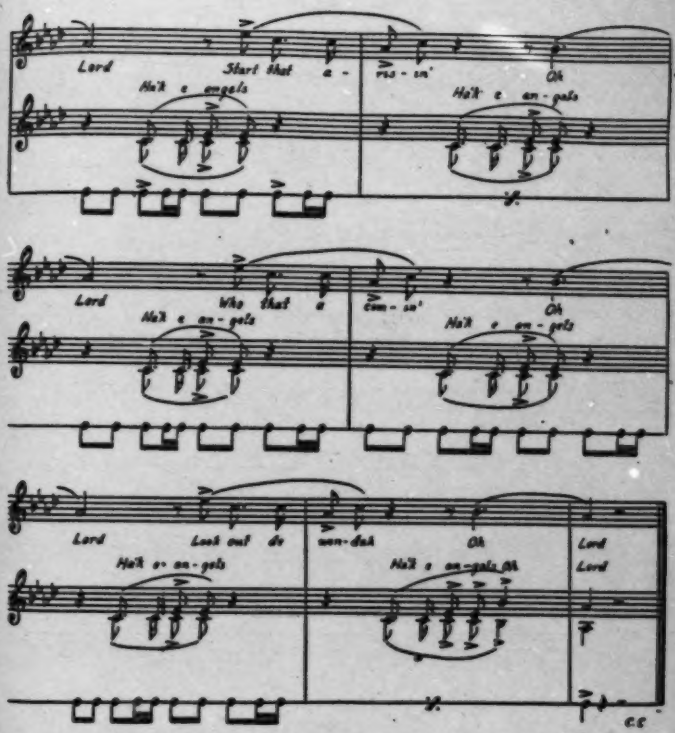

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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## UNTIL I DIE

796 I am told that this shout was once a favorite at "foreday meetin'," held on Sunday in the neighborhood of five o'clock.

Laura considered it her duty to ring the bell, and get the other members out to church. Since her death, however, nobody has felt the urge to take her place, and on St. Simon's the early service has lapsed:

[533]
[539]

I'm goin' tuh set in the humble chair
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Goin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Un-til I die.

Chorus: Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
I'm goin' tuh rock from side tuh side 'til I die.
(Repeated several times)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## 7. UNTIL I DIE

533
539

*Moderately, in steady tempo*
*mf*

*R. Mac Gimsey*

*Gon tuh sit in nuh hum - ble chah___ Gon tuh*

*rock from side to side___ Gon tuh rock frum side to side___*

*_ un- til Ah die Un - til Ah die,___ Un - til Ah die_*

*Un - til Ah die___ un - til Ah die___ Ah'm gon tuh*

*rock frum side tuh side___ til Ah die___*

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## PLUMB DE LINE

533
•539

There are as many variations in the words of this shout song as there are counties on the coast of Georgia. However, the warning to "Plumb de line" and the tune itself remain the same, while the naming of deacons and plumbers, sisters and members, and the things they must do is made to fit the rhythm as a glove fits the hand:

Members,
Plumb de line.[5]
Members,
Plumb de line.
O members,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.[6]
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
You got t' sing right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
O sister,
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
You got t' shout right
Plumb de line.
Want t' go t' Heaven got a plumb de line.

[5] *Julia Walker sings "Plumb de line" an octave higher than the others—as was customary with "high tribbles" in the old days.*

[6] *This line is often sung "You want t'go t'Heaven you got a plumb de line."*

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533 "Dear brother, Plumb de line," continues the song; and the next verse follows
•539 the same construction and thought in: "You got t' live right," following which Old Quarterman always put in an effective "Yes Sir!" The above version, used by Katherine, appears to be more modern than that used by Josephine, who gets a far-off look when she sings:

Deacon deacon,[7]
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
If you pray fo' me
Plumb de line.
I pray fo' you
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.

[7] The deacon "deacons" a song when he reads it two lines at a time for the benefit of any in the congregation who have not a hymn book or who cannot read. The custom of "lining out" and then singing a hymn was copied from the whites, who sang in this manner a century ago—perhaps later in sections where illiteracy prevailed. When done to short metre it is dreary beyond measure, but long metre sometimes has a barbaric charm.

[177]

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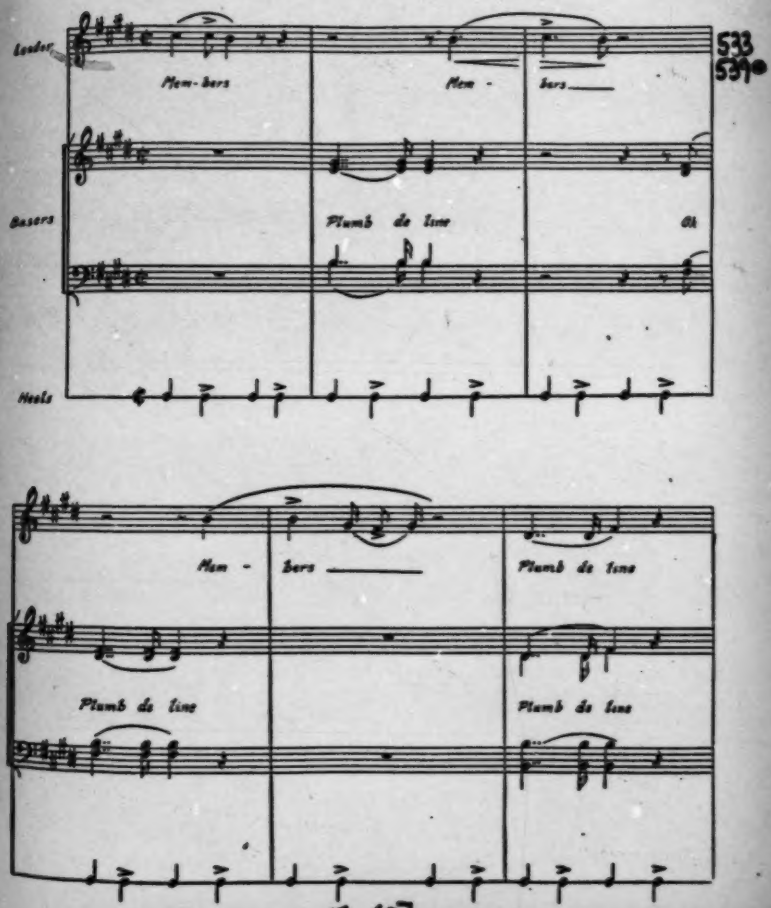
9. PLUMB DE LINE




[p. 69]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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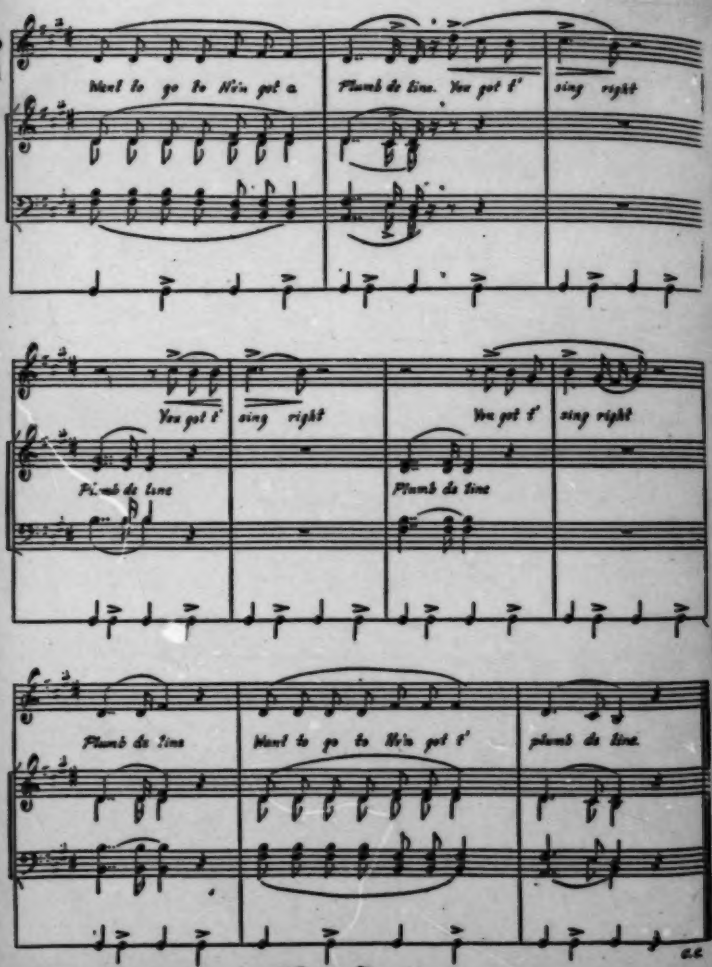
539



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## 10. DOWN TO DE MIRE

533 535 Of all the ring-shouts I know, "Down to de Mire" is in more ways than one the most interesting. In the center of the ring, one member gets down on his knees and, with head touching the floor, rotates with the group as it moves around the circle. The different shouters, as they pass, push the head "down to the mire." The several arms reaching out to give a push make an unusually picturesque pattern. The refrain—repeated relentlessly—corresponds in its character and rhythmic beat to that of the drums in a song which accompanied an ominous ceremonial dance seen in *Trader Horn*.[8] One is apparently never too old or too fat to take part in this shout. I saw Quarterman, born in 1844, go "down to the mire" with satisfaction when he was ninety. Josephine, who weighs well over two hundred pounds, thinks nothing of getting down on her hands and knees and, with her head bobbing to the floor, proves the power of mind over matter:

533
• 539

Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Sister Emma, Oh, you mus' come down to de mire.
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Lowrah lowrah
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire
Sister Josie, you must come down to de mire

[8] I am told that, while the greater part of this film was made in California, "background shots" made in Africa were introduced, for obvious reasons. It is to these shots, naturally, that the above reference applies.

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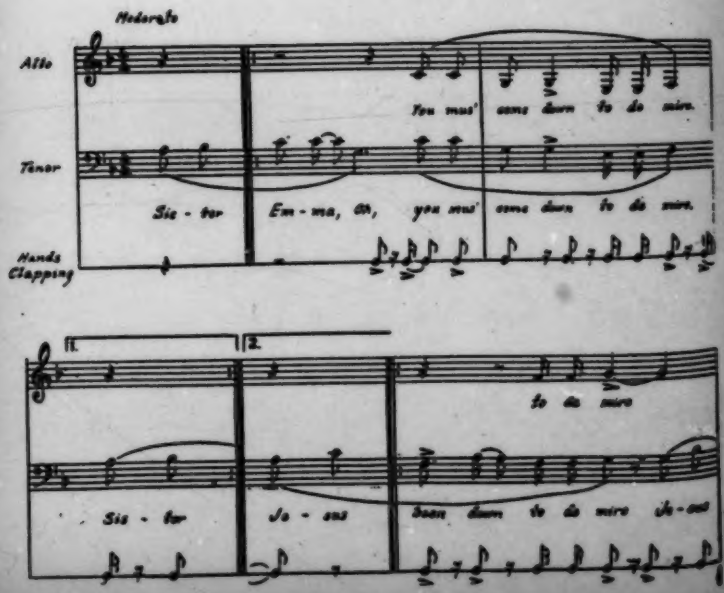
533
•539

Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Jesus been down
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
Honor Jesus
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire
You must bow low
to de mire.



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538
539

1. 2.

to de mire

Seen down to de mire Je - sus Low - rah

to de mire to de mire

Low - rah to de mire Low-rah, Low- rah to de mire Low-rah,

to de mire Je- sus Seen down to de mire.

Low - rah to de mire Je - sus Seen down to de mire.

C.C.

[p.78]

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533
.534

ELI AH CAN'T STAN'

Hate that[9] sin that made me moan
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Chorus: Hay John—John's on nuh[10] islun
Hay John—E-li Ah can't stan'![11]

* * *

John's on the isle ub Pat-te-mos
E-li Ah can't stan'!
Repeat:
Take one brick out Satan's wall
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
Satan's wall come tumblin' down
Eli—can't stan'!
Repeat:
One a these days I'm goin' away
Eli—can't stan'!
Won't be back 'till judgment day
Eli—can't stan'!

[194]

[9] "That" sounds like "tat," and "Ah" sounds very like a short "eh."
[10] "The"—following a final "n"—has the sound of "nuh."
[11] The chorus is repeated after every two or three verses.

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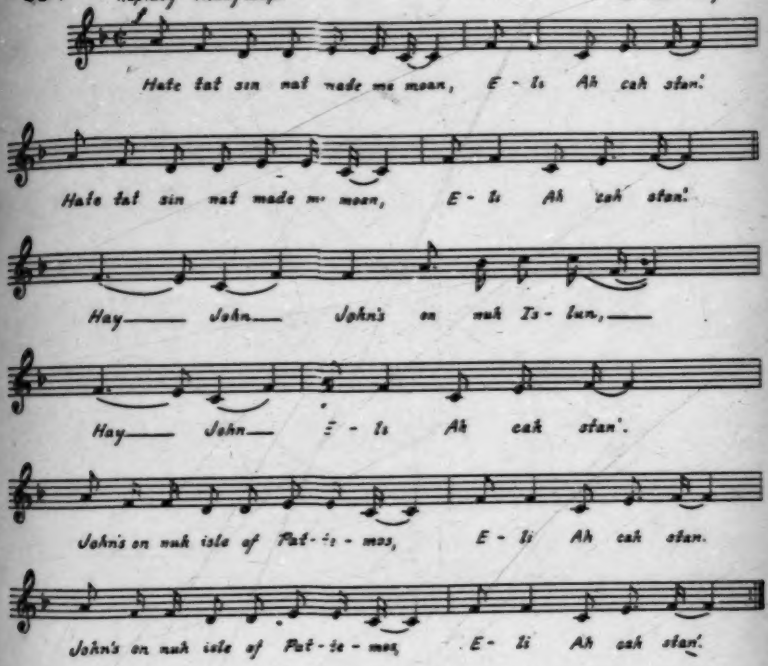
539

11. ELI AH CAN'T STAN'



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539



Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Bend my knee-bone to the ground
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone Zachaniah
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone when I call you
H-a-nnn Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone didn't I call you
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone didn't I call you
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the mornin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the mornin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.
Knee-bone in the evenin'
H-a-nnn knee-bone
Knee-bone in the evenin'
Ha-ah Lord knee-bone bend.

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461

Creighton Churchill explains to me that when this song was used for rowing it could have had only one rhythmic accompaniment, the oars, since the other two rhythms, the hands and heels, would have thrown the rowers off their beat. To use his words: "The speed of the rowing version must also have been slower, for one could not possibly row to the rhythm of this version. It should be recognized as well that no musical meter known to man can represent exactly the rhythm of oars in their locks; in this song especially, it is something intangible and personal, like the beat of the Viennese waltz. For the sake of simplicity I have represented the rowing rhythm in this transcription as 2/8, 3/8, 3/8, equal to a full measure of time for the voices and other rhythms."

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13. KNEE-BONE

533
539

Moderato

Voices

Solo

Knee-bone when I call you

Chorus

Hannn knee-bone

Ears (Stick)

Hands

Heels

Solo

Knee-bone when I call you

Chorus

Hann-n-n Lord knee bone bend

Repeat for verses 2 to 5

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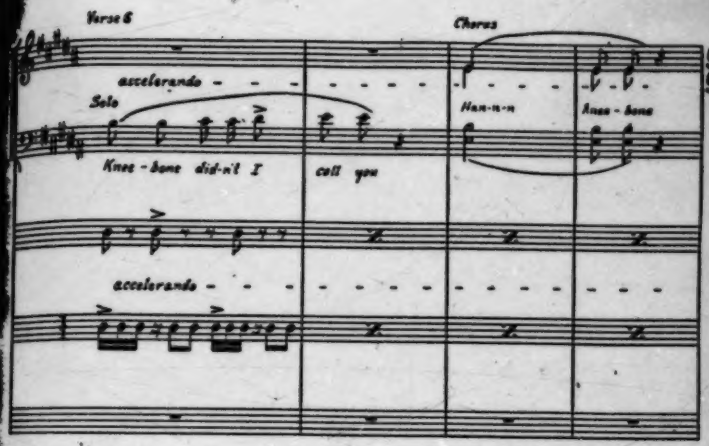


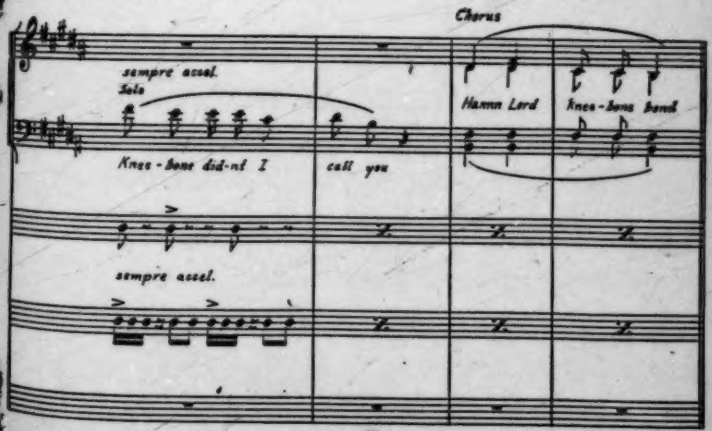

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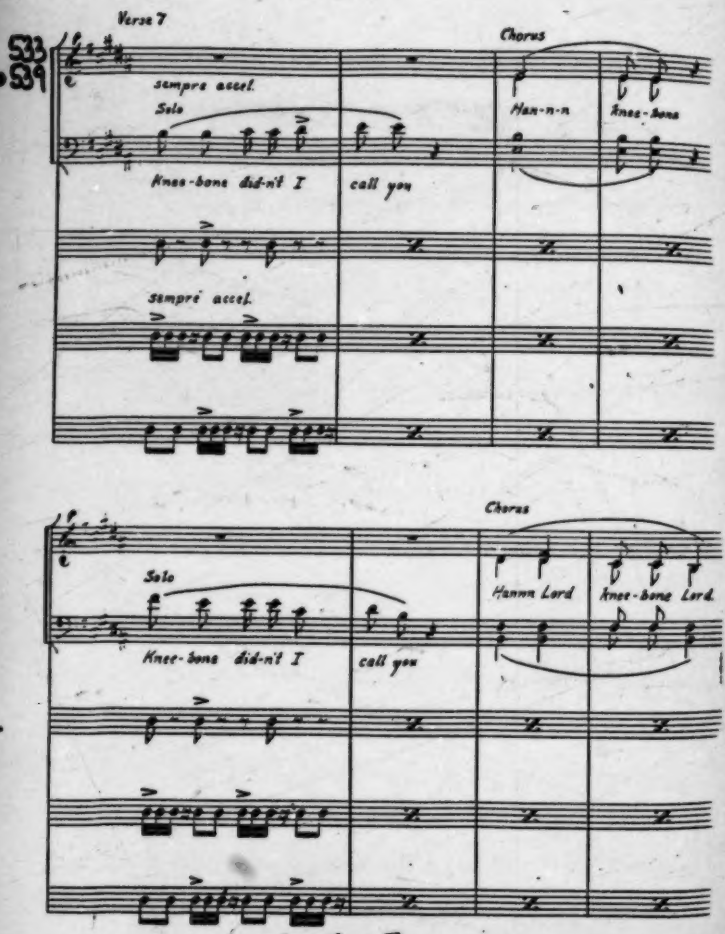

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## OH EVE—WHERE IS ADAM?

533 [126] In taking down a shout song, you are beset with the difficulty of reconciling the different versions. No leader sings a song twice alike, and no two ever sing exactly the same version; yet the beat, the accent, and the tune remain so stable that leaders are unerringly followed. The words are in truth only the vehicle for carrying along the complicated rhythm. This is beaten out by the heels of the McIntosh County group in a way not approached by any other that I know. Shouters sometimes clap their hands; on St. Simon's they always call for a broom handle, which, when knocked on the floor, provides an extemporaneous tom-tom. In McIntosh County, however, they are so proficient in tapping out the rhythm with their heels that they can dispense with both sticks and hand clapping. With their hands free, they are able to do things descriptive of the text which less skillful groups would not be at liberty to attempt.

535 [539] The shout:

> Oh Eve—where is Ad-u-m?
> Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
> Pickin' up leaves.

is a good example of the combination of dancing and pantomime. After swinging deliberately around the circle, singing the slower part of the chant, the dancers, when the time quickens, go through the motion of picking up leaves. With aprons gathered up and bodies bent, the women add greatly to the interest of the dance. All are amusingly industrious, but the men, without the assistance of aprons, are not quite so convincing in following the action indicated by the text.

533 535 Since the version I have encountered in Glynn and Camden Counties holds to "pinnin' leaves," I am inclined to believe that some McIntosh shouter took an artist's license and substituted "pickin' up" for "pinnin'" for the sake of more varied, more picturesque action. At any rate, the delightful result justifies the less usual interpretation of the Biblical text.

With "Lord called Adam—pinnin' leaves," the movement is faster. The feet are not supposed to leave the floor or to cross each other, such an act being sinful. The shouting proceeds with a curious shuffling but controlled step which taps out with the heel a resonant syncopation fascinating in its intricacy and precision. Over

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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam" is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading
• 534 lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
[177] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its
[178] form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.

Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
786 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull'
him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that
she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
• (539) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bar!
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bar!
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bar!
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bar!
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bar!

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## MY SOUL ROCK ON JUBILEE

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786

This song was sung and shouted after prayer meeting and after church service—usually when the church "got a soul":

Chorus: 'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord![13]
'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

---

Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
I got a right in Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
I got a right in Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Repeat Chorus:

In reference to the following version, Clara said: "When it gets hot, them that's on the outside of the church comes runnin' in." I asked what she meant by "getting hot." "O, you feel good. You know things is warmin' up and you gets revived":

I come t' tell you 'bout Jubilee
O-o-o-h my Lord!
Come t' shout that Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee[14]
O-o-o-h my Lord!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

[13] A wild quavering cry given by the "high tribble"—far above the other singers—makes your "hair riz," as the Negroes say.

[14] Faster, with double rap on "That Jud! That Jud!"

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## GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

533
539

Certain songs are considered to be peculiarly suitable for specific occasions. This shout has always been the favorite farewell song among the St. Simon's Negroes. At the Cabin, the white folks seem to think the evening cannot end properly without it:

Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye everybody
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Goin' 'way to leave you, sorry t' tell you
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Jesus settin' on the Sac'ment Table
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Handin' the bread an' the wine to the members
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah
Good-bye all you deacons
Good-bye sing Hallelujah

Good-bye is also said to "all you preachers," "all you false-pretenders," "all you hypocrites," and "all you tattlers."

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15. GOOD-BYE EVERYBODY

523
523
529

Chorus
Andante

mp Good-bye ev'- ry bod-y

f Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

mp Good-bye ev'- ry-bod-y

f Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

f Goin' way to leave you sor-ry to tell you

Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

mp Je-sus set-tin' on the Sac'-ment Ta-ble

f Good-bye, sing Hal-le-lu-jah

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523
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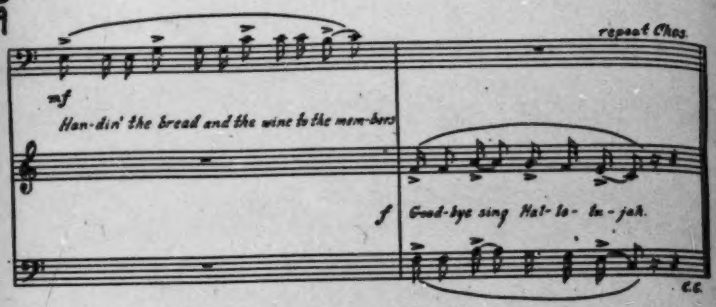


The following verse comes from McIntosh County:

Goin' up in the heaven
Goin' to try on mh garment
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.
Goin' to try on mh garment
See how it fit me
Good-bye sing Hallelujah.

(Illustration 15)

[p. 92]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

533 This ring-play has been revived by Julia Armstrong, who remembers it from her
539 youth.

Emma you my darlin'
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you duh bad gal
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!
Emma you from the country
Oh Emma Oh!
You turn aroun' dig a hole in the groun'
Oh Emma Oh!

(Illustration 30)A

A. [For Illustration 30, see Category 533, plate facing p. 192--Analyst]

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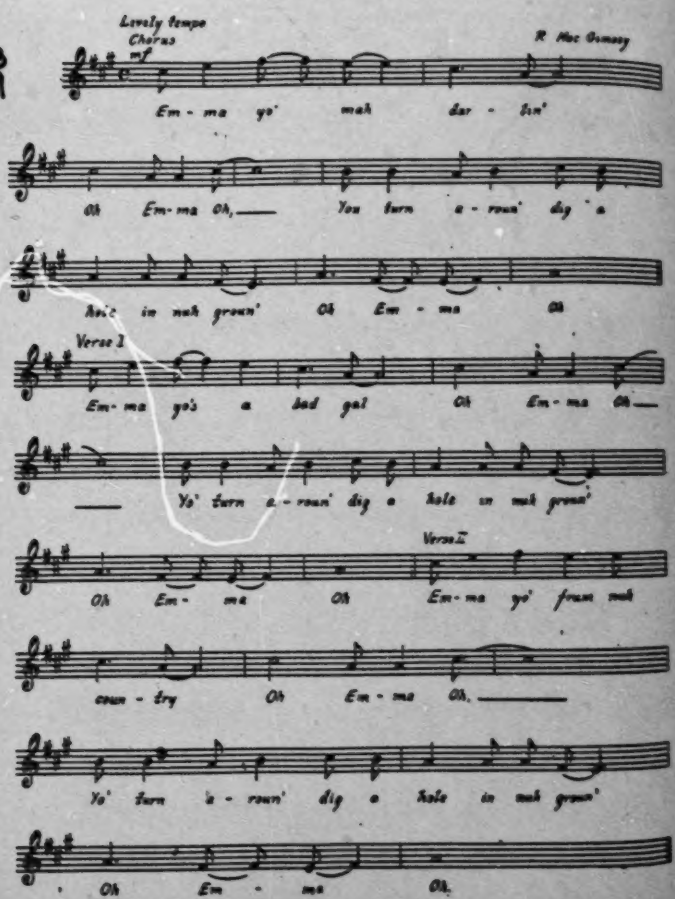
## 16. EMMA YOU MY DARLIN'

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## SANGAREE

533
•539
(524)

This ring-play varies in action wherever I see it done. For that reason I will attempt no description. The tune, however, always remains the same:

If I live
Sangaree.
Don' get kill'
Sangaree.
I'm goin' back
Sangaree.
Jacksonville
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

If I live
Sangaree.
See nex' fall
Sangaree.
Ain' goin' t' plant
Sangaree.
No cotton at all
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

Chicken in the fiel'
Sangaree.
Scratchin' up peas
Sangaree.
Dog on the outside
Sangaree.
Scratchin' off fleas
Sangaree.
Repeat Chorus:

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533 Extra verses are contributed by a Darien singer:
• 534

My husban's got the shovel
Sangaree.
An' I got the hoe
Sangaree.
If that ain't farmin'
Sangaree.
I don't know
Sangaree.

Repeat Chorus:

If you want t' see a nigger
Sangaree.
Cut the fool
Sangaree.
Let him ride
Sangaree.
A white man's mule
Sangaree.

Chorus: Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.
Oh Babe
Sangaree.

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## 18. SANGAREE

Lively tempo

R. Mac Ginsey

*f*

If ah live Sang-a-ree Don'— get kill,— Sang-a-ree Ah'm gon' back, Sang-a-ree Jack-son-ville Sang-a-ree— Oh— — babe Sang-a-ree, Oh— babe, Sang-a-ree, Oh— babe, Sang-a-ree Oh,— babe Sang-a-ree.

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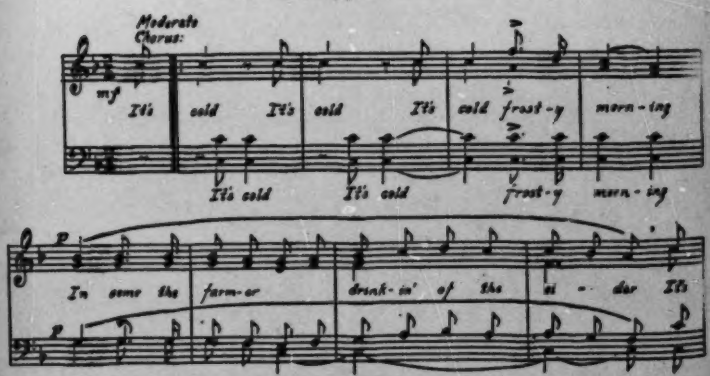
## 19. IT'S COLD FROSTY MORNIN'

The words of this "play," called "a marchin' piece," are clearly derived from an old English song. With "It's cold!" two and two march; with "There she stands right by your side" they change partners and march again:

It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold
(It's cold)
It's cold frosty mornin'
In come the farmer drinkin' of the cider
It's cold ray-me-oo
An' now where to find her
An' now I lost my lover
An' where shall I find her
(repeat)
There she stan's right by your side
Don't she look jus' like a bride
Hug her an' kiss her an' call 'er your own
Then she'll marry you.



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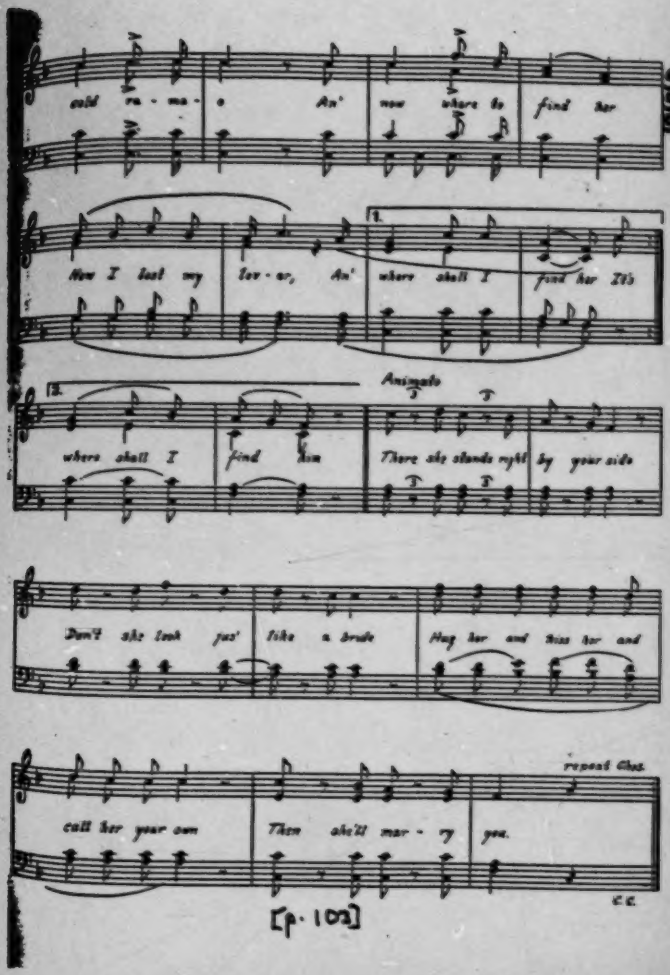


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## PRETTY GREEN SHAWL

From the verses of this "play" it can be seen that it is a "promenading piece" and is the Negro counterpart of "It's Cold Frosty Mornin'." Partners are changed after singing the chorus a second time:

Chorus: Farewell, farewell
Fare you well my darlin'
Farewell, farewell
I love you to my heart

---

Now choose in another one honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Choose in another one honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
pretty green shawl
O the lady—she wear a pretty green shawl
So early in the mornin'.

Step gran' (or proud) wid y'r lover, honey my love
honey my love
honey my love
Step gran' wid y'r lover honey my love
So early in the mornin'.

Repeat Chorus:

## FOUR AND TWENTY LAWYERS

535 The action is spirited, with much hand clapping that encourages those who "lead off." As far as I can see the figures are similar to those of the Virginia reel, with the exception of the beginning, where "Lead off one" is the signal for a man to walk briskly from the top of the line to the foot (men on one side, women on the other, as is usual). "Up and down" indicates the repetition of the short swinging jaunt; at "Lead off next," he takes the hand of the woman on the opposite end and

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535 they "Step in a hurry" and go "up and down" twice. The play then proceeds in the familiar way. Unless you have been told beforehand it is difficult to distinguish the words of the response "Lawyer's suit." When it is sung by all, as fast as it should be, and overlaps the leader's last word, a strange twist is given the tune. As can be seen, the words are no more than stage directions, but the rhythm is unusual, with the unmistakable stamp of Africa in the ominous cadence found in "Lawyer's suit."

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The chorus is repeated as well as each leading line with its refrain:

Chorus: There is four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
Four and twenty lawyers
All in a line
(faster) Lead off one[3]
Lawyer's suit.
Up and down
Lawyer's suit.
Lead off next
Lawyer's suit.
Step in a hurry
Lawyer's suit.
Turn that lady
Lawyer's suit.
Turn her loose
Lawyer's suit.
Don't you hurt that lady
Lawyer's suit.
You hurt my heart
Lawyer's suit.
She's a very fine lady
Lawyer's suit.
Just from the country
Lawyer's suit.
Basket of oysters
Lawyer's suit.

[3] When another man leads off, the verses change to suit the leader. In place of "Step in a hurry" I have heard "Get in a hurry," then:

Very fine gentleman
Lawyer's suit.

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## SHOUT JOSEPHINE SHOUT

533 Julia remembered this verse from her youth on St. Simon's—with a fragment of
● 539 another from the same song:

Josephine! Ma'am?
Don't you hear y'o' mammy call you
Why don't you go an' see what she want?
Josephine! Ma'am?
Want to shout? Yes, ma'am.
Shout Josephine—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Get a hump on y'o'self you red-eye' devil
Get a hump on y'o'self you big-eye' coon!

[524] Years later, at Broadfield, I found that the verse given above was the chorus of
[535] an amusing play song, with pantomime, which is related to both the ring-play and the solo dances. "Josephine! Ma'am?" is sung first as is usual; the leader then tells where the pain (or ornament) is located and the participants instantly try to place their hands on the spot named:

Pain in the head—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the back—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the neck—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!
Pain in the hip—Shout—Shout!
Shout Josephine—Shout!

Josephine
Ma'am?
Want t' shout?
Yes ma'am
What time?
Right now.
Shout Josephine
Shout!

Pain in the toe
Shout! Shout!

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Pain in m' leg
Shout! Shout!
Pain in the heel
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That sore toe
Shout! Shout!
That finger ring
Shout! Shout!
That water fall [4]
Shout! Shout!
Shout Josephine
Shout!

That ribbon bow
Shout! Shout!
That air ring [5]
Shout! Shout!
That slipper shoe
Shout! Shout!
That shiny eye
Shout Josephine
Shout!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Now shake the baby
Shake! Shake!
Shake the baby—Shake!

The song is closed off with:

A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet!
A'n' Jinny hoecake
Sweet! Sweet!
Take some an' lef' some
Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!

[4] An old-time hair-do.
[5] Earring.

(302)

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535 On Sapelo Island, I found in the Johnson family a combination of the old dance form with rather more modern steps than the original African pantomime warranted. Of the twins, Naomi did the patting while Isaac did the dancing; [8] an older brother rhythmically called out the cues in a sharp staccato, and another one lay on the floor of the wide veranda representing a dead cow. Anyone who has seen turkey buzzards disposing of "carr'on" [9] will recognize the aptness of the following directions. Those who are at all squeamish had better skip this part. The bracketed asides were given for my information:

{533}
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| | |
|---|---|
| March aroun'! | (the cow) |
| Jump across! | (see if she's daid) |
| Get the eye! | (always go for that first) |
| So glad! | (cow daid) |
| Get the guts! | (they like 'em next best) |
| Go to eatin'! | (on the meat) |

All right!—cow mos' gone!
Dog comin'!
Scare the dog!
Look aroun' for mo' meat!
All right!—Belly full!
—"Goin' to tell the res'."

And with an eye to the dramatic exit, Isaac danced into the house.

[8] *In later years I saw the Buzzard Lope done by Isaac's teacher, Reuben Grovenor—a descendant of the Sapelo Bilali who wrote a "diary" in Arabic. Many times have I seen others do this peculiar dance, but Reuben's performance is far and away the most finished. With effortless grace he gives a stylized pattern of the bird's awkward steps, without any attempt at realism. His is indeed a high form of rhythmic approximation, and those who have seen it at the Cabin are fortunate.*

[9] *Miss Kingsley tells us that in West Africa turkey buzzards are called "Jack Crows"—the natives call them "yubu." In the West Indies they are called either "John Crows" or "Carrion Crows."*

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## GIMME HIM

533 •539 Another primitive song that offers the proper rhythm sounds slangy, but I am positive that such was not its intent:

Jesus died a happy die
He died fuh sin but not His own
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)
He died on the Roman cross
That we might live
Gimme Him gimme Him Aw sho
Gimme Him until I die.
(Repeat the last two lines)

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## 21. GIMME HIM

*Moderately fast - with no change in tempo* — R. Nas Ossmy

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Je - sus died a hap - py die, He

died fuh sin but not his own. Gim-me Him, gim-me Him

Aw___ sho Gim-me Him, gim-me Him un-

til Ah die___ Gim-me Him, gim-me Him

Aw___ sho. Gim-me Him, gim-me Him un-

til Ah die He died on nuh Rom-an cross that

we might live, Gim-me Him, Gim-me Him

Aw___ sho. Gim-me Him un-til Ah die.

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## STICKIT BALL A HACK

533 Like "Ham Bone," "Ball the Jack" and "Juba dis an' Juba dat," this curious song is half-spoken in a lively fashion, to rhythmical hand clapping. When the verse is finished "Then you kick it off":

• [539]

Jack t' the rack back
Stickit ball a hack
Low ball high ball
Scallion jack.

## HAM BONE HAM BONE

533 524 [115] As is obvious, twelve-year-old Maria's version of these rhythmical lines is modern. Luck was with me when I found George, another twelve-year-old, who could give the older verses which are recited in the same way—alternated with similar patting. The only difference is that Maria balances herself on one foot; with her left hand she holds her cotton skirt tight around the "ham bone" section of her anatomy, places her right foot on the other leg below the knee and with her right hand deftly smacks out the intricate rhythm on her "rusty butt." [10] George, however, takes the line of least resistance, and leans with his back against a wall. However, in that position he is able to lift his "ham bone" a little higher and do a rather more complicated bit of patting. His hand flies back and forth like a shuttle between his chest and his rump.

These are Maria's words:

[539]

Ham bone ham bone pat um on uh shoulder
.....[11]
Gimme a pretty girl show y'u how t' hold her
.....
I went down town one day
.....
I went with my mother—too.
.....
My mother bought me a billy goat
.....
If my billy goat don't butt
.....
Momma goin' to beat my rusty butt
.....

[10] The night she wore a corduroy skirt, the patting could not be heard and her performance missed fire.

[11] These dots represent patting.

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As far as "I went with my mother—too" the lines are repeated, but when it comes to enumerating what she bought, there is this change:

My mother bought me a radio
.....
If my radio won't play
.....
Momma goin' t' beat my NRA
.....

George's lines, which are clearly of an older vintage, are given in the time-honored question and answer manner of Africa. Half-way through they merge into an old play song:

Ham bone ham bone wha's you bin?
.....
All roun' the worl' an' back agin.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd y'u do?
.....
I got a chance an' I fairly flew.
.....
Ham bone ham bone where you stay?
.....
I met a pretty girl an' I couldn' get away.
.....
Ham bone ham bone what'd you do?
.....
Hopt up to Miss Lucy's doo'.
.....
Ax Miss Lucy will she marry me?
.....
I wouldn't care if poppa didn't care.
.....

At this point George uses the narrative of the old play song: "Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh!" [12]

[12] *Brother Froggy went to town—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*To buy his wife a weddin' gown—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*What y'u goin' t' have de weddin' fess?—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Two big bread an' not a bit a grease—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*Firs' come aroun' wuz Mr. Bug—Un hunh, Un hunh!*
*He fell in de lemonade tub—Un hunh, Un hunh!*

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Nex' come in wuz Mr. Snake
.....
Pattin' all round' dat weddin' cake.
.....
Nex' cum in wuz Mr. Bug
.....
Hoppin' all roun' dat whiskey jug.
.....
Nex' come in wuz Mr. Tick
.....
He ate so much till it made 'im sick.
.....

The youngster said he knew many more verses, but these are more than enough to show how lines of proper length can be utilized.

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JUBA DIS AN' JUBA DAT

Juba dis an' Juba dat
An' Juba kill d' yalla cat
An' get over double-trouble
Juba!
She served d' meal
She gimme d' husk
Cooked d' bread
She gimme d' crus'
She fried d' meat
Gimme d' skin
That's 'e way momma
Took me in
Now Juba! [13]

By rapidly crossing his hands to first one knee and then the other, Snooks pats out an intricate rhythm to the above staccato lines. When he gets to "Now Juba!" he does some clever footwork that matches the coördination of his hands.

(Illustration 11) A

[13] *Maude Cuney Hare in* Negro Musicians and Their Music *says that the dance Juba is known to be over a century old. Cable in his "Creole Slave Songs" mentions that "The guiouba was probably the famed juba of Georgia and the Carolinas."*

A. [For Illustration 11, see Category 535, plate facing p. 65--Analyst]

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## FIDDLE SONGS—FRAGMENTS

533 Ten years ago, when I hunted up the local fiddler, Green Harris, who was already seventy-six, I tried to find out about the tunes he used to play for the "sinful" young Negroes on St. Simon's. He said: "You caught me without my studyin' cap—they jus' gone." He would not even bring out his fiddle.[15] Finally he admitted he [534] had loaned it: "They're holdin' a revival this week an' I don't want it around the house." The implication was that temptation might be too strong for him—besides, it was improper to have a fiddle in your possession at such a time. After two unsuccessful visits I heard him play old-fashioned dance tunes which had been favorites south of the Mason and Dixon Line in ante-bellum days. Here are the harmless, 533 fragmentary verses he gave me:
•539

Tune my fiddle, tune it good
The little neighbor in the neighborhood.

I do I do I tries to do
Put on de silver slippers.
An' I do I do an' I do no mor'
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
My ole Miss' promis' me
Put on de silver slippers.
When she die she set me free
Put on de silver slippers.
She live so long till her head got bal'
Put on de silver slippers.
It look like she never die
Put on de silver slippers.
I do I do I do no mor' my huckleberry do
Put on de silver slippers.
Oh how happy I feel
Put on de silver slippers.

[15] Joel Chandler Harris tells us in The Critic, December 15, 1883, that "The banjo may be the typical instrument of the plantation negroes, but I have never seen a plantation negro play it. I have heard them make sweet music with the quills—Pan's pipes; I have heard them play passably on the fiddle. . . . and beat . . . on the triangle . . . I have heard them blow a tin-trumpet with surprising skill; but I have never seen a banjo." Cable, himself, grants that the favorite instrument of the negroes of the Southern states is the fiddle.

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Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
No use grievin'
Got t' do widout me
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.
I had a little fella
His name was Isabella
He went run awa' wid anudda nigga fella
So-bye-bye my honey I'm gwine.
If you ain't got the money
You can' call me honey
Good-bye my honey I'm gwine.

Goin' to the bathin' house
Goin' to the kitchen
My foot slip an' I fell down
I wouldn' go there no mo'.

Choose in the girl with the rosy cheeks
Choose in the boy with the money
Choose in the girl with the coal-black eye
Choose her an' call her honey.

Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Bu' alligator, alligator come out tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Ent a plenty guinea hen here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Ent a plenty pigeon here tonight
Te-la lallah bam!

My oldest aunt heard Virginia ex-slaves sing this verse seventy-five years ago:

Went to see my Sally
My Sally wasn't home
I set myself in the big armchair
And I played on the old jaw-bone.

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(534)

Old Jim Gardiner rapped the bones to the rhythm of the two similar jingles that follow:

Once I went out huntin'
I heard de possum sneeze
I holler back to Susan
Put on de pot o' peas.

I went down to Missy house
Missy was in bed
I took de marrow bone
An' beat her in de head.

Chorus: Ding dang me one
Ding dang.
Ding dang me two
Ding dang.
Ding dang me three
Ding dang.
Ding dang me four
Ding dang.

Toad frog sittin' on the railroad track
Train come along an' break his back.

Chorus:

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## BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

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(635)

A St. Simon's Negro called this a "Cracker Dance" and gave me the following verses:

Bile dem cabbage down
Bile dem cabbage down
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

Went to Susy's house
Susy wasn't home
Look here gal—don' wan' no foolin'
Bile dem cabbage down.

My old Missus promis' me
Bile dem cabbage down
When she die she goin' to set me free
Bile dem cabbage down.

She live so long till her he'd got bal'
Bile dem cabbage down
She gib up de idea o' dyin' at all
Bile dem cabbage down.

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WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE

Julia sang this when she was a little girl—"long time ago":

Chorus:
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Way down in the Ole Peedee
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

I wish that gal was mine
I wish that gal was mine
Summer night the moon shine bright
Sally you can see.

(repeat chorus)

Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone
If you call me honey spen' my money
Good-bye mh honey I'm gone.

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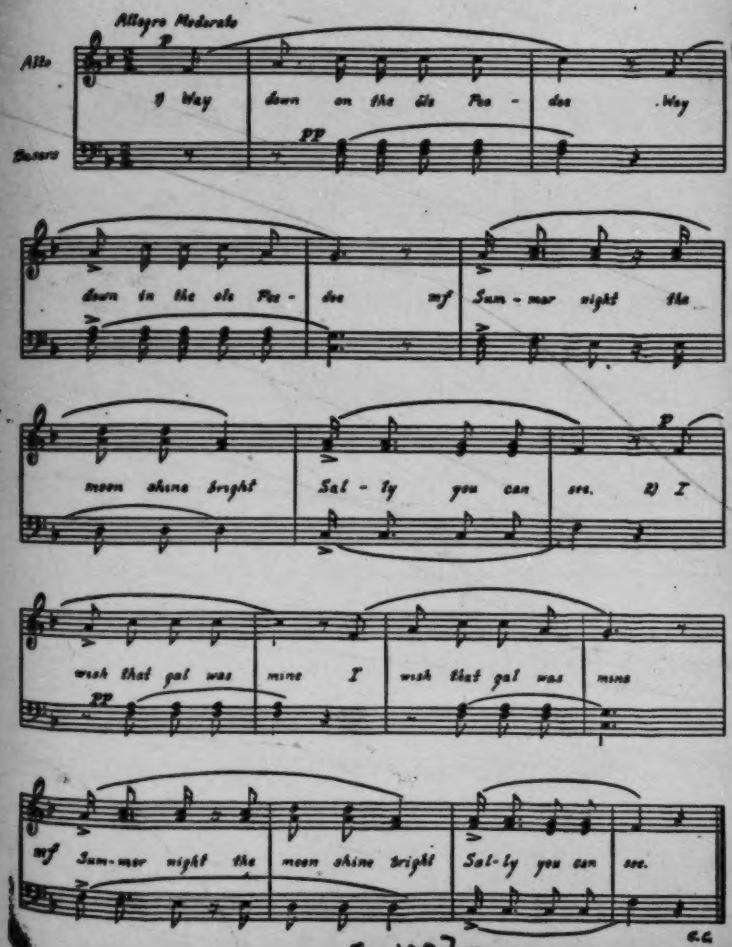
22. WAY DOWN IN THE OLE PEEDEE

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## JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your sweetheart
Johnny come a long time.

Run home muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.
Run 'long muh Lulu
Johnny come a long time.

Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.
Johnny is your master
Johnny come a long time.

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## 23. JOHNNY COME A LONG TIME

Allegro

Alto

Bass

mf — Run 'long muh Lu - lu

p — John - ny come a long time

f

mf — John - ny is your mas - ter

mf — John - ny come a long time.

mf — John - ny is your sweet - heart

p — John - ny come a long time

f

mp — John - ny is your sweet - heart

mf — John - ny come a long time.

f

C.C.

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533 796 At one of our singing festivals, Liverpool, who was well over a hundred at the time, became excited as he heard again the old prayer-meeting song, left his seat, joined in the swaying group of sixty-five singers, and gave a demonstration of the "right hand of fellowship" which he performed with the dignity seen in the minuet. First he gave his right hand to the singer on his right; then, bowing sedately, he crossed his left hand over to the same member. Both hands were then shaken as the singers bowed with the rhythim before passing to the next neighbor and repeating the same ceremony.

• [539]

'Tis well an' good I come here tonight
come here tonight
come here tonight
Well an' good I come here tonight
For to do my Master's will.
O Brother Quarterman show me the way
show me the way
show me the way
O my brother show me the way—
The way to the Promised Land.

[1944] At old-time prayer meetings the following song brought out all of the members—one at a time—on the floor, breaking up any tendency to stiffness. Each rose as his or her name was called and moved around the circle, returning to the group when another member's name was about to be called.

This same song was called an "ant'em" on Eleuthera, (one of the Bahamas). When I asked the singer if it was old, she said: "Methuselum sung 'um."

533 539

Oh mh Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Sister Bessie where were you
My sister where were you
My sister where were you
When the Lord was passin' by.

(Illustration 16) A

A, [For Illustration 16, see Category 142, plate facing p. 97--Analysis]

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794
796 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

175
159 This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall mag-
[533] nolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of
[291] the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her
[829] family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

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I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
Believer I know

[4] The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



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It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
It's thorny an' ruggy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Go in the wil'erness
Believer I know
Fall on your bending[5]
Believer I know
Fall on your bending
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
Cry Lord have mercy
Believer I know
The way to get to Heaven
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
Love the Christian pastor[6]
Believer I know
Love everybody
Believer I know
The narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
Here an' there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together there
Believer I know
Glory Hallelujah
Believer I know
I done cross Jurden
Believer I know.

[5] Knees are implied.
[6] The white minister.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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25. BELIEVER I KNOW

Andante

Solo Alto

p

I know I know Lord, Be - liev - er I know

pp

I know I know Lord Be - liev - er

mf

I know I know the road so thorn - y

Be - liev - er I know I know the road is

pp

thorn - y Be - liev - er I know

mf

It's

thorn - y and rug - gy Be - liev - er

I know It's thorn - y and

rug - gy Be - liev - er I know.

C.C.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Oh God comman' Brother Norah one day
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' told Brother Norah to build an ark
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Chorus: Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Oh Norah, hist the windah
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

Well Norah commence to buil' his ark
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he buil' his ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

An' the foolish man come a ridin' by
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
Well he point his han' an' he scorn at Norah
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he call ole Norah the foolish man
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
You buildin' yo' ark on the ha'd dry lan'
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

Well, the little turtle dove done droop his wing
Oh hist the windah let the dove come in
An' he gone on Zion's Hill to sing
Hist the windah let the dove come in.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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26. NORAH, HIST THE WINDAH

Andante

Soprano: No - rah Hist the win - dah No - rah

Basses

Hist the win - dah No - rah Hist the win - dah

Legato

Hist the win-dah let the dove come in. Oh God com-min' Bro-ther

No-rah one day Oh hist the win-dah let the dove come in. An'

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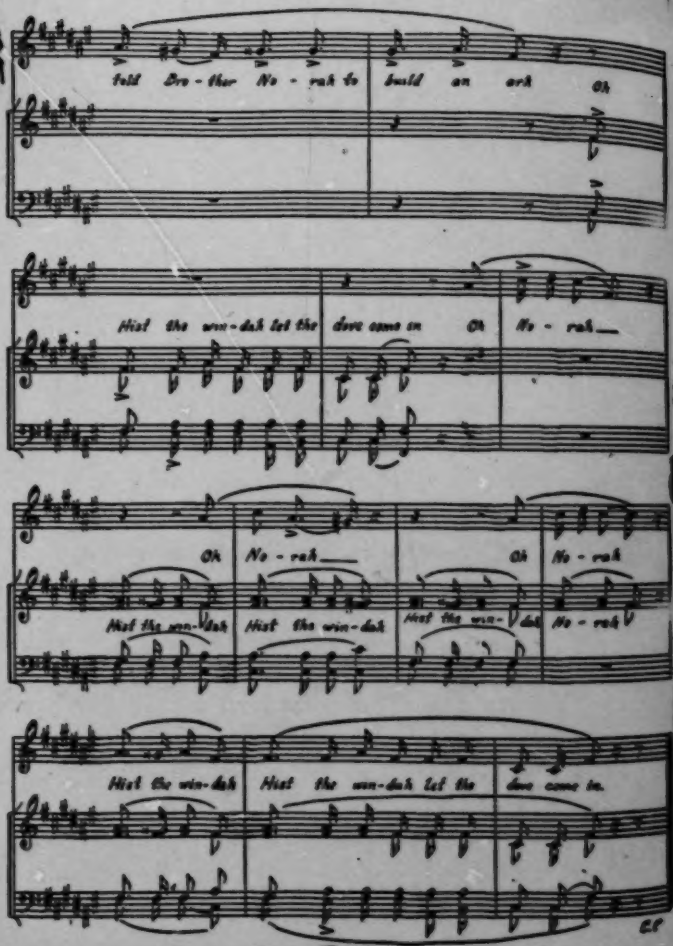

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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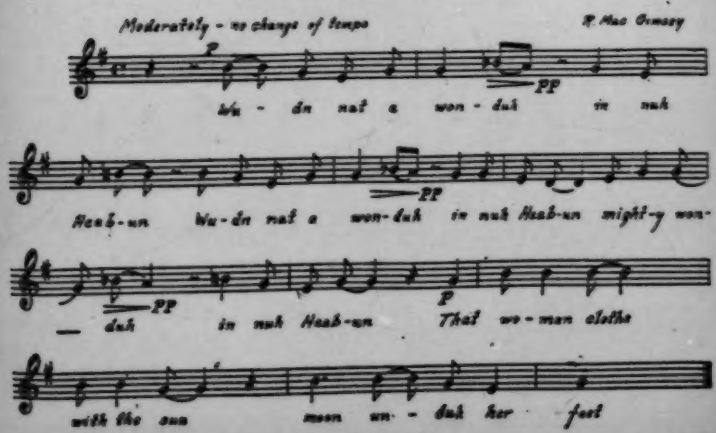
## 28. WASN' THAT A WONDER

Chorus: Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Wasn' that a wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Read about the wonder
in the Heaven
Mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
John saw the wonder
in the Heaven
It's a mighty wonder
in the Heaven
That woman clothe with the sun, moon under her feet.

Well, John' mother may gone before me
But you can't get no higher in Glory
If you get there befo' I do
Jus' tell my Lord I'm comin' too.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

Chorus: One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
One mornin' soon
Ah heard the angels singin'.

All in my room
All in my room
All in my room
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, Ah wuz down on my knees
Down on my knees
Down on my knees
Ah heard the angels singin'.

No dyin' there
No dyin' there
No dyin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'
Ah heard the angels singin' Lawd
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Well, there's no weepin' there
No weepin' there
No weepin' there
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
All 'roun' me shine
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all over my head
All over my head
All over my head
Ah heard the angels singin'.

Lawd, it wuz all aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
All aroun' my feet
Ah heard the angels singin'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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29. I HEARD THE ANGELS SINGIN'

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•539

*Moderately - no variation in tempo*

R. Mac Ginnis

One morn - in' soon, One morn - in'

soon One morn - in' soon Ah heard duh an - gels

sing - in; All in my room All in my

room All in my room Ah heard duh an - gels

sing. Lawd Ah was down on my knees

Down on my knees Down on my knees Ah

heard duh an - gels sing - in' No dy - in'

thah No dy - in' thah No dy - in'

thah Ah heard duh an - gels sing - in'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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CAN'T HIDE SINNER

You may run to the rock
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the rock cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the sea
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the sea cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

Oh sinner man
Can't hide
What you going to do
Can't hide
In the Judgment day
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the grave
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the grave cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the Church
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the Church cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

You may run to the mount'n
Can't hide
For a hidin' place
Can't hide
An' the mount's cry out
Can't hide
You can't hide sinner, you can't hide.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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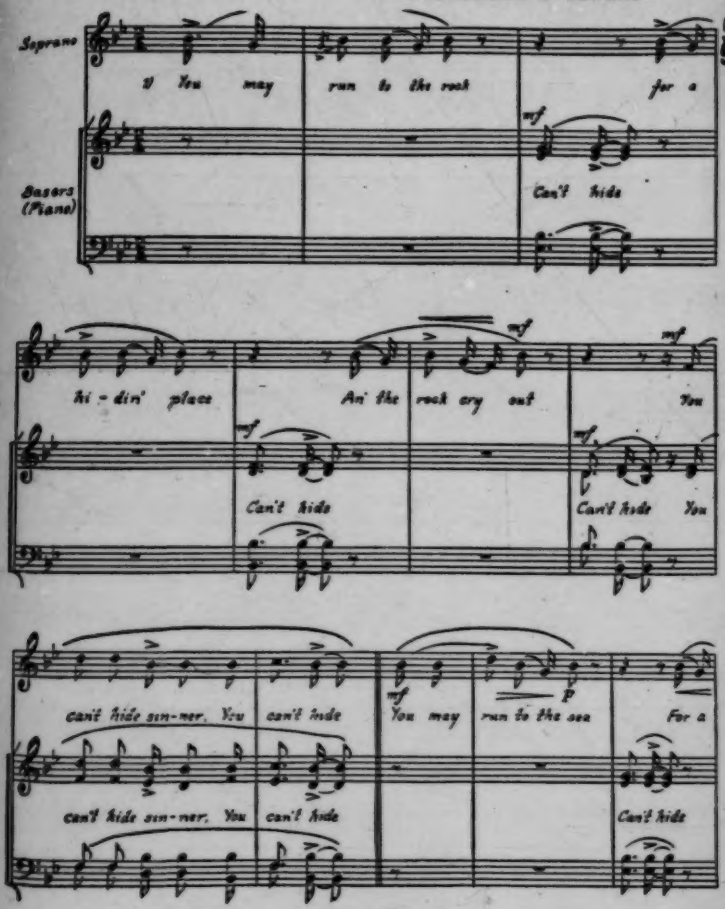

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hi-din' place An' the sea cry out You

mf

Can't hide Can't hide

can't hide sin-ner you can't hide. 3) Oh sin-ner man What

p

can't hide sin-ner you can't hide. Can't hide

mf

you gon-na do At the judge-ment bar

Can't hide

You can't hide sin-ner you can't hide.

Can't hide You can't hide sin-ner you can't hide.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Chorus: John, John you will see John
Aye John
John, John you will see John
Aye John.

Fiah in nuh Eas' and fiah in nuh Wes'
Aye John
Fiah goínah burn out tuh wilduhness
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

Gawd in nuh wil-d'ness jes begin tuh look out
Aye John
Yes, duh ram hohn blow an' nuh childun shout
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

When Quarterman (Illustration 28) finished singing these verses into my recording machine, he said: "You can't take dat!" And when I played it back to him, he exclaimed: "O My Missus--de debbil!"

Katherine sings the following verses to the same tune:

Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John
Talk about John but you will see John
Aye John.
When I get to Heaven goin' to walk all aroun'
Aye John
Angel in the Heaven can't order me down
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

When I get to Heaven goin' to sit an' tell
Aye John
Goin' to a'gue with the Father an' chatter with the Son
Aye John.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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31. JOHN, JOHN

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Moderately fast - steady tempo
Chos. mf

R. Mac Gimsey

John, John you will see John Aye

John. John, John you will see John Aye

John. Fi - ah in nuh Eas' An Fi - ah in nah Wes'

Aye John Fi - ah gon - na burn out tuh

Repeat Chos. then sing next verse

wil - duh - ness Aye John.

Gawd in nuh wil- ness jes be - gin tuh look out

Aye John Yes duh ram hoin How an nah

chil- dun shout Aye John.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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Chorus: No hidin' place
No hidin' place
Almos' t' the Judgment Bah
No hidin' place.

'Cause Ah don't know what my sister wan'nuh stay here for

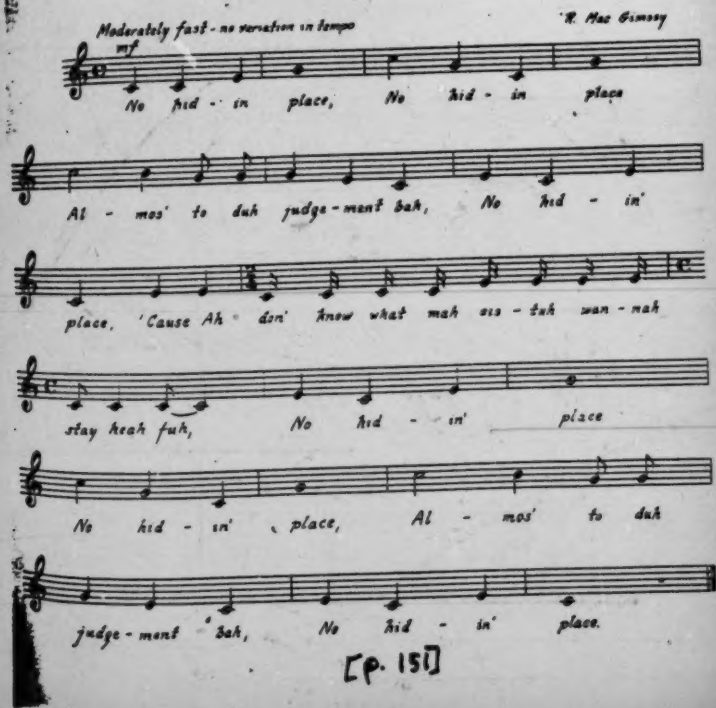
Repeat Chorus:

Ah'm goin' t' run t' the rock for a hidin' place

Repeat Chorus:

Fox got a hole in the groun'
Bird got a nest in the air
There's nare one thing got a hidin' place
But these sinners got none.

Repeat Chorus:



9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## LIVIN' HUMBLE

781 533 "Gettin' religion" is a soul-stirring matter with the Negro. When he feels the serious need of salvation he responds to the appeal of the minister to come forward to the "Mou'ners' Bench"—also called the "Anxious" or "Mercy Seat." There, at the bench directly in front of the pulpit, he kneels while the congregation sings an appropriate song. In the old days he wandered at night until he managed to "come through." Many lines in the oldest songs refer to customs that are now practically obsolete. I cannot imagine a young Negro today wandering alone at night until his "head got wet by the mid'l-night dew."

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Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Christ is a waitin' to receive
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
None but tuh righteous shall git thah
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
O my head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
I pray to my God until I come through
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Ever since I been converted
I been tryin' to live 'umble.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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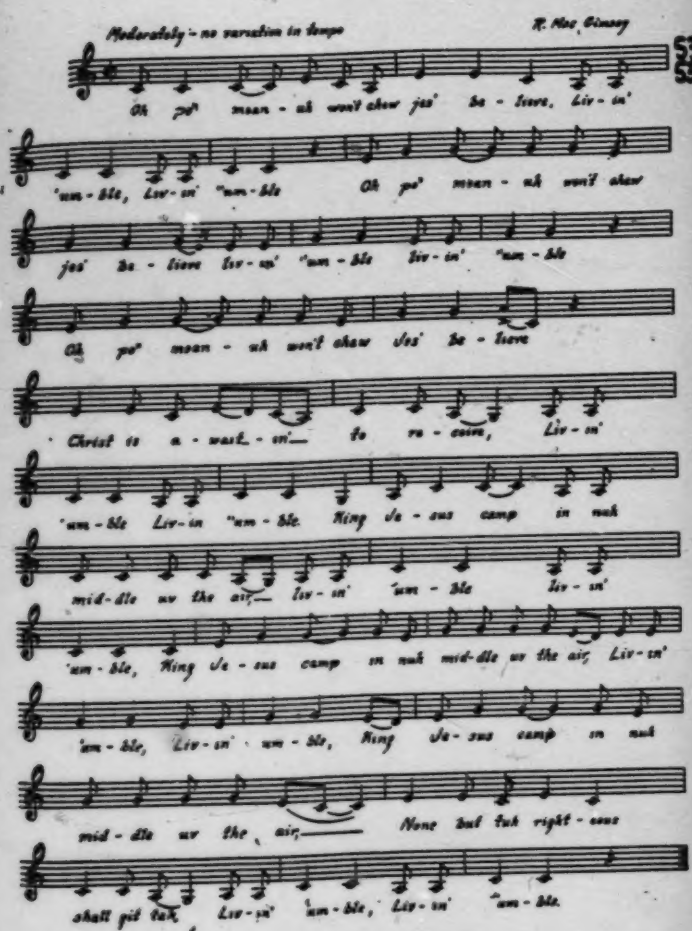

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## SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

533 781 From the reference to "Mornin' star was a witness too" and "I heard a voice an' I saw no one," followed by "It mus' be Jesus passin' by," it is apparent that this unusual version of "Swing Low" was another of the songs appropriate to the "comin' through" of "sinners," who had agonized at night in order to achieve the proper exaltation.

533 •539

Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
It mus' be Jesus passin' by
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
I heard a voice an' I saw no one
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
Mornin' star was a witness too
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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35. SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

Briskly - with no variation in tempo

R. Mac Ginnis

S23
S37

Oh— swing low, — Oh swing low, — Oh

swing low sweet Char-i-ot— Swing low.

It mus' be Jo - sus Pass-in' by— Oh

swing low sweet Char-i-ot— Swing low. Swing low in nuh

Eas' swing low swing low in nuh Eas' swing low, swing low char-

- i-ot swing low,— swing low— char - i-ot swing low.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 haps it is true that certain plantation owners were of a superior type and provided a
156 superior example; or was it that the education received by the slaves was better suited to their needs?

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I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
When my Lord call me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to weep like a willo' moan like a dove

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
When my Lord call me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
When my Lord calls me I must go

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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ZION

533 585 Most Negro weddings, in church or out, are conducted, I am told, without music; but when Ben Davis was married, this song was used with telling effect in the Frederica African Baptist Church. Two ushers walked from the altar with lighted lamps in their hands, and met the bridal party at the door. Two little girls headed the procession and strewed flowers in its path. Ben, with the maid of honor, was followed by the bride on the arm of the best man. To the music of "O Zion—when the bridegroom comes," sung by the guests who filled the church, the participants moved to the altar, where the ushers put down their lamps, and Joe Lowman, the preacher, was waiting for them. When Lowman asked Ben: "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" Ben spoke up "good and strong": "Yes suh!" When the same question was asked of Norah, her answer was very weak. This did not satisfy the parson: "Answer as though you mean it. This ain't for today and tomorrow, this is a lifetime business!" Everybody laughed. Lowman, after the usual procedure, offered a prayer and ended the ceremony by telling Ben to "salute the bride."

533 [461] Besides being used in church and at praise meeting, I find "Zion" was one of the favorite rowing songs of the Butler oarsmen. Tall, lean Liverpool, who looks like an Arab sheik, showed us how he rowed to its rhythm:

533 539 585

Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come
Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come.

Chorus: O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
When the bridegroom come.

Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come
Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

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Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
When the bridegroom come
Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come
Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come
What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come
Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come
We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come
We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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36. ZION

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Andante

Don't you be like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride-groom come, Don't

like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride - groom 'come

mf

Oh Zion, Zion Oh Zion, Zion

Oh Zion when the bride - groom come.

[p.160]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

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This song belongs to the exhorting-sermon type which has an African counterpart. The old-time preacher rhythmically chanted his sermon; at effective intervals he broke into song, in which he was joined by the congregation.

533
•539

Chorus: My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
My God is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop let me tell you 'bout the Chapter One
When the Lord God's work has jus' begun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Two
When the Lord God's written his Bible through
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Three
When the Lord God died on Calvary.

Chorus: An' Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Four
Lord God visit 'mong the po'
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Five
Lord God brought the dead alive
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Six
He went in Jerusalem and healed the sick.

(repeat chorus)

Stop and let me tell you 'bout Chapter Seven
Died and risen and went to Heaven
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Eight
John seen Him standin' at the Golden Gate
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Nine
Lord God turned the water to wine
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Ten
John says He's comin' in the world again.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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37. MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

Moderato, marcato

Baritone (Leader)

mf My God is a rock in a wear - y land

Basers

wear - y land in a wear - y land My God is a rock in a

wear - y land Shel-ter in a time of storm. Ah

know he is a rock in a wea - ry land wea - ry land In a

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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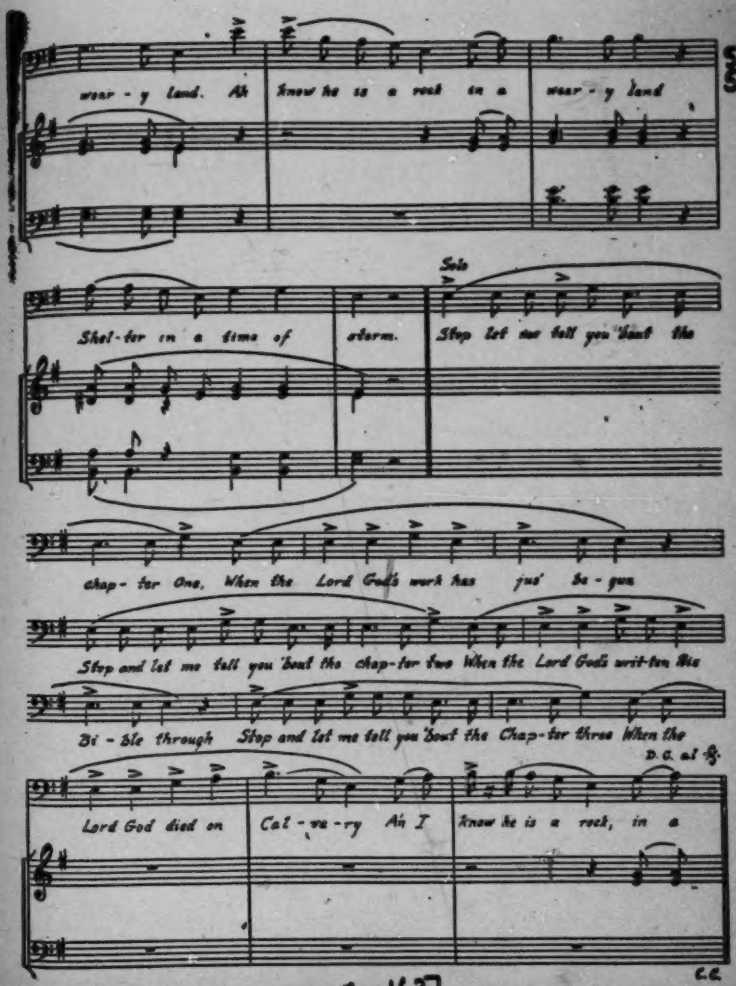


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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song [10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 • 539

Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

[10] Vol. *I*, record 86-A.

(567) [11] Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

123
796
[346]
[352]

Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

796
786

53

See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



May be the las' time we shout together
May be the las' time I don't know
May be the las' time we pray together
May be the las' time I don't know.

(repeat chorus)

Eatin' of the bread an' drinkin' of the wine
May be the las' time I don't know
It may be the las' time we moan together
May be the las' time I don't know
I don't know I don't know may be the las' time I don't know
It may be the las' time I don't know.

## ONE-A THESE DAYS

533 This was a favorite song for the close of prayer meeting:
• 539

One-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
When the Lord call me home.

Chorus: Soon shall be done with the crosses
Soon shall be done with the trouble of the worl'
Soon shall be done with the crosses
When the Lord call me home.

Sister Julia, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
My Sister, one-a these days
When the Lord call me home.

Other "sisters" and "brothers" present are named in lengthening the song.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
.531

## WADE IN NUH WATUH CHILDUN

Chorus: Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh childun
Wade in nuh watuh
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

If a you don' believe Ah been redeem'
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Follow me down to Jurdun stream
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

Repeat Chorus:

Who dat yonduh drest in white
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh
Mus' be the childun uv the Isralite
Gawd's go'nah trouble duh watuh.

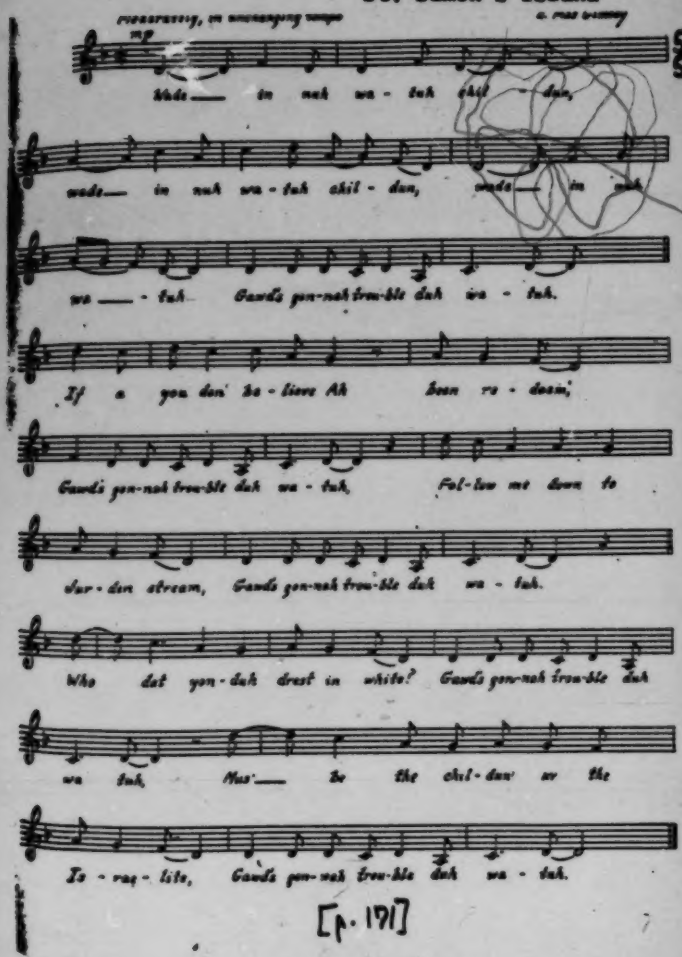
Repeat Chorus:

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p. 171]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533
•509

SABBATH HAS NO END

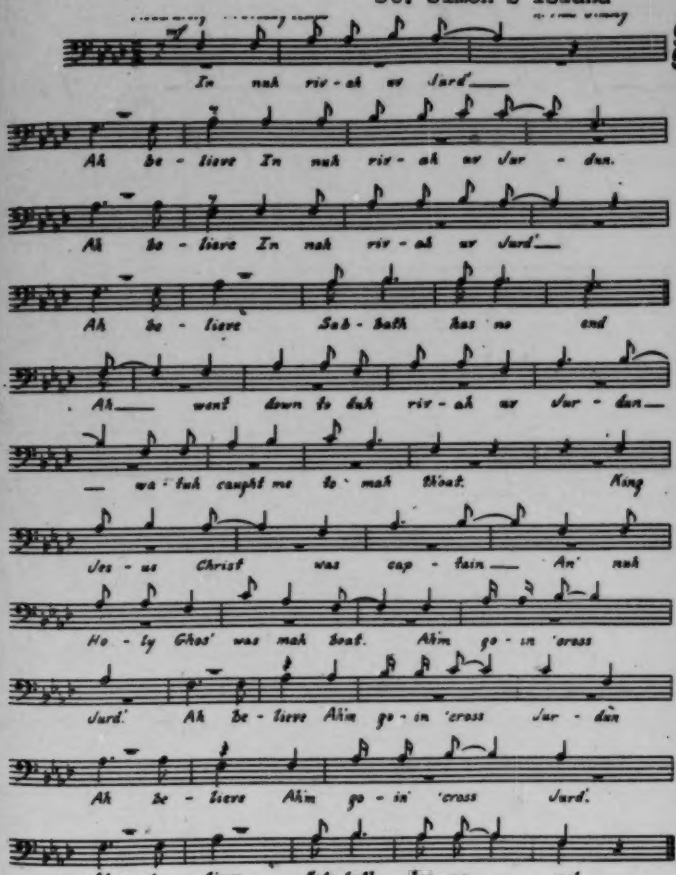
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
In the River uv Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Water caught me to my throat
Jesus Christ was the Captain
An' the Holy Ghos' was my boat.
I'm goin' cross Jurd'n
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
I'm goin' cross Jurdun
I believe
Sabbath has no end.
I went down to the River uv Jurdun
Where John baptize three
Up step ole big man Satan say
John baptize me.
Look in the Book of Redemption
There you shall fine
Where Jesus Christ was the doctor
Turned the water to wine.
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Wasn't that a doctor
I believe
Sabbath has no end.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p. 173]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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771 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know
772 that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the phys-
171 ical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

533 In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in
771 their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers
[154] was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without num-
[171] ber, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it
533 was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this
787 song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

533
• 587

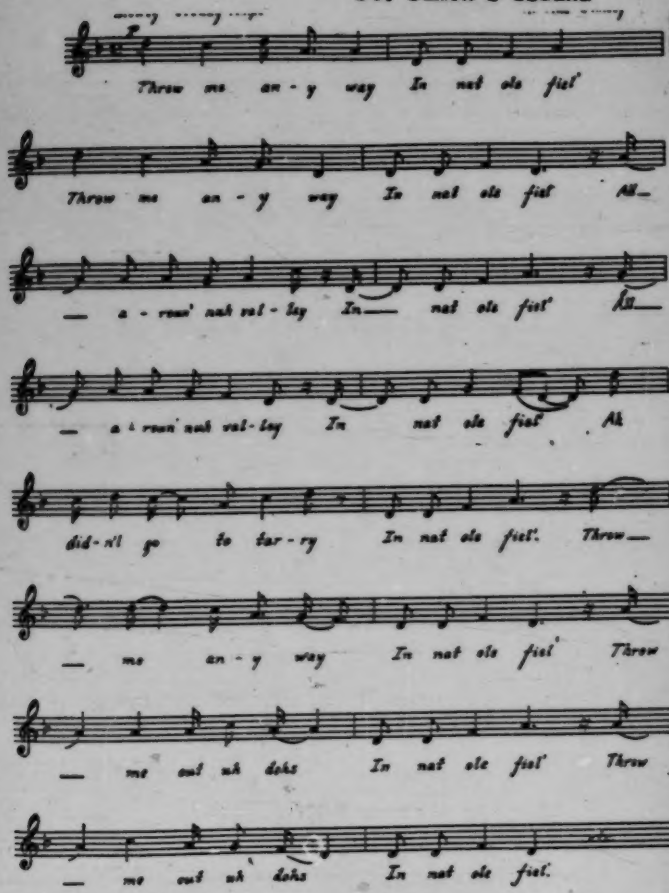
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p. 177]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## JESUS GON TUH MAKE UP MY DYIN' BED

533
767

Although this song was brought to St. Simon's after the War Between the States, I am told by an old resident of McIntosh County that it originated in antebellum days when there were no colored undertakers, and a certain Negro was appointed on each plantation to make the dead ready for burial.

533
.539

Chorus: He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
Jesus gon tuh make up my dyin' bed.
Well, in my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's gon tuh cry
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to close my dyin' eye.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to weep
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to fol' my dyin' sheet.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to moan
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to hear my dyin' groan.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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St. Simon's Island

533
539

Moderately fast - steady tempo

R. Nat Ginsey

mf

He's a dy - in' bed mak - er,— Well, well, He's a

dy - in' bed mak - er,— Well,— well, well,— He's a

dy - in' bed mak - er— Well, well—

Je - sus gon tuh make yo mah dy - in' bed.—

Verse

Well in mah dy - in' room Ah know Some -

bo - dy's gon— tuh— cry All— Ah want them to

do fuh me Jus' to close mah dy - in' eye.—

— He's a dy - in' bed mak - er,—

91 Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
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## O DE ROBE

533 177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 •539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

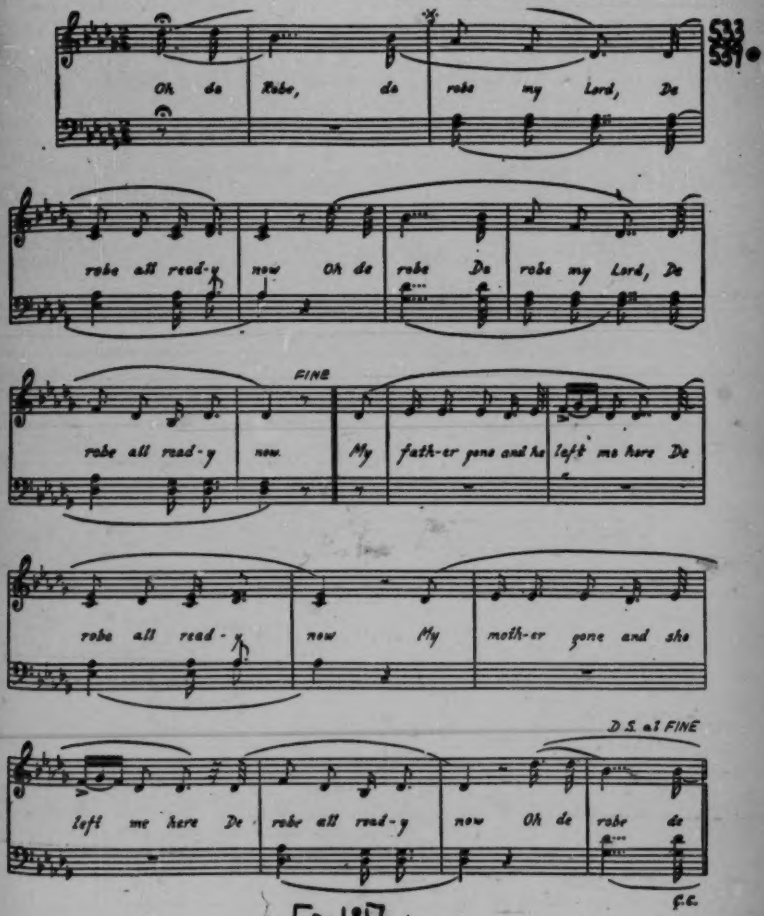
[464 560] [17] In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[p. 181]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533
•539

## AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NIGH

Good-bye Mother
Hmmh [19]
I'm goin' to leave you
Hmmh
For you can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

In the city of Jerusalem
Hmmh
An' Pentecos' Day
Hmmh
When the people got the Holy Ghost
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

Good-bye tattlers
Hmmh
Goin' away to leave you
Hmmh
You can't go with me
Aye Lord
Time is drawin' nigh.

[19] Sung by the basers with closed lips. This odd nasal tone adds attractive variety to a fine piece of melodic construction.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island

44 AYE LORD, TIME IS DRAWIN' NIGH

533
539

Allegro

Alto

p

Good-bye Moth-er I'm go-in' to leave you

Basers

Hm-m-h

Hands

f

For you can't go with me Aye Lord, Time is draw-in'

Hm-m-h

f

Aye Lord, Time is draw-in'

[p. 186]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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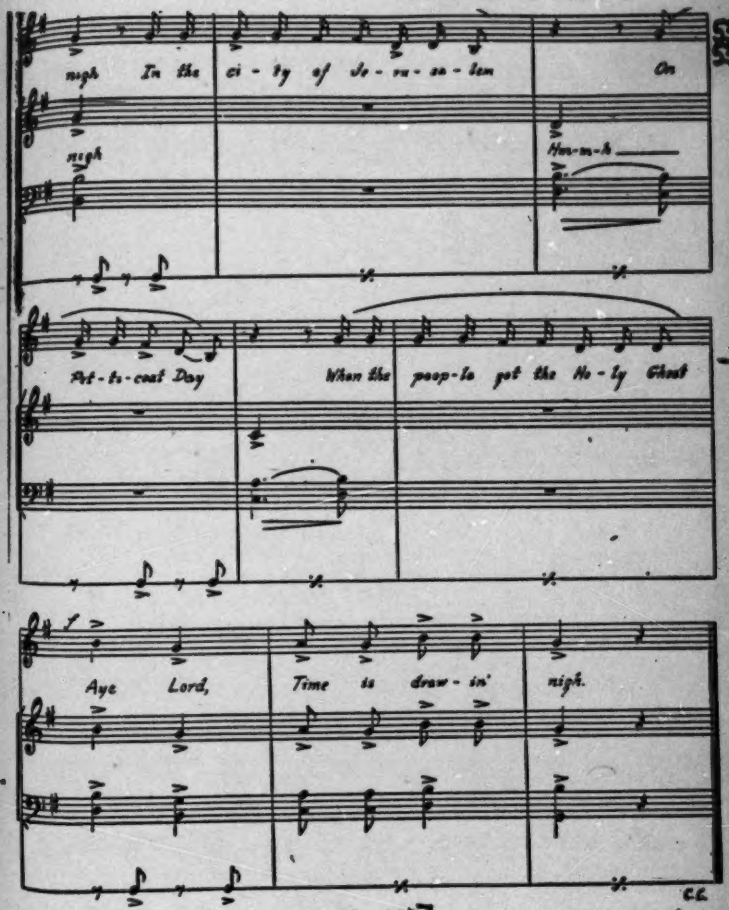
Georgia

St. Simon's Island




[P.187]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
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533 It was interesting to find the tune of this song fitted out in M[illegible]
• 539 with an entirely different set of words. None but a Negro poet could [illegible]
the imagery of the following lines:

Loose horse in the valley
Aye
Who goin' t' ride 'im
Aye
Nothin' but the righteous
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Judgment's a comin'
Aye
How you know it
Aye
By the buddin' of the fig tree
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

Don't you hear God talkin'
Aye
He's a talkin' through the thunder
Aye
Then people ona wonder
Aye Lord
Time's a drawin' nigh.

NUMMER ME ONE

Chorus: Nummer[30] me one
Nummer me one
Nummer me one
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
Sen' for my leader here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
Sen' for my preacher here
I'm goin' to the Judgment Bar.

The song is prolonged by sending for the different me[illegible]y.

[30] Number.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

533
539

45. NUMMER ME ONE

*Andante*

Num - mer me ___ one, ___ Num - mer me ___ one, Num - mer me ___ one, I'm goin' to the judge - ment bar

C.C.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 764 [574] The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

[539]

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)[A] one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

[533] [539]

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

533 In Charleston, where I was so ill-advised as to ask a member of the white Society for the Preservation of Spirituals why this work was not done by the Negroes, I was tartly told that they no longer sang the old songs. In spite of that statement, when a friend called her cook into the dining room, and summoned an old flower woman from the street, I heard the two sing songs which were perfectly familiar.

I asked for "In Some Lonesome Graveyard." They tittered and said: "You know dat one? Dat's real ole." After singing three verses, the cook, with an instinct for a dramatic exit, threw her apron over her head, and retreated sobbing to the kitchen. She probably remembered she had something in the oven that required her attention.

533 Willis tells me he learned the song as a small boy from his father, Adam
• 539 Proctor, while planting corn.

U-m-h, u-m-h,[25] I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
Mother, Mother, don't let your daughter condemn you
In some lonesome graveyard.

U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
U-m-h, u-m-h, I hear' a mighty moanin'
In some lonesome graveyard.

Fathers are warned about their sons, preachers about their members.

[25] Sung with the lips closed.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

46. IN SOME LONESOME GRAVEYARD

533
539

*Andante*

*p*

Um - h — Um - h — I hear a might - y

moan - in' — Um - h — Um - h — I hear a might - y

moan - in' Um - h Um - h I hear a might - y

*f*

moan - in' In some lone - some grave - yard.

[p. 194]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942

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Georgia

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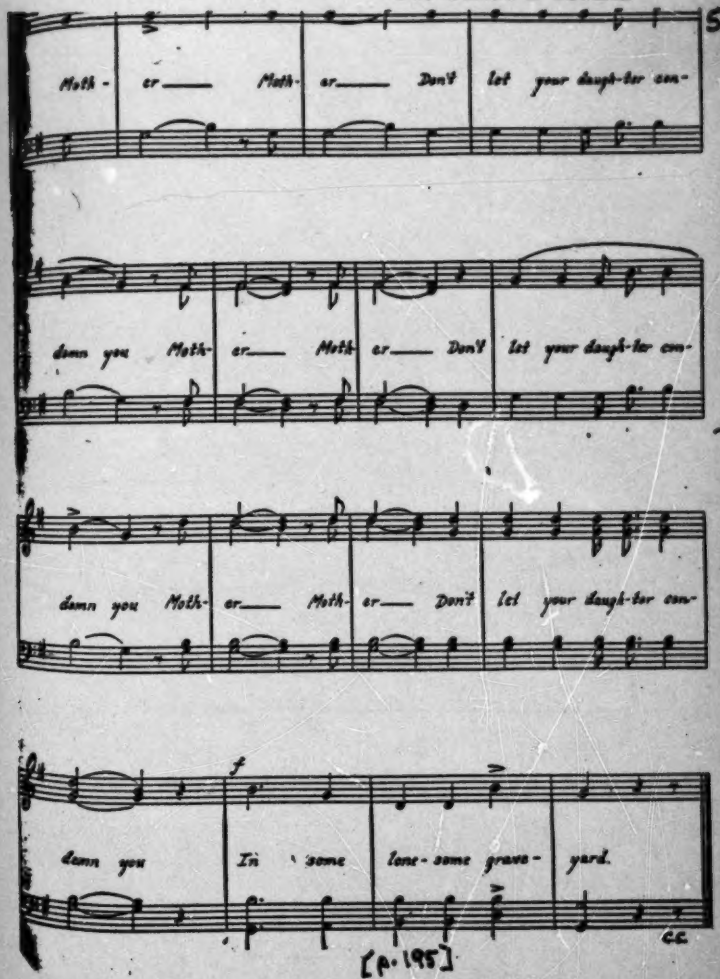


[p. 195]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## I GOT TO LAY IN YONDER GRAVEYARD

533
•539

It is a pity that the music of these touching lines is not available.

I got to lay in yonder graveyard
I got to lay there fo' myself
Nobody here can lay there fo' me
I got to lay there fo' myself.

I got to stan' my trial in the Judgment
I got to stan' there fo' myself
There's nobody here can stan' there fo' me
I got to stan' there fo' myself.

I got to give an account in the Judgment
I got to give it fo' myself
Nobody here can give it fo' me
I got to give it fo' myself.

I got to cross that river o' Jurden
I got to cross there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to cross there fo' me
I got to cross there fo' myself.

I got to pray in that lonesome valley
I got to pray there fo' myself
Nobody here goin' to pray there fo' me
I got to pray there fo' myself.

I got to weep at Zion's Court House
I got to weep there fo' myself
My dear mother can't weep there fo' me
I got to weep there fo' myself.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the 533 505 461 ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers," [7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe [8] (Illustration 31) A calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu 461 of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] *The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.*

[567] [8] *In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.*

A. [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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533
•589

O bring me a 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'.
A ring-tail' 'ator
O gal when you come off the islan'
A Darien 'gator
O gal when you come off the islan'

Let us hope that more of these rollicking songs can be retrieved. They have a flavor that is unique.

## CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY

[46]
[506]

This song was used in loading lumber, when six men on each side of the rope hauled on the block and tackle in putting a great "stick" [9] in place on board a vessel.

Call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
You call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
Yes, I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.
O we'll heave an' haul together
O hang boys hang.
We heave an' haul forever
O hang boys hang.
They hang my ole Grandaddy
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
O they hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They hang him for his money
O hang boys hang.
They call me hangin' Johnny
O hang boys hang.
O I never hang nobody
O hang boys hang.

[9] This is Joe's way of referring to a piece of timber 16" x 16", and 40' long.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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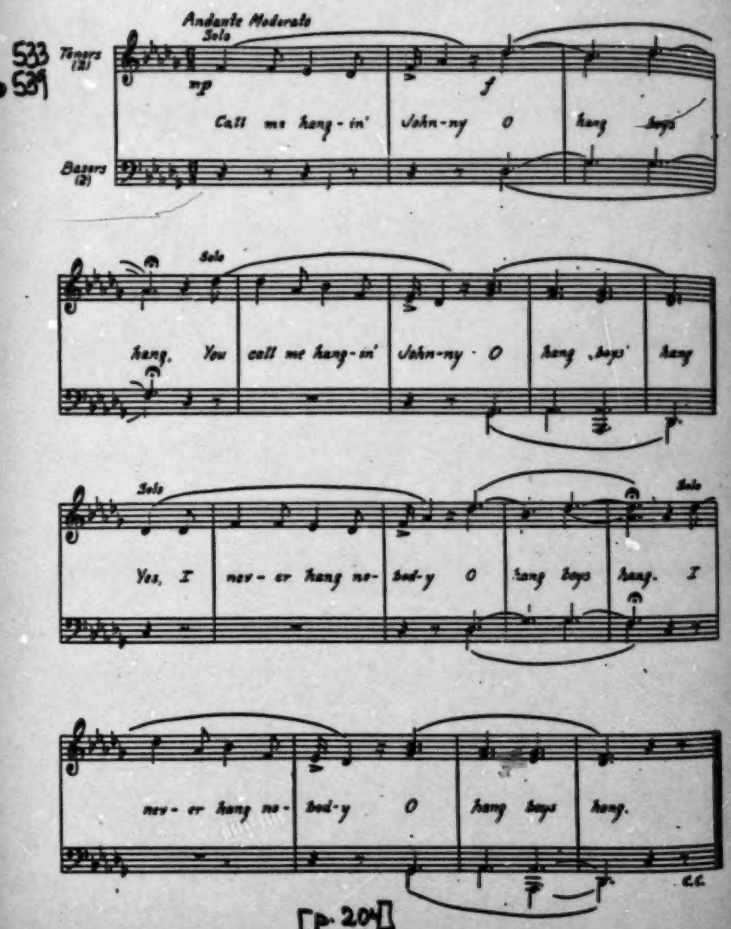
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

## 47. CALL ME HANGIN' JOHNNY




[p. 204]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## 48. KNOCK A MAN DOWN

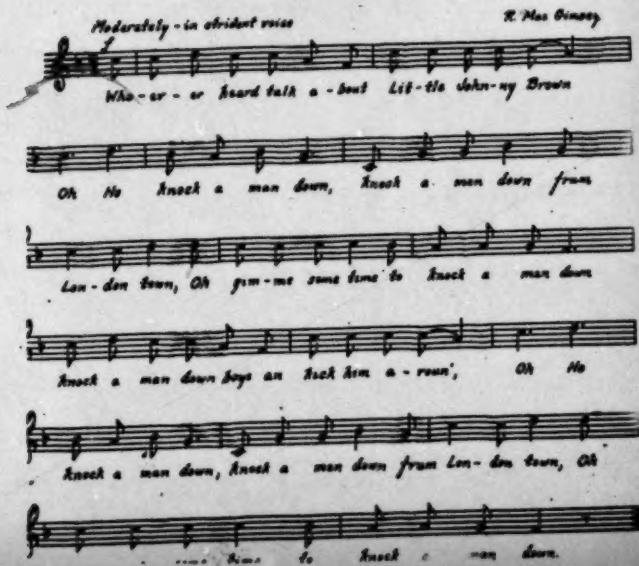
533
539
[505]

Johnny Brown was captain of a tugboat called The Dandy, which towed to open water the sailing vessels coming to Doboy Sound for lumber. The stevedores agreed he was "the fines' cap'n of 'em all."

Y'a never heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Knock a man down bullies an' kick him aroun'
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Knock a man down from London town
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.

Y'a ever heard talk about Little Johnny Brown
Oh Ho knock a man down.
Fines' cap'n on Doboy Sound
Oh gimme some time to knock a man down.



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SANDY ANNA

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Seaman, what's the madda?
Hoo-ray 'o-ray
Seaman, what's the madda?
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray 'o-ray
He stole it in Savannah
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
He spend it in Havana
Hooray 'o-ray
I caught 'im in his colla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.
I shake 'im till he holla'
Hooray o'-ray
Seaman stole my dolla'
Hooray, Sandy Anna.

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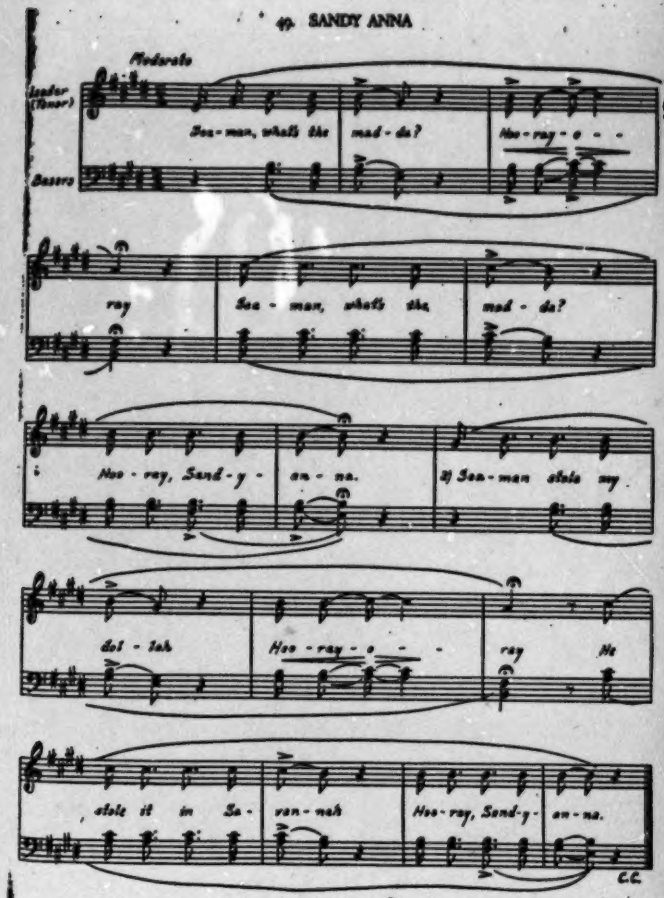


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Pay me my mon-ey down Think I heard my Cap-tain say

Pay me my mon-ey down Tmor-row is my

Sail-in' day Pay me my mon-ey down.

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## DEBT I OWE

Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe, Lord, debt I owe
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Debt I owe in Brunswick sto'e [11]
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
O Mister Watchman don't watch me
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe
Watch that mg'ah right behine that tree
I ain' gonna pay no debt I owe.

[11] To sustain interest the shanty leader always introduced an element of surprise into his lines. To this day we feel cheated when Floyd fails to include "Jewtown Sto'e" and "St. Simon's Sto'e" when he sings about the debts he "ain' gonna pay," but then, that may be part of the game.

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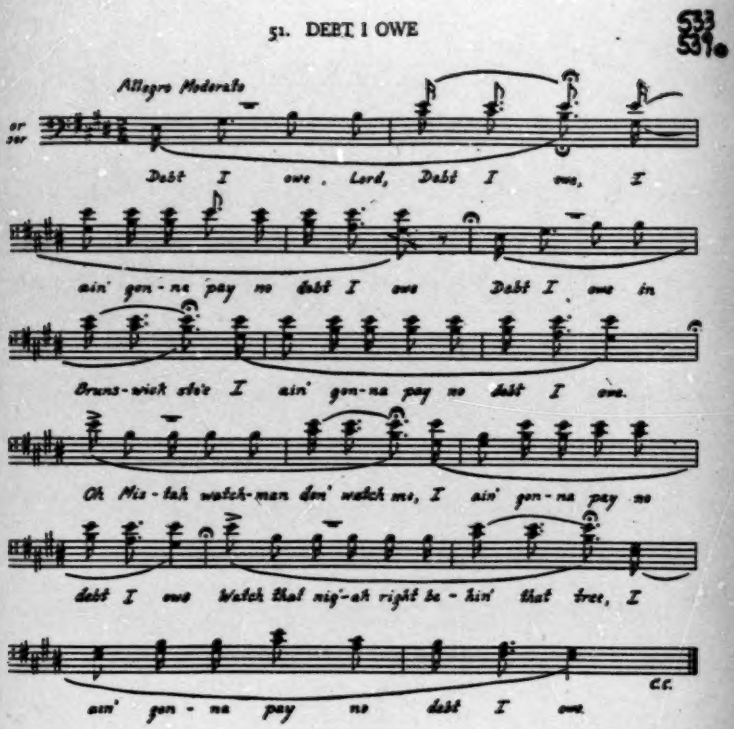


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## RAGGED LEEVY

Ragged Leevy! Oh — Ho!
Do ragged Leevy
Ragged Leevy! O boy!
You ragged like a jay bird!
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence [12]
In the mornin'—Oh — Ho!
Soon in the mornin'.
Hos' an' buggy—Oh — Ho!
Hos' an' buggy
Hos' an' buggy—O boy!
Dey's no one to drive 'um.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
In de mornin'
When I rise
I goin' to sit by de fire.
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
O soon in de mornin'
In de mornin'
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.
Mauma Dinah Oh — Ho!
Do Mauma Dinah
Mauma Dinah
O gal I can't suppo't you.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Do Mr. Sipplin
Walkin' talkin'!
O buil' me a sto'e fence.
Sweet potato Oh — Ho!
Sweet potato
Sweet potato O boy
There's two in de fire.
Mr. Sipplin! Ha-n-nh
Goin' to buil' me a sto'e fence
In de mornin' Oh — Ho!
When I rise I goin' to sit by de fire.

Used when "blockin' heavy timber."

[12] Store fence.

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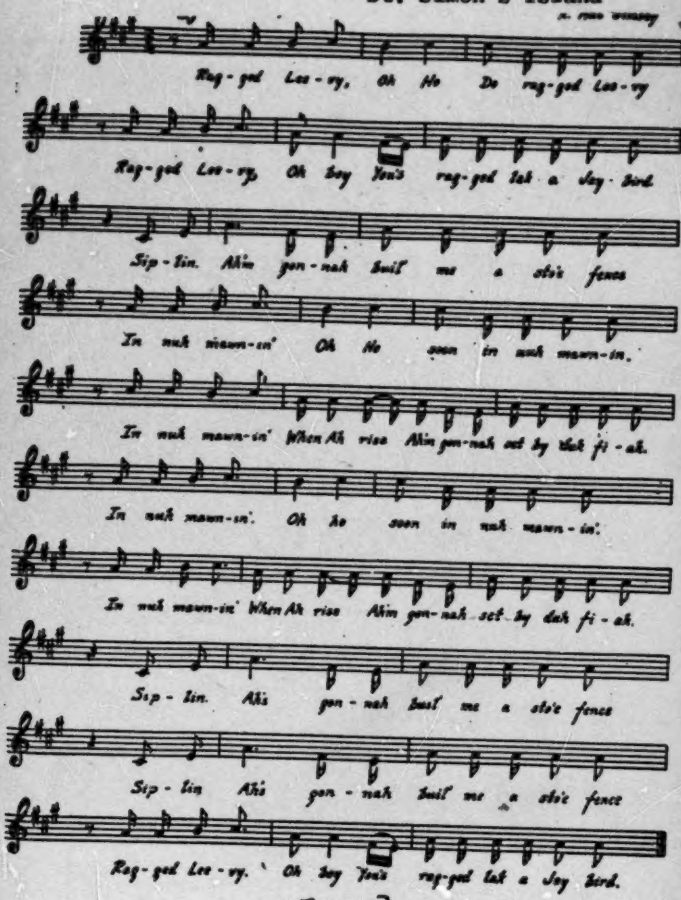


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## GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O

Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone an' I'm goin' too
Goodbye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
Riley gone to Liverpool [13]
Good-bye my Riley O!
You Democrat Riley
O Riley, O man!
You Democrat Riley
Good-bye my Riley O!
Riley, Riley, where were you?
O Riley, O man!
When I played that nine spot through
Good-bye my Riley O!

[13] London Town and Mobile Bay are the other spots where Riley is supposed to have gone.

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53. GOOD-BYE MY RILEY O

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Andante Moderato
(Solo)

mp

Ri - ley, Ri - ley, where were you?

rit.

O Ri - ley O man!

(Solo)

mp

Ri - ley gone and

I goin' too, Good - bye my Ri - ley O!

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## OLE TAR RIVER

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Chorus: O, On the ole Tar river
O—eee[14]
O, On the ole Tar river
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
O—eee
Tar river goin' run tomorrow
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Tar river run black an' dirty
O—eee
Tar river run black an' dirty
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Tar river goin' to water my horses
O—eee
Tar river goin' to water my horses
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Ole Tar river is a healin' water
O—eee
Ole Tar river is a healin' water
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
O—eee
Ole Tar river run free an' easy
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

Chorus: Way down, way down in the country
O—eee
Way down, way down in the country
Lord, Lord, the ole Tar river.

[14] In some sections such a refrain is called a *howl*. In Seaboard Slave States, Olmstead calls it "Jodeling" or "The Carolina Yell" and describes its use by a group of Negro laborers. "Suddenly one raised such a sound as I never heard before; a long, loud, musical shout, rising and falling, and breaking into falsetto, his voice ringing through the woods, in the clear, frosty night air, like a bugle call. As he finished, the melody was caught up by another, and then another, and then by several in chorus." Olmstead goes on to say that a similar response was sung by this group of Negroes as they put their shoulders to a bale of cotton and rolled it up an embankment:

[46]

"Come bredern, come; let's go at it, come now, ooho! roll away
eeoho-eeoho-weeioho-if"

A different example, sung by Negro boat hands, is given in another chapter by this observant gentleman:

"Ye see dem boat way dah ahead . . .
Oahoiohieu . . .
Dey's burnin' not'n but fat [wood] an' rosum
Oahoiohieu."

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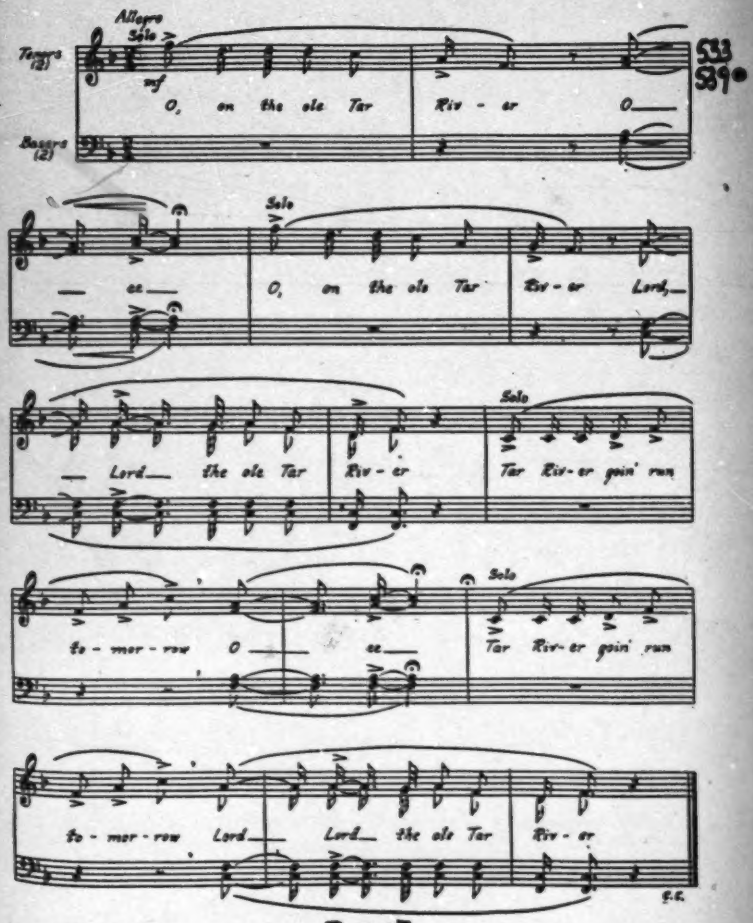


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## THIS TIME ANOTHER YEAR

This time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long
My brother broke the ice an' gone
O Lord how long!

Befo' this time another year
I may be gone
In some lonesome graveyard
O Lord how long!
Mind my sister how you walk on the cross
O Lord how long
Your right foot slip an' y'ur soul get los'
O Lord how long!

## HAUL AWAY, I'M A ROLLIN' KING

Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Yonder come a flounder flat on the groun'
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Belly to the groun' an' back to the sun
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Ain' but one thing worry me
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
I leave my wife in Tennessee
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.
Haul away, I'm a rollin' king
Haul away, haul away
I'm boun' for South Australia.

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[461]
[506]

SUNDOWN BELOW

This tune was sung at the end of the day as a hint to the captain, when the hold was too dark for the stevedores to see what they were doing:

Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down in the hole below
Sundown
Sundown below.
I hear my captain say
Sundown
Sundown below.
Sun is down an' I mus' go
Sundown
Sundown below.

MY SOUL BE AT RES'

One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—goin' be at res'
My soul be at res'.
Be at res' till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
It won't be long—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Be at res'—till Judgment Day
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
Goin' t' hitch on my wings an' try the air
My soul be at res'.
One a dese mornin's—it won't be long
My soul be at res'.
You a'ks fo' me an' I'll be gone
My soul be at res'.

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## ANNIEBELLE

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Of all the shanties, this concerning Anniebelle appears to be adaptable to the most varied uses, and to be the most widely distributed. Joe tells me he learned it over forty years ago from the stevedores who loaded lumber on the vessels at the Hilton-Dodge mills, but its main use was for "spikin' steel" on the railroads. I notice, however, that he puts the song to equally good use in chopping wood or swinging the weed cutter. In the mines it is called a "hammerin' song."

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Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't weep
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't moan
Hunh!
Anniebelle
Hunh!
Don't go
Hunh!
Leave home.
Hunh!
When I throw
Hunh!
My head
Hunh!
In the bar
Hunh!
Room doo'
Hunh!
I'll never
Hunh!
Get drunk
Hunh!
No mo'.
Hunh!
Don't want t' hurt nobody
Hunh!

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O-h no
Hunh! 533
O-h no 539
Hunh!
Dis ole hammer [15]
Hunh!
Kill John Henry
Hunh!
Laid him low buddy
Hunh!
Laid him low.
Hunh!

At this point Joe interpolated rhythmically: "Stan' by for another verse."

Ain't no hammer
Hunh!
In this mount'in
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy
Hunh!
Ring like mine buddy.
Hunh!

Several years ago I heard the following version sung by Boogaloo, one of Darien's happy-go-lucky Negroes, as he cut weeds on the highway shoulders in front of Josephine's house. It was amusing to read in a recent issue of *Time* a letter from Mary J. Phillips telling of the explanation of the present war Boogaloo had given her husband. Mrs. Phillips quotes Boogaloo as saying: "Boss, I tells you what I thinks about this here war. Germany, some back, she starts a crap game, threw an eight, then falls off. Now she wants her money back and starts grabbing." I imagine that Boogaloo's speech was more consistent all through, but the thought is clearly his. 533 [461]

This is the hammer that kill John Henry
Tell 'im I'm dead, buddy, tell 'im I'm dead
Cap'n Smith what you reckon?
Ten-pound hammer kill John Henry
Kill' my buddy, Lord, but 'e can't kill me. [539]

[15] Sometimes he specifies "nine-poun' hammer."

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## 56. ANNIEBELLE

*Very Slowly*
*Time is suspended at "huh" for swinging of ax or hammer*

*R. Mac Gimsey*

An - nie - belle (huh!) don' weep (huh!) An - nie - belle

(huh!) don' moan (huh!) An - nie - belle (huh!) don'

go (huh) leave home (huh!) When Ah throw (huh!) mah

head (huh!) in - nuh bah - (huh!) room dooh (huh!) Ah

ner - uh (huh!) get drunk (huh!) no mo' (huh!) Don' wan-na hurt no-

bo - dy (huh!) Oh no! (huh!) Oh no! (huh!) Dis ole

ham - mah (huh!) Kill John Hen - ry (huh!) Laid 'im

'low bud - dy (huh!) laid 'im low bud - dy (huh!)

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## RICE SONGS

243 461 553 Growing rice was a thriving industry along the Ogeechee, Altamaha, and Satilla rivers a century ago, but today it is difficult to find even a handful of grain to demonstrate how it was beaten. At Hofwyl Plantation, the last in Glynn County to grow rice to any extent, I asked Jerry Rutledge about the songs that were used for planting rice, and getting it ready to eat. He gave me these appropriate lines:

[539]

John say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
John-say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
If you sow it in the rain, you got to reap it jus' the same
You got to reap in the harvest what you sow.

He explained how the rice sheaves, about a foot through, and tied with a twist of straw, were whipped with "frails"; they were laid in parallel rows on a large sheet on the floor with the butt ends out. When two Negroes "t'rashed" together, they always sang as they faced each other. The short part of the flail which flew in the air in a seemingly reckless fashion was called a "bob," and it was rather important to have its gyrations rhythmically controlled. As soon as one side of a sheaf was clear of rice it was turned over and the other side whipped. By the time the string was broken the grain was in a long row in the middle.

Julia Walker, born near Riceboro in Liberty County, gave me precisely the same description of the work, and sang the following song as she demonstrated how the "frail" was used. Frankly, I was skeptical of the strength of the rawhide that attached the bob to the stick, and kept well out of range:

[539]

Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
My Lord call you—wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late I know, sinner, too late.
Church bell ring—you wouldn't come
Preacher preach—an' you wouldn't come
My Lord call you—an' you wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late, sinner, too late.

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243 Julia said that when only a small amount of rice was to be thrashed, the grain
461 was stripped from the straw by hand, and put on a good clean floor. With a quick
(535) and effective dance step, the outer husk was scuffed off. On Sapelo the work was done to a similar step, with these words:

533
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Peas an' the rice done done
Higho—Higho!
Beaufort boat done come
Higho—Higho!
How do you know—done heard it blow
Higho—Higho!

On St. Simon's, Julia Armstrong sings still another version:

New rice an' okra—Nana—Nana![18]
Eat some an' leave some—Nana—Nana!
Beat rice to bum-bum
Eat some an' leave some.

I am told that Old Adam Proctor hoed rice to the tune of:

Way over yonder in that new bright wo'l'
Poo' sinner got a home at las'

and tied up the sheaves to:

Do Lord remember me—Do Lord remember me
Way over in Beulah Lan'—Do Lord remember me.

(635) A shout song was often used for the rice dance. The following lines indicate how the rhythm changed. While walking around in a circle with a preliminary scuffle, the "t'rashers" sang the slow part as in shouting.

Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[18] According to Dr. Turner, "nana" means grandmother.

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You know the way an' you wouldn't come home
Yes Lord, I know the way.
Every sheep know his shepher's voice
Yes Lord, I know the way.

[535] The faster part was sung as two hops were made on one foot while the other did the scuffing.

Make a jump, jump for joy!
Make a jump, jump for joy!

This phrase was repeated over and over, with the variation:

Sheep jump, jump for joy!

243 The planters believed that rice was only good when freshly beaten,[17] and the sheaves kept for family use were put in a well-ventilated mouse-proof loft. The commercial rice was threshed in a mill, but the husks were left on, and even in cities, in the South, the rice was beaten fresh every day. The mortars were generally hol-
[412] lowed out of cypress or hard pine logs and used upright, although on Sapelo I have seen some made of immense pieces of squared timber laid flat so that the beating took place against the grain. The pestles had two ends, one sharp for bruising the husks and removing them, the other flat for whitening. Boys or women generally did the beating. They would grasp the pestles in the middle, raising and letting
[461] them fall so quickly and evenly, to the rhythm of what was more like a chant than a song, that the task was not considered difficult.

243 [17] William Ellis in his History of Madagascar, 1838, makes it clear that our early rice planters
171 got their ideas about the culture and preparation of rice for the table directly from Madagascar. In Seed from Madagascar Duncan Clinch Heyward tells us that the seed of the Carolina Gold rice was brought from that land by a sea captain about the year 1685, but Mr. Ellis furnishes the African end of the picture. After describing planting and harvesting methods, he explains the laborious process by which rice was made ready for cooking. "The rice, which is kept in the husk in a sort of granary, is made ready for use in such quantities only as the daily consumption of the family may require." In minute detail he explains that it is then beaten in a mortar by two people using large wooden pestles, about five feet in length, so as to break and remove the outer husk without breaking the grain. The rice is taken out, and separated from the husk by winnowing; it is then beaten in the mortar a second time for the purpose of taking off the inner skin. The process is repeated a third time; tossed again in the winnowing-fan, then washed and cooked. It was reported by Francis Moor that on the West Coast of Africa men worked the corn ground, and women and girls the rice ground. Jobson, another West African traveler, says: "the wives do all the hard labor such as cleaning and pounding rice . . . which is done in mortars with great staves." One explorer mentioned that rice was so plentiful in Kongo and Angola that it hardly bears any price.

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## PEAS AN' THE RICE

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(243)

In her youth, Julia Walker employed these rhythmic lines to help in thrashing rice on the floor.[18]

Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice
Peas an' the rice done done done done
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.
New rice an' okra, eat some an' lef' some
Peas an' the rice, peas an' the rice done done done done.

243
171

[18] James A. Grant in a Walk across Africa tells of many interesting things he saw in 1861 on the way from Zanzibar to Uganda. "On the third of April the rice harvest was being gathered. . . . The reapers consisted of negro women and girls, who sang pleasantly. . . . The thrashing of the rice was novel. A quantity of ears was placed upon a cow's hide, slaves in irons were made to work it with their toes and feet, and winnow it in the wind; and after being thoroughly sun-dried upon a clear space of cow-dunged ground, it was fit for the process of shelling in the large pestle and mortar. If a considerable amount was to be thrashed, a bludgeon answered the purpose of the negroes' feet. . . . If our Seedees had to clean rice in the wooden mortar, a dozen hands would set about the work of two. It could not be done without those who worked beating time with the pestle to their song, the lookers-on clapping hands and stamping their feet. The work and song never ceased till the rice was pounded almost into dust—such joyous reckless creatures are these simple Africans!" To the Southerner of the nineteenth century this account presents a familiar picture.

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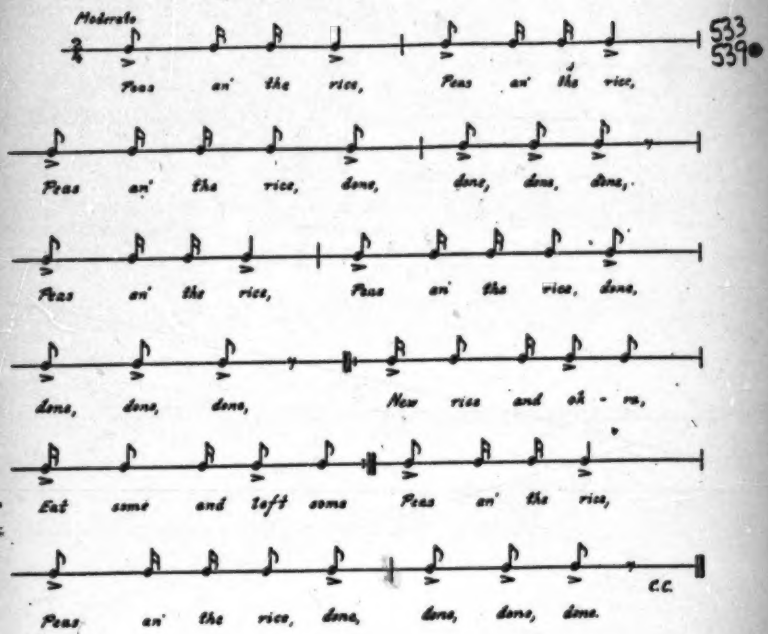
58. PEAS AN' THE RICE



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## HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest;[19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were
243 "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about
533 Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

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Summer comin' again
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she set me free
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
  Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821] [19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

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## A. B. A. B. A.

243 533 461 The rhythm of this nonsensical Butler Island song enables the rice beaters to do work which would otherwise be extremely tiresome.[20] It continues as long as the work lasts, with no change in rhythm and very little in the words.

533 539

Uncle July mortal man, stan' right by de doo'
An' see how y'r rice done mash.[21]
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A. B. A.
Go A. B. go
Go A. B. go
July'll cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' July'll cut y'r win'.
July de mortal man
July cut y'r win'.
A. B. A. B. A.
An' A. B. A. B. A.
Go Lizzy go, Billy goin' t' cut y'r win'.
Go Emma go, Cally goin' t' cut y'r win'.

[20] Mrs. Cate tells me that each plantation had its particular songs for beating rice, just as its rowing songs were unlike those of other plantations.

[21] The footnote on page 232 suggests that the "reckless" Africans pounded rice in the same careless fashion. [171]

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## I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine f' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

## ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay." [22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell [23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

[22] The editors of Slave Songs of the United States say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

[171]

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## MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me (296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

[539]

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

(234) (539) She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[37]

[37] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

*Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long*
*Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.*

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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [191] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

(539)

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 569 461 [412] (533) On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Janey Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

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539

What y'u gwine t' do fo' June month? Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
June month's a ha'd month—Jerusalem Jerusalem.
Jersualem in de mornin'—Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Floyd sang several variations of the central theme, but as he said himself, "This is enough!" Janey's song was practically the same except that she substituted "Zion" for "Jerusalem."

You mus' pray ha'd—June a ha'd month
June month a sailin'—Oh, Zion O Zion.
What y'u do fo' June month?
Y'u pull off y'u coat an' go t' work—Oh, Zion O Zion.

252
256
402

In her "Reminiscences" Mrs. Conrad tells how meal was ground on Broughton Island in a Biblical handmill: "Large stones with a hole in the uppermost one that connected it with the roof of the shed in which it stood,[28] held a stout pole. The women would take hold of this piece of wood and turn the stone with a celerity and ease that was surprising. I can shut my eyes now at any time, and hear the whirring of the stones, the soft rustle of the meal as it fell in the basket placed to receive it and the sound of the women's voices singing at the mill." However, from this scanty description, I could not visualize how the mill worked until Belle Murray of St. Simon's explained that a large block of wood supported the stones; that the lower stone was held in place through the use of a bar of iron called a "spindle"—about one and one-half inches square and eighteen inches long—and that it fitted into an auger hole in the timber underneath. It appears that after the square piece of iron had made the lower stone secure, it abruptly ended in a half-inch bolt, about three inches long, which went through a round hole in a rectangular piece of iron, about two and one-half inches by three and one-half inches and half-an-inch thick, called a "frog." The corn was fed into the round hole in the stone above the frog; three holes of varying depth and width—chipped out of the top stone only about three inches from its rim—regulated the fineness or coarseness of the meal through shifting the pole from one hole to another. A wedge was also put under the stones to tilt them when one wanted the mill to run more easily. According to Mrs. Conrad,

[28] *In all probability a hole in an overhead beam engaged the upper end of the pole at the time its lower end—on a slant—was moving the stone with "celerity and ease."*

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252 the meal fell into a basket, but I still cannot see how this was possible when the
256 stones were circular. Belle says that her mill was set up in a box and the meal fell
[402] into it.

I go into detail because no one has told me so clearly as Belle how the work was done. She obligingly sold me the mill that came from Butler's Point where she was born, and said: "I wish I had a dollar for every mess of grits I've ground in it." Lonnie Davis says he knows how to set it up, and soon I hope to be grinding enough meal at the Cabin to supply Belle's needs and mine.

533 A colored man who used to be a "shack-rouser" at a railroad camp on the
461 Georgia Central Line sang these warning lines before he gave the rat-a-tat-tat, with
• 539 a stick, on the different doors.

Wake up buddy
An' sit on the rock
It ain't quite day
But it's four o'clock
Rata-tat-tat!

Next door:
Hey buddy
It's hard but it's fair
You had a good home
But you wouldn't stay there
Rata-tat-tat!

And the next:
I had a little kitten
He grow to be a mouser
Yonder come
That cruel shack-rouser
Rata-tat-tat!

534 Shad Hall, who lives on Sapelo, showed me how the conch was blown in olden
533 times to get the hands out to work before day. It was a joy to find that the musical
[202] note I had heard on the Riviera was used in this country in spite of Thomas Spald-
[199] ing's dislike of music. His antipathy was such that he banned all instruments—except one fiddle which was retained for dancing. It is just possible that Mr. Spalding's attitude resulted in the same reaction among the Sapelo Negroes as was seen among those of the Quaker community in which I was born. In neither section did the Negroes hear much of the white folks' music, and for that reason, perhaps, they relied upon their traditional tunes more than they would have otherwise.

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533 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was tell-
567 ing tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge
533 used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she ex-
533 plained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

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Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud [29] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433]
[248]

[29] Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.

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## 60. FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

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Moderately - ad lib without definite rhythm — R. Mac Ginsey

mf

Way down in the bot - tom whah the cot - ton bolls are rot - ten Won' git mah hun - dud all day Way down in the bot - tom whah the cot - ton bolls a' rot - ten Won' git mah hun - dud all day Be - fo' Ah'll be beat - ed, An' be - fo' Ah'll be cheat - ed, Leave five fin - guks in the boll. Fo' Ah'll be beat - ed, An' be - foe Ah'll be cheat - ed, Leave five fin - guks in the boll.

Hurried

mf

ten

Hurried

[p.248]

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000 correspondent goes on to tell of the difficulties encountered by the Governor of Kenya in stamping out what we consider crime. "Imprisonment is found to be no deterrent. Nor among the Kikuyu does an ex-convict lose caste in the tribe. After he is released from jail the sacrifice of a single goat puts everything right. A new suit of a white tunic and shorts is thoroughly enjoyed by native prisoners for theft in East Africa. Fines are not always a success because the native, well-fed, housed and clothed at government expense, actually enjoys his term as a vacation."

697 Our own prison camp in Glynn County formerly offered an example of the same problem. A colored convict whose time was up pleaded with Mr. Higgenbotham—who was the court of last appeal at the camp—to be allowed to stay. A living being hard to get nowadays, he figured he could not provide for himself as well as the county did.[22] But the authorities were firm, and he was obliged to move on. Of course, he knew how to get back if times were too hard. It is the same with us, as in Africa, when it comes to any stigma being attached to a Negro who has served a [554] term in jail or spent time on the chain-gang. Ex-convicts assume the same status in their community as they enjoyed before the county forcibly detained them.

Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations. Of course there were abuses, but they also occur within prison walls—only there they are not so readily found out.

533
•539

Chorus: Drinkin' of the wine—wine—wine
Drinkin' of the wine
O—yes—my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

[22] *My corner was for years the favorite resting-place at noon for the convicts when they worked on the island. I saw the substantial rations served them, and it is no wonder the discharged convict felt he could go farther and fare worse. I also observed that the model prisoners were well treated. One day I overheard a guard say very hospitably to one of my Negro singers, who was working for me: "Want to come back?" With a good-humored chuckle, the man replied: "No, thank you." It seems that he had been mixed up in a drinking affair in which a knife had figured. He told me he had run away, but had found the world a hard place to live in—so he had come home, surrendered, and taken his medicine. The guard said he had been a star prisoner.*

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Eatin' of the bread—bread—bread
Eatin' of the bread—O yes my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If my mother ask for me
Tell her Death done summon' me.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If y'u get there before I do
Tell my Lord I'm comin' too.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

Ain' but one thing I done wrong
Stayin' in the wilderness mos' too long.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

## WHEN I'M GONE TO COME NO MO'

533 Nobody but a Negro could employ such entrancing elaborations as occur in the singing of "Gone—gone—gone," and no transcription could possibly give it. Our musical method is opposed to that of the Negro, and, try as we may, we cannot achieve his strange inflections, nor place emphasis as he does. A song may appear perfectly simple, but try to learn it, and the simplicity vanishes.

533 The first time I heard this song, a gang of Glynn County convicts was using
697 its rhythm to heave great clods of black earth out of the tide-water creek behind my house. The leader was such an excellent singer that I asked the guard how soon he was due to be free. The man did not have much more time to serve, his record on the gang was good, and his last offense was nothing more than taking a stool he fancied from an office; but he was a repeater. He just could not leave other people's property alone. Even though I coveted his voice, obligation to the community would not permit me to encourage his presence on the island:

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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

• 539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

I[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [1] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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ketch um. Wen eh git close ter um eh notus um good. But Goat keep on chaw. Buh Lion try fuh fine out wuh Buh Goat duh eat. Eh yent[1] see nuttne[2] nigh um ceptin de nekked rock wuh eh duh leddown on. Buh Lion stonish.- Eh wait topper Buh Goat. Buh Goat keep on chaw, an chaw, an chaw. Buh Lion cant mek de *ting out, an eh come close, an eh say: "Hay! Buh Goat, wuh you* duh eat?" Buh Goat skade[3] wen Buh Lion rise up befo um, but eh keep er bole harte, an eh mek ansur: "Me dun chaw dis rock, an ef you don leff, wen me done long um me guine eat you." Dis wud sabe Buh Goat. Bole man git outer diffikelty way[4] coward man lose eh life.

[1] he. [2] lie down. [3] ain't. [4] nothing. [5] scared. [6] where.

II[11]

"Ben, you are a big strong man, why did you let that woman beat you?"

"Gin'ul, lemme tell you de trute, Gawd bin wid me dat day. You know, all me life uh bin uh strong man. Uh nebbuh hab no man fuh outdo me fuh wu'k, eeduhso[1] fuh fight, en[2] uh bin nyuse[3] fuh lick 'ooman en' t'ing all me life. W'en 'ooman ent sattify me wid 'e wu'k, eeduhso 'e manus,[4] uh lick'um fuh mek'um mannusuble. W'en my wife Sarah' son John' wife come een my house dat day, 'en sassy 'tell 'e mek me bex. Uh nebbuh tek sassy f'um no 'ooman, uh dunkyuh[5] ef 'e big ez cow, en' da' gal big 'ooman fuh true. So uh cut one 'tick[6] en' uh graff'um[7] by 'e sleebe en' biggin fuh lick'um. Gin'ul, de 'ooman tu'n on me en' box me same lukkuh[8] him duh man. Blood bin een me yeye[9]! Uh 'membuh de time w'en uh could'uh box'um en' kick'um alltwo[10] one time, en' ef uh ebbuh leh de *foot* folluh de *han'*, uh would uh kill'um *dead*. But Gawd hol' me han' en' me foot, alltwo, Gawd tell me fuh peaceubble, en' spayre de 'ooman life. Gin'ul, me don' want no 'ooman life 'pun me han'. Enty[11] you know, suh, ef uh had uh kick dat 'ooman 'e would uh dead? Gawd tek' care uh ol' Ben dat day. Da' 'ooman t'ink suh him lick me, Gin'ul, but enty you know, suh, him oughtuh tengk Gawd fuh sabe'um? Ef uh didn' bin hab 'lij'un, da' 'ooman cawpse would'uh gone Jacksinburruh

[11] From Gonzales, *The Black Border*, pp. 168-69.

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een one oxin cyaa't[11] weh 'e come f'um. All de time 'e binnuh box me, uh bin study 'bout how da' 'ooman' cawpse would'uh look ef uh had uh hit 'um like de time w'en uh nyuse to be uh Ben! En' uh study 'pun him husbun', my wife Sarah boy John, en' un study 'pun John' maamy, en' uh t'ink 'bout how dem will mo'n ef uh kill dis 'ooman, en' wid Gawd help us hab strengk 'nuf fuh hol' me han'. Gin'ul, w'enebbuh uh look 'puntop de' dead 'ooman een me mine', uh tengk Gawd eb'ry day fuh hol' me han'!" . . .

[1] either so, i.e. either, or, nor, etc. [2] and. [3] used, accustomed to. [4] manners. [5] don't care. [6] stick. [7] grab them (her). [8] like a, as if. [9] eye. [10] both. [11] ain't. [12] cart.

III[12]

"Wey[1] yo' is bun'? Tell me say."
"Down een[2] de 'za'b[3]."
"Wuh[4] yuh bun duh do down de-dey[5] een de 'za'b?"
"Bun duh fush[6]."
"Ketch um?"
"Sho'!"
"How many?"
"Too many[7]."
"Lemme shum[8]! Wey 'e dey[9]?"
" 'E de-dey[10]."
"Wey?"
"Dey de-dey, Opey do[11]!"
"Yunt[12] opey do' twill me yiz shum[13]!"
"Yunt gwine shum twill opey do'!"

[1] where. [2] been. [3] in. [4] reserve, a compound of fresh water. [5] what. [6] there. [7] fish. [8] very many. [9] see them. [10] where are they (where he there)? [11] here they are (he right there). [12] open the door. [13] ain't. [14] till I see them.

IV[13]

Regardless of who might be fishing, "Dah Dannil" would always catch more fish than any other in the boat. If one should ask him how he accomplished that feat, he would invariably, should others be present, whisper the secret of his success: "Well, I tell yuh, son, but yuh ain'fuh tell *nubbody*, cuz I nebbuh tell

[12] From Bennett, "Gullah: a Negro Patois," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, VII, p. 334.

[13] From Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, pp. 128-29.

(113)

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*nubbody* yet. You see yuh ain'fuh trow yuh line *way out* like you see dese odduh peepul like'fuh do; but droppum right by de boat, den tek you' finguh en lif' de sinkuh *lee-ee-tul* piece offuh de bottum en lem drop bac'. Do diss eb'ry wunce w'ile en dih fish notuss dih bait bettuh. Dat's de reazun I ket mo' fish den de torruh' wun."

Not only was he the prince of camp cooks, but after serving a magnificent supper on the beach of bass steak, grainy "griss'," flapjacks and hot coffee, not to mention delectable side-dishes, he would relate with great gusto and much gesticulation his war-camp experiences. An inveterate smoker, the boys would keep him supplied with cigars. Gathered around him in the moonlight, they would sit for hours, as much pleased to listen as the old mestizo was to relate.

"Yuh'see, son," he was telling them upon one occasion, "we binnuh camp tih Uhrange Hill pon John Ilun, en de Yankee bin tic" pontoppuh' Seabrook Bay sukkuh' ant, en we bin trow we picket out tuh Haulobuh' Cut. Now wun night de picket wuh' bin'fuh do jooty', bin wun kinc'uh *skittesh* nyung man, en een dih night wen mos' eb'rybody een de camp bin fass uhsleep, yuh' we yeddy' dih hawss down dih road frum Haulobuh' Cut side. *Bliggity, bliggity, bliggity,* lay'out tuh 'e lenk, de hawss tayre eentih camp. De Yankee *exwancin'* de Yankee *exwancin!* Yuh de *debb'l tih'play*. De drum roll—de bugle en de fice" blow—de picket duh holluh fuh we *mekkase*". Den obuh all de nize", I yeddy de Majuh woice; "Fall'een mens, *fall'een*. Leh'dem cummon en we gih dem HELL tinnight'. En de Majuh, 'e ain' bin faid" dih de debbul. Nuttin' suit 'im bettuh den fuh fight, 'e dinkyuh" ef deh duh t'ousun" Yankee en duh hunnud'uh we. Hin wann *fight*, but some'uh dem odduh wun, dem binnuh kinduh skittesh. . . .

"Fo'yuh kin tun 'roun' I hab de waggin' hitch'up en all dih ting" eennum. Dem orduh 'mih fuh fall bac', cuz ef de Yankee bin obuhpow'r dem, I could sabe de bittle. I jump een dih waggin ennuh crac' mih wip ennuh nebbuh stop 'tell'uh git spam 'cross dih bridge at Chuch Flat—dah bin 'bout eight mile—en den I keep-

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•539 pon 'tell I git'tuh Willtown road—*twenty mile mo'*—ennuh halt fuh'uh seazun. I ain' bindeh[1] long fo' day bruk en wun fass riduh obuhtek'mih, gih'mih metsidge seh fuh tun bac'. 'E seh ain'duh no Yankee *'tall;* seh binnuh stingry[2] duh tun'obuh een Haulobuh' Cut, en dih pickit binnuh *sway*[3] duh *Yankee* duh paddle boat *cummin'* 'cross."

[1] other. [2] grits. [3] thick. [4] on, on top of. [5] like, like a. [6] who, what. [7] duty. [8] here. [9] hear. [10] life. [11] make haste. [12] noise. [13] afraid. [14] don't care. [15] thousand. [16] things. [17] been there. [18] stingray (a fish).

v[14]

Ber Wolf had a pease-patch. An' every night somebody go in de pease-patch an' eat de pease. So Ber Wolf made a tar baby an' set him up in de yard. So Ber Rabbit went in de patch, an' he meet de tar baby standin' up. So Ber Rabbit said, "Good-mornin', gal!" Tar Baby ain't go no manners, say nothin'. Say, "Man, I slap you." His hand fasten. Ber Rabbit say, "I got anoder han'." So he hit him wid dat han! Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a head."[17] Said he butt him wid de head. De head fasten. "Gal, you don't see I got a foot?" So he kick him wid de foot. De foot fasten. "I kick him wid de oder foot." Dat one fasten. Ber Rabbit said, "I got a mout'." De mout' fasten. Den Rabbit say, "Tu'n me loose!"

Next t'ing come along Wolf. Wolf say, "I ketch yer, t'ief! you eat all my pease. I putshyer head down on de choppin'-block an' chop em off."—"Oh, don't duh dat! Dat will kill me." Say, "I want ter kill you." Say, "I'll t'row you in de creek, drown you." "Ah, don't duh dat!" he say. "Yes, Ber Wolf, t'row me in de briar-patch! Den you'll kill me." When Ber Wolf t'row him in de briar-patch, Rabbit say, "Ping! Ping! Dat's de place my mammy done born me!" So dat ol' rabbit git away.

539 19 From these brief passages one can see that the outstanding characteristics of the dialect may be expressed as follows: (1) economy in vocalization, as evidenced by the short cuts in tenses, pronouns, number, gender, etc.; (2)

[19] From Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina*, pp. 26-7.

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the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

## PHONOLOGY[18]

### *Vowels*

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

[18] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data.

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533 lowing were sung in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

•[539]

See dat man gwine 'cross de fiel'
Kickin' up dus' like a automobile.

Oh, if I die in Tennessee,
Don' wan' my friends to grieve attah me.

That the line between religious and secular songs is not always clear was evidenced by the fact that a call for spirituals in the little island schools often brought forth such responses as *The Green Grass Grew All Around* and *Johnny's So Long at the Fair.* This sort of thing is, of course, not peculiar to St. Helena, but it is more apparent on the Sea Islands than elsewhere because of the relatively retarded cultural status there.

5. Several variations of the same song occur side by side. For example, *Mary Had a Baby* is sung in three ways, *You Better Run* in three ways, *Wrastlin' Jacob* in two, *Jacob's Ladder* in two, and so on. Of course, this trait is not peculiar to the Sea Islands. In fact the variants of this sort probably originated elsewhere, but they are more apparent on St. Helena because of their convergence and survival there. One rare instance of the origin of a local variant was observed on St. Helena during the past year. In one of the churches a spiritual entitled *You Better Live So Jesus Can Use You* was among the favorites. It was sung rather fast, with pronounced swing and syncopation, the tune being as follows:

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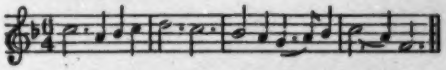
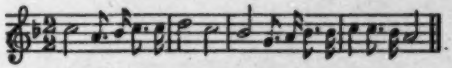
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

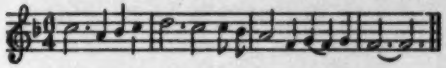
Hymn:



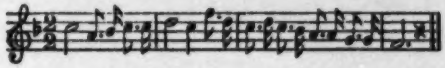
Spiritual:



Hymn:



Spiritual:



The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment*, although the final phrase,

is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn*,[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:

[539].

[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp*, II, 39.

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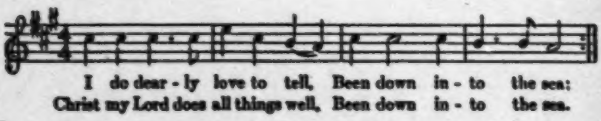
177 533 Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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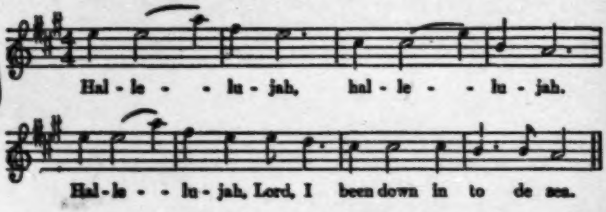
which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 621; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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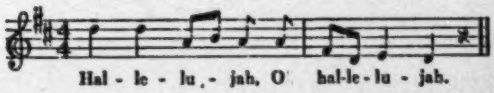
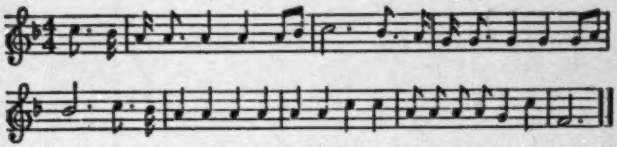
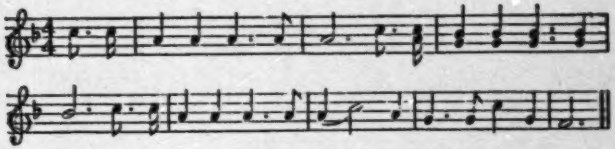



The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now*,[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus*,[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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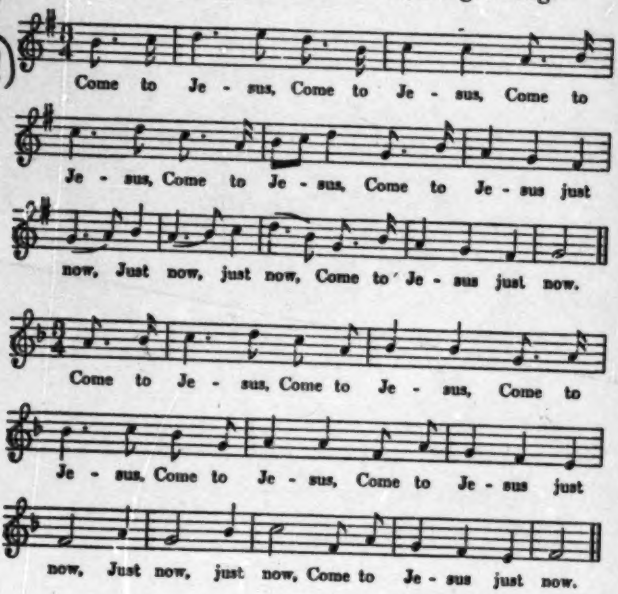
ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[27]




The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the

[27] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."

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538 are safe for some time yet among the Negroes of the Sea Islands. The older people rarely tell the stories to white people, it is true, but the children tell them naïvely and with plenty of skill. On the way to school, at recess time, at parties, at home around the fireside, or at work, the young folk tell stories and riddles. They may deviate from the traditional version of a tale, but they are good at supplying new incidents and at combining several stories to make a new one. If part of a story is supposed to be sung, they sing it rather than recite it as many adults would do. If Buh Rabbit is supposed to make a funny noise as he runs down the road, this is supplied with an ingenuity which attempts to outdo the other fellow.

In the following tales the language is, as a rule, that of a person who speaks a somewhat modified sea-island dialect. It happens that none of the stories given here was told me by the old-time mushy-mouthed type of speaker. This is fortunate for the average reader, for the pure dialect is quite difficult to read. Since different speakers have different peculiarities, the reader must not be surprised at the apparent lack of consistency in dialect.

I

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### DOG AND DOG HEAD[1]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Frog all-two go fo' hunt deah. Dey need some dog, an' a dog cost twelve biscuit. Buh

[1] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. This is one of the most popular stories in the Sea Islands. For other variants, see Parsons' *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, pp. 1-5. The following is the most common variant: Rabbit sees Frog's "t'roat gwine up an' down," and thinks Frog is eating his biscuits, so Rabbit decides to eat some of his. Frog arrives with all of his biscuits, but Rabbit has only a few left and has to be content with a dog head. Sometimes, Frog uses the mock plea and tricks Rabbit into admitting that his dog head did not catch the deer.

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Frog got plenty biscuit, so 'e buy one dog, but Buh Rabbit been uh eat some o' his an' ain' got but six lef', so 'e buy one dog haid. So dey go fo' hunt deah, an' dey ain' gone too long 'fo' Buh Frog dog run attah a deah and ketch um. Buh Rabbit run ahaid an' knock off Buh Frog dog an' put e' dog haid on de deah. W'en Buh Frog come up, Buh Rabbit say, "Look, Buh Frog, my dog haid done kill a deah." Buh Frog say, "Now, Buh Rabbit, you know dog haid cyan' kill deah. Tek a dog fo' kill deah." Buh Rabbit say, "O, man, course a dog haid can ketch a deah. Yunnah shum deh on de deah, enty? Tek a dog haid fo' ketch deah. If yunnah want to ketch deah, yunnah have to cut yo' dog haid off." Buh Frog say, I guess you right, Buh Rabbit." So Buh Frog cut 'e dog haid off, an' dog haid ain' never ketch no mo' deah since dat.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

II

THE FALSE MESSAGE: TAKE MY PLACE[2]

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de cat drink wine.

'Bout de man, de lee' gal, and Buh Rabbit. Man have a pease patch an' lef' lee' gal fuh watch um. Buh Rabbit come up an' say, 'Mornin', lee' gal. Yo' paa say tu'n me in pease patch at twelve an' tu'n me out at five." Lee' gal say, "All right, Buh Rabbit," so she tu'n Buh Rabbit in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' when five come 'e

[2] See also Parsons, pp. 40-2.

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•539 say to lee' gal, "Time to tu'n me out." She tu'n 'im out. When 'e paa come home 'e say, "Who been in my pease patch?" Lee' gal say, "Buh Rabbit say you sen' word fuh me to tu'n 'im in de pease patch." 'E paa say, "Well, if Buh Rabbit come tomorrow, you tu'n 'im in an' don' let 'im out till I come."

So nex' day Buh Rabbit come, an' de lee' gal tu'n 'im in de pease patch. 'E eat an' eat, an' den 'e say, "Lee gal, time to tu'n me out." Lee' gal say, "I busy now." Buh Rabbit wait awhile. Says, "Please let me out now." Lee' gal say, "Wait a minute, I too busy now." Den 'e paa come home. 'E ketch Buh Rabbit in de pease patch an' tek an' lock 'im up in a cyage, den 'e gwine off fuh git a cyaa't-load o' switch fuh beat Buh Rabbit. Buh Wolf come along an' see Buh Rabbit in de cyage an' ax 'im, "What you do deh, Buh Rabbit?" Buh Rabbit say, "Oh, man, dey gwine be beeg time tonight—beeg party, singin' an' dancin' an' eatin'. Don' you wanna help?" Buh Wolf say, "Sho', man, let me in." "All right, onlock dat do' an' come in." Buh Wolf onlock de do' an' come in de cyage. Buh Rabbit jump out and lock 'im up. Man come back, say, "Buh Wolf, what you do in deh?" "Oh, Buh Rabbit say we gwine have beeg time." Man say, "Yes, we sho' is gwine have beeg time," an' 'e tek de cyaa't-load o' switch an' beat Buh Wolf mos' to deat'.

III

PLAYING GODFATHER: TUB OF BUTTER[3]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been frien'. Day hab tub o' buttah fuh eat w'en wintah come. Dey wukkin' een de

[3] From a student in Penn School. See Parsons, pp. 5-8. Sometimes the names of the children are varied, as, for example, Begin-um, Buh Quartah-um, T'ree-fourt' Gone-um, Mos' Done-um, etc.

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fiel' w'en Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Wolf, me yeddy my sistah duh call me. I gwine see w'at 'e want." So 'e went off. Attah w'ile 'e come back. Buh Wolf say, "W'at yo' sistah want?" "Oh, my sistah hab a fine baby an' 'e want me fuh name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "I name um Buh Start-um."

Dey wuk a lee' wile, den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen to dat! My sistah duh call me ag'in. I wish 'e leave me 'lone." Buh Wolf say, "Man, you bettah go see w'at 'e want." So Buh Rabbit go off again. Fin'ly 'e come back, say, "Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah baby an' want me to name um." "Well, w'at you name um?" "Oh, I name um Buh Half-um."

Dey wuk a lee' w'ile mo' an' den Buh Rabbit say, "Lissen, Buh Wolf, my sistah duh call me again. I t'ink I not go dis time." Buh Wolf say, "Oh, man, I t'ink you bettah go." "All right, I be back in a lee' w'ile." Fin'ly Buh Rabbit come back, say, "Law, Buh Wolf, my sistah done hab 'nuddah chile." "W'at you name um dis time?" "Oh, I name um Buh Done-um." Dat mean 'e done eat all de buttah.

Dey wuk on till Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, le's go see 'bout dat tub o' buttah." So dey go fuh git buttah an' de buttah all gone. Buh Wolf say, "Buh Rabbit, you been uh eat de buttah, enty?" "No, 'fo' Gawd, Buh Wolf, I yent eat um." Buh Wolf say, "I t'ink we fin' out who eat 'um. We gwine een de sun an' lay down, an' de one de sun melt de buttah out ob, 'e de one wuh eat um." Buh Rabbit agree, so dey go een de hot sun an' lay down. Buh Wolf go to sleep. De butter melt out o' Buh Rabbit, an' 'e take an' smear um on Buh Wolf. Den 'e wake up Buh

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•539 Wolf an' say, "Look, Buh Wolf, de buttah melt out on you. Dat prove you eat um." Buh Wolf say, "Yeah, Buh Rabbit, I guess you been right. I eat um fo' trute."

IV

WHO STOLE BUH KINLAW'S GOAT?[4]

Once upon a time de cat drink wine,
De monkey chaw tobacco on de street-car line.

Deh been a man name Buh Kinlaw. Buh Rabbit t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat, an' Buh Kinlaw gwine hab court fuh fin' who t'ief um. So Buh Rabbit see Buh Wolf an' say, "Buh Wolf, deh's t'irty dollahs on a song, t'irty dollahs on a song. Big time on court day. You bass me on de song an' we make a heap o' money. Now, w'en I sing,

[Chanted] Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,

you sing,

Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So Buh Wolf agree, an' dey try out de song till dey can sing um good.

W'en de court day come, Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf come in to town. W'en dey come close to de court place, Buh Rabbit say, "All right, Buh Wolf, time to staa't sing-in'"; an' 'e begin:

"Buh Wolf t'ief Buh Kinlaw goat,"

an' Buh Wolf come in strong on

"Yes, indeed, indeed I did."

So de jedge yeddy um an' say, "So dat's de man wuh stole Buh Kinlaw goat." An 'e gib Buh Wolf t'irty days 'stead o' t'irty dollahs.

[4] *Cf.* Parsons, p. 145.

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V

## THE PARSON'S SHEEP

539.

Once dere was a li'l boy, an' 'e paa stole de paa'son sheep, so de boy sing,

"My paa steal de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

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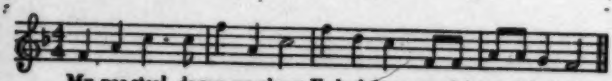

My paa steal de paa-son sheep, Ve had sheep soup fo' suppah las' night.

De paa'son yea'd um singin'. Say, "What dat you sing, son?" "Oh, nuttin', suh." "Well, you come heah tomorrow dis same time an' sing dat same song, an' I give you ten dollahs." "All right, suh."

So dat night de boy tell his paa, say, "Paa, man gwine give me ten dollah fuh sing tomorrow." Paa say, "Le' me hear you sing um, son." De boy sing:

"My paa stole de paa'son sheep,
Vee had sheep soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa knock 'im down, *Bam!* Den 'e say, "Son, sing um ag'in." Boy sing um dat same way ag'in. 'E paa knock 'im down ag'in. "Sing um ag'in, son." So dis time de boy sing:

"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

'E paa say, "Now dat's de way to sing um, son. Anybody ax you fuh sing, you sing um same like dat."

Nex' day de boy go to de place whuh paa'son say come. Paa'son deh wid lots o' oddah mens. De paa'son say, "All right, son, sing dat song." So de boy sing:

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"My paa went a-fishin' last night,
Vee had fish soup fuh suppah las' night."

Paa'son say, "Dat's not de song you sing d' oddah time." Boy say, "Yes, suh, dat him." Paa'son say, "Try um ag'in." An de' boy sing um dat same way ag'in. Paa'son ax him, "Don' you know anoddah song!" "No, suh, dat de only song I evah sung, suh." So de people made paa'son give de boy ten dollah like 'e promise.

VI

RABBIT SEEKS A WIFE[5]

De king had a fine daughtah. Buh Rabbit ax king fo' 'e daughtah. King say, "If you git me one bag o' blackbird, one rattlesnake tush an' one alligator tush, you will hab my daughtah."

So Buh Rabbit go down de road singin',

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding-a ding, ding, ding."

He see some blackbird een a fiel' singin', so he take a bag an' say, "Heh, you blackbird, up deh singin' so big, I bet you cyan' full dis bag." De blackbird fly een de bag, an' Buh Rabbit tie de string an' take de bag to de king. King tell 'im, "You a smaa't man, Buh Rabbit. Now git me de rattlesnake tush."

Buh Rabbit meet Buh Rattlesnake. Say, "Good mornin', Buh Rattlesnake. You sho' is growin' mighty big. Le' me meadger you wid dis stick to see how long you is." Buh Rattlesnake lay down 'side de stick and Buh Rabbit tie 'e tail to de stick. "Wha' fuh you tie my tail, Buh Rabbit?" "Oh, man, I haffuh tie you' tail to straight

[5] Told by James Henderson, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, p. 14.

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you out so 's I can meadger you good." Den he tie Buh Rattlesnake haid an' pull de string tight an' choke 'im to deat'. He take out de tush an' take um to de king. King say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* smaa't. Now bring me de alligatuh tush." 539

Buh Rabbit go down to de pon' an' fin' Buh 'Gatuh an' call out, "Oh, Buh 'Gatuh, come up hyuh on de sho'. Gwine hab beeg time up hyuh." 'Gatuh come up. Buh Rabbit say, "Now we play a lee' game." An' 'e sing:

"Go t'rough my legs swif'ly, O,
An' come back slowly, O."

Buh 'Gatuh go t'rough swif'ly, an' w'en he come back slowly, Buh Rabbit knock 'im wid a stick. 'Gatuh pitch een to de pon', say, "Buh Rabbit, you *too* mean." Buh Rabbit study 'bout how he could git Buh 'Gatuh to come out again. Fin'ly he go off an' kill a squirrel an' dress up in de squirrel clo'es. He come back to de pon' an' sing,

"Ding, ding, ding, a-ding, ding, ding,
Ding, a-ding, ding, ding."

Buh 'Gatuh say, "I t'ink I hear Buh Rabbit woice." Buh Rabbit say, "Come on up, Buh 'Gatuh. It's me, Buh Squirrel." 'Gatuh wife tell 'im, "Don' go up deh. You might get hurt." 'Gatuh call out, "Dat you, Buh Squirrel?" "Yeah, come on up." Buh 'Gatuh come up on sho'. He say, "Dat Buh Rabbit a *mean* man. He knocked me wid a stick. But I glad he yent hit me on dis side, 'caze I would-a daid." So Buh Rabbit take a stick an' knock 'im on dat side and kill 'im daid. Den he take out de tush an' take um to de king. De king tell 'im, "Man, you *too* smaa't." Buh Rabbit say, "Eider gib me yo'

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•539 daughtah or gib me trouble." De king say, "I'll gib you trouble." So he gib Buh Rabbit a bag an' tell 'im, "Don' open um till you come to a wide fiel'." So Buh Rabbit go off to a wide open fiel' an' open de bag. An' w'en he loose um, out jump t'ree houn' dog right attah Buh Rabbit. One o' de dog bit Buh Rabbit tail smack off, an' his tail been short to dis day.

VII

LION SEES HIS SHADOW

Buh Lion been king o' de beas'. D' oddah animals 'fraid to walk, 'caze Buh Lion eat um if 'e ketch um. So one day dey hol' a council an' 'cide to mek a 'greement wid Buh Lion to sen' 'im one of um fuh eb'ry meal if 'e leabe um alone 'tween meal.

W'en it come Buh Rabbit time to go fuh let Buh Lion eat 'im, ' e staa't off sad an' slow-like. 'E tek two step frontwa'd, one step backwa'd, an' 'e been a-study all de time. Buh Lion gittin' mighty hungry, 'caze Buh Rabbit due at twelve o'clock an' it already 'bout t'ree. Fin'ly Buh Lion see li'l cloud o' dus' way down de road. Say, "Dat mus' be Buh Rabbit comin'." Buh Rabbit tek two step frontwa'd an' one step backwa'd. Buh Lion bex. 'E call out, "Hurry up, Buh Rabbit. Why you so late?" "Oh, man, I been a-study 'bout dat oddah lion. I shum [saw him] down een a well back deh on de road. Him say him can beat you all to pieces." Buh Lion too mad. Say, "Dey ain' no body can beat me." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat w'at I tol' 'im, but 'e look mighty fierce an' say 'e can tear you up." "Tek me to 'im, Buh Rabbit. I wan' a-shum." So Buh Rabbit tek 'im to de well, an' Buh Lion look down een de watah an' see 'eself. 'E give a roah an'

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shake 'e haid, an' de lion een de well done de same. Eb'y-t'ing 'e do, de lion een de well do likewise. Buh Lion git so mad, 'e jump at 'e shadow een de well, an' 'e got drownded.

VIII

LION LOOKS FOR MAN

'Bout Buh Elephan', Buh Lion, an' Man. Buh Elephan' sleep undah tree, an' Man cut de tree, an' it fall on Buh Elephan' an' hu't 'im. Buh Lion come along an' say, "What de mattah, Buh Elephan'?" "Man cut de tree on me." "Man? W'at Man look like?" "Well, 'e got two t'ing long down, call um laig; two t'ing long out, call um han'." "You t'ink I c'n ketch um?" "Yah, you c'n ketch um."

So Buh Lion go hunt fuh Man. Fin'ly 'e shum. Say, "You de t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah, I de t'ing dey call Man." "Well, w'at I mus' do to make you fight me?" Man tell um, "Tu'n yo' back an' tu'n yo' shu't-tail ovah yo' haid, an' I fight you." So Buh Lion t'un 'e back an' tu'n 'e shu't-tail ovah 'e haid, an' Man take 'e gun an' shoot Buh Lion.

Finally Buh Lion got up an' went to fin' Buh Elephan'. Say, "Oh, Buh Elephan', you know dat t'ing dey call Man?" "Yah." "Well, Man ruled by God. I ax um w'at I must do to make um fight me, an' 'e tu'n my back an' tu'n my shu't-tail ovah my haid, an' 'e t'row a t'ousan' poun' o' grabbel on me, den 'e jerk out my rib an' cut me till I fall."

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PLAYING DEAD IN THE ROAD[6]

Once a man been fishin' an' had a cyaart load o' fish. Buh Rabbit lay down side o' de road like 'e daid. De cyaart go by, an' den Buh Rabbit run t'rough de woods an' lay down 'side de road again. Cyaart come along an' de man say, "How come so many rabbit daid een de road today. If I see anudder one, I pick um up." Buh Rabbit run roun' an' lay down 'side de road again. W'en de man come along he say, "I never see so many daid rabbit. I t'ink I bigin to pick um up." So he pick up Buh Rabbit an' t'row 'im up on de cyaart wid de fish.

Buh Rabbit t'row off fish an' t'row off fish till he got all he want, den he jump off an' go back an' pick up de fish an' take um home. Buh Wolf come along an' see all de fish. He want to know how Buh Rabbit got um. Buh Rabbit say, "Man, I play like I daid, an' de man put me on de cyaart, and I t'row off de fish." So nex' day Buh Wolf done de same trick. De man stopped de cyaart, say, "Well, Buh Rabbit fool me dat way, but you no fool me," an' he beat Buh Wolf to deat' an' carry 'im home fo' he chillun.

X

FATAL IMITATION[7]

Buh Rabbit see Buh Pa'tridge one day, an' Buh Pa'tridge had 'e haid undah 'e wing. Buh Rabbit say, "Buh Pa'tridge, weh yo' haid?" Buh Pa'tridge mek answer, "I leff um at home, Buh Rabbit." "You leff um

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[6] From Edisto Island. An unusual variant of "Playing Dead Twice in the Road," which is quite popular in the Bahamas, according to Parsons, but which she failed to find in the Sea Islands. See *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, p. 44.

[7] *Cf.* Parsons, pp. 33-5.

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at home! How come you do dat?" "Well," say Buh Pa'tridge, "I jes' leabe um deh so my wife can comb um w'ile I been gone." Buh Rabbit say, "Dat soun's mighty good, Buh Pa'tridge. Tell me how you do it." "Well, you jes' ax yo' wife fo' cut yo' haid off, den you can leabe yo' haid at home an' go widout it like me."

So Buh Rabbit run home an' say to 'e wife, "Wife, I see Buh Pa'tridge run roun' widout 'e haid, an' 'e say you mus' cut my haid off so I can do dat way myse'f." Wife say, "Now, I 'fraid Buh Pa'tridge been try fo' fool you." "Oh, no. You mus' tek de ax an' chop my haid off like Buh Pa'tridge say." So dey argue an' argue till fin'ly Buh Rabbit have 'e way, and 'e put 'e haid down on de block and 'e wife tek de ax an' bam! off come 'e haid. An' Buh Rabbit been jes' as daid as 'e can be.

## XI

### RABBIT MAKES WOLF HIS SADDLE HORSE[8]

Buh Rabbit an' Buh Wolf been great frien'. Dey git ready to go to big party to dance an' play wid all de gal. Buh Rabbit been tellin' de gal dat Buh Wolf been his saddle horse. W'en de time come to go, Buh Rabbit say, "Lawd, Buh Wolf, I feel so bad I t'ink I cyan' go." Buh Wolf say, "You got to go, Buh Rabbit. Le' me carry you paart o' de way." Buh Rabbit say, "All right, if you let me put de saddle on you so 's I can hold on." Buh Wolf say he agree p'vidin' he take de saddle off befo' dey git to de party. So Buh Rabbit git his saddle an' spurs, an' off dey go. Attah w'ile w'en dey git up close to de place weh de party gwine be, Buh Wolf say, "Time to git off, Buh

[8] From Eustis School, Ladies Island. Cf. Parsons, pp. 53-4.

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Rabbit." But Buh Rabbit dig de spurs in Buh Wolf, and Buh Wolf howl an' run right up to de house befo' all de gal. Buh Rabbit call out, "See! See! Ain' I tol' you Buh Wolf been my saddle horse?"

XII

THE RACE BETWEEN SNAIL AND DEER

Buh Deah been a-boas' dat he de fastes' runnah een de worl'. Buh Snail say, "Buh Deah, I t'ink I run a race wid you." Dey all laugh at Buh Snail, but he say he want to try to beat Buh Deah, so dey 'p'inted de day fo' de race. Buh Deah come to de place weh dey gwine staart, but he not see Buh Snail. But Buh Snail, he deh, an' he crawl up easy-like undah Buh Deah tail. Fin'ly Buh Deah say, "Well, I wondah weh is dat Snail. I guess he don' wan' a-run no race." Buh Snail speak up an' say, "I'm hyuh, let de race staart." Buh Deah went sailin' off down de road, an' soon he come to de finish place. Big crowd deh. Buh Deah say, "Hab anybody seen dat Snail?" Dey all laugh an' say dey ain' shum. So Buh Deah staart to set down, an' Buh Snail cry out, "Man, git up off-a me. I been hyuh long befo' you." So dey give de race to Buh Snail.

XIII

THE MERMAID*

De King wife dead an' King marry 'nodder woman. King had daughter an' dis woman had daughter, an' dey treat her daughter good, but not treat de King daughter good. She have to do hard work, an' de odder gal do nuttin'. So de po' gal go down to de water an' cry. Mer-

* From Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 137-39.

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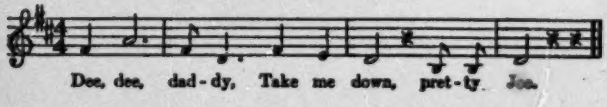
maid rise up an' say, "What you cry for, li'l gal?" "My mudder die an' my fadder marry ag'in an' my step-mudder have daughter. Dey treat me bad an' won' give me 'nough t' eat." De mermaid say, "Come down wid me." She take her down under de water to de purties' place. Give her all kin' o' good t'ing t' eat. Den she bring her back up. Dat night, de gal not want a bite t' eat after de odders done eat, but she feel so glad. 539•

Nex' day she go back to de water an' sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe."




(533)

An' de mermaid rise up an' take her down an' give her plenty good t'ings t' eat, den bring her back up. So dat night, dey keep wonderin' why she not eat. Fin'ly de step-mudder daughter say she gwine fin' out. Nex' day she follow de gal to de river an' hear her sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy,
Take me down, pretty Joe,"

an' she see de mermaid rise up an' take de gal down. She run home an' tell her mudder an' de King what she see. So nex' day dey all t'ree went down to de river widout de King daughter knowin' it. De King sing:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. Den de step-daughter try it:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

an' up rise de mermaid. King shot de mermaid daid.

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When de King daughter come down to de river, she sing like she always sing, but no mermaid. She step down in de water an' sing again:

"Dee, dee, daddy," etc.,

but no mermaid. She went on deeper an' deeper, singin' dat song all de time, till she drown. Dat's end o' my story.

XIV

THE CHOSEN SUITOR: ESCAPE FROM THE DEVIL[10]

Once upon a time King had wife an' daughtah. Debbil court de daughtah an' she marry 'im, but she not know 'e been debbil. 'E take de gal home an' 'gin to cut wood fuh burn 'er up. Ole 'oman come an 'tell gal she mus' run away. Give 'er t'ree needles an' tell 'er to t'row one down when she need help.

So de gal take de debbil fastes' hoss an' ride 'im off. De Roostah see 'er an' 'e sing:

"Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

Debbil say, "I t'ink I yeah my roostah woice." Roostah sing ag'in:

"Go eas', massa, go eas'.
Go wes,' massa, go wes'.
Massa, massa,
Yo' pretty gal gone home 'fo' day dis mornin'."

[10] From Helen Brown, Eddings' Point School. Cf. Parsons, pp. 45-6.

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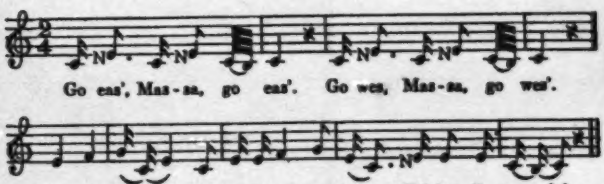


NOTE: N indicates a neutral third, in this case a tone between E and E-flat.

Debbil yeah dat, an' 'e jump on 'e hoss an' staa't fuh ober-take de gal. She drop one o' de needle an' big fores' grow up, an' debbil have to git ax an' cut 'e way all t'rough um. but 'e git t'rough an' 'bout to ketch de gal ag'in. She drop annodah needle, an' big rivah rise up, an' debbil have to go back an' git boat an' row across. Gal almos' home now, but debbil git across rivah an' keep a comin'. 'E jes' 'bout to ketch 'er when she drop de las' needle. When she drop dat a big fiah come an' burn up de debbil. Den she git home wid her faddah and muddah.

## XV

## TOO LAZY TO LIVE[11]

Once there was a slave on Wallace or Tom Fripp Plantation who was too lazy to work. His master punished him, but he wouldn't work. When his master gave him corn to grind for bread, he wanted somebody to grind

[11] As told by Mr. Aurelius Brown, teacher in Penn School. I found several variants of this story, usually given local settings. It is interesting to note, however, that it was known more than a hundred years ago in Jamaica. In his charming *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, Matthew Gregory ("Monk") Lewis relates that the story was thought to have originated on a certain Jamaican plantation whose owner was accustomed to disposing of his worn-out slaves by sending them to a desolate place called "the Gulley" and leaving them to die of exposure and starvation. The cruel master always had his men bring back the shroud and board so that he would have no expense. See the song, as quoted by Lewis in his *Journal*, p. 322.

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•539 it for him. Then he wanted somebody to bake the bread. When the bread was ready he wanted to know if somebody wouldn't feed him. His master said, "Any man that's too lazy to eat is too lazy to live. We'll just bury him."

They made a box and put the man in it and started to the graveyard. The man sang:

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Master sang,

"Car' [carry] 'im along, car' 'im along,"

Then the man,

"Massa, me not dead yet,"

Then the Master,

"Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

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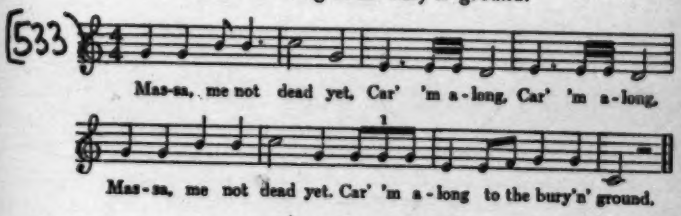


They carried the man on and on toward the graveyard.

"Massa, me not dead yet."
"Car' 'im along, car' 'im along.
Got more money to buy more slaves,
Car' 'im along to the bury'n' ground."

They took him on to the graveyard and put him in the grave and covered him up and let him die.

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XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

There were two brothers who had confessed Christ and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him. 539.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

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come riding." The white man said, "I will attend to that. I will get down and ride you half the way, and you must ride me the other half." With this the colored man agreed, and he rode upon the white man's back half the way. Then he got down and let the white man get on his back. When they got to the gate the white man knocked. St. Peter ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding. White man said, "Yes." St. Peter said, "Left your beast on the outside and come in." The white man went into heaven and the poor colored man was left outside.

## XVIII

## A TALL TALE[14]

Gentlemen, I tell you de trut'. Once I was on a pleasure trip, me an' my employah. I was standin' in de bow of my yacht, I saw two pompers [porpoises] standin' in middle o' river, an' deh was a ole oak tree to Stoad [Stuart's] P'int—dat 'bout twenty mile away—wid a big bee-hive in it. I shoot my rifle an' bus' dat ole oak tree into de river. De pompers ent die from de shot, so I pull off my coat an' leap overboard an' catch de pompers an' pat um on de side. I say, "Whoa, whoa!" I was thirsty fo' a drink, so I tas'e de water an fin' dat de whole river sweet from de bee-hive. De pompers pullin' fas', never stop till 'e get on St. Helena Sound to egg bank. He was drunk from de sweetness of de water. I roll 'im on de sho' an' start back to meet de yacht. When de cap'n reach me I have bass an' trout enough to loaded to yacht, an' ~~den I quit.~~

[14] Told by Sarah Holmes, Lee-Rosenwald School, Coffin's Point.

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XIX

FAMILY AFFECTION[16]

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Once upon a time there was an old lady and a old man and they were man and wife. The old man was at dinner and his wife and children were on the outside. It was a windy day and the wind blew the house down. The children cried out, "The house fell on popper." The old lady called, "I hope it ain't broke my pipe." The children said, "Wait till I done eat, then you will hear me cry." The end of the story.

XX

OPENING VERSES[16]

1.

Once upon a time, a wery good time,
Monkey chaw tobacco on de railroad line.[17]

2.

Once upon a time de goose run blin',
Monkey chaw tobacco an' de man drink wine.[18]

3.

Beef in de market ten cents a poun',
You never git a poun' till you lay yo' money down.

[16] Written by Lawrence Mingin, Lee-Rosenwald School.

[16] After hearing one of these at the beginning of a story, I began to ask each narrator if he knew any opening verses. Thereafter I found them to be quite frequent, although they tend to drop out of use as unnecessary embellishments unless something reminds the narrator of them. [538]

[17] Sometimes "on de street cyaar line," sometimes "an' spit white lime."

[18] Sometimes "cat drink wine." Other variations are made by interchanging the names and varying the combinations of the two lines.

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XXI

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524
177 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

### TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

> My pretty pink, I really think
> That you and I should marry. (539).

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 514 516 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children.*

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III

273 Thou art my love, and I am thine,
574 I drew thee for my valentine.
576

IV

•539 The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

*Other Verses*

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de veek I vear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
*Did he preach it!*

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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X

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Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
They give me this jolly red nose.

XI[22]

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

[22] This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

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*Play Rhymes and Games*[23]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

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II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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VI

•539 524 Once I went up the heeple, steeple,
Met a crowd of little people.
Some was white, some was black,
Some was the color of ginger snaps.
O-U-T spells *out*, and you are clean out,
With your mother dirty dish rag in your mout'.

VII

Mother ketch a flea,
Flea die,
Mother cry,
Out go *she*.

VIII

Three little horses in de stable,
One fell down an' skinned his nable.
All ready?
Not yet.
All ready?
Not yet.
Ready, ready?
I'm comin', I'm comin'.

IX[24]

Little gal? Yes, mam!
Won't you go wid me? Yes, mam!
To Tennessee? Yes, mam!
For to hoe some cotton? Yes, mam!
Will you hoe it good? Yes, mam!
Did you went to de barn? Yes, mam!
Did you get any eggs? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it to de cook? Yes, mam!

[24] In this and the one following, the children move in a circle around the leader who puts the questions, the circle making the responses. Sometimes they go through the words without forming the ring. All come in loud on the last line of No. X. For other ring games, see Parsons, pp. 199-203.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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To put it in de bread? Yes, mam!
Did you carry it up town? Yes, mam!
Did you shake it all round? Yes, mam!

x

What for breakfast? Bread an' butter.
Where is butter? Cat eat it.
Where is cat? In de wood.
Where is wood? Fire burn it.
Where is fire? Water out it.
Where is water? Ox drink it.
Where is ox? Butcher kill it.
Where is butcher? Dead an' gone
*An' buried in de ol' bone-yard!*

*Game Songs*[25]

I[26]

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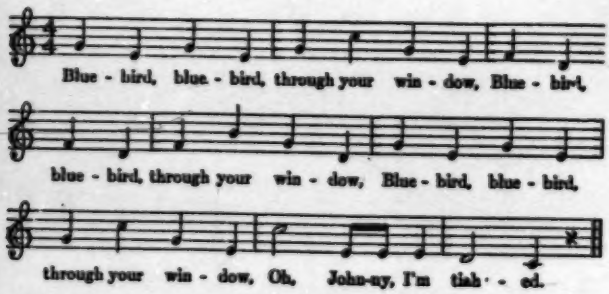


Chorus:

1. Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
   Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,

[25] For other game songs, see Parsons, pp. 180-83.

[26] The players join hands and form a ring. As they sing the chorus, the leader weaves in and out of the ring, passing under the players' hands. At "take that little boy," etc., he puts his hands on the shoulders of a boy, and, as, the chorus begins again, the boy so indicated leaves the ring and goes with the leader. The process is repeated until all players have been touched and there is no ring left.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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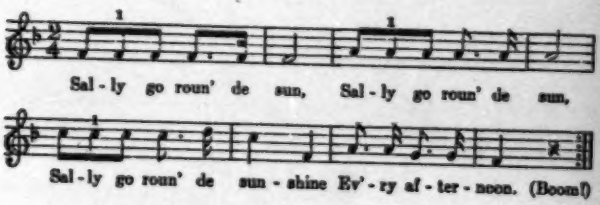
Bluebird, bluebird, t'rough yo' window,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed [tired].

2. Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Take that little boy, pat 'im on the shoulder,
Oh, Johnny, I'm ti-ahed.

3. Take that little girl, pat 'im on the shoulder, *etc.*

II[27]




1. Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sun,
Sally go roun' de sunshine
Ev'ry afternoon.
Boom!

2. Repeat for other verses.

[27] The ring begins to move clock-wise, and at the word *boom* it stops with a jerk and goes around in the opposite direction. The tune, it will be noticed, is the same as *Farmer's in the Dell.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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III[28]

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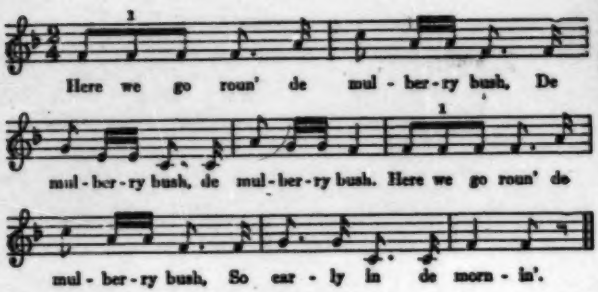


Chorus:

1. Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   Mulberry bush, mulberry bush .
   Here we go roun' de mulberry bush,
   So early in de mornin'.

2. Dis is de way we sweep our flo', *etc.*
3. Dis is de way we dus' our flo', *etc.*
4. Dis is de way we wash our face, *etc.*
5. Dis is de way we i'on our clo'es, *etc.*
6. Dis is de way we brush our hair, *etc.*
7. Dis is de way we brush our teet', *etc.*
8. Dis is de way we go to church, *etc.*

[28] Signs are made to indicate the various motions. There is no limit to the number of stanzas. At one school the children were singing an agricultural cycle in commemoration of Planting Week. They used such lines as: "This is the way we plow the land," "plant the wheat," "hoe the corn," etc.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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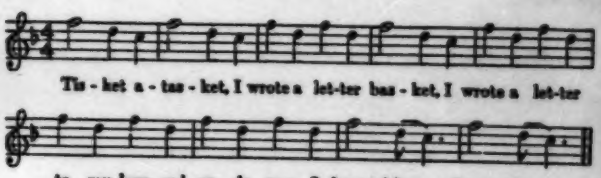
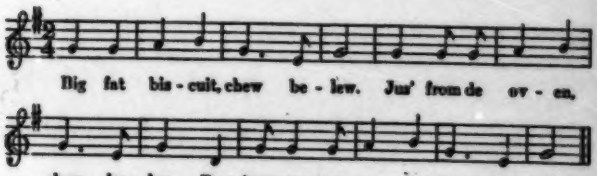
IV[29]




1. Tiskit, a-tnskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

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171

In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune: 793 796 175 (533) (539)

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2] (782)

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed- 175

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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# Epilogue

539

*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Broke at last! Broke at last!*
*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Gonna praise God till I die!*

*Way up in that valley,*
*Pray-in' on my knees,*
*Tell-in' God a-bout my troubles,*
*And to help me if He please.*

*I did tell him how I suffer,*
*In the dungeon and the chain;*
*And the days I went with head bowed down,*
*An' my broken flesh and pain.*

*I did know Jesus heard me,*
*'Cause the spirit spoke to me,*
*An' said, "Rise, my chile, your children*
*An' you too shall be free."*

*I done 'p'int one mighty captain*
*For to marshal all my hosts;*
*An' to bring my bleeding ones to me,*
*An' not one shall be lost."*

*Now no more weary trav'lin',*
*'Cause my Jesus set me free,*
*An' there's no more auction block for me*
*Since He give me liberty.**

The Thirteenth Amendment, which ended all slavery in the United States, barely slipped through the House of Representatives with the necessary two-thirds vote on January 31, 1865. But for the Gullahs, the "Year of Jubilo" was January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared them "forever free." It was the first truly Happy New Year the Gullahs ever had, and they marked it with a festive occasion organized by General Saxton. The celebration took place in Beaufort. The multitude consisted of the "First South" Regiment, many "white visitors," superintendants, officers, dignitaries, and the band of the Eighth Maine. From the Islands and surrounding mainland came the now for-

175 567 175 541 567

* Quoted from Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 167.

[p. 323]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
•541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
771 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and
178 Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
(668) spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of citizenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
874 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson de-
641 veloped the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segre-
563 gation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil rights groups turned their attention to voter regis-
(668) tration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
(666) proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
(123) Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
533
• 545 (P-ix-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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114 533 545 arranged for the Moving Star Hall Singers to perform their spirituals, folktales, and children's game songs across the country, from the Newport Folk Festival to UCLA. The Carawans produced recordings of the Moving Star Hall Singers, and Guy told of them and sang their songs in his own performances. As a result of Guy and Candie's efforts, the Moving Star Hall Singers became widely recognized across the country as perhaps the preeminent tradition bearers of the oldest layer of African-American cultural expression in living American tradition.

114 533 During this period Guy and Candie organized a number of "Sing for Freedom" workshops around the South, cosponsored by Highlander, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. At a three-day gathering in Edwards, Mississippi, for example, young civil rights workers from all over the region came together. There they exchanged (545) ideas and shared experiences with the Moving Star Hall Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, and traditional singers and instrumentalists from Mississippi. There they swapped songs and learned new verses. Many sea island songs were thus introduced to new areas in the South because of these freedom song gatherings.

114 527 545 Guy and Candie also worked closely with the Johns Island community to produce a series of sea island folk festivals. The folk festivals picked up much of their meaning from the context of all the things that were happening in the sea islands and the South—the citizenship schools, the voter registration drives, the mass demonstrations of the civil rights movement. The festivals did not celebrate a quaint past; they related the past to the present. The festival became the focal point for "pilgrimages" from leading civil rights workers in the South—Vincent Harding, Julius Lester, Bob Moses, Willie Peacock, and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The old songs and stories, the old talk and tales seemed strikingly new and fresh. The traditions of the past had a power to move a generation, a power to call the youth to the task of achieving democracy.

(P.X-A)

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 563 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, previously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with (691) (668) the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

• 545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

(P. xiv-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

159 ment for the Arts. Here is how the NEA described her:

159 533 Sea Island people are noted for their retention of African cultural influences and for their creation of a rich body of game, work and religious songs, stories and craft skills. Janie Hunter is the matriarch of a family notable there for its musical artistry. Her voice is as strong and clear as a clarion bell and she carries in her memory a large repertoire of religious songs. Many of these came from her father, Joe Bligen, a fisherman and part-time farmer. Mrs. Hunter is an artistic decision-maker as well as a singer for the Moving Star Hall Singers, a group named for a Praise House on Johns Island.

•[545] The music heard in Moving Star Hall is joyous, a music in celebration of life, freedom, and a deeply felt religious optimism, the dawning of a better world. Mrs. Hunter and her friends and family sing not only with their voices, but with their hands and feet as well.

159 Like many other folk artists, Janie Hunter is multi-talented. She carries in her memory a collection of animal stories. They are for the amusement of children and adults, but they also show the uses of wit and logic. Mrs. Hunter is a maker of quilts and of dolls, a keeper of folk medicine techniques. She learned and remembered all these skills, and she is also an activist and transmitter. She has trained her children and the children of neighbors to respect and keep the beauty and artistic self-sufficiency of an important American place.

Mrs. Hunter felt she represented the island community when she was recognized for her cultural knowledge. When she traveled to Washington to receive the award, a vanload of family and friends from Johns Island went with her and joined in a jubilant shout as part of the Heritage award concert. When she returned to Johns Island, she was honored by her church, Wesley Methodist, and valued as a teacher in their own series on Afro-American heritage. Also recognized that same year by the NEA was a basketmaker from the Charleston low-country, Mrs. Mary Jane Manigault.

178 889 The older people will not lose their heritage. It is already too much a part of them. But they have

(p XV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 829 [545] When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that. [NN]

468 829 533 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

527 829 199 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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668 533 114 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins, brought some of us together and told us that a white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 529 533 545 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife, Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from Atlanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

(P. 235-B)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their
545 performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the ~~Coastal~~ Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight.
[434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large
545 number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white
177 people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

533 Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home
545 with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during
[434] the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the
(187) sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the
•545 rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not
787 broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was
[539] strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

My God is a rock in a weary lan'
A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
Shelter in a time of storm.[23]

000 What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

[23] An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.
[786] Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
[782] the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of
[152] each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
[533] a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

• 551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
[115] which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

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•551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[30]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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# *Tatemville*

361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

•551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[48a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody [755] done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid [789] yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[6]

715 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
775 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
• [551] Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
[101] "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
[192] edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [35c] and a hog *gulluh*.

[322] To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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674 anybody view uh face aw lay deah hans on uh[31] wuz sho a
682 pity.[36]
964 "Ebrybody wuz at duh fewnul. Come frum miles roun tuh pay deah las respecks tuh a po wife murduhed by uh huzbun on Friday duh thuteent.

"Duh body wuz brung frum duh unduhtakuh's pahluh straight tuh Sweet Fiel ub Eden Chuch at duh Pint. Chuch so crowded yuh caahn hahdly see duh coffin up in front. We sing hymns, an den wen duh singin hab die out an yuh could heah jis a lill hummin heah an deah, somebody stan up an say, 'Catherine De Lanzy wuz a sistuh ub duh Lawd.' 'She sho wuz,' somebody else say. 'She wuz a chile ub Jesus an she walk in duh way ub righteousness.'

"Dis staht off duh whole congregation an deah mustuh bin neah a hundud people git up an gib testimony bout Cather-
[152] ine's goodness. Some people cry an scream wen dey tell duh congregation wut a fine uhmun she bin.

"Den duh remains wuz took tuh duh cimiterry neah duh chuch an buried. Duh whole time we sing hymns an sway tuh duh soun uh duh music. Ebrybody tro a hanful uh dut in duh grabe an[38] wen duh grabe digguhs fix duh moun, we put some uh Catherine's tings on duh top. Deah wuz a lill flowuh vase wid duh bottom knock out, an a lamp chimney, an some puhfumery bottles, an duh pitchuh she made ice watuh in jis fo Bo-Cat tuk uh off.[47] Den duh ministuh nounce dat duh fewnul suhmon wuz tuh be preach at duh annyul memorial wen dey pray fuh ebrybody who die durin duh yeah.[42] An den das all an we wehn home."

"Why was Limerick De Lancy called Bo-Cat?" we asked.
• 551 "Deah ain no signifcunse tuh dat. I hab a frien dat ebrybody call Friday but[20] uh name is Lula. I hab a cousin name Augus Bond an a son name May Bud simply cuz he wuz bawn in May. One uh muh brothuhs wuz call Baby Head cuz at birth he wuz a tiny baby wid sech a great big head.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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197 major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

197 Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers
177 of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter
178 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

197 The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah
192 and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so, there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

*gula*, "pig": Kongo
*goober*, "peanut": Kimbundu
*gumbo*, "okra": Tshiluba
*gumbi*, "medicinal weed": Bambara
*heh*, "yes": Vai
*hoodoo*, "bad luck": Hausa
*yambi*, "yam": Vai
*chigger*, "small flea": Wolof
*juk, juky*, "disorderly": Wolof
*cush*, "bread," "cake": Hausa
*nana*, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
*nansi*, "spider": Twi
*tote*, "to carry": Kikongo
*chicabod*, "seesaw": Mandingo
*unu*, "you": Igbo
*yent*, "to lie": Umbundu
*pinto, bento*, "coffin": Temne
*biddy*, "small chicken": Kongo
*buckra*, "white man": Ibebio
*de*, "to be": Igbo
*eh*, "yes": Igbo
*ashantie*, "house": Ga[10]

•551 Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 139

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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It is a common African practice to give people names that represent personal characteristics. It is not unusual for a Sea Islander to be named for the day of the week or month of the year in which he was born.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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S 551 are among those names whose roots are traceable to West African languages. Some older island residents are named after the day of the week or month of the year when they were born. While it is very European to ask, with Shakespeare, "What's in a name?" it is very African to answer, "Everything is in a name." For example, the name Ada given to a girl child in Igbo means that the girl is the firstborn daughter. It is customary for Igbo children to be named after days of the week or given names that express sentiment: a woman who has long been unable to conceive might name a child finally born to her Ngozi, for instance, meaning "blessing" in Igbo. Some linguists have challenged Turner's work, claiming that most of the four thousand Africanisms that he listed were nicknames, or what the islanders call "basket" names.[11] Yet as DeCamp so aptly states, "Names are also a part of language and are no less capable of preserving an African heritage than are common nouns."[12]

I 551

S 114 551

Many of the "old words"—Africanisms—known to the older island residents are, with the "new talk," fading from use. A number of idioms are still very much apparent in daily communication, however. Consider the following list:

S 195

dark the light: the sun was set
out the light: turn the light out
hot the water: bring the water to a boil
ugly too much: very ugly
the old man bury: the old man is dead
this side: this island
do the fect to you: cause harm to come to you
can't bring the word right now: I can't remember at the moment, or I will not speak of it at this time
pull off my hat: I had to run
de fix for you: lie in wait for you
watchitsir!: watch your step!
day clean: daybreak
clean skin: a person with light skin color
one day mong all!: finally!
nothing for dead: nothing dying
the sun de red for down: sunset
knock em: hit
sweetmouth: flatter

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

## Appendix 1

1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

## Appendix 3

1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

## Appendix 4

1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

[p. 178 is blank]

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
226 though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
• [551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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114 174 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierra Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

101 (567) African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gizi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11] (578)

174 One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial 55

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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rite.' " For the latter Gullah name, Turner states ". . . a ceremony during which the male receives the national mark . . . and a new name, at the same time being given certain instructions which he keeps strictly secret. . . ." The Gullah name *pora* Turner determines is Mende, referring to "the great secret society of the men." Also, Turner's African equivalent for the Gullah name *zo* is a Vai term, "the wearer of the mask in the Sande Society." Among Windward Coast groups, secret society leaders hid behind masks and the leaders were called *zo*.[12] Given the fact that the above Gullah words are personal names rather than vocabulary terms, one obviously views these relationships as speculative. Yet they do point to Upper Guinea influence. These considerations, together with observations made by P. E. Hair, indicate a strong ethnic influence in South Carolina of peoples from the Windward Coast.

174 SS1

This suggested presence of Upper Guinea and Windward Coast influences qualifies rather than negates the BaKongo impact. Certainly early colonial records indicate the overwhelming presence of Kongo-Angolan groups. As far as linguistics go, Turner argues strongly for that impact. Furthermore, some linguistic relationships noted for Windward Coast groups can be made for BaKongo. For example, the Gullah *ndoko* is Bobangi (KiKongo), referring to "a bewitching that is said to cause illness." In KiKongo *ndoki* is a sorcerer, or witch. Also, the Gullah name *n'zambi* is KiKongo for God. Yet how does one account for what Hair calls "the extraordinary" prevalence of Sierra Leone terms in Gullah ritual and working vocabulary? Undoubtedly both ethnic influences were significant. Moreover, the prevalence of Tshi names among Gullahs probably indicates important Ashanti and Fanti presence, the first slaves to reach Carolina as well.[13]

174

Brazilian scholar, Roger Bastide, points out that even in Portuguese communities where Bantu peoples dominated the slave population, "only a few traces of their religion survived. . . ." Perhaps Bastide makes too fine a distinction between religion and magic. Taking a theme from Melville Herskovits, he acknowledges the continued significance of customs related to death, funeral practices, and afterlife, but also maintains that Bantu was the most susceptible of all African religions to "external influences." More recently, Robert Farris Thompson takes a more expansive approach. In discussing the religion and art that "withstood the horrors of the middle passage," Thompson argues for a strong BaKongo influence. He believes the BaKongo cosmogram was "too complex" to re-

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[551] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their
484 residence since and before the turn of the century. While many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth - versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
•551 mother at birth. *Lisa* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes tha. most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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538 Even among the younger generation, most children on the
•551 island are known by two names.

538 28. The phrase *I can't bring the word*, or *I can't bring that* means 'I can't remember at the moment', or, depending on the context, 'I will not speak of it at this time.'

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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212 show that the "diary" was in reality not a record of Old Bilali's life. Disappointing
567 as this discovery may be to those who are primarily interested in his history, it is still possible, according to Mr. Greenberg, to draw certain conclusions about him from the character of the manuscript.

He was apparently a fanatical Mohammedan, for the "diary" consists mainly of descriptions of "ablutions and the call to prayer." Mistakes in the Arabic script,[17] along with "repetitions, incorrect word divisions, and incorrect arrangement of the excerpts," indicate that he was trying to reproduce what he had learned orally. Since "books are first taught by oral memorization," Mr. Greenberg conjectures that "at the time of his departure from Africa the writer was still a young student."

175 It was reassuring to find that Mr. Greenberg's deductions tallied with what
567 Katie Brown, Bilali's great-granddaughter, had told me about him years before. According to her, he was captured when not fully grown, and went to Sapelo from Nassau with his wife and children. Where he spent the intervening years no one knows. Both Katie and her cousin, Shadrach Hall, tell me that the three oldest children were named Margaret, Hester, and Charlotte (Cotty). The others bore Afri-
[55] [171] can names:[18] Fatima (Shad says she was named for her mother), Nyrrabuh or

[17] Concerning the possibility "of discovering the origin and status of the writer" through the character of the script he used, Mr. Greenberg says: "The fact that the Arabic script was of the Maghrebine. or Western variety, and that the Risala is a legal work of the Malekite school, which is dominant in appproximtely the same regions as the Western style of writing, would seem to indicate that the writer came from some part of northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis) or from the Western Sudan. The confusion of 'd' and 'f' in several cases points strongly to the Sudan, since this pronunciation is unknown elsewhere. It is doubtful whether local varieties of the Maghrebine script in the Sudan can be distinguished at the present state of our knowledge; at any rate, no attempt has hitherto been made to do this, and therefore, this approach would seem to be closed to us pending further research."

In Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan, by W. B. Hodgson, the birthplace of Bul-ali is established in a letter from James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton plantation, Georgia. This letter is given in full, and states that his "driver Tom" and Mr. Spalding's Bul-ali were intimate friends. Both spoke the Foulah language. and were from the Kingdom of Bambara. Tom was born on the Niger River in Kianah, between Jenne and Timbuctoo, but Bul-ali was from Timboo.

[18] Lyell mentions the singular taste displayed by Negro parents in naming their children: January, April, Monday, and Hard Times. He did not know what Dr. Turner has discovered: the slaves followed a West African custom in naming their children according to the time of birth, conditions surrounding it, or the temperament of the child. Bad Boy, Peanut, Blossom, and July are names found on the Georgia coast. In West African Studies Miss Kingsley tells us that soon after a child is born it is given "the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
• 165 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
174 This fact raises still another interesting question.
091

Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika," [20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

175 Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
567 came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
782 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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551 She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy
070 born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).-

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. Ac-
(171) cording to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

567 Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
754 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
197 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
754 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
(551) magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[21] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[22] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[21] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[22] "Where Black Man Meets Red," Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[28] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 (231) (434)

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 (551) (553) (551)

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[28] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. (461)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[33]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[33] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## RICE SONGS

243 46 553 Growing rice was a thriving industry along the Ogeechee, Altamaha, and Satilla rivers a century ago, but today it is difficult to find even a handful of grain to demonstrate how it was beaten. At Hofwyl Plantation, the last in Glynn County to grow rice to any extent, I asked Jerry Rutledge about the songs that were used for planting rice, and getting it ready to eat. He gave me these appropriate lines:

[539]

John say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
John-say you got to reap in the harvest what you sow
If you sow it in the rain, you got to reap it jus' the same
You got to reap in the harvest what you sow.

He explained how the rice sheaves, about a foot through, and tied with a twist of straw, were whipped with "frails"; they were laid in parallel rows on a large sheet on the floor with the butt ends out. When two Negroes "t'rashed" together, they always sang as they faced each other. The short part of the flail which flew in the air in a seemingly reckless fashion was called a "bob," and it was rather important to have its gyrations rhythmically controlled. As soon as one side of a sheaf was clear of rice it was turned over and the other side whipped. By the time the string was broken the grain was in a long row in the middle.

Julia Walker, born near Riceboro in Liberty County, gave me precisely the same description of the work, and sang the following song as she demonstrated how the "frail" was used. Frankly, I was skeptical of the strength of the rawhide that attached the bob to the stick, and kept well out of range:

[539]

Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
Turn sinner turn—sinner wouldn't turn
My Lord call you—wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late I know, sinner, too late.
Church bell ring—you wouldn't come
Preacher preach—an' you wouldn't come
My Lord call you—an' you wouldn't come
I know sinner too late, too late
O too late, sinner, too late.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[26] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 452 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[26] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins."[43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals[44] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping
[533] her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp,
113 "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization*
114 *and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1971), p. 369.

2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A*
127 *Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).
113 3. See ibid., p. 21.

4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a
122 Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.
113 5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia
Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stan-
123 ford University, 1976).
113 6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than
123 they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have
earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University
609 of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12.
113

## Chapter 1

131 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource,"
113 p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

[p. 169]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which [805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was [554] informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina



175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
793 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
• (554) sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
(797) ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina



code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who maintained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote:

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 began among the Gullahs and the other ended, or if in slavery a shared
554 authority and governance was practiced. Among Windward Coast Afri-
000 cans authority rested with two bodies—the chief and his elders, and cultural authority, which consisted of Poro and Sande leaders. The latter was called the Poro Council. "All grave and problematic questions touching the interest of the section or tribe in general were handled by this Poro Council, and their decisions, after due deliberation, were preemptory." Among the BaKongo, governance was far more centralized and hierarchical. Authority was in the hands of a king, and on the village level, a chief, who might have advisers, among whom was a medicine man *(Ngangu Nkisi)*.[28] But the importance of the priest in all African societies may explain the continued presence of the spiritual parents. Because spiritual parents, like their African counterparts, held their positions for life, and since they comprised the "religious court," they possibly represented the communal soul of the people while the elder personified the individual soul in a more Christian context. From the spiritual leader a Gullah candidate not only received religious guidance but also instruction in conduct or "manners," thus preserving values as well as maintaining authority. Different social conditions make it impossible to actually compare types of instruction given to African and Gullah initiates. But in both situations such qualities as good conduct, allegiance, generosity, and group responsibility were emphasized. Secret society initiates received a rich background in physical survival, social interaction, instruction in ethnic-group history, and art. They were also schooled in their particular occupation for the future. For Gullah "seekers," instruction was probably a mixture of Christianity, Africanisms, and practical information. Candidates were taught how to pray, an interpretation of the nature of God and Christ, concepts about death, and especially about the realities of life, all within a context relevant to their circumstances as bondspeople.[29]

175 554 575

000 When African initiates left the bush, they returned to the village as "reborn," and were said to have "crossed the water." Their former existence was obliterated—old animosities, debts, even crimes no longer existed. The person was entering a new life with new responsibilities. Neophytes were expected to take their place in the village, to serve it when called upon, and to obey its regulations as interpreted by the Poro Council. When initiates were led back to the village, they underwent a washing ceremony in the creek or river. After "washing," new members were dressed up for their final return. Parents publicly expressed pride

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

•554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [757] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 793 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People [744] to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 758 74 (452) (734) (737)

Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

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While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

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Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

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He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a
• 554 positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school
554 on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black
871 teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people
[177] worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior.
[179] Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
571 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a
limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland
blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and
have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social
and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks,
but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the
two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic
choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim
will be made that opportunity to participate in social situa-
tions in which a given language variety is used is a more
important influence on choosing to use that variety than
simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower main-
land group retain a higher percentage of creole features in
their speech than do island residents, despite the latter
group's greater geographic isolation.

796 services as depicted in the literature is still rather accurate and need not be entertained here, except to say that the general patternings of the services and demonstrations of faith via "shouting" has remained as a center of church services.

The Church Structure

794 (793) The Pastor is the head of each church. There may or may not be a pastor "in training" to assist as needed. Under the Pastor is the Elder Council of Deacons. This body is comprised of the oldest male members of the congregations. The Deacons Council, through a committee structure, runs the affairs of the church. Next in the structure are the Elder Mothers, followed by the general congregations. Aside from their committee responsibilities, the Elder Deacons take part in Sunday services. An extremely learned body, the Elders are easily as able in the scriptures as the Pastors. Their learned abilities and oratorical skills are particularly evident during Funeral services. In these services, the Deacons take turns recalling through their eyes the life of the deceased person. Their eulogies delivered by these Soul stirring orators are the highlighted feature of the rites.

The Practice of the Sea Island Religion

791 554 The islander does not simply outgrow religion. On the

771 islands a man's worth is measured by his religious dedica-
•[554 tion. This is so much the case, that the question of out-
growing religion, or active versus the inactive participa-
tion of the congregation is not a legitimate concern. The
practice of weekday religion is more vigorous than the
Sunday demonstrations of faith.

Here on the Islands, religion penetrates every aspect
of life. It is rare to encounter islanders who are not
learned in the scriptures. This includes islanders who be-
771 cause of personal conflicts with the church's institution-
795 alized style, no longer attend Sunday services. The blunt
of this disagreement is usually focused at the church's
social inactivity; they say the church simply is not doing
enough.

The Church's Doings

795 Before the coming of community action programs, helping
794 neighbors in need was the exclusive role of the church. To
some extent, the church is still the most active agent in
this regard. Whose analysis shows that congregation members
make up the policy making bodies of all the community action
programs on the island. It appears, now that these program
resources are available, the church has taken a more in-
direct role. Rather than continuing the tradition of
neighbor helping neighbor, neighbors in need are now di-
rected to available program resources. When the need is

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time, three-time*, etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chuesday, two T'ursday, two place*, the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

*Proverbs*

538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care is better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Little axe cut down big tree."

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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[554] "Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh my own."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



000 correspondent goes on to tell of the difficulties encountered by the Governor of Kenya in stamping out what we consider crime. "Imprisonment is found to be no deterrent. Nor among the Kikuyu does an ex-convict lose caste in the tribe. After he is released from jail the sacrifice of a single goat puts everything right. A new suit of a white tunic and shorts is thoroughly enjoyed by native prisoners for theft in East Africa. Fines are not always a success because the native, well-fed, housed and clothed at government expense, actually enjoys his term as a vacation."

697 Our own prison camp in Glynn County formerly offered an example of the same problem. A colored convict whose time was up pleaded with Mr. Higgenbotham—who was the court of last appeal at the camp—to be allowed to stay. A living being hard to get nowadays, he figured he could not provide for himself as well as the county did.[32] But the authorities were firm, and he was obliged to move on. Of course, he knew how to get back if times were too hard. It is the same with us, as in Africa, when it comes to any stigma being attached to a Negro who has served a [554] term in jail or spent time on the chain-gang. Ex-convicts assume the same status in their community as they enjoyed before the county forcibly detained them.

Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations. Of course there were abuses, but they also occur within prison walls—only there they are not so readily found out.

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Chorus: Drinkin' of the wine—wine—wine
Drinkin' of the wine
O—yes—my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

[32] My corner was for years the favorite resting-place at noon for the convicts when they worked on the island. I saw the substantial rations served them, and it is no wonder the discharged convict felt he could go farther and fare worse. I also observed that the model prisoners were well treated. One day I overheard a guard say very hospitably to one of my Negro singers, who was working for me: "Want to come back?" With a good-humored chuckle, the man replied: "No, thank you." It seems that he had been mixed up in a drinking affair in which a knife had figured. He told me he had run away, but had found the world a hard place to live in—so he had come home, surrendered, and taken his medicine. The guard said he had been a star prisoner.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

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The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16] Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

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[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18] 567 463 554 [466]

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862 found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants. 567 463

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house. 567 357

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 267.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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to Beaufort, Charleston, and the North. Some of the St. Helena people were as alert and ambitious as the whites themselves. Charles Ware, of Massachusetts, in 1862 described Charles, the carpenter on Hope plantation, as "a man after my own heart." "He attracted me first by his dignified and respectful demeanor, and by his superior culture. He has a little touch of self-consideration. He, more than any other negro I know, seems to me like a white person."[18]

### SOCIAL CLASSES

The Negroes themselves perhaps unconsciously set a premium on a knowledge of "buckra" ways, for they placed in the upper classes of their social scale those who had superior advantages of learning the customs of the dominant race. The "swonga" people were the drivers who took their orders directly from the overseer, the house servants who were intimately associated with the master's and the overseer's families, the mechanics who were permitted to hire their own time from their masters and work in Beaufort or Charleston. To this group also belonged any among them who from superior rank or intelligence acted as their official or self-appointed leaders. The religious leaders and the plantation watchmen were usually "swonga" Negroes, as were also the witch doctors and those who could boast of physical prowess. It is obviously difficult to point out definitely the various gradations in the social classes among the slaves, but in general the drivers and mechanics stood at the head, followed by the house servants, and at the bottom of the scale stood the field hands.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



Edward S. Philbrick was surprised in 1862 to find the St. Helena Negroes so sensitive to social distinctions and "caste feeling." "There is no race in the world," he wrote from Coffin's Point plantation, "with whom a little *state* gives so much power as the African. They have always been accustomed to see men of any power treated as such, and receiving the attention corresponding thereto. They have always seen a white man on a horse, and have got to think it so far a badge of power & caste, that they will hardly lift their hats to a white man on foot. In fact the Negroes themselves, while moving about from one plantation to another always find some old mule to straddle & look down with contempt upon a 'walking nigger.'"[116] Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary like Philbrick, also observed the Negroes' sensitiveness to class feeling. Upon visiting two Negro women, she was made to understand that they were "both of the colored aristocracy, had lived in the best families, never did any work to speak of, longed for the young ladies and young 'mas'rs' back again, because April was the month they used to come to Beaufort and have such gay times."[117]

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### SLAVE MARRIAGES

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The amount of interference in the domestic life of the slave varied with the opinions and attitudes of the master. A Charleston planter told his English guest, Captain Basil Hall, in 1827, that he made no attempt to regulate the habits and morals of his people except in matters of police. "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till the next day," he said. "The

[116] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce, March 27, 1862.
[117] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 14.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he con-
824 cluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
789 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that
• 556 I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.

•556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69c] You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.

(789) "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't take to salt."[69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
(759) don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
342 stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

•556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 789 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root [755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change
175 was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza
249 Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experi-
[247] ments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and
[386] from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government. Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the
[556] province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and
175 indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy
567 African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

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[For information on generational differences in attitudes toward, and application of discipline within the household unit, see Category 861.]

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
• 561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
561 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
561 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social

121 factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker.
561 In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are mar-
193 ried to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while
(184) the husband uses some for two grammatical categories.
Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

There is some indication that sex differences in the
562 use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight
193 years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island
561 children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be com-
• 561 pared with the data from the longer adult conversations, but
they give some indication that sex differences in language
use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some
of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were
from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic
mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better
in school than mainland boys in their group, but their
language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar.
These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' dis-
cussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972)
operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms
may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the
two social groups under discussion here, however, the pat-
tern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in
the island community.

121 5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropolo-
gist who has studied language and social relationships in a
black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period
of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility
might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
• 561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as pre-
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vious studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted,
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we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process
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of language change. One group of women is strongly resist-
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ant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
(593) In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

• 561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "en ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

561 of not completing tasks were harsh because chores were
593 meaningful to the household. It is reference to this
178 agrarian life and the demands for the obedience of children
861 upon which grandparents draw. That the generation of par-
592 ents now share significantly different childhood references
than their parents merely illustrates the component of
change in the agricultural habits on the islands. In agree-
ment with this, parents reared in more distant households,
where the farm habit is comparatively more active tend to
mirror the views of the preceding generation. A similar
positive relationship between exposure to the farming habit
and the cohesiveness of discipline behavior across the two
generations exist on the near islands. The generational
differences found in this study can certainly be attributed
to the farming versus non-farming pattern. This rationale
was expressed vividly by Grand Flower, who at 78 years sees
big differences in the rearing habits of her day and those
of today. "Billie, let ma tell ya son, we haad no timb fer
fooln. Wen d cock taak en bernean we up wete de fas cro.
I go ta git d wnata on me sista she giz d wod. Wey be fa
d life ob dae comin we haad d bakfaz redi. Abta we done
wete d poz en plata wen goin ta d fiel. Dey we wask puen
sed en d grun or piken en pulen dat wat don redi, we dey
til d timb com n fer fix d supa den bak ta dat huse we goin.
We giz d mel fer d men fak, den we carie it ta d fiel we

561 sta en d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb for d chiln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long ~~to~~ exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma dae" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

861 Still another point to be considered in looking at
562 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
[578] differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 178 177 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the tested generational relationships were significant. These differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now 464 177 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston. 861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. 861 178 The more demanding work requirements which accompanies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed. 561 593 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder islanders base their discipline references was unknown to

86 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
561 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not bei. ; transferred to this genera-
tion of young islanders. In this light, the childhood
histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen
how the harsh work habits required in farming families
demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the bur-
den of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobe-
dience than parents are today. The reason given was again
differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
86 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because
they spend time with their children. For the farming par-
ents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tol-
erance level, and that isolated households operate in an
<u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
86 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived
to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
86 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This rela-
tionship was explained along two lines. The first was the
status that the male child has on the islands. Here a
dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba, [171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate • [562] in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during
538 the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 761 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 123 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women [562] do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr. [795] Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with [805] flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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121 statistical evidence, participant-observation in the com-
193 munity which confirms these findings, and from the close family relationships which obtain between several of the speakers represented in Table 6, who nevertheless show striking differences in language use.

In the mainland community, older men use more
121 standard forms than older women--a finding which differs
562 from that of previous studies of sex differences, except
193 Fasold's study of the black working class in Washington,
184 D. C. For the island community, women generally use more standard forms than men in all three age groups, although speakers in the oldest age group show very little difference in the use of creole and nonstandard forms. Women in this group use 31 percent creole and nonstandard variants in 145 possible occurrences, while men use 37 percent of 240. The heaviest users of standard forms are middle aged women in the island community.

I suggest that sex differences in language used by
121 the two communities are more directly related to occupa-
562 tional opportunities than to sex roles as such. The occu-
463 pational choices are limited by the factor of sex, to be
193 sure, but the sex of speaker affects language choice only
184 indirectly, in my analysis of the social factors influencing
562 language choice. In rural South Carolina, the occupations
463 open to black women have been extremely limited until very recently. While the vast majority of black women in this

562 463 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the [197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily. [465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence 562 873 463 464 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young people. In one older family, the women had attended college for four generations; men were skilled construction workers with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu- 464 562 199 463 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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464 562 197 463

no use of standard English and which entail little interaction with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by black men in the region are blue collar and require few language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island women, however, have had strikingly different employment patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in the group studied have been confined to domestic service or field labor with a limited number of employers. One of these women had lived on a single plantation all of her eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She had had no formal education and could neither read nor write. [212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort motels to work for middle-class families in mainland communities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the [177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist population which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers. One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
•562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
[121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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829 there so that he could teach them the things he had learned,
186 and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved
•562 away would return in later years. A daughter in her late
teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she
would not ask her future husband to live there. Another
brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-
grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on
the island. One young mother in another family spoke with
feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the
island with three pre-school children, when most other
adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the
men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities
than did the women. To the outside observer, island life
seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was
some indication that identification with island life in-
creased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived
for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of
Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another
older man and his wife had spent some years living and work-
ing in New York City, returning to the island when his aged
parents needed them. They were both leaders in community
and church life on the island; their speech reflected their
[197] wide range of experience. In formal church speech events,
both spoke and read language very close to standard; in
their conversations with each other at home many creole
features were used. At the close of the field work for the

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
121 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
561 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland
121 group were included in the study. Language used by these age
561 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
193 table also reflects the relationship between the social
184

121 factors of sex and age and the language used by a speaker.
561 In the middle aged island group, Speakers 9 and 11 are mar-
193 ried to each other; the wife uses no creole features, while
[184] the husband uses some for two grammatical categories.
Speakers 13 and 15 in the younger age group are their daughter and son; the daughter uses creole and nonstandard forms only for the preposition, while the son uses some in every grammatical category. His overall use of such forms is higher than that of his father. Speaker 12 is the father of Speakers 14 and 16 in the young adult group. Again, the daughter uses no creole forms, while the son uses slightly more than his father in every category. By a slight margin, young island men use more creole and nonstandard forms than speakers in any other age group except older mainland women. Middle aged island speakers use fewest of such forms, chiefly due to the language patterns of women in this group, which exhibit almost none of these variants.

There is some indication that sex differences in the
• 562 use of creole features may begin as early as seven or eight
193 years for islanders. In narratives told by eight island
561 children from the third through sixth grades in school, boys consistently used more creole and nonstandard variants than girls at their level. By fifth and sixth grades, island girls were using no creole forms in the three selected grammatical categories, while boys' use ranged from 14 percent to 100 percent in the pronominal category for the

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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562 stories the children told in recording sessions. The figures
193 obtained from these narratives were small and cannot be com-
561 pared with the data from the longer adult conversations, but they give some indication that sex differences in language use for islanders begin at an early age. In contrast, some of the most creolized utterances obtained in the study were from fifth grade girls and boys of the lower socio-economic mainland group. Mainland girls generally performed better in school than mainland boys in their group, but their language patterns in relaxed conversation were similar. These findings indicate that the factor of 'age-grading' discussed by linguists such as Stewart (1967) and Dillard (1972) operates in rural Georgetown County, and that creole forms may be preserved in the speech of younger children. For the two social groups under discussion here, however, the pattern of age-grading may be different for boys and girls in the island community.

121 5.3 Mobility of Speaker and Language Use

Discussions with Shirley Brice Heath, an anthropologist who has studied language and social relationships in a black urban community in upper South Carolina over a period of five or six years, indicated that geographic mobility might be an important factor in language use. In comparing
193 the experiences of children in the communities we were
369 studying, Heath observed that those children living in the

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off
• 562 the island for extended periods of their lives and that most women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older genera-
(212) tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
871

167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167 MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND
166 NONSTANDARD VARIANTS
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184

| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

562 484 464 184 Mobility patterns are different for men and women in the two communities. In the mainland community, men have been considerably more mobile than women. As previously mentioned, one older woman had spent her entire life working as a domestic servant for the owners of a single plantation. The other woman had a more varied employment record as a field laborer, as a cannery worker for a local seafood factory, and as a cook for a middle-class white family. She had never moved far from the sphere of a single plantation, however. Of the men, Speaker 3 in his early thirties had moved onto a plantation with the help of an uncle, and had remained there as a laborer for fifty years. Speaker 4 was the most widely traveled of this group, having received more formal education in his youth than either of the others. He had worked outside the region during a portion of his middle years, acquiring some skills and obtaining better jobs than [193] the other man. Women in this group use more creole and non-standard forms than men, a pattern which reflects both their lack of mobility and their limited occupational choices.

562 484 184 On the island, older men have been slightly more mobile than older women. Of the women, Speaker 5 has been less mobile than Speaker 6, who lived for a portion of her middle years off the island. Speaker 8 was the only island resident encountered who had never attended school and has [193] been less mobile than Speaker 7. These two men do not differ appreciably in their use of creole forms, however. For

562 484 184 193 older island residents, mobility does not seem to influence language use to any great extent, when comparing island residents with each other. When comparing island women and mainland women, however, the greater mobility of island women may well be related to their greater use of standard forms. Among middle aged men from the island, mobility seems to be a factor in the greater use of creole forms by Speaker 12, who refused to commute to a job which prohibits his return to the island nightly. His use of creole features is twice that of Speaker 11, who spent some years working in Washington, D. C. In the younger group, the woman who has been least mobile uses more creole features than Speaker 14, who clerks regularly in a mainland store. Similarly, the young man (Speaker 15) with least mobility reflects this in his speech, when compared with Speaker 16, who works as a waiter in a resort motel during the tourist season. Sex of speaker appears to outweigh degree of mobility as an influence on language use, but within sex, mobility seems to be a contributing factor.

167 Over and above language use, mobility is an important factor in the population patterns of rural Georgetown County. In a report on Population and Economy in the region encompassing the county, concern is expressed about the migration patterns of younger black residents to northern cities. During a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970, 76.8 percent of black males and 72.6 percent of black females between

121 island women use standard forms categorically. Standard
193 forms for the complementizer are used categorically by a
178 more diverse group of speakers: all island men and women in
the middle aged group, young island women, one older main-
121 land man and one older island woman. Island men in the
193 oldest and youngest groups and mainland women in the oldest
178 group retain creole forms across all three grammatical cate-
184 gories. Figure 11 indicates which speakers are most resist-
ant to change, according to sex, age, and community member-
ship. Group I is moving most rapidly toward standard forms,
while Group III is most resistant to change. Older island
women and older mainland men are somewhere in between Group
II and III, as indicated by the categorical use of standard
forms for the complementizer by one speaker in each of these
two groups.

In a small number of speakers, carefully matched for
121 sex, age, and social group, it has been possible to find
19 systematic linguistic variation for three morpho-syntactic
184 categories. The activation and progression of linguistic
561 change in these categories are related to the social factors
562 of speaker sex, age, community, and mobility. Those in the
forefront of change are young and middle aged women in the
island community who have available to them, through occupa-
tional roles reserved to their sex, opportunities to parti-
cipate in a variety of speech events in which standard English
is used. Those most resistant to change are also women,

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I. Island women: young and middle aged

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II. Island men: middle aged

(Island women: old)

(Mainland men: old)

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III. Island men: young and old

Mainland women: old

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Figure 11. Linguistic Change by Sex, Age, and Community

though of the older mainland group. Sharing their reluctance to change are older and younger island men, who have different occupational patterns and who may have stronger identification with island life than women. Again, as previous studies of sex-differentiated language use have noted, we find women occupying a paradoxical position in the process of language change. One group of women is strongly resistant to change, while another group is leading the community movement toward standard forms--both groups of women living in an isolated rural area and occupying similar social positions by conventional measures of social class. From my

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121 perspective as a participant in community life, however, the
19 life experiences of these groups of women have been different
178 from each other and from those of men in their groups. Re-
562 cent anthropological analyses have pointed out that men and
121 women universally occupy different positions within their
562 cultural and social groups (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974;
Keenan, 1974). In these analyses, women are seen as outside
the male-oriented norms of their social groups. Linguists
have long understood that the interaction of language and
social life has important consequences for linguistic be-
havior (see especially Ferguson, 1959 and Hymes, 1967, 1973).
121 If the two sexes have differentiated social roles within all
562 societies, we must expect certain linguistic consequences
19 to follow from the different life experiences of the two
sexes. Men and women will speak differently from each other
in every social group, but the ways and extent to which they
differ can be expected to vary from social group to social
group. Hymes (1973) has observed that inequality among
speakers arises because some speakers participate in social
situations not available to other speakers. To resolve the
paradox of linguistically conservative and innovative women,
the social situations open to women in their respective
groups must be carefully examined. Focusing on women as
members of social groups, we should not be surprised to find
them represented at the extremes of linguistic conservatism
or innovation, depending on the speech situations open to
them as active participants in communal life.

000 them as active participants in communal life.

5.5 Conclusion

121 178 193 Language does not change in a vacuum. It changes as part of the life experiences of people who use it. Because language is inherently a shared process, those who use it share in determining the direction of change. The analysis of the linguistic variables presented here has shown that the direction of change in Gullah is all in the direction of the standard variety of English. Within each category, speakers show systematic variation which indicates that the meanings or uses most basic to the original creole variables are last to change toward the standard. The variant fE as pre-infinitival complementizer is retained longest for the introduction of purposive clauses. The pronoun ee is retained longest to distinguish neuter subject from neuter object Ee, a distinction not made by standard it. The static-locative preposition to is retained for indications of spatial notions, while standard at is introduced for expression of temporal and figurative notions never expressed by the creole to. Although individual speakers show shared patterns of variation in their movement toward the standard, they make separate choices about the speed with which they move toward it. (562) Young and middle aged women in one community find it advantageous, probably for job-related reasons, to move faster toward the standard than any other segment of their speech

121 community. Older women in another community choose to resist
178 change toward the standard longest of any speakers in the
193 study. The social factors of sex, age, community membership,
562 and geographic mobility have been shown to influence the activation of change. Sex is indicated as the most influential of these social factors, but its effect is different in the two social groups examined here.

121 The pattern of change exhibited in Gullah does not
178 parallel that reflected in the history of English. For
193 standard English, to is the original pre-infinitival complementizing particle and retains this function today. Originally introducing infinitival forms in variation with infinitival verb endings, to later shared this function with other particles such as at, til, and for. Although some of these forms are retained today in certain dialects of English, to has never lost its original complementizing function in the standard dialect. The status of for in this grammatical category for standard English is presently the subject of debate by synchronic and historical linguists; in some analyses it has become a complementizer in the base structure, while in other analyses it has retained its prepositional status throughout the history of English. By way of contrast, the particle fɛ in Gullah was the original complementizing particle, now being replaced by standard to. In the English pronominal system, the singular personal pronouns were marked for gender throughout the history of

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disci-
plined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which signifi-
86 cant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perceptive of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
[177] siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad scale influence of the mainland elements on island

861 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
561 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not bei. : transferred to this genera-
tion of young islanders. In this light, the childhood
histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen
how the harsh work habits required in farming families
demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the bur-
den of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobe-
dience than parents are today. The reason given was again
differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
861 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because
they spend time with their children. For the farming par-
ents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tol-
erance level, and that isolated households operate in an
<u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
861 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived
to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
• 562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
861 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This rela-
tionship was explained along two lines. The first was the
status that the male child has on the islands. Here a
dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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562 86 [178] The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining. [578] Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a common behavior of males. [177] The reason for fighting as a more frequent behavior of males on James Island was explained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders to mainland patterns.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



764 seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog
[175] did not appear—but the cart went back empty.
[176]

In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African cus-
[178] tom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they
[175] are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pot-
171 tery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

481 The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a bap-
•562 tism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us:
178 "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In
[764] the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] *Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.*

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] *In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[493] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[562] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[23] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[136] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

 567

his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) (837)

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[28] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[28] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have advised the people to set the women in their proper place —never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.; and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children
[854] were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight to see a woman going about her home work with an infant tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

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Sea Islanders NN23

[For segregation policies imposed by White South Carolinians on the Sea Islanders, see Category 177.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Table 2. Racial Breakdowns for Five of the Carolina Sea Islands

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| Year | Population | Edisto | James | Johns | Wadmalaw | St. Helena |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | Total | 1,948 | 3,058 | 3,264 | 2,054 | 4,626 |
| | Black | 1,693 | 2,419 | 2,826 | 1,813 | 4,458 |
| 1940 | Total | 1,955 | 3,913 | 3,534 | 1,858 | 4,266 |
| | Black | 1,717 | 2,709 | 2,633 | 1,607 | 3,961 |
| 1960 | Total | 1,589 | 13,872 | 6,252 | 2,326 | 6,048 |
| | Black | 1,306 | 4,168 | 3,260 | 1,980 | 4,994 |
| 1970 | Total | 1,374 | 18,969 | 7,530 | 2,024 | 5,718 |
| | Black | 1,115 | 5,217 | 3,104 | 1,719 | 4,278 |
| 1980 | Total | 1,345 | 27,719 | 9,296 | 2,440 | 8,134 |
| | Black | 1,124 | 6,173 | 3,975 | 1,935 | 4,934 |

*Source:* U.S. censuses of population.

paratively remote, do not show any significant population changes. In the late 1970s Edisto Island had only 19 persons per square mile dispersed over a 72.6-square-mile land area. The 1980 census revealed a population of 1,345 persons—another slight decrease. Edisto's population remains predominantly black (84 percent). Its slow growth is attributed to the lack of incorporated areas, of major manufacturers, and of essential services such as water and sewer.[17]

Wadmalaw Island, situated between Johns and Edisto, is rural in nature and like Edisto has exhibited very little in- or out-migration. In 1970, 85 percent of the people were black, and this figure had dropped only to 79 percent in 1980. Even though 80 percent of the housing is occupied by owners, Wadmalaw is ranked second in the region in economic distress. It has no water or sewer services, and its only industry is Metal Trades, which provides services primarily for ship repair. Most of the inhabitants are laborers, farmers, and fishermen, though there are an increasing number of professional persons who have returned home to the island to work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on.[18]

[464]
[463]

The addition of more whites is not precipitating an erosion of the traditional social and racial composition of most of the Sea Island communities. They remain isolated, with predominantly black populations. Only the most readily accessible islands, particularly James,

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[161]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

| | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Edisto Island | 1,374 | 1,170 | 1,120 | 1,110 | 1,150 | 1,190 |
| James Island | 24,197 | 25,944 | 29,280 | 33,064 | 36,890 | 40,450 |
| Johns Island | 7,530 | 8,853 | 10,483 | 12,016 | 13,469 | 14,999 |
| McClellanville* | 4,094 | 3,867 | 3,814 | 3,905 | 3,994 | 4,125 |
| Wadmalaw Island | 2,024 | 1,900 | 2,150 | 2,250 | 2,450 | 2,650 |

*Source:* BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 161 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

## Economy

433 241 In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will (178) affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods. (464) By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah 464 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that 177 "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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179 counter those of outside interests. The County
177 Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
158 well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
[N3] part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
[423] Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a
• [563] black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
[P. 4iV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, pre-
•563 viously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with
(691) the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County
(668) School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

(P.xiv-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## MY FATHER WAS BORN A SLAVE

567 291 My father was born a slave. He was fourteen years old before he had a shoe on his foot. And across the hills of South Carolina you could track him. They had big snows in the winter, and he wrapped his feet in gunny sacks. He said you could track him through his blood in the snow as he went out to bring the cows home during those snowy nights. In the morning he'd get up and run the cow up from where he slept all night to warm his feet, warm his hand with the warmth of their bodies. He was fourteen years old before he had his first pair of shoes.

567 (563) My grandmother was half Indian. 'Course the Indians are stubborn, supposed to be. And being a half Indian and then being a slave also, she was very stubborn. She said that her master was a very cruel man. Since she was stubborn, he'd take her by the ears to the corner of a house, and just bang her head against the corner until she'd bleed. Come out covered in blood.

She died in the insane hospital in Columbia. You couldn't find three square inches on her head where there wasn't a scar when she died. And well, you find naked places all through her head where she was beaten until she be beaten into unconsciousness. Sometime she come to herself under a tree; Master had knocked her out. In her latter years it was discovered that during one of those forays the skull was crushed into her brain. The older she got, the worse it got. So she died at the age of seventy-seven, right there in Columbia Hospital. I knew her. I went to her funeral.

1: Federal Writers' Project NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For information on the reminiscences of older informants about the African people and/or their ancestors who were brought over to the New World as slaves before the American Civil War, see Category 829.]

●567 American Blacks NK4
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[For general information on the history of slavery and missionization in Georgia and South Carolina, see the NN23 Sea Islanders file, 3: Creel, Categories 17 and 175, pp. 67-109 and 113-251 *passim*.]

● 567

[For the African origins of slaves on the Georgia and South Carolina coasts, see Category 175, pp. 29-44.]

3: Creel NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

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[For general background information on the history of slavery and missionization in Georgia and South Carolina, see Categories 175 and 17, pp. 67-109, and 113-251 passim.]

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121 packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly
115 stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around
[757] his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke"
[567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house, chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names
[192] and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of numerous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 One of the oldest of the residents is white-haired F. J. Jackson * who remembers his childhood days on "Massuh George Wiley plantation" when many freed Negroes stayed on to work in the cotton fields. Years have weakened his once sturdy frame and slowed down both thought and gesture, but the light of humor still gleams in his dimmed eyes. We found Jackson in the kitchen of his comfortable frame bungalow, a new house built to replace a little old shanty that was burned down. He was making a casting net, his twisted old fingers still deft with the cords. He conversed like one glad of congenial company.

[227] [286]

"Does I membuh ole times?" he repeated in answer to our question. "Yes, I dohn git away frum dis place much now an uh jis sit roun an tink ub a long time ago. Deah wuzn no automobiles an duh only way tuh git tuh Savannah wuz by duh mule an caht aw git in duh road wid yuh foots. Not many uh duh people still livin wut come long wid me. Dey's bout gone. Me an ole man Bruurs Butluh's bout duh onlies ones lef uh duh fus settluhs.

115 "Yes, I membuhs duh plantation days. Massuh George wuz a slave dealuh fo duh waw, an he tuk us all, muh grandaddy, Lewis Hargray, an muh maw, an muh daddy—I name attuh him. Massuh George use tuh buy an sell but he wuz a good man an lot uh his slaves stay wid im on duh fahm attuh freedom. Dat big house in duh ben uh duh road wuz weah he lib, an dey still got duh ball an chain an duh banjo table in duh house now.

• 567

115 "Wen I lef duh fahm an moob tuh duh pint, ain but five wite families yuh. Ain no roadn nuttn, jis woods. I done a lot uh huntin an fishin. Deah wuz plenty uh deahs roun yuh.

"I use tuh go back tuh duh fahm on Satdy night fuh duh big times. Dey hab wut yuh call shouts. Wut kine uh music did us hab?" Jackson's aged eyes twinkled. "We use

533 534

* *F. J. Jackson, Grimball's Point. Deceased July, 1940.*

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Georgia

## WILMINGTON ISLAND

115 "We come in a wagon hitch up tuh a double team uh
492 hawse. We pile ebryting in duh wagon, all duh pots and
484 pans an beddn. Duh women ride in duh wagon an duh men trudge longside.

115 "It take us days an days tuh come frum Clinch County
484 tuh yuh. We cross tree ribbuhs. We git tuh one ribbuh wut take us a half day tuh git obuh. Wen night come, we sleep in duh houses long duh road wut duh folks desuhted. I membuh one time we stay at a house wut dohn hab no flo. Jis walls an a roof. We put duh beddn right down on duh groun an sleep deah.

115 "We done sell tuh Mistuh Barnard. Yuh know duh
•567 Barnards, missus? Mis Barnard come outn a Barstow.
829 Dey lib yuh, too. Well, wen we git tuh Wilmington Ilun, deah wuz jis a few houses on duh ilun. Deah wuz still some folks yuh wut hab come frum Africa. I recollect dat one gang uh slabes wuz brung frum Liberia. Dat wuz fo I git yuh. Duh las gang wuz brung attuh I git yuh an dey come ovuh frum Africa an dey stop an add tuh um at Santo Domingo.

"Yuhs heahd bout dat lot, ain't yuh? Big boat try tuh creep up duh Savannah Ribbuh, but dey chase um out tuh open sea an dey keep chasin um till wen dat boat git way an kin lan dem slabes, it way down tuh Jekyll Ilun. Den attuh dey git um deah, dey steal some ub um back an carry um up yuh tuh Hutchinson Ilun. I tink dasso, missus.

"I membuh doze Africans wen dey fus come couldn walk on duh groun bery good. Dey hab lill clumpy feet an dey ain weah no shoes needuh."

We asked if Uncle Robert had ever heard the Africans say how they had been captured and he nodded. "Yes'm, I heahs um talk bout dat many times. Dey say duh wite mens git um tuh come on ship an dey fool um wid all kine uh pretty tings. Den dey lock um in duh hatch an wen dey git out, dey way out on duh open sea."

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face
• 567 brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin
829 bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut
[115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [60]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we
776

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. [567] Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 754 [789] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69a] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[63] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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Georgia



829 a misery in duh leg aw ahm, yuh kill a black chicken an split it open an slap it weah duh pain is an dat will cuo duh pain.

"She tell me dat in Africa she lib in a palmettuh house. She say dey kill animals wid a bow an arruh. Some dey use fuh food an some dey kill fuh skin. All duh people keep deah finguh nail long so dey could grab tings tuh eat off duh trees an bushes. Eben attuh she come tuh dis country, she keep uh nail long fuh a long time. Wen she staht cuttin um, she alluz bun duh pieces an she bun duh combins frum uh haiah too. She say it dangerous tuh let anybody git um. Dey make cunjuh gense yuh.[10] She say in Africa dey plant berries an pumpkin an dey had tuh plant um ebry seben yeahs or dey die.

"Friday wuz duh day she call huh prayuh day. Den she use tuh make bread. Wen she mix it up, she put duh dough in a wet bag an bake it in duh ashes.

"She tell me bout duh hahves time wen duh folks stay up all night an shout. At sun-up dey all sing an pray and say dey live bettuh an be mo tankful duh nex yeah." [38]

"Was your 'gran' grown up when she came from Africa?"

829 "No'm, she wuz jis a leedle ting. She say dat duh way
• 567 she happen tuh come frum Africa wuz dat dey wuzn use tuh seein anyting red. One day dey see a boat wid a red piece uh clawt flyin on it. Wen dey go up close tuh see it, dey wuz caught. Huh mothuh, Theresa, wuz caught too an dey
829 wuz brought tuh dis country. Attuh dey bin yuh a wile, duh
789 mothuh git to weah she caahn stan it an she wannuh go back tuh Africa. One day muh gran Ryna wuz standin wid uh in duh fiel. Theresa tun roun—so—" here Rosa made two quick swings with her skirt. "She stretch uh ahms out—so —an rise right up an fly right back tuh Africa.[69c] Muh gran say she wuz standin right deah wen it happen. She alluz wish dat uh mothuh had teach uh how tuh fly. She try an try doin duh same way but she ain nebuh fly. She say she guess she jis wuzn bawn wid duh powuh."

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Georgia

# *Darien*

361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

361 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty
[342] Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced
[343] patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from
[351] wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees strag-
[415] gle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny dry-
[824] ing ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen
115 years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our
[535] conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
• 567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um fuh duh feas.[35e] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[782] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit
[775] tuh hab a las good meal.[68] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sperrit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit
[775] tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[42]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an • [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We 764

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1953.*

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533 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh
534 way." [24]
764

We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of
534 drums.

"We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry
[237] um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that
•567 were real Africans.
829

"Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caann unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduh-
829 stan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue,
789 he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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•567 829 789 gits tuhgedduh an stick duh ha in duh fiel an den say 'quack, quack, quack,' an dey riz up in duh sky an tun hesef intuh buzzuds an fly right back tuh Africa." 68b, 69a

At this, we exclaimed and showed our astonishment.

"Wut, you ain heah bout um? Ebrybody know bout um. Dey sho lef duh hoe stannin in duh fiel an dey riz right up an fly right back tuh Africa."

Had Wallace actually seen this happen, we asked.

"No, ma'am, I ain seen um. I bin tuh Skidaway, but I knowd plenty wut did see um, plenty wut wuz right deah in duh fiel wid um an seen duh hoe wut dey lef stickin up attuh dey done fly way."

115 This story of the flying Africans seemed to be a familiar one, for it was later repeated to us by William Rogers,* who [789] lived about a mile from Darien on the Cowhorn Road. We had been told that he had been a cabinet maker in his youth [322] and still spent much of his spare time in the carving of a variety of objects. The old man was evidently well known in the vicinity, for upon inquiry neighbors quickly directed us to his house.

Because a short time ago a fire had destroyed Rogers' home and most of his possessions, we found him living in an unfinished cottage which was as yet unpainted except for the bluish-green trimming on all the window facings. In spite of the apparent newness of the house, there was a pleasant homelike atmosphere about it. Proof of Rogers' skill was [322] demonstrated in scroll-work which decorated the porch and in a cupboard and fine square chimney in the dining room which the old man and his wife were building.

Rogers, who was seventy-two years old, was small of stature with copper-colored skin and alert black eyes. His manner was affable and friendly despite the fact that a recently suffered paralytic stroke had partially deprived him of the use of his hands. He told us that his grandmother had been

* *William Rogers, Cowhorn Road, Darien.*

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115 Georgia but still retained many pleasant recollections of the days of her early youth. She had heard of many African customs and went on to tell us some of these.

829 "I heahd many time bout how in Africa wen a girl dohn lack jis lak dey should, dey drum uh out uh town. Dey jis beat duh drum, an call uh name on duh drum an duh drum say bout all duh tings she done.[26] Dey drum an mahch long an take duh girl right out uh town.

"Girls hab tuh be keahful den. Dey caahn be so triflin lak some ub em is now. In Africa dey gits punished. Sometime wen dey bin bad, dey put um on duh banjo. Dat wuz
626 in dis country."

This being "put on duh banjo" was unintelligible to us and we asked for an explanation.

"Wen dey play dat night, dey sing bout dat girl an dey tell all bout uh. Das puttin uh on duh banjo. Den ebrybody know an dat girl sho bettuh change uh ways."

829 The story of flying Africans was a familiar one to the old
789 woman and she said that her mother had often told her the following incident which was supposed to have taken place
• 567 on a plantation during slavery times.

"Duh slabes wuz out in duh fiel wukin. All ub a sudden dey git tuhgedduh an staht tuh moob roun in a ring. Roun dey go fastuhnfastuh. Den one by one dey riz up an take wing an fly lak a bud.[68b, 69c] Duh obuhseeuh heah duh noise an he come out an he see duh slabes riz up in duh eah an fly back tuh Africa. He run an he ketch duh las one by duh foot jis as he wuz bout tuh fly off. I dohn know ef he wuz neah nuff tuh pull um back down an keep um frum goin off."

115 As we left, Priscilla accompanied us down the walk to the gateway. She was reluctant to see us go and until the last minute regaled us with a variety of stories.

We had learned that an elderly Negro named Lawrence Baker * lived out on the Ridge Road near the Ridgeway Club.

* *Lawrence Baker, the Ridge Road, near Darien.*

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
• 567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [30] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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115 row wooden gate opened into a field where a winding path led to the small cabin of Julia Grovernor,* called Juno by the island Negroes. Julia, very black, tall and gaunt, was slightly hostile and suspicious and disinclined to talk. Even [123] the pipe tobacco, potent in most cases, she indifferently dropped.

"No'm, I ain know nuttn. Ise feeble-minded. I bin weak in head sence I small chile. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout witches. I ain know nuttn bout root doctuhs. No'm, I ain nebuh heah uh cunjuh. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout spells. No'm, I ain kin tuh Katie Brown."

115 This refusal to answer except in the negative seemed to continue indefinitely. Finally, however, after innumerable 124 slow, quiet, good-humored questions that showed no resentment at her hostility, she became friendly in a reserved and superior way. It was soon evident that this sullen, reticent woman, though hostile to outside invasion, was not feeble-minded, but on the contrary sharp-witted, with a dry sense of humor.

829 "Muh gran, she Hannah. Uncle Calina muh gran too; dey bote Ibos. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran Hannah. She marry Calina an hab twenny-one chillun. Yes'm, she tell us how she brung yuh.

829 "Hannah, she wid huh ahnt who wuz diggin peanuts in duh fiel, wid uh baby strop on uh back. Out uh duh brush 567 two wite mens come an spit in huh ahnt eye. She blinded an wen she wipe uh eye, duh wite mens done loose duh baby frum huh back, an took Hannah too. Dey led um intuh duh woods, weah deah wuz udduh chillun dey done ketched an tie up in sacks. Duh baby an Hannah wuz tie up in sacks lak duh udduhs an Hannah nebuh saw huh ahnt agen an nebuh saw duh baby agen. Wen she wuz let out uh duh sack, she wuz on boat an nebuh saw Africa agen."

* *Julia Grovernor, Sapelo Island. Deceased winter, 1938.*

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115 A back path from Julia's house led to the house of her sister, Katie,* who had a regal and impressive bearing. She, too, had a hostile and taciturn manner.

"No'm, Ise younguh dan Juno. I dohn membuh nuttn uh doze times. No'm, I ain heah tell uh cunjuh. I dohn know bout witch doctuhs. I dohn know spells. No'm, I dohn know none uh dis yuh askin. Yes'm, I nuss Hannah an Calina wen deys ole, but I young chile, an I dohn membuh nuttn bout um. No'm, I cahn unnuhstan um; dey talks a funny talk. I cahn unnuhstan um."

In the afternoon we went to see Phoebe Gilbert,** another descendant of the Ibos, Calina and Hannah. Phoebe, black, buxom, and comely, lived in a comfortable cottage in Shell Hammock. Obviously embarrassed at being the center of a rapidly increasing crowd of Negro listeners, she evaded most questions. Our visit did not prove entirely unsatisfactory, however, for after considerable humorous chatting Phoebe rewarded our efforts by giving a vivid description of how her grandfather, Calina, was captured and brought here from Africa.

829 "Belali Smith muh gran. I ain know bout Belali Mohomet. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran. She Hannah.
•567 Yes'm, muh gran Calina, too. Dey's Ibos. Muh gran Calina tell me how he got heah. He say he playin on beach in Africa, an big boat neah duh beach. He say, duh mens on boat take down flag, an put up big piece uh red flannel, an all chillun dey git close tuh watuh edge tuh see flannel an see wut doin. Den duh mens comes off boat an ketch um, an wen duh ole folks come in frum duh fiels dey ain no chillun in village. Dey's all on boat. Den dey brings um yuh."

115 Cuffy [20a] Wilson,† sitting in the clean-swept yard which surrounded his whitewashed house, told us about the much-discussed experience of a neighbor of his. This dealt with

* *Katie Grovernor, Sapelo Island.*
** *Phoebe Gilbert, Sapelo Island.*
† *Cuffy Wilson, Sapelo Island.*

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115 another Belali Mohomet descendant, who came to the door of his neat cottage clad in blue denim. Delighted to have visitors, Shad was eager for conversation. With a few polite (123) words of thanks for the pipe tobacco, he began to talk of the old days.

829 "Muh gran wuz Hestuh, Belali's daughtuh. She tell me Belali wuz coal black, wid duh small feechuhs we hab, an he (567) wuz bery tall. She say Belali an all he fambly come on same boat frum Africa. Belali hab plenty daughtuhs, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, Bentoo, Hestuh, Magret, and Chaalut.

"Ole Belali Smith wuz muh uncle. His son wuz George Smith's gran. He wuz muh gran Hestuh's son an muh mudduh Sally's brudduh. Hestuh an all ub um sho pray on duh bead. Dey weah duh string uh beads on duh wais. Sometime duh string on duh neck. Dey pray at sun-up and (782) face duh sun on duh knees an bow tuh it tree times, kneelin on a lill mat."

We asked Shad if he had ever heard his grandmother say anything about Africa. Had she ever mentioned what sort of house they lived in or what food was generally eaten? Shad nodded eagerly, and from the steady flow of talk that followed it was evident that he had heard much of the land of his ancestors.

"Muh gran Hestuh say she kin membuh duh house she lib in in Africa. She say it wuz cubbuh wid palmettuh an grass fuh roof, an duh walls wuz made uh mud. Dey make duh walls by takin up hanfuls uh mud an puttin it on sumpm firm, sticks put crossways so. I membuh some pots and cups dat she hab made uh clay. She brung deze frum Africa. She membuh wut dey eat in Africa too. Dey eat yam an shuguh cane an peanut an bananas. Dey eat okra too. Yes'm, das right, dey calls it gumbo. Dey dohn hab tuh wuk hahd wid plantin deah. Jis go in woods an dig, an git big yam. Dey eat udduh roots too. Dey ain no flo tuh

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." 8, 12a, c, d

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he
•567 answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " 60

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about
313 Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by
782 a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
775 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh,
567 yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh
ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey
git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up
in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I
tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long
I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh
cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an
riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a
fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he
web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut
duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly
—An Nancy got um.' "[A]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp
and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII). The
little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps
shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the
darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the
women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church
and took our places on the second from the front middle
bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most
of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in.
The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over
his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin,
narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned
later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey
• 567 git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum.
534 Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle
533 em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope
535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way
789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
[351] been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
[165] til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
[764] hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
[783] long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[68]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
[753] Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[16] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He

[567] * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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115 could really be so old. We asked him who his people were and what he remembered about the old times.

[567] "We belong tuh duh Coupers. Ise son tuh Belali. He wuz butluh tuh James Couper at Altama. I membuh we hab lots uh time tuh play wen we's chilluns." He smiled pleasantly at the memory.

829 This man, too, remembered native Africans he had known, for he told us, "I membuh lots uh Africans, but all ub em ain tame. But I knowd some ub em wut is tame an I knowd one tame Indian."

We asked again about old Alexander, the African root maker.

829 "Yes'm, I membuh him. He wuz a lill black man an he
567 belong tuh duh Butlers but I ain know him well cuz we's diffunt people. Now ole man Okra an ole man Gibson an ole Israel, dey's African an dey belong tuh James Couper an das how I knows em. Dey tell us how dey lib in Africa. Dey laks tuh talk. It funny talk an it ain so easy tuh unnuhstan but yuh gits use tuh it. Dey say dey buil deah own camp deah an lib in it.

"Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat roof wut he make frum bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. But Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place.

829 "Ole Israel he pray a lot wid a book he hab wut he hide, an
782 he take a lill mat an he say he prayuhs on it. He pray wen duh sun go up an wen duh sun go down. Dey ain none but
567 ole Israel wut pray on a mat. He hab he own mat. Now ole man Israel he hab shahp feechuh an a long pointed beahd, an he wuz bery tall. He alluz tie he head up in a wite clawt an seem he keep a lot uh clawt on han, fuh I membuh, yuh could see em hangin roun duh stable dryin."

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
• 567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[23]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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534 sho it wuz maple. He stretch em obuh it good. It wuz bout eighteen inches wide an fifteen inches deep wen he finish it. He beat it wid a stick. Ole man Okra he sho kin chase a drum. Ole man Jesse he frum Africa, too, an he make he own drum."

829 When we asked Ben if he remembered any African words, he replied, "I know dat deah wuz a ole man, it bin so long I caahn relate his name, at duh plantation wut wehn roun wid ole man Okra an I membuh well he call all duh fish an ting uh duh ribbuh by duh name uh 'nyana' an den I heah pancake call 'flim.' Muh granmothuh Hettie, duh mothuh uh muh mothuh Bella, he come from Africa too an he huzbun come frum Africa. He name wuz Alex Boyd. Alex wuz bery small felluh but heaby an he hab dahk skin an shahp-feechuch. Yes, ma'am, he talk African but he stuttuh so he dohn talk much roun us chillun, cuz we make fun at im, an as I say befo, I wuz small lad den. Alex wuz knock-kneed an he tie he head up in a clawt."

829 Had his grandmother, Hettie, ever talked to him about Africa, we wanted to know.

Ben told us, "Many time. He tell some tings I membuh. He say he mus be bout tutteen aw foeteen wen dey bring im frum Africa. He say deah wuz great talk bout comin tuh dis country an some men tell em it would take only two aw tree days tuh git deah. Dey wuz all happy tuh come. Him an lot uh friens come tuhgedduh.

"Wen Hettie fus come, he say he feel worried cuz he couldn unnuhstan duh talk yuh an many udduh tings bein so diffunt frum he own country. He hab two sistuhs an tree brothuhs but dey couldn git a chance tuh come. He hab mo refrence tuh he mothuh dan tuh he fathuh. An he say dat in Africa he lib in a 'groun house.' It wuz a squeah house, an he say dat he didn lib close tuh a salt ribbuh but weah deah wuz a lot uh wile swamp. Wen he fus come tuh dis country, he didn unnuhstan bout fish. But he tell a lot bout monkey

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ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[49] He kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody. Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[63] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

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527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
o long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back
in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats
drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down
• 567 the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days.
He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh
frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the
waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to
eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin
git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken.
They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these
pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much
talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun
an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain
nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em."
Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX), A whose
342 little house (Plate XX), B sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

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115 Henry, who sat on his sunny porch, was strong and healthy looking for his eighty-seven years. The shabbiness of his clothes contrasted with the splendor of the naval cap on his head. Two little neighbors, Enoch and Artie Jones, were playing in the yard, (Plate XXI). A

When we told Henry that we wanted to know about old times, he launched into eager conversation.

"I belong tuh William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation but it wunt long befo the waw an then I wuz free an come tuh town. Wen I wuz bout twelve, I hep Daddy Patty in his tannin yahd ovuh theah on the watuh by the cimiterry. Patty wuz a shoemakuh too an use tuh make all kines uh things out uh hides an skins."

We asked him to tell us all he could remember about Uncle Patty and his wife.

829 .567 "Well, they's both frum Africa an as I remumbuh they's Ibos. They wuz bout middle height an heavy buil. I ain suttn bout Ahnt Rachel but Daddy Patty belong tuh ole man Arnow an I think he bought im at a sale an bring im down yuh. They use tuh talk tuh each othuh in a language wut we couldn unduhstan an Patty use tuh alluz be singin a song, 'a-shou-tu-goula.'

"Daddy Patty, he use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he come frum. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im. He say they ain hadduh plant but once a yeah cuz evrything grows wile. They buns gumbo fuh wood. He say they live in 'boo-boo-no' made out uh sticks an straw thas plastuhed with mud. Fus they digs a big flat celluh bout a foot deep an packs the earth down smooth an tight. Thas the flo. Then they leans the sticks tuh the centuh an they puts the straw an the mud on em an it come out lak a beehive an thas weah they lib.

"They buil a big 'boo-boo-no' fuh the chief. Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz.[14]



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii--CC--Analyst]

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [16] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

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342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[755] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[12b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

829 We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was a young man.

• 567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A. [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

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775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain
(845) nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em.
Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a
caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time
775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then
764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54]
—that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole
days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest
to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals
in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the
day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa
they have night fewnuls."

115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grand-
mother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so much I caahn remembuh all them things."

829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they
567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they
alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an
they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special
with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut
she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down
theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr.
Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to
keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin
about two hundud yahds out in the rivuh off Cumberland
tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

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829 and what kind of house they lived in. "She ain speak of wut kine uh house but she do speak of monkeys. They have monkeys all roun em and they dohn have tuh do no plantin cuz evrything is wile and they pick it off the trees."

We asked him if he could remember any African words he had heard his grandmother use. "They wuz funny wuds," he laughed, "I ought tuh be able to remembuh em but I caahn. She use tuh sing songs with African wuds. Ef I could study about em, I might remembuh some but now you ask me I jis caahn git em tuh mine. She did sing a chuch song wut have wuds we could unduhstand, an then in the middle of it she say 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by,' and looked like wen she come to the en of each stanza, she sing 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by.' It sho is a long time ago, them days."

491 Later we followed a deeply rutted sand road which led westward in the direction of Folkston. Few cars traveled
493 this way and once during our trip we encountered an old fashioned two-wheeled ox cart whose driver guided his oxen deftly to one side in order to let us pass.

115 About three or four miles out on the road we turned in a gate and drove to the side of Shadwick Rudolph's * house. The old man greeted us smilingly. At first glance he did not appear to be the eighty-six years he claimed, but on closer observation we noticed that his eyes were dimmed from age. He talked with us for some time, telling us among
• (567) other things, "I belong tuh Mr. Dave Bailey. He own Woodbine Plantation. Muh granfathuh, his name wuz Jim. He come ovuh tuh this country frum Africa. He tell me that ovuh theah they have houses made of palmettuh.

829 "Then, ole Nanny Mammy, she live at the plantation too, and she come frum Africa. She alluz set down tuh wuk; no mattuh wut kine uh wuk, she set down tuh do it. Nanny Mammy use tuh set down in the middle of the flo of uh house

* *Shadwick Rudolph, Folkston Road, near Woodbine.*

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133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah; from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St. Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
133 only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and surf.

131 The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and vis-
177 itors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
131 Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in many ways this book tells their story too.

175 For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
• 567 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

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175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun,
182 surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that
433 isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting, then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding, the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before. For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes, the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the
182 environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage, reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

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## Demography

175 The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Euro-
[103] peans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves
175 and their free descendants.[10] Not many whites or Europeans inhabited
162 the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas
• 567 have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importa-
567 tion from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African
[178] population. The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14]

175 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-
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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

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226 fish they attract to the area. One has to be careful in this venture, however, because the drums may also bring sharks.[31]

262 Though much sustenance is taken from the rivers, the streams, and the ocean, another food source is provided by creatures that live at the edge of the water, such as "cooters" (slider turtles), bullfrogs, terrapins, alligators, and sometimes rattlesnakes (not everyone will eat the latter because the flesh is believed to be poisonous if the snake was angered before it was killed). The flesh from the cooter is particularly pleasing to some islanders owing to its unusual taste and tender texture. The alligator is a rare delicacy, now, being no longer as readily available as it was in the past. Yet Ber Gator[32] and his swampy home continue to be lively topics in folklore and literature. Under the slave regime, according to one source, when the islanders were denied the use of guns and powder, they hunted the alligator armed only with a long hook. They entered his hole at low tide and, at considerable risk to their lives and legs, dragged the alligator out and killed him quickly. The skin was saved to sell and the flesh taken home for cooking.[33]

[538] 225 567 [262]

000 This dangerous method of hunting alligators is reminiscent of an even more dangerous method once used to trap the giant boa constrictors and pythons in Nigeria. One Igbo hunter explained to me that the snake hunters rubbed their bodies with a scent taken from captured boa constrictors and pythons before entering places which they were known to inhabit, in order to prevent the snake from smelling their approach. Once the quarry's hole had been located, either the hunters dragged him out with a hook or, at greater risk, one man would insert a leg into the snake's hole, allowing the snake to swallow it up to the hip. When the leg was pulled out the snake came along helplessly, unable to move with the hunter's leg in his mouth. The hunter quickly drew his knife, slit the snake's jaws and throat, and thus recovered his leg. The account of this method of hunting was corroborated by some Nigerians and called a lie by others. The hunter who told me about it, however, swore that it was indeed done. Like the alligators in the United States, the giant snakes are captured in Nigeria chiefly for their hides. The larger the snake, the more dangerous his capture is, and thus the greater the price paid for his skin will be.

262 223 224 The woods provide a further excellent supply of food for the Sea Islanders. Many of the more remote islands still abound with large ducks, partridges, wild turkeys, geese, and many other edible birds. Likewise, the woodlands are alive with game. Deer often roam alongside the roads in the early morning.

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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their masters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal industrial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by [505] barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some 775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see • 567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.'" When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: "'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk'" (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

[829]

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

197 113

4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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# Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies, Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long 248 staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who 249 also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African- 567 American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to 170 mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of sig- 178 nificant combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation, and intergroup socialization.

101 The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peo- 175 ples, were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial 567 history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17]

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114 174 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

101 African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically [567] speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gisi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a prov- [578] ocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11]

174 55 One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

175 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and [197] grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary:

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena:

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the

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175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Carolina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change 175 was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza 249 Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experi- (247) ments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and [386] from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government. [556] Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and 175 indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, •567 South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

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175 Hence, the middle period of the slave trade to Carolina which corresponds to the last half of the eighteenth century, is significant for obtaining additional impressions of African provenance in the coastal and Sea Island region, since this time span corresponded with vigorous economic growth in those areas. Aside from records left by merchants and factors, advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which, beginning in 1732, is an almost unbroken newspaper file, provide information on the trade. Announcements such as the following from 1756 usually mentioned and frequently emphasized the origin of cargoes:

> To be Sold: on Wednesday . . . a cargo of fine Slaves just arrived in the ship St. Andrew . . . directly from the River Gambia [Wolof, Serer, Mandingo, etc.]; they are perfectly healthy, and have been so the whole passage.
> Negroes chiefly from the same country as those which are brought from the River Gambia . . . from the factory in Sierra Leone [Mende, Temne, Vai, etc.] on the Windward Coast of Guiney, where said cargo was picked out of a large parcel.[19]

In the early nineteenth century the South Carolina up-country engaged in large-scale production of short staple cotton, creating a renewed demand for slaves. This brought on the third and final phase of African trading, from 1804 to 1808. The Kongo-Angola area mainly supplied up-country plantations as well as plantations in other states that refused to import. Percentage-wise then, Bantu-speaking peoples apparently comprised the majority of Africans imported to South Carolina. Yet it has generally gone unnoticed that Upper Guinea contributed heavily to the slave populations of the Sea Islands and surrounding coast. Africans of Senegambia figured most prominently in the slave trade to South Carolina prior to and immediately after the War for Independence. Closely following in imports were those of the Windward Coast. Together these two regions' captured inhabitants comprised a large majority of Africans brought to South Carolina even if we make allowances for the fact that Angolan ships were sometimes larger and sometimes brought more Africans to America.[20]

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Thus, the middle period of the slave trade represented expanded economic enterprise in the Sea Islands where indigo dominated, and in the hinterlands where rice was almost exclusively cultivated. Africans brought into these areas where chiefly ethnic groups of Upper Guinea and were victims of the "holy war" conducted by Moslem Mandinga, Susu, and Fula peoples.

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
[754] conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical
[759] actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
•567 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
791 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting
175 house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
791 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
791 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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171 roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society.[28]

Viewed in this light, the power of Poro-Sande, of the ancestors, and of *minkisi* were key unifying socioreligious forces. Each was effective because of divine supernatural intervention which demanded individual and group propriety. God gave Upper Guinea peoples Poro-Sande, gave *minkisi* to the BaKongo, and transformed the ancestors into spiritual guardians. Hence God was not only a Supreme Spirit but a lawgiver as well. The supernatural existence of Poro-Sande was thus ordained and the pantheon of Poro-Sande spirits, through association with God, decreed laws, set standards, modes of behavior, worship, and customs. The "captured spirit" in each *nkisi* was incarnated power sent directly from *Nzambi* (similar perhaps to the Christian Holy Ghost). Ancestors were the emissaries of the withdrawn Supreme Deity. This idea of the remoteness of God, noted by writers and observers, is disputed by some recent African scholars. Still both sides of the debate acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Deity in African spiritual concepts, and that God had agents through which divine will was dispensed. This provided a linkage of spiritual virtue with communal responsibility. The attributes of God (discussed earlier), corresponded with characteristics of harmony and social order, the antithesis of bush living which was a wild, antisocial state of consciousness. Similarly, Gullahs who accepted Christianity associated community socialization with religious piety. The laws of God were synonomous with correct conduct toward other members of the slave quarters. In maintaining this African socioreligious connection in the American ambiance, bondspeople operated on an internal logic that excluded planters, overseers, and even white Christian ministers. There was a parallel between the structural configuration of what became Gullah folk religion and composition of social order in the quarters. Thus in Gullah antebellum communities their interpretations of spirituality played a major role in attitudes toward collective accountability.[29]

171 African codes of ethics stemmed from spiritual orientation. Moral defects were considered spiritual flaws in traditional society and a blight on one's character. Individuals were expected to be guided by ethics characteristic of God, the ultimate source of moral order. Patriarchs, diviners, ancestors, and other spirits that one met in the sacred grove

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lies in 1728. The first rector was Lewis Jones who served in that capacity until 1745. Jones painted a bleak picture of life on the frontier. "The inhabitants are mostly poor planters of corn, pease, rice and a good many ot them living at a great distance from each other," he wrote in 1728. There were at that time sixty-two families in the parish, thirty-nine of whom were Anglican, twenty-one Presbyterian, one Independent, and one Anabaptist. At that time only 170 slaves lived in the entire parish, and hence they were a minority, an atypical situation for early Carolina.[9]

The parish had no school although a few families had private teachers. As for the Negro slaves, Jones admitted in 1728 that "no care" was taken in Christianizing them. The reason, he cited, was due to their frequent removal to other areas, since Spaniards and Indians plagued the frontier, carrying away slaves. As a result, the number of St. Helena slaves decreased rather than increased from 224 in 1727 to 170 in 1728, while the entire colony's black population was over 20,000 in 1727.[10] Several possibilities may explain the disappearance of slaves. Spaniards provided a safety valve and chance for freedom. Indians may have done the same or may have simply attempted to decimate the white people's black labor force. Proximity to freedom and the paucity of whites must have intensified slaves' expectation of obtaining liberty. If later developments are any indication, slaves took advantage of these opportunities and the removal of slaves from the area represented white efforts to prevent this. The pattern continued until the Spanish and Indians were pushed back by the settlement of Georgia.

But the Sea Island region received early missionary attention for the slaves from another Anglican source. Thomas Bray (1658–1729/30) was the chief organizer of the three Anglican missionary efforts—the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), established in 1699, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), formed in 1701, and the Associates for Dr. Bray, established in 1723/24 and reorganized in 1729–30. Bray's first concern was Christianizing blacks and Indians. But he also shared, with Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, an interest in improving the lot of prisoners in England. With encouragement and financial support from high places, Bray and a group of sympathizers attempted to put a missionary plan into operation, hence the founding of Bray's Associates. Because Thomas Bray and a number of Associates became involved in plans to found Georgia, it was determined that the southern missionary movement should begin near Savan-

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nah (since the Trustees did not initially intend to have slaves in Georgia). One Associate and Georgia Trustee wrote to John Wesley prior to the latter's departure for Georgia as a missionary to whites:

> One end for which we were associated was the conversion of Negro slaves. As yet nothing has been attempted in this way; but a door is opened, not far from home [i.e. Georgia]. The Purryburgers have purchased slaves; they act under our influence; and Mr. Oglethorpe will think it advisable to begin there.[11]

Thomas Bray did not live to see Oglethorpe settle Georgia or to witness the missionary attempt among South Carolina slaves. But he and his Associates were instrumental in bringing about one endeavor to Christianize slaves in South Carolina.[12]

A colony of Swiss Protestant refugees, led by Jean Pierre Purry, settled on the southern frontier on the north bank of the Savannah River in 1731. This was about 20 miles from where Savannah, Georgia, would be located in 1733. Two Moravian missionaries, commissioned by the Associates to instruct slaves in Purrysburg, arrived there in 1739. The missionary venture failed. Few blacks were in the area, and one missionary became ill and died within six months. The other sailed for Philadelphia the following year. But an even more significant note on the ill-fated nature of the plan was the fact that these missionaries apparently could not even speak English. Yet this early activity and interest in slave conversion in the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Island region set the stage for future developments. The Georgia Trustees' alteration of their brief policy of slavery exclusion in the colony, the proximity of the two colonies, and the Trustees' early concern for religious instruction made the Sea Island region fruitful territory for the evangelism of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening. These early associations also perhaps laid the foundation for later acceptance of black independent churches at a time when such institutions were forbidden elsewhere. Georgia's evangelistic fervor and liberalism spilled over into the South Carolina slave population in the Sea Island region.[13]

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Lewis Jones[5] remained at St. Helena until his death in 1745 and his main concern as rector was with white communicants. In 1736 he complained to the Society that despite his endeavors he had only been allowed to baptize one black and one mulatto slave. Bringing Christianity to slaves in St. Helena was discouraging work. Writing to the Secretary in England he stated that "the pious zeal of the venerable Society, and

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of its worthy Diocesan for promoting Christian knowledge among the Negroes meets with but a cold reception." This attitude was further strengthened by the 1739 Stono Rebellion. From St. Helena Lewis Jones lamented the fact that twenty-three "much indulged" slaves from his parish had joined the rebellion.[14]

But St. Helena witnessed some spiritual awakening. Whitefield preached there in 1739 and convinced a few whites to instruct slaves in Christianity. Whitefield however was not popular with the Anglican hierarchy. Unbeknownst to Lewis Jones, Whitefield had been censored by Commissary Alexander Garden in Charleston, and the latter was outraged upon learning that the outspoken evangelist was preaching in the Anglican Church at St. Helena. Further problems were created for Jones by one of Whitefield's St. Helena disciples, a planter named Hugh Bryan. Bryan, considered a mystic and an eccentric, preached to his slaves and reportedly openly predicted they would rebel and obtain their freedom.[15]

Like sister parishes, St. Helena suffered from problems of white communicants with only marginal interest in spiritual matters. Jones complained that duly elected vestrymen refused to serve even after accepting appointments. Church attendance was also poor. Jones suggested Sunday worship be held only once in five weeks. But even these infrequent services were poorly attended with the total numbers of communicants usually not exceeding twenty. Still, the long tenure of Lewis Jones brought an added stability and consistency for the Church of England on the frontier and it remained the dominant denomination throughout the colonial era. After Jones' death, ministers came and went in rapid succession. As the parish grew in economic enterprise through cultivation of indigo, a demand for slaves gave St. Helena a new significance. Yet, except for short-term effects of the Great Awakening, Anglicans in the Sea Island region remained aloof toward spiritual enthusiasm for themselves and their burgeoning African-born black population.[16]

Pecuniary interest and spiritual indifference were not the only factors that generated hostility and a "cold reception" from planters. The element of sheer physical self-preservation cannot be discounted as a reason for planter resistance. They were spread out on the frontier, surrounded by a predominantly hostile population—namely West Africans and Indians—and were in the process of exploiting both through bondage and unfair trade practices. Whites had every reason to fear of slave insurrec-

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Sunday as a day of pleasure. Certainly, it was difficult to convince slaves that they should be more exemplary than their masters. These early Carolinians were described as a boisterous lot, frequently engaging in "cursing, swearing, drinking and gaming and barbarous misuse of their Negroes." For ministers and missionaries then, there was the double obstacle of combatting "the strong prejudices" of Africans "grown in years," and "the backwardness of masters."[46] 175

Not all masters were "backward." Some, such as Hugh Bryan, were atypical in that instead of depriving slaves of Christianity, it was sometimes forced upon them. Bryan was accused of inciting the St. Helena slaves to revolt in 1741, when he was probably just attempting to provide religious instruction. His utterances may have generated some discontent among the slaves since he counseled in words similar to those used by Whitefield in his letter to slaveholders. But Whitefield was speaking to masters not to slaves. As ill-advised and eccentric as Hugh Bryan's statements may have been, he was a planter, and as his letter of apology reaffirmed, was in sympathy with the planter cause. He soon settled down to a less public life. But his diary and letters indicate that the spiritual welfare of his slaves was a continual concern. Still, he seems to have been no more successful in creating a change of heart among his bondspeople than he was in mastering his own sense of sin and guilt. Some slaves were baptized and admitted into the Stoney Creek Church, as demonstrated by the church register. Their numbers were small, probably household servants. And, slaves were listed only for baptism, while the baptism, marriage, and burial of whites was recorded.[47] [669] [567]

Of course, church lists do not tell the whole story. And while few slaves cared to convince the Stoney Creek white membership that they had a "true experience," some probably had to listen to sermons and instruction in their "duty." Certainly Bryan's slaves were rarely deleted from his fervent prayers. He found them inattentive and continued to pray for them. "My servants were called to prayers, but none came," he wrote on one occasion. On another he wrote of it being "a time of trial and uneasiness from the disobedience of servants. . . ." Thus the slaves heard but did not listen and Bryan's frustrations for his soul and theirs seemed to weigh heavy on his heart.[48]

It was a strange relationship between master and slaves. Bryan seemed sincere although his own spiritual enthusiasm was often mixed with periods of gay indulgence and the conviviality so common among individ-

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17 ers, for a number of years. Many either brought their children with them or formed partnerships after flights, giving birth to children behind British lines, that is, born free. The existence of this "Book of Negroes," with large numbers of South Carolina slaves on the lists, refutes claims that the War for Independence little affected the black population in the Lowcountry. Also, the lists demonstrate bondspeople's sense of autonomy in familial matters, and what E. P. Thompson, in another context, characterizes as representing "symbolic authority." Many did not give the surname of their masters as their own, making their detachments from previous status as complete as possible.[13] Furthermore, we find few African names on the inspection lists. Except for an occasional Cudjo or Mingo, most slaves have English names. Perhaps this represents a demarcation line between those slaves who decided to cast their lot with the British and less assimilated, African-born slaves, who remained in the swamps and woods of coastal Carolina and Georgia, becoming part of the groups that plagued the region after the War for Independence.

Among those who took refuge with the British in New York was Boston King. Although King was the son of favored slaves on the Waring
• [567] plantations in the Sea Island region, this was not a mitigating factor in his bondage. He was apprenticed to a carpenter at sixteen who was a cruel man, and King "suffered many hardships." On one occasion he was falsely accused of stealing nails. "For this offense," wrote King, "I was beat and tortured most cruelly, and was laid up three weeks before I was able to do any work." King's owner's objections and his threats to break the apprentice agreement led to fairer treatment for a time. But another incident occurred for which the young man anticipated "severest punishment." It was 1780, and the war between Britain and the colonies provided the safety valve King needed. Though "much grieved at first," to reside among strangers, King nevertheless "determined to go to Charles-Town and throw myself into the hands of the English," who received him "readily."[14]

For the first time Boston King "began to feel the happiness of liberty." Despite many dangerous exploits that year, as well as a bout with smallpox, King managed to stay in British service and joined the crew of a man-of-war bound for New York in 1781. His adventures and hardships continued, culminating in capture by Americans while serving on a British pilot boat. King was taken to New Brunswick, and though well-treated, he longed for the freedom he had briefly known with the Brit-

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of the cotton gin. On the Sea Islands indigo planters marked time and clung to their slaves, although their new relationship with Great Britain cut off their monopoly of indigo profits. Shortly, a new commodity, sea island cotton, proved to be a vastly profitable substitute for indigo. There was never a question as to whether or not slavery would survive in South Carolina and Georgia.[18]

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Postwar South Carolina settled back into a system of slavery which was unbending in its oppression. Signs of brutality and harshness were clearly visible. One 1785 traveler was awestruck by the natural beauty of the state, but also mused on how quickly "heaven's best gifts" were forgotten, "as well as the bountiful giver." Upon visiting a structure jocosely referred to as the "sugar house," the observer was repulsed by what he saw. Here Charleston slaves were punished. The place contained "dreadful machinery" on which slaves were confined and suspended. "I marked the scourge which was tinged with human blood and other apparatus of more than savage barbarity." More revolting than the "machinery" said the observer, was the "viewing bench" designed for "such spectators as chose to regale themselves with a view of the agony of suffering humanity." How was it possible, wondered the traveler, that "a people who have just risen up from the struggles of virtue and liberty should be so insensible of their inestimable blessings . . . as to consign to sining and dispair creatures like themselves and to triumph in their destress." Another example comes from Georgia. Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush noted that on the Sea Island plantations of Pierce Butler, the overseer, Mr. Mitchell, whipped slaves "til they laughed."—"Pain," said Rush, "changed to pleasure."[19]

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Whatever mechanisms of escapism prompted this "hysterical" reaction to whipping, it is doubtful that pain was turning to pleasure as the usually sensitive Dr. Rush believed. But the statement represents more than an ignorant comment about an oppressive system, since the incident took place on a Butler plantation. This latter fact demonstrates the limitations inherent in viewing bondage from what may seem to be a redeeming ideology—paternalism. While Butler himself can probably be considered as close to any planter in representing "paternalism," this only reveals the inadequacy of the term in describing master-slave relationships. He was known for buying slaves in family units and for trying to keep them together on his plantations. He was also remembered by his old house slaves for having been a caring master. But Butler was often absent, and

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175 with an eye toward profit to support his elegant Philadelphia life-style,
•567 he hired hard-driving overseers and gave them free reign in his absence. His heirs continued to manage the estates in this way, and just before the Civil War, many "faithful" Butler slaves were sold to maintain that life-style.[20]

175 The postwar runaway situation among the slaves in the country and cities created alarm. In rural areas maroon groups were strengthened by the war with Britain. Slaves who aided the British in the siege of Savannah fled after their allies lost the war and maroons lost their hope of freedom. After the war, campaigns against maroons were conducted by the South Carolina and Georgia militias. The situation was discussed in both states' legislative bodies. Major Pierce Butler frequently expressed anxiety over maroon groups, and in 1789 noted that his island plantations were threatened from two sources—Indians and groups of runaway slaves, both of which were aided by the Spanish. It was, he wrote, "such an alarming and serious a nature as to threaten . . . ruin and depopulation unless timely protected by Congress." He proposed making war on the Creeks, taking Florida from the Spanish, and sending federal troops to combat slave maroon problems. He and other elected officials from his region "sounded" the new national Congress on the issue. But the new government was too engaged in more "pressing" business. These groups of fugitives, sometimes aided by the Spanish, remained part of the Lowcountry landscape even in the vicinity of Charleston. Some could be linked to the wartime period. In one 1786 account a militia expedition attacked a band of about one hundred fugitives who had sheltered on "Belleisle Island, about 17 or 18 miles up Savannah River." The band had boldly committed robberies on neighboring plantations. The first attempt to dislodge the group failed although several fugitives were killed, and four whites wounded. That same evening the whites were reinforced and continued their assault, "but the Negroes came down in such numbers" that it was decided to return to the boats. The fugitives attempted to cut off this route, "but were prevented by Lieutenant Elfe of the artillery," whose company discharged grape shot, killing or wounding several as evidenced by the amount of blood seen afterwards in the place where the shot was aimed. Several days later, after the fugitives had abandoned the scene, "General Jackson" went to the Island and destroyed the provisions, canoes, and boats. He also burned their homes

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and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 533 539

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175 spiritual state. While slave labor produced "the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and all the superfluities we possess," they received "nothing equivalent." On the contrary, wrote Bryan, "we keep from them the key of knowledge, so that their bodies and souls perish together in our service."[37]

If Christian instruction among slaves languished in supposedly liberal coastal Georgia, in coastal South Carolina it was deplorable among many Baptists whose attachment to the former preachings of George Whitefield stopped short of missionary work among the slave masses. Baptists were interested in extending the faith, as evidenced by how quickly they spread to the coastal and upcountry frontier. But this evangelical zeal did not extend to the general slave population. Early Sea Island Baptists [569] were involved in protecting slavery, consolidating property, and maintaining a money crop. Like Episcopalians, they viewed efforts of spiritual uplift among masses of slaves as dangerous and antagonistic to economic interests.

175 The War for Independence did much to unsettle growth in the Sea 799 Island region. Once the war ended the people engaged in reconstructing their society and reconstituting their economic priorities. Little time was spent on contemplation of their souls. In 1792, Matthew Tate, a friend of Benjamin Rush and an Episcopalian minister, became rector at St. Helena Church in Beaufort. The spiritual life was low according to Tate, who was himself primarily interested in economic advantage. Since there was no other Episcopal clergyman for 40 miles, Tate boasted of the money to be made from conducting marriages and funerals. Also the availability of single, preferably wealthy widows was a notable concern of the rector's.[38] Given such pecuniary preoccupations on the part of ministers it is understandable that the state of Christianity suffered.

175 Religion did not assume a prominent role in the lives of either Baptists 569 or Episcopalians in the coastal and Sea Islands region. Indigo, cotton, rice, slaves, and a well-planned social calendar received highest consideration. In 1766 a Philadelphian, John Bartram, visited the coastal and Sea Island regions of South Carolina and Georgia. Even at this early stage of development a certain affluence was observed. Bartram wrote in his diary that the "best inhabitants" had great farms distanced from the seacoast towns. On the farms "they keep numerous Negro slaves, who are closely employed in cultivating the ground, or sowing plank, or looking after their stock for maintenance of their masters." The farms were

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39] 175 567

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that: [162]

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41] 175 567

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries 175 567 794 177

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175 and a tower, a first indication of a notable black membership at this
567 Island church. In 1819, the Euhaw Church reported a membership of
794 "18 Whites and 4 Colored," and the church at Black Swamp had thirty white and one hundred black members.[42]

Some slaves, during the "Second Great Awakening," beginning around
175 1800, were exposed to Christianity in Baptist churches. Often blacks
567 were "converted" when no whites came forth. In 1800, Richard Furman
797 of Charleston wrote to a Philadelphia Baptist minister of the success the new minister at Euhaw Church was experiencing. In nine months, "Mr Cook" had "baptized about twenty persons." Most of them "are Negroes."[43] This is a very small number, but nonetheless demonstrates that actual black membership does not tell the whole story. Obviously blacks were baptized in many instances without being given church membership. While this demonstrates black exposure to Christianity, it also illustrates the paucity of "Christian" instruction.

175 Even the religious revitalization that began in the North after the War of 1812 and spread to some parts of the South, was not greatly effective in the Carolina Lowcountry. In 1821, a long-term visitor from Connecticut living in Robertville wrote:

> The Religious state of things here it is hoped is improving. A few are enquiring "What they Shall do to be saved" . . . we who have been accustomed to having ministers settled in every village must feel the dearth of ministers in this part of our country where the toilers are ripe for the harvest and seem only to want Faithful Laborers in the vineyard. . . . The inhabitants of this place are all connected by inter-marriages, and I am afraid are very wordly minded and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than the rise and progress of religion.[44]

Although Baptists had no national association, local organizations exemplify how negligible black membership was in white churches. By 1806 there were 130 Baptist churches in South Carolina, most of which were in the upcountry. Communicants totaled 10,560, 3,500 of whom were reportedly black. Sixteen years later, according to the 1822 South Carolina Baptist Convention, the number of black Baptists had not greatly increased. The Baptist Church at Charleston had a black membership large enough to allow for separate meetings with "proper" regulations by 1819. It is questionable how many of the total black church membership was made up of slaves. In the case of the Charleston Baptist Church's black membership, the majority of the congregations were free. Yet an

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eyes may be opened." Nevertheless, missionaries increased their efforts yearly and other denominations applauded the undertaking. In 1838 an interdenominational group of influential clergymen met under the auspices of the Methodist Missionary Society and asserted their growing concern and commitment to slave conversion. They agreed that areas of the large cotton and rice plantations along the sea coast from the Savannah to the Pee Dee rivers in Georgia and South Carolina would receive the bulk of attention. In most of the state, churches existed in nearly every area, but the group admitted that even there, accommodations for blacks were insufficient. However, at least no one could say, "Negroes of the neighborhood are without the gospel." Such was not the case "on the Sea Islands, and in the delta of the rivers, where the Negroes are most numerous." These thousands had no churches accessible to them, and the interdenominational group confessed, "they are as destitute as if they were not inhabitants of a Christian land." The plantation missions were undertaken for the benefit of these slaves.[20]

Southern churches and seminaries were not long in taking note of the movement. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, as well as Methodists preached sermons on the benefits of the enterprise. Gradually, some planters, convinced of the desirability of Christian instruction, publicly declared their approval at agricultural meetings and in agricultural journals. Denominational newspapers also kept up arguments in favor of religious instruction. William Capers prepared a short catechism for the missionaries' use in instructing slaves. Arguments of appeal rarely varied. Although the interest of the plantation was preemptory, the security of the country and saving of black souls were also loudly proclaimed. The 1830s was a period of persuasion and promotion of Christian proselytizing, with the Methodist church directing the campaign and receiving widespread if not unified support from a number of quarters. In the words of one church association spokesman, discussing conditions in South Carolina and Georgia during this period, "The religious instruction of our slave population, entirely suspended in some parts of the country, through the lamentable interference of abolition fanatics, has proceeded with almost unabated diligence and steadiness of purpose."[21]

In the Sea Island region south of Charleston, Methodist missionaries acquired early access to some plantations. Two missionaries, George W. Moore and Thomas D. Turpin, arrived in 1833. Moore's appointment included Beaufort and the surrounding islands. His first charge consisted

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175 of two plantations and two preaching appointments in Beaufort (attended
797 by slaves from several plantations), six plantations on Paris Island, and
one plantation on each of the five remaining islands around Beaufort.
567 Turpin's appointment in the Beaufort District, called the May and New River Mission, included Hilton Head, Bull's and Dawfuskie Islands, and the mainland between the May and New Rivers.[22]

The most successful method of gaining permission to evangelize slaves involved having a sympathetic local planter approach fellow slaveholders on behalf of the missionaries. In the Sea Islands Methodists were actively supported by William E. Baynard. The Baynard family were large slaveholders with plantation interests on Hilton Head and Edisto Islands as well as on the mainland. Baynard was a frequent intermediary between planters and missionaries. Writing to him in 1833, one Hilton Head planter expressed his confidence in the cause:

> I am anxious that the mission to the colored people in this community be continued . . . that the gospel should be preached to them in their cabins and the Scriptures explained in such a plain and simple manner that they may fully understand what true religion is.[23]

Baynard was not always so successful. While some slaveholders simply refused to allow missionaries on their plantations, others gave the experiment a try but found "results" discouraging. For example, William Pope, Sr., Baptist patriarch of a Sea Island family who owned the largest amount of aggregate acreage on St. Helena, Dawfuskie, and Hilton Head, answered Baynard's inquiry of 1834 in the negative. Pope felt that Thomas Turpin, sent the previous year, had gained few converts. He wrote:

> If I am not deceived one or two of them [the slaves] will long remember him with gratitude . . . but am inclined to think he has not met with decided success . . . he has had to encounter some difficulty, discouragements and prejudices which he has not been able to fully overcome—tho' he has certainly laboured faithfully, and been zealous and diligent in the discharge of his duty.

Pope concluded his letter by stating that the missionary's services would be discontinued since the "means and opportunities" of religious instruction had improved; there were "now two churches on this Island [Hilton Head] in which there is service at least twice a month."[24]

There appeared to be a consensus among certain planters in the May and New River Mission to withhold cooperation from Turpin and the Methodists. James Sealy, also a planter on Hilton Head Island, wrote to

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Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he "could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming.

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary, "these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin:

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats belonged to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gullahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident,

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since this regulation took place within a religious context, ostensibly under the rubric of Christianity. High and low seats in Gullah society assumed a meaning different from African Poro-Sande society. But the function of regulation and community control was still present. The Gullahs reserved the "low seat" for those who betrayed community interests by divulging "the secret of stealing," undoubtedly from the master. This demonstrates the seriousness of solidarity among the people. Thus picking up the benne seed was reserved for the worst of crimes "according to their view of the crime." While the Methodist missionary believed the slaves had incorrect ideas about who should be punished, slaves themselves were using an internal logic with little reference to Protestant conceptions of sin. This Gullah interpretation of sin was at variance with their Christian instruction. A sense of contrition for the safety and peace of the plantation or out of fear of the Christian God was not a motivating issue. For the Gullahs, moral guilt fell on those who forsook socioreligious authority and loyalty in the slave quarters. The presence and influence of black leadership was also revealed as the "punishments" were administered by a "priest." This implies no relationship to the Christian church to which some of the slaves belonged. Missionary Turpin believed the rites strangely akin to Catholicism. Obviously they were not. But in West Africa Poro-Sande priests and priestesses were responsible for administering justice and punishment. Thus this role had some cultural-historical continuity. Slaves saw nothing incongruous about adopting elements of Christian religion and adapting those to aspects of their traditional spiritual heritage still serviceable in the New World setting.

The penance for the "sin" of divulging the secret of stealing was no brief activity, but a rather trying feat. A "gentleman" residing on Bull's Island informed Turpin that an individual usually could not pick up all the scattered benne seeds in one night. And "if it was not done in one night they had to continue until they did it." Thus while the benne seed ritual was not comparable in degree to African punishments instituted by the Poro Council for community crimes, there is a symbolic reference. While representing a form of censure for erring members, it was not the way "Christianized" slaves were expected to interpret the concept of "sin." Turpin stated in his report that having to contend with "all this superstition and ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism," he had added few church members. Nor, reported Turpin,

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did he strive to do so, "but rather . . . to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict."[28]

Planters in the May and New River Mission region were offended by statements implying that they tolerated practices such as the one Turpin discussed. Sea Island Baptists felt under attack for not instructing black converts in "true" principles of Christianity and for baptizing slaves without scrutinizing their religious life. Turpin was smarting from the cold reception he received from planters. Turpin did in fact infer that some planters were aware of and permitted un-Christian practices among slaves baptized as Baptists. It was after all a "gentleman" of the Island who had explained to Turpin the workings of the benne seed penance he had observed. Methodist unpopularity among Sea Island planters was recognized at the Missionary Society Headquarters. Soon after the report was circulated, Turpin was removed from the May and New River Mission, and assigned to the John and Wadmalaw Islands Mission in the Charleston District. Turpin insisted, however, that he did not intend to discredit the planters. Nor, he said, did he mean that planters knowingly sanctioned "corrupt" practices among the slaves. Turpin merely wished to point out how irreligious so-called converted slaves were. Through the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, he made a somewhat cynical apology, which undoubtedly did little to assuage the ire of Sea Island planters:

> But it [the report] appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons, notwithstanding though, it has been said that I have "shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it was hit the Episcopalians." If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended, I feel it my duty to heal the wound.[29]

Turpin had indeed offended the planters, especially his comments on the slaves' lack of "truly religious" training, despite Baptist church membership. He believed that the "converted" slaves made a mockery of Christianity. These slaves who "scarcely ever saw the pastor" of their church were members of the First African Church in Savannah. Andrew Bryan's nephew, Andrew Marshall, was the pastor. In 1830, church membership was 2,417. Although a black church, whites were responsible for control and for the conduct of its members. Whites came to the

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The "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" discussed by Coburn came from two sources. First, Gullah leaders continued to exert influence and they resented as well as resisted supersedence of their authority. Secondly, a growing number of slaves professed affiliation with Baptists of the region. Many missionaries complained that these alleged black Baptists were unfamiliar with Christian doctrines. Thus from the missionaries' point of view, the complexity was actually three-tiered: a powerful black leadership holding sway through beliefs and practices apart from Protestantism, a conflict with black "professors of the faith" whom missionaries considered mere "pretenders," and both problems compounded by the skepticism of Baptist and Episcopalian slaveholders. The missionaries admitted that religious instruction under such circumstances was a formidable task.[34]

Methodist Sea Island missionary activity experienced various periods of growth and decline. Methodism was persistent, but there was never a massive moment into the church on the part of the Gullahs. By 1839, the May and New River Mission had been discontinued and the limited number of converts absorbed by the Beaufort and Savannah River organizaiton. Also by 1839 Methodists created a new mission in the Beaufort district, called Pocotaligo, and another in the Charleston district called Edisto Island Mission, including Jehossee and Fenwick Islands. Edisto was by far the most prosperous of the Sea Island missions. By 1842 Beaufort Mission embraced thirty plantations but contained only 310 members, with 370 children under instruction. The Pocotaligo missionary ministered at nine plantations, had 295 church members, and 156 children under catechetical instruction. Progress was slow in these areas compared to other missions north of Charleston and in the upcountry. For example, the North Santee Mission embraced only fifteen plantations but had 528 church members and the Black and Pee Dee Rivers Mission covered twenty-five plantations with 1,180 church members. By the time of national division within the Methodist church in 1844, the Beaufort Mission had dropped to twenty plantation appointments, and Pocotaligo still served only nine. The Edisto Mission however, maintained steady progress.[35]

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Figures relating to church membership are not impressive considering the thousands of slaves in the coastal and Sea Island region. Still, Methodist missionaries remained active there until 1861, even after it became apparent that Baptist influence would predominate. Not only were white

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175 Baptists already in the area, but many were large slaveholders. Hence
56 Baptists had the power to control the type of contact, religious or other-
797 wise, to which slaves were exposed. Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention in 1844–45 gave a new impetus to the movement of slave conversion. But by then Methodist missionaries were employed mainly by Episcopalian Sea Island planters. In 1844, island appointments south of Charleston included
175 Port Royal, Paris, Dawtaw, Coosa, Ladies, and Beaufort. However, even
797 during these years, missionaries indicated that the "spiritual state was not encouraging." By 1855, Sea Island appointments had dwindled to preaching places only on Ladies and Paris Islands, and a tiny Methodist chapel erected in Beaufort. On the mainland around the Sea islands, Beaufort Mission continued to increase in terms of plantations served and preaching appointments. Yet even here it was clear that while Methodists seemingly provided Gullahs with their first organized exposure to the doctrines of Christianity, they rarely gained a large number of new or lasting converts for their own denomination as occurred in other regions of the state.[36] Nevertheless, despite the distrust manifested by a number of Lowcountry and Sea Island planters, and the problems with black leadership, Methodism left its impact on these slaves who ultimately adopted the Baptist faith.

### *The Response*

175 Gullah response to Methodism is partly related to the nature of slavery
56 in the Lowcountry. Plantation bondage in the Sea Islands and coastal
797 regions of South Carolina and Georgia was a complex phenomenon. Similar to the West Indies, it contributed to growth and development of cultural autonomy among the slaves because visible aspects of Africanity could remain. At the same time, however, the region proved ultimately to be fruitful ground to plant seeds of Christianity among the slaves. One finds little of the paternalism which some historians claim was the determining ideology in the relationship between master and slave. Sea Island slavery was generally absentee. Planters might have several tracts of land on one island, as did the large Fripp family, or have holdings in several regions of the coast, as did the Popes, Fullers, Jenkinses, and Butlers. The real family home was usually in Beaufort, Charleston, or Savannah, in some cases as far away as Philadelphia, Newport, or En-

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gland. Industrious masters might remain near their plantations during the "sickly season" by building homes on a high bluff. From these retreats, such as St. Helenaville, they directed plantation affairs through their drivers and overseers. The enormous black population working in the fields rarely saw a white except for overseers and their families, or through brief sometimes seasonal contact with slave masters.[17]

Bondspeople were under the direct supervision of black drivers who might report to a head driver, also a black man. Slaves recognized these supervisors' powerful position as coming from an outside oppressive force. The Gullahs had little affection or even genuine respect for black drivers. Although exceptions existed, the interests of slave drivers and those of the slave community were inimical. Francis Kemble, an English resident on the Georgia Sea Island plantations of her husband Pierce Butler, described drivers in their role:

> At the upper end of the row of houses, and nearest to the overseer's residence, is the hut of the head driver . . . The negroes, . . . are divided into troops or gangs, . . . at the head of each gang is a driver, who stands over them, whip in hand, while they perform their daily task, who renders an account of each individual slave and his work every evening to the overseer, and receives from him directions for their next day's task. Each driver is allowed to inflict a dozen lashes upon any refractory slave in the field, and at the time of the offense.[18]

Laura M. Towne, a Philadelphia osteopath who went to the Sea Islands as part of the Port Royal experiment, observed the Gullahs' attitude toward slave drivers. Towne noted that the people complained of one driver in particular named Gabriel. " 'How, boys,' " he answered, " 'You know I cut and slash you for ole Massa. Ain't you know I no do dat Massa do worse.' " The men smirked at him scornfully. Certainly the black drivers' position was unenviable. They did not usually seek the role, yet were bound to do the master's bidding or face punishment themselves. Nevertheless, antipathy toward black drivers was observed on many occasions. Yankee cotton agent, Edward Philbrick, stated that their position over the masses of slaves did not seem to derive from intelligence or respect. As soon as the artificial element of force was removed by masters and overseers fleeing, "these black foremen generally dropped back to the level from which they had been temporarily raised." They had no useful authority over the slaves and attempts to reinstate them in the management of crops "generally met with singular failure." Antebellum Methodist missionaries stated the slaves believed drivers would

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175 never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver
•567 during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite
(533) secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":
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> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
> O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
> O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo
567 cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton
248 culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton ex-
461 tracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

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staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plantation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate: 175 567 248 461

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fatiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late September through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42] 175 567 248 461 462

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 17 567 248 461

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17 that cotton did not lie around or be stored after picking since too much
•567 exposure injured the product. Some overseers worked the slaves at night
248 and on Sundays. The rawness and wetness of the weather did not deter
461 managers and planters from ordering all "available" hands out to the fields. Though work in the gin house was considered "light" work, this "cotton barn" offered little relief from cold and dampness. The air inside was so unhealthy that slaves preferred the openness of the fields. Workers breathed flying lint and dust during the long hours as they labored in standing positions.[43]

17 The labor had a telling effect on the slave women's physical health. A
567 callous attitude developed toward needs of pregnant women, postpartum illnesses, infant care, exhaustion and exposure to inclement weather. Bondswoman Susannah, in relating to Laura Towne, the tragedy of having all three of her living sons sold away, mentioned that she had actually had twenty-two pregnancies. Another defiant Gullah woman who worked in the house was beaten frequently by order of the mistress and retaliated by bringing "not one nigger" to Maussa. Another woman was buried up to her neck in earth as punishment, a few days after she had given birth to a stillborn child. Laura Towne, who saw signs of illtreatment, recorded various accounts:

> On this place, the Oaks, Loretta showed me her back, arms and breasts today. In many places there were ridges as high and long as my little finger and everywhere marks of the whip. She said that her children had been killed in her by whipping. She says it was because when "heavy with child," she could not do the full task of a field hand. I suspect also being rather apt to resist and rather smart in speaking her mind, poor thing. She has suffered terribly and it is no wonder that she is more indifferent about her clothes and house. . . . She says this was "de cruelest place."

Loretta lived on the plantation of Daniel Pope, a member of the Sea Island Baptist "aristocracy" who "gave no shoes, salt, molasses, nor Sunday clothes . . . neither would he allow the field hands any meat, nor permit them to raise pigs." In the year before the Civil War Pope determined to make the people work as much as possible, "so he kept them in the field from morning till night and lashed them every day."[44]

Francis Kemble noted on her visit to the Georgia Sea Islands that the principal hardships fell to the lot of the women. She wrote of her first visit to the "Infirmary":

> Women lay prostrate on the floor, without bed, mattress or pillow, buried in tattered and filthy blankets. . . . I stood in the midst of them, perfectly unable

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to speak. . . . Here lay women expecting every hour the terrors and agony of childbirth, others who were groaning over the anguish . . . of miscarriages—here lay some burning with fever, others chilled with cold and aching rheumatism on the hard cold ground, the draughts and dampness of the atmosphere increasing their sufferings, and dirt, noise, and stench, and every aggravation of which sickness is capable, combined in their condition.[45]

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Conditions among the female population affected Kemble deeply. She spent much time trying to alleviate deprivation and discomfort. For her concern she faced the resentment of Pierce Butler, who considered her interfering with plantation "discipline." An antislavery Englishwoman, Kemble claimed she married Butler without knowledge of his human property. Their divergent views caused dissension between them. On one occasion, Kemble wrote of Butler's reaction to the petition of a group of slave women:

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Mr. _____ was called out this evening to listen to a complaint of overwork from a gang of pregnant women. I did not stay to listen to the details of their petition, for I am unable to command myself on such occasions and Mr. _____ seemed positively degraded in my eyes as he stood enforcing upon these women the necessity of their fulfilling their appointed tasks . . . as a *duty*.[46]

The conditions of labor under the "peculiar institution" hindered longevity and a natural increase in birth rate survival among the slaves. Both races paid in different ways because cotton planters did not usually attend to their estates personally, and because they too often judged managerial quality by the magnitude of cotton profits. But illegal imports still contributed to the increase in slaves. The last slave vessel to arrive in the Sea Islands, the ship *Wanderer*, was in 1858. Sea Island planters had opposed reopening the slave trade in South Carolina in 1803, apparently because it might have decreased market value of their own slaves at a time when these planters were economically vulnerable. However, after the close of the African trade to North America in 1807, and the rise of Sea Island cotton, planters engaged in smuggling. Illegal importations continued to contribute to the native African population.[47] Even more significantly, many American-born slaves were only one or two generations from African ethnicity, because many were imported into the Sea Islands during the last two decades before the War of Independence.

Thus Methodist missionaries found very oppressed but tightly knit communities of African-Americans still clinging to patterns of social behavior and modes of worship, largely a mystery to whites, having devel-

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oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840, "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccustomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

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> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan'?*" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

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Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539]

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[65]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual:

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On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a

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175 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poi-
764 gnant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas
533 Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volun-
teers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

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I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many
771 accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubt-
797 edly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so
•567 little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[68] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

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Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

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The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

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17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

175 797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 [795] Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 • 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

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Even some time after 1831, general Baptist concern for the spiritual well-being of their slaves was limited. Only a small number of churches showed significant increases in church membership in about a ten-year period following the revival. This gradual progression itself was unique to older Sea Island churches. Leading Baptists stimulated to "duty" by the "revival spirit," and mindful of the currents affecting church and state nationally, attempted to generate more Christianizing activity through their influence in the Savannah River Baptist Association. In 1832 the Association formed a committee to seek funds from member churches to hire Baptist missionaries for the slaves. Since this effort was a slow process, the Association further recommended that ministers devote a certain part of their time exclusively to the slaves. The organization went on record as "feeling a deep interest for the spiritual improvement of our colored population, who have hitherto been neglected."[4]

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The committee was composed of large slaveholders, many of whom were also deacons or pastors of the more prosperous churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, Black Swamp, Hilton Head, and Euhaw. These congregations had comparatively large black memberships, and the committee members were known for their "good works" in general and for the interest they took in converting their own slaves. But the resolutions expressed more of the committee's own sentiments and personal concern than a real plan of action. Baptist congregations were autonomous, and slaveholders in the Sea Island region resisted efforts of individuals in the denomination to create a Christian instruction movement. For a variety of reasons, Baptist efforts at slave conversion met with some success where it existed. But if measured in terms of church membership and frequency of exposure, such endeavors, were not extensive.[5]

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About a third of South Carolina's Baptist laymen and two-fifths of the ministers were slaveholders. Baptists in the Sea Island region, the most numerous sect since 1820, counted the wealthiest and largest slaveholders among its numbers. Consequently, antislavery sentiments were never expressed there despite early debates elsewhere in the South. On the contrary, the official opinion of South Carolina Baptists was expressed in 1822 following the Vesey Conspiracy, by Richard Furman of Charleston. "Slavery," wrote Furman, "was clearly established in the Holy Scriptures by both precept and example."[6]

Nevertheless, South Carolina Baptists confronted strong abolitionist sentiment from church members in other regions. As with Methodists, the controversy dominated national meetings in the 1830s. Abolitionists'

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175 primary target was Baptist home and foreign missions. There antislavery
797 elements labored to obtain official condemnation of their Southern breth-
ren not only for slaveholding but for hypocrisy in attempting to spread
•567 Christianity domestically and abroad while ignoring their own bonds-people. Accusations prompted some prestigious Baptists to encourage more attentiveness to slave conversion. However, abolitionist recriminations also infuriated Southern congregations. Sea Island Baptists raged over the presence of abolitionist-oriented home and foreign mission "agents." They also denounced abolitionist dissemination of religious newspapers. One such newspaper, *The Christian Reflector*, which argued against a scriptural interpretation of slavery, was sent to Sea Island churches. Not all Northern Baptists were antislavery. Even some of those who were did not advocate abolition, nor propose interference with slavery. Yet the situation was perceived as threatening in the Lowcountry, and it was impossible to procure a consensus on instruction from congregations whose only tie with the regional association was voluntary. Yet, larger churches continued to scrutinize and contemplate the situation. In 1837 further proclamations were used to stir congregations into activity. The Euhaw Church representatives spoke out on the "spiritual destitution of our colored population," and urged the Association to act. The committee previously formed in 1832 had apparently met with little success, and offered three resolutions on the issue. First, emphasizing the duty of ministers to pay "especial attention" to the slaves' spiritual condition. Second, that the "Domestic Missionary" preach to slaves whenever an "opportunity may be offered him." Third, that the General Committee consider the subject and adopt measures to "best secure to our colored population spiritual instruction."[7]

175 Clearly no real commitment was as yet outlined. A few individual churches were already engaging in evangelism among the slaves and attempting to persuade others. The message was one of urging a sense of responsibility, since the Savannah River Baptist Association lacked power to bind churches to a strong general policy. the Association's resources allowed them to employ one missionary, but mainly to serve whites. He ordained officers, preached at the various established churches with no regular ministers, generally superintended the constitution of new churches, and preached to "destitute" whites. Although not specifically precluded from preaching to slaves, the missionary's other extensive obligations prevented his going to plantations where he was needed or ac-

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in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, long-time residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

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day worship as well as during the week. Slaves attending Beaufort Church were sometimes instructed by their own masters who were also prominent church elders. Aside from scripture, church discipline and rules of conduct were emphasized.[25]

As a Sea Island planter and a favorite son of the community, Fuller could combat some resistance to religious instruction of the slaves. By 1840 he had organized a system of preaching places on the Islands where he or a member of his staff made periodic appearances. Establishment of these preaching stations furthered the Baptist cause, leading to "conversion" of many plantation slaves. While pastor of Beaufort Church, Fuller was respected among the whites as a sincere, inspiring, and effective minister. He was also popular with the Gullahs. Fuller was one of the very few planters who openly denounced the separation of families. He considered this morally wrong and against biblical law. He refused to sell or divide his bondspeople, an important consideration to black people accustomed to seeing "pious" planters disregard slaves' familial ties at a moment's notice. In addition to observing (like a true patriarch) this fundamental principle of humanity, Fuller adopted an evangelical style of preaching said to be filled with "earnestness, fire and melting pathos." An associate who often heard Fuller preach wrote:

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> His whole mien was imposing. When he rose to address a congregation, his very attitude was that of a man conscious at once that he had a most important message to deliver, and that he had the capacity to deliver it worthily. . . . His voice was singularly sweet and of great compassion and managed with such exquisite skill, that his softest whispers were distinctly heard in the remotest parts of a crowded congregation; while his loudest tones did not jar upon the ears of those nearest the speaker. His gestures were always graceful. . . . He subdued others, because, in the loftiest flights of his imagination and the deepest feelings of his heart, he was master of himself.[26]

Apparently a skillful and arousing speaker, Fuller captured the imagination of the bondspeople, something few white preachers could do. The Gullahs also viewed him as a kind and sensitive man whose "good works" were equal to his "faith." No doubt these considerations explain the eagerness with which he was received and accepted by the Gullahs as a preacher and for the warmth with which they remembered him to the Northern missionaries during the course of the Civil War. The Gullahs even created a stanza for Fuller in one of their most revered spirituals: "Massa Fuller on de Tree ob Life, Roll, Jordan, Roll."

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175 After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into
•567 Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in
797 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association mission-
ary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Bea-
[795] ker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the
795 largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May
794 River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District
[162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29]
[567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

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In the latter and generally most vigorous period of the movement for Christian instruction from 1845 to 1861, Baptist involvement continued to center in areas where evangelizing efforts were already in progress, such as the Sea Islands. Although several Lowcountry churches did increase their black membership during the period, such augmentation was numerically insignificant. Most membership returns submitted to the Savannah River Baptist Association had racial designations by 1848. These reports indicate that a few individual Sea Island churches maintained fairly large memberships and Beaufort Church had unusual increases. But the majority of Baptist churches in the Lowcountry south of Charleston seemed to fall short of the goal of religious conversion of bondspeople. Actually neither Sea Island Baptists, Baptist missionaries, nor lukewarm Baptist churches adequately "served the spiritual needs" of so large a black population. In 1859, as civil conflict approached, the total black membership of the Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association was not yet 7,000.[30] In some ways these figures are unimpressive, but they nevertheless demonstrate black exposure to Christianity through Baptist efforts. We can also surmise that black church members were the best conduits of the faith in the slave quarters. When this is considered, Baptist influence is even more manifest, for few Gullahs actually joined the Methodist church. Most Gullahs "converted to Christianity" or even adherents of it accepted the denomination of their masters, a preference that continued even after bondage. This raises questions about the nature of Baptist activity among the Gullahs, and why the denomination of slaveholders so strongly appealed to slaves.

Superficially, Lowcountry planters appear to represent "paternalism" par excellence. Those "young and refined" citizens of the Sea Island communities who claimed Daniel Baker for their spiritual patron included such men as C. C. Pinckney, William H. Barnwell, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Stephen Elliott, and Richard Fuller. These men represented the quintessence of South Carolina Lowcountry aristocracy, dominating landholdings and counting their slaves by the hundreds. Beaufort was the chief place of residence for most Baptist planters. But some of the stauncher Baptists such as the Lawtons, Robertses, Bosticks, and Nortons shunned "iniquitous" recreations offered by the Sea Island resort town and created their own manorial splendor at Robertville, Lawtonville, and Gillisonville. These planters reportedly excelled in erudition

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cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo.

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### *"Christian" Slaves*

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave:

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> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading

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to the slave galleries be moved to the outside so that the two races would not have to pass each other, or use the same entrance when they met to worship God in common.[17] One can thus imagine the disdain that "gentle" white folk felt at being in close quarters with field slaves.

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Some whites considered it a dangerous practice to allow slaves to leave plantations to attend church no matter what their status. Thomas Fuller, Episcopalian brother of the venerable Richard, reported on the state of religious instruction at the Charleston Meeting. Fuller complained that the habit of black church members descending upon the town of Beaufort was deplorable:

> Removed as so large a number are, every Sunday from the control and discipline of the plantation, and impossible as it is for the Church to know and control their conduct, they use their liberty in ways and for purposes adverse to their morals. Nothing seems to me more essential in order to their becoming a religious people, than that they be subjected to the supervision of the plantation, of the minister of a Church, that will investigate and correct their wrong views and bad habits. . . . It is owing, I think, to the want of religious instruction and discipline on the plantations, that the influence of religious instruction and the spirit of subordination among the negroes is so little seen and felt.[18]

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Baptist planters themselves recognized and attempted to confront these problems. As church memberships increased, a means of superintending the widespread congregation and keeping slaves on the plantations was needed. Black church members were organized into plantation associations under the jurisdiction of the church.

These "black societies" were the nucleus of the Gullah socioreligious community. They existed even before preaching stations were established and were reportedly religious bodies which slaves entered into voluntarily, although the nature and origin of these societies was unknown. Methodist missionaries found them already organized and a hindrance to Methodist authority among the slaves, especially when their practices were under the rubric of Christianity. In 1833, John Field, a St. Helena planter, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned to the island. Speaking for himself and "others," Field expressed his disapproval of the societies, and of the slaves' association with the Baptist Church on St. Helena. According to Field, the slaves who joined the church were "almost entirely under the control of Negro leaders." The Methodist missionary's preaching on the island prompted "constant ap-

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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"The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the elders] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

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Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

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Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

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175 he left), and late-coming Baptist missionaries who brought the last surge
•567 of slave baptismal activity in the mid-1850s. Apparently little screening
797 occurred prior to uniting with Baptist churches, except examinations im-
posed upon the slaves by black leadership. Slaves were accepted into the
[795 Church from the societies, and admission was based on a profession of
[794 faith, evidence of "good character" from the slavemaster, and recommen-
dation from the white brother in charge, who relied on intelligence re-
ceived from the black elder.[46]

195 This lack of a meaningful conviction to teach Christianity raises the
567 question of why some slaveholding Baptists accepted such large numbers
795 of slaves into the churches at all. Neither a revival spirit nor Northern
797 agitation fully explain the motivation. But activities of the Church Com-
mittee on Discipline perhaps express the manner in which Baptists ex-
pected Christianity to best serve them as slaveholders. Their change in
attitude reflected the general shift away from paranoia about Christian-
izing slaves. After 1845 many believed that practical Christianity could
work for the slave system. And although the majority of Gullahs had
little or no contact with the Baptist church itself, church members felt
the restraining arm of the faith through the Committee on Discipline.

175 Church discipline is an old concept, dating as far back as the sixteenth
century. Early Baptist discipline was similar to the English Separatists'
1696 "Confessions of Faith," and integral to views of Christian fellow-
ship for believers. This spiritual and communal sense revolved around
creating a "true and orderly gospel church," with members conducting
personal behavior according to Old Testament biblical tenants. Later,
London Baptists' "Confessions of Faith" reflected concern for "order and
discipline," and this was emphasized by their American counterpart, the
Philadelphia Baptist Association, when in 1742 they composed their
confessions and annexed a particular discipline code to it. In 1769 the
Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia model. Not all,
probably not most, American Baptist churches had explicit discipline
references in their confessions although discipline was a reality in the
churches. But Charleston Baptists and their Lowcountry congregational
extensions were products of the Calvinist-Baptist tradition as is reflected
in their patent emphasis on discipline, and in other ways previously dis-
cussed.[47]

Nineteenth-century Southern and frontier evangelical congregations
fostered a sense of community through worship, revivals, camp meet-

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ings, prayer meetings, and discipline. Church discipline kept alive the "heavenly pattern" which each church personified. This "city set on a hill" meted out censure and excommunication regularly to offending members who paled its self-image of purity and piety. As the country expanded, church discipline was used to control the raw excesses of new communities struggling against such "immoralities" as "drinking, fornication, gambling, dueling and profanity." Evangelical churches grew increasingly more powerful and espoused an increasingly conservative theology in the South and perhaps elsewhere. This trend toward religious conservatism was tied, though not exclusively, to political and social developments in the South, most notably to slavery. An obvious manifestation of this was the national polarization of church denominations.[48] In the Lowcountry, another significant and more immediate expression of efforts to protect the existing social and political order through religion is found in the function of discipline committees on plantations. Every Lowcountry church examined for this study with a large black membership had such a committee. The nature of this committee's concern with the slaves' activities reveals how Baptists intended to make Gullahs "good Christians" mainly insofar as Christianity made them better slaves. The work of the Committee on Discipline in the largest Sea Island church amplifies this thesis.

Once attention focused on slave conversion, the most pressing church business was discipline of slave members. The Committee existed previously, but was reorganized and restructured in 1840, and its function broadened. According to the Minutes, the disciplinary body governed behavior of all church members, "both bond and free," but was specifically charged with looking into breaches of conduct committed by bondspeople. This committee of eight brethren investigated a few white cases, mostly involving social lapses. But in the "inquiry and investigation" of slaves, the "Committee on Discipline" had "broad" but "conservative powers."[49]

As with white "brethren in charge" of black societies, prominent Sea Island slaveholders, such as Benjamin Chaplin, Saxby Chaplin, William Fuller, James Fripp, and Edward Fripp dominated discipline of the Gullahs. Furthermore, members of the Discipline Committee might also double as superintendents of a black society. Sea Island planter Benjamin Chaplin, for example, was a member of the disciplinary body and also superintendent of the Beaufort Society. Noted for cruelty to his

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slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

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Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

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> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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17 bility of such an accomplishment, an intense love of family and deep
• 567 attachments to familiar surroundings kept runaways nearby. Perhaps even
181 more than any other slaves in the United States, Gullahs maintained a clan-type kinship community, and in their isolation clung tenaciously to these relationships. This attitude was also expressed toward their plantations. Those Gullahs able to purchase small twenty-acre plots of land during the Port Royal experiment, resisted buying on any plantation other than their "own." They thought "it was as bad as slavery if they had to leave their old homes." Yet as slaves, Gullahs ran away frequently and bad treatment was the leading cause for absence. Treatment was also
17 a recurring theme in Gullah songs, as indicated by this slave worksong
567 related by Sam Polite:
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(539) I wuk in field on Maussa Johnnie Fripp plantation. Sometime we sing w'en we wuk. One song we sing ben go lak dis:

> "Go way, Ole Man
> Go way, Ole Man
> W'ere you bin all day
> If you treat me good
> I'll stay 'till de Judgment day,
> But if you treat me bad,
> I'll sho' to run away."[19]

17 Not all masters were cruel. For example, the Gullahs represented "Capt.
567 John" Fripp as a kind man. Still, his "whipping post" was within twenty feet of the "drawing-room." The tree, "a sprawling Asia-berry," covered with grey moss, "looked wiered enough." "Capt. John" reportedly never "licked" hard nor struck "in the same place twice." Fripp's houseman, Dick, only recalled getting one "hard" flogging, when he watered the old man's garden with seawater. However, his wife, the cruel one, liked "to stand at the window to see the floggings," administered by "Driver Moody," when "Capt. John" was away. Thomas Chaplin of Tombee Plantation was tough enough, and threatened his slaves a great deal. He was also an insensitive master in regard to selling slaves, unable to believe blacks had the same familial loyalty as white people. He wrote in his Journal, "cowhide was all talk with me." But one must take such a comment skeptically since he frequently had his drivers do the flogging. Chaplin was not remembered by his slaves for excessive cruelty nor for kindness.[19]

Rarely could a Sea Island slave boast, as one did, that their backs "stan

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lak white man's," that is, with no marks of the whip. "Talk o' lick um sar?" answered one slave when queried about floggings, "yes, sar, nebber did noffin but lick um sar." He insisted that they were whipped when they didn't work and "when we work, hard lick um all same sar." A "devil" for cruelty was Alviro Fripp who "before he got religion use to cuss and cuss and cuss." But when he joined the Baptist church, he could no longer cuss, "so he used to lick 'em instead." The "richest man on St Helena," Edgar Fripp, was reportedly the meanest, and his temper knew no bounds at "full moon." He also worked his slaves all night in full moon at cotton-picking time. The Gullahs went out of their way to avoid him for if a hat was not tipped quick enough or a bow low enough, Fripp would "lay his horsewhip on them well."[60]

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Of the many cases of harsh treatment and sometimes actual barbarity, few compared with the 1849 incident recorded by Thomas Chaplin in his Journal. Chaplin's neighbor, James Sandiford, was brought before an inquest of planters regarding the death of his slave, Roger. In examining the slaves' remains, Chaplin wrote that "such a shocking sight never before met my eyes." The slave, a born cripple who "used his knees more than his feet," had been instructed, on a "cold and bitter day," to paddle a boat downriver for oysters and then to cut a bundle of mud marsh. Roger, instructed to return before "high water," did not show up until "ebb tide." But he brought back seven baskets of oysters and a small bundle of marsh. "That," commented Chaplin, "was more than the primest of my fellows would have done." But Sandiford gave Roger thirty lashes for not returning sooner, for not cutting more marsh, and for hollering loudly while being flogged for the first two offenses. Sandiford later eavesdropped on a conversation Roger had in the kitchen with another man. Two versions of the exchange were reported. According to the planter, Roger stated that if he had "sound limbs" he would shoot down a white man before he took a flogging. The man to whom Roger spoke denied this, informing the jurors that Roger said "he would turn his back on them if they shot him down," which Chaplin believed was the truth. Neither comment, in Chaplin's opinion, warranted the punishment Roger received:

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For these *crimes*, this man, this demon in human shape, this pretended Christian, member of the Baptist Church, had this poor cripple Negro placed in an open outhouse, the wind blowing through a hundred cracks, his clothes wet to the waist, without a single blanket & in freezing weather, with his back against the

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partition behind him, & fastened on the other side—in this position the poor wretch was left for the night. . . . The wretch [Sandiford] returned to his victim about daylight next morning & found him, as anyone would expect, dead, *choked*, *strangled*, frozen to death, *murdered*.[61]

That same day the jurors reached a verdict—the slave met his death by choking on the chain his master put around his neck, "having slipped from the position in which he was placed." The verdict, Chaplin wrote should have been Roger died from "inhumane treatment," for he not only strangled from trying to disengage himself, hence becoming entangled in the most "shocking position," but was also "stiff dead" from the cold. In Chaplin's "individual" opinion, the act was deliberate, but unpremeditated murder. Whether Chaplin attempted to convince the court of this is unknown. The case, like many such situations was certainly murder, but it behooved slaveholders to protect their position. The "witness" against Sandiford was a slave, the planter was related to at least four of the eight jurors and property rights were supreme in the South. Whatever Chaplin felt in private, his public posture was another matter. Furthermore, five years later, he defended an overseer who killed a runaway slave for stealing watermelons.[62]

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Since Sandiford was a Baptist planter, his conduct came before the Beaufort Church where he held membership. The crime apparently occurred on February 18, 1841, and the inquest was held the next day. However, not until March 31 was the incident was brought to the Beaufort Church's attention according to the Minutes. At that time it was discussed at the "Business Meeting," and Sandiford ordered to appear at its next session. On May 5, after receiving "a letter" from Sandiford, his case was "postponed for further consideration." On June 30, "the case of Brother Sandiford was again postponed," and never mentioned after that time. Sandiford's letter was not part of the Minutes and its contents are unknown. Undoubtedly he defended his actions, and though the case probably made him an unpopular communicant, he was never "disciplined." He eventually sold his property and left the region. But more significant, this rawly violent, not to say un-Christian act went uncensored by the Baptist Church.[63] One can imagine what a stir it caused among the slaves, some of whom probably had sanguine expectations that at least ecclesiastical action would be taken. Such occasions reinforced for slaves the fact that even in matters of "Christian" justice, a double standard applied.

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Thus during the Civil War, observers commented on a "total absence of any trace of feudal affection among these people." Even on supposedly "model" plantations with well-built, neat-appearing cabins like the Smith Estate on St. Helena, slaves related tales of white cruelty and black defiance. One slave who did not salute his master "respectfully enough," was ridden "down and over and left in the road until night." When brought back to his cabin, the man was "more dead than alive." Another man helped his wife finish her task after doing his own. He was ordered to flog his wife but refused. For his "obstinance," slaveholder Smith, a "kind" master, gave the man "500 lashes with his own hand." The slave, previously one of the strongest workers, was "completely broken down." Susannah, the sickly but high spirited seamstress on the Oaks plantation, told Laura Towne she once raised pigs but her harsh, domineering master, Baptist patriarch Daniel Pope, forbade this and threatened to shoot them. "'I don't mean impudence Massa, but you cawn't shoot my hogs. What can I do for my children's winter shoes and our salt.'" Pope's slaves were some of the worse off, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-fed. However, Susannah's mistress, though full of threats and scoldings, never lashed her seamstress. Susannah attributed this good fortune to "my pride and principle." Another bondswoman, Celia, told Towne how "Driver John" abused the people and how she once "clutched him by the throat when he whipped her husband and two children."[64]

Gullahs who took "to de swamps and marshes" usually either returned voluntarily or were caught. Sometimes "patterollers" apprehended Gullahs as they returned from or embarked upon some innocent but unauthorized personal errand. Brutal corporal punishment and church censure were certain, yet no amount of flogging, stays in the stocks, ball and chains, sermons, suspensions, or excommunications could daunt the Gullahs' high spirit or their natural inclinations to independence. Incidents of flight express these slaves' refusal to accept their masters' conceptions of moral behavior. Although no reliable avenues of physical escape from bondage existed, Gullahs resisted servitude instinctively, undermining plantation and church discipline. When Northern forces occupied the Sea Islands and masters fled, chances for freedom did seem imminent. Masters endeavored to take as many slaves as possible with them to the mainland, telling the Gullahs that the Yankees intended to carry them to Cuba, take their children, and "knock out der brainses against de treeses." Few Gullahs went willingly with their masters to the main-

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175 •567 land, but many were taken forcibly. Gullahs risked and often lost their lives to flee, telling horror tales of death and suffering inflicted upon anyone suspected of desiring either to remain on the Sea Islands or to escape from the mainland where the planters "refugeed." The fact that they continued to flee under these circumstances is the best testimony to their sense of independence and will to freedom. One such incident was told to Laura M. Towne:

> A woman today just escaped from her owners on the Mainland. She said she had hard work to escape, sleeping in the marsh and hiding all day. She brought away her two little children. Her master had just whipped her oldest son almost to death because he was suspected of trying to join the Yankees.[45]

Although the Battle of Port Royal ended in an easy Northern victory and occupation, the rest of South Carolina remained in Confederate hands. Planters fled the Sea Island region but returned, sometimes under cover of darkness, hoping to force slaves back to the mainland. Blacks and whites picketing the region could not place men at every landing spot and Gullahs lived in apprehension of the slaveholders' return. Susannah's master returned several times, once telling slaves to burn the cotton. "Why for we burn de cotton? Where we get money then for buy clo' sho' and salt?" So instead of burning cotton, they guarded it nightly. Women kept watch and men stood ready to defend their interests when the alarm sounded. At the Oaklands plantation of rebel Baptist Dr. Sams, a field hand named Cupid told Charlotte Forten how his master had daringly returned to St. Helena, risking capture by Northern soldiers, solely to retrieve slaves. Sams attempted to cajole Cupid into cooperation:

> He ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he [Sams] came to look for them, not one of his "faithful servants" was to be found.[46]

[688] [795] To the end Baptists had "faith" in the "faithfulness" of their slaves, apparently believing that the white church had secured fidelity among the Gullahs. Just how far some whites took this assumption is illustrated

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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865: 175 567

Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67] 688 795

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68] 175 567

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures. 175 567 795 (688) [684]

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions 175 567 584

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175 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Bap-
●567 tist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery"
584 and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as
[836] defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the ma-
[583] jority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> [587] If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for
> [765] a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
> [586] . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth
567 and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs
581 simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted
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how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life.[73]

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Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

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> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slavery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were separated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

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17 793 797 superstitious rites with a purer system of instruction, producing thereby a hybrid, crude, and undefinable medley of truth and falsehood.[78]

Many missionaries saw slave children as the future of the enterprise. Others were even skeptical about that. According to one Methodist, "so 17 567 797 far does prejudice extend, even the children on some of these places refuse to be instructed, because of the example of their parents and the older ones." Many Baptist planters left instruction of the young in the 793 hands of plantation "help" who taught the children prayers and whatever else their religious instruction consisted of. Gradually, Methodists were forced to admit that despite their consistent though infrequent preaching and catechizing, they could not successfully compete with black leadership operating clandestinely or with the approval of Baptist churches and slaveholders.[79]

17 567 797 The Episcopalian mission established in 1849 on the Sea Isalands took away the near monopoly that Methodist missionaries previously had among a number of Episcopalian planters. Episcopalian slaveholders observed the same uninterested attitude among the slaves as Methodists witnessed. John Edwin Fripp, a St. Helena Episcopalian, allowed his slaves to attend the preaching of a diocese missionary while Fripp himself was in residence on the plantation. But given a choice, few showed up to hear "Mr. Welch" when the minister was on the plantation. According to Fripp's Journal:

> Sat. Dec. 19th—Rev. Welch is down tonight lecturing to the Negroes. Will go to Seabrooks in the Morning. The Negroes appear very backward in coming to hear him. They are getting tired of religion I expect.

No doubt "religion" was not what tired Fripp's slaves, but the dry "lecturing" which often characterized missionary sermons. Gullahs realized that planters were not truly concerned with their spiritual welfare and the they recognized the one-sidedness of their situation. An old coachman on the same Fripp plantation stated "massa been unjust to we. Take all we labor and get rich, then say we lazy, Can't care for we self, give us two suits a year, dat our wages."[80] No one need wonder about the degree of enthusiasm Gullahs had for the religious emissary of such masters.

Thus, a key to understanding the appeal of the Baptist faith for Gullahs lies in recognizing the slaves' rationale. Methodist emphasis on order and hierarchy left little room for internal flexibility in the denomina-

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tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation.

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently.

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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[2]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she had the following dialogue:

•567 "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"

"Yes Sir."

"What is you fretin' bout so?"

"Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."

"You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
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World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12] 771

For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time, but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future. 567 771 175 [212]

The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization, there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails,"but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But 175 701 177

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

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fervent zest for life. As slaves, the cornerstone of their faith rested on confidence that freedom on earth would not be denied them and their progeny. One missionary wrote of how the Gullahs expressed this: 181 171 567

> As they spoke of their trust in the Savior, his assurances, by the application of the promises to their hearts, that "a good time was coming" when their own vines and fig trees would cast their shadows around them in quietness and safety, and no more parting of families be known, our hearts dissolved in sympathy and gratitude in their behalf.[21]

Christianity can be interpreted in fatalistic terms. But to believe Gullahs totally accepted a submissive Christian posture suggests that they did not struggle against the cultural domination that masters attempted to impose through religion. To say, on the other hand, that an element of patience was not present in their form of Christianity would be a denial of historical reality. Resolution of the contradiction may come through understanding the limited role of doctrinal Christianity in Gullah life and thought, and taking a fuller cognizance of the influence of previous traditions. Practically and theologically speaking, Gullahs were not resigned to their condition, and not uncritical of religious teachings. Nor were they beguiled by insipid attempts to "make them better slaves." From their African heritage Gullahs retained optimism—a proclivity to make the best of their near-tragic situation for the sake of communal spirit and future generations. This was more meaningful than blindly striking out and committing racial suicide. The simple issue of the practicality of insurrection must also be considered. They had learned from Vesey and others, perhaps implanting the Charleston insurrection attempt in their memory. They believed armed rebellion was impossible as long as they were enslaved. Higginson stated that he often pondered over why the Gullahs' "daring and endurance" in combat had not manifested itself in armed insurrection against the slavocracy. Predictably, Higginson attributed the lack of large-scale rebellions to "the peculiar temperament of the races, in their religious faith, and in the habit of patience that centuries had fortified." But Higginson added that to have kept "the land in a perpetual flame of insurrection" would have been impossible for a number of reasons: 181 567

> The shrewder men all said substantially the same thing. What was the use of insurrection, where everything was against them? They had no knowledge, no money, no arms, no drill, no organization. . . . They had no mountain passes

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to defend like the Maroons of Jamaica,—no impenetrable swamps, like the Maroons of Suriname. Where they had these, even on a small scale, they had used them,—as in certain swamps round Savannah and in the everglades of Florida, where they united with the Indians, and would stand fire—so I was told by General Saxton, who had fought them there—when the Indians would retreat.[26]

Priceless energy and humanity would have been the fruits of rebellion as far as the slaves were concerned. Such physical confrontations would have left little enthusiasm for cultural creativity. Thus does the quest for examples of physical courage often overshadow a valiant spiritual temper. Gullahs maximized their creative talents, developing a socioreligious collective derived perhaps from the most edifying features of two traditions. In this way they maintained their dignity and provided a legacy of the truest examples of valor and vitality. They maintained a passionate love of humanity so that they could confront their former masters with an absence of revenge. But as Higginson noted, they also possessed a deep sense of progressive rationalism in their calm realization that masters and slaves are natural enemies. In observing the Gullahs' capacity to endure pain and tendency to look beyond their own individiual situation, the surgeon in Higginson's black regiment referred to the men as "natural trasncendentalists."[27] This was true to some extent. Yet a more accurate characterization could be that these African-Americans were natural humanists. For them, integration of the human personality on a collective level was central, so that cultural considerations received primary attention sometimes at the expense of practical ones.

While the African tradition from which Gullahs descended emphasized preservation, protection, and enrichment of life, the phenomenon which unified this anthropocentric philosophy was religion. Hence it is not difficult to understand why Gullah life was expressed from an essentially spiritual perspective. Christianity and traditional African religion combined to provide them with an ideology of freedom, and a noble, mystical explanation for their existence as a people. They internalized the optimism in both religions and both orientations were necessary ingredients in the creation of Gullah culture. Slavery did not erode the African sense of pride, of community, love of home, and of family. Yet who knows how long these attributes could sustain cultural life among slaves, no matter how much their spirits struggled against degradation? Christianity offered the additional cohesion needed to develop a homogeneous people and a society based upon a progressive religious nation-

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alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis.

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Litwack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?"

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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

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[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew, through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to the disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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have a tradition of politeness. Among the Limba of Sierra Leone for example, "shame" (Kulaku) and "honor" (yiki) are spoken of often. According respect to leaders, strangers, one's wife, and her relatives, is of great importance. Fear of shame is a very real sanction in everyday life. Rudeness or abusive behavior also brings shame, which only an apology can erase. Ceremonious welcomings involving hand shaking are greatly stressed among Africans. Thanks, greetings, and farewells are often reinforced by a gift, approved of as much for its token value of "giving the words weight," as for its economic worth. A gift of a fowl, eggs, or rice is commonly offered when guests arrive. A physician assigned to the colony of Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century, wrote that the people possessed a "great share of pride, and are easily affected by an insult." They could not even bear a harsh expression, or raised voice without distaste. One of the severest insults toward an African was to "speak disrespectfully of his mother," which the Africans called "cursing her." More recently, a researcher in the Kongo was told that there were two things he should know right away about BaKongo peoples. "The first is that we all came from Mbaza Kongo. The second is the importance of good manners."[11]

Aside from a spirit of cooperation, Gullahs used their religion to foster a sense of justice. Undoubtedly, since they were exploited so unjustly on all quarters, it was important that among each other fairness predominate. The power of the community and the extent to which slaves could pursue their indignation against erring members was not always peaceful, and could reach extreme proportions. Jenkins Mikell's recollection of a grisly event on Edisto Island represents a case in point. Crimes within the slave quarters were infrequent, but they did occur:

> Early one morning, we were awakened by the repressed excitement we felt around the dwelling. We soon found that all the people on the home place were in a terribly wrought up state and waiting for the Master to appear. A murder had been committed among them. A man had killed his wife in anger. The poor woman had been found dead hanging by her neck to the rafter of the cabin, and the guilty husband had run away and left her there. He was caught during the day . . . he was tried and convicted and remanded to the scene of his crime for execution. . . . On the day of his execution very little work was done in the community by the negroes. All attended the tragic scene. His coffin was made on the plantation and placed in a wagon. The doomed man, tied, seated upon this coffin rode six miles to the place of execution, and by his side seated on the same gruesome seat was his companion in guilt—a woman. She was made to witness at close quarters his dreadful end. She returned to the place of burial,

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

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they hoped, would encourage obedience, docility, humility, and a "turn-the-other-cheek" attitude. The elders' judgment was important to planters, who realized the influence these leaders exercised. Masters probably depended upon the reasoning power of elders, expecting them to use Christianity as a soothing influence in the slave quarters. Although law forbade black religious gatherings without three slaveholders being present, this edict was grossly violated in the Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, and black societies were rarely visited by whites supposedly superintending black worship.

Thus, black elders' duties of oversight, direction, watchcare, and advice were extensive. Since they ultimately had the last word on whether or not the "Christian" character of a "seeker" of religion warranted that individual's being accepted into "de Ark ob Safety," the supremacy of these leaders was considerable.[13] Yet black elders undoubtedly used their position of power with measure, fairness, and to benefit of the slave community, for they always maintained respect among the bondspeople. Their message was one of encouragement and their capacity to inspire moral confidence largely depended upon their verbal ability, gravity of deportment, and consistent record of honesty and correctness. As guardians of the community and articulators of group values, they may have counseled patience and been the main proponents of the Christian attitude of "resignation," which observers attributed to some Gullahs, as a form of protection. Above all, black elders were firm about depredations within the slave quarters, watching closely "to detect some delinquency" or "any shortcomings," yet ready to forgive an errant member.

> They visit, pray with and exhort the sick, rebuke the impenitent, counsel the weak, conduct social meetings for prayer, whenever such meetings are permitted by the proprietor of a plantation, and especially have vigilant watch over the young, striving to keep them in the path of rectitude.[14]

The other group of religious leaders, spiritual fathers and mothers, were not white-sanctioned leaders of the Praise House, but among the Gullahs they were recognized as legitimate and reportedly had "the most absolute authority over them." They were a continuous foil to Methodist missionaries and often disliked by planters because these religious leaders successfully incorporated non-Christian elements into white Protestantism. From this group came Praise House leaders and the "committee' that acted as the religious court. Thus on an individual plantation, the

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'" process:

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> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river.
> When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

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normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of burials), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote:

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back.". . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation:

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body—all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[22]

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More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

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code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who maintained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote:

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership

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began among the Gullahs and the other ended, or if in slavery a shared authority and governance was practiced. Among Windward Coast Africans authority rested with two bodies—the chief and his elders, and cultural authority, which consisted of Poro and Sande leaders. The latter was called the Poro Council. "All grave and problematic questions touching the interest of the section or tribe in general were handled by this Poro Council, and their decisions, after due deliberation, were preemptory." Among the BaKongo, governance was far more centralized and hierarchical. Authority was in the hands of a king, and on the village level, a chief, who might have advisers, among whom was a medicine man *(Nganga Nkisi)*.[28] But the importance of the priest in all African societies may explain the continued presence of the spiritual parents. Because spiritual parents, like their African counterparts, held their positions for life, and since they comprised the "religious court," they possibly represented the communal soul of the people while the elder personified the individual soul in a more Christian context. From the spiritual leader a Gullah candidate not only received religious guidance but also instruction in conduct or "manners," thus preserving values as well as maintaining authority. Different social conditions make it impossible to actually compare types of instruction given to African and Gullah initiates. But in both situations such qualities as good conduct, allegiance, generosity, and group responsibility were emphasized. Secret society initiates received a rich background in physical survival, social interaction, instruction in ethnic-group history, and art. They were also schooled in their particular occupation for the future. For Gullah "seekers," instruction was probably a mixture of Christianity, Africanisms, and practical information. Candidates were taught how to pray, an interpretation of the nature of God and Christ, concepts about death, and especially about the realities of life, all within a context relevant to their circumstances as bondspeople.[29]

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When African initiates left the bush, they returned to the village as "reborn," and were said to have "crossed the water." Their former existence was obliterated—old animosities, debts, even crimes no longer existed. The person was entering a new life with new responsibilities. Neophytes were expected to take their place in the village, to serve it when called upon, and to obey its regulations as interpreted by the Poro Council. When initiates were led back to the village, they underwent a washing ceremony in the creek or river. After "washing," new members were dressed up for their final return. Parents publicly expressed pride

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

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gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature."

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith. Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 787 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
796 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a
• 567 corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60
[786] years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspira-
tion from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head
thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms
bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of
the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some
very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoy-
ing the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good
looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned
at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special bene-
fit.[45]

771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs at-
tempted to exert control over their environment just as their African
forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most
threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic sys-
tem that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion.
Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spir-
itual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Chris-
[178] tianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk
religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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*Women and children in the evening after "Mauma's" task is done. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

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implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000 Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761 sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware 533 that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539] children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought [787] to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of [567] the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
533 tude toward death:
(539)

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
799 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
• 567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

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Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power, and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

761 (797) (177) (178)

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

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This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

• 567 763 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were [754] sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. [759] The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated 567 the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her 764 funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved [533] slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."

[789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to an- [775] other across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.

[533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could
not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead:

> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

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The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18]

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Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related:

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

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representing honor, constancy, harmony, and perfection, while humanity occupied the center, ever striving to be godlike through a sense of love, community, kinship, and cooperation. In addition, the good and bad of the spirit world existed in both traditions although it was far more complex for Africans than for Gullahs. These beings included superhumans, animals, and objects without biological life.[10] Gullahs applied the African ontology, adapted Christianity and bondage to it, and created a religion that employed spirituality as a means of self-preservation and as a vital component of community life. It is, then, to the Gullahs' credit that though circumstances prevented them from rising up against slavery, they did not succumb to white cultural domination. Instead, they successfully rose above many of the negative ingredients of Christianity while assimilating certain other attributes which were synthesized with African culture. In bondage, Gullahs achieved elevation on the level of personal culture and the molding of community values. The edifying qualities of Gullah religious belief must be seen as having contributed much to that achievement, just as an element of truth must be recognized in the assertion that insofar as people develop their own culture they are not slaves.[11]

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# Epilogue

539

*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Broke at last! Broke at last!*
*Slavery chain done broke at last!*
*Gonna praise God till I die!*

*Way up in that valley,*
*Pray-in' on my knees,*
*Tell-in' God a-bout my troubles,*
*And to help me if He please.*

*I did tell him how I suffer,*
*In the dungeon and the chain;*
*And the days I went with head bowed down,*
*An' my broken flesh and pain.*

*I did know Jesus heard me,*
*'Cause the spirit spoke to me,*
*An' said, "Rise, my chile, your children*
*An' you too shall be free."*

*I done 'p'int one mighty captain*
*For to marshal all my hosts;*
*An' to bring my bleeding ones to me,*
*An' not one shall be lost."*

*Now no more weary trav'lin',*
*'Cause my Jesus set me free,*
*An' there's no more auction block for me*
*Since He give me liberty.**

The Thirteenth Amendment, which ended all slavery in the United States, barely slipped through the House of Representatives with the necessary two-thirds vote on January 31, 1865. But for the Gullahs, the "Year of Jubilo" was January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation declared them "forever free." It was the first truly Happy New Year the Gullahs ever had, and they marked it with a festive occasion organized by General Saxton. The celebration took place in Beaufort. The multitude consisted of the "First South" Regiment, many "white visitors," superintendants, officers, dignitaries, and the band of the Eighth Maine. From the Islands and surrounding mainland came the now for-

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* Quoted from Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 167.

[p. 323]

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175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
•567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
881 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and
178 Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

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Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new religion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

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APPENDIX A

# Ethnic Origins of Carolina Slaves

This appendix explains my own tabulations for ethnic origins of Carolina slaves. A valuable source of information for studying African origins was published in four volumes by Elizabeth Donnan. Her works are based on primary sources consisting of ships' records, newspaper advertisements, records of the Royal African Company, the correspondence of Henry Laurens and other merchants, and various documents illustrating the pattern and magnitude of the international slave trade. Donnan's volume on the Southern colonies was particularly useful for examining the slave trade to Carolina because the records of that colony were so well preserved and because white Carolinians made a fetish of regional provenance where human cargo was concerned. From these data we obtain an impression of the coastal origins of many cargoes entering Charleston harbor, and it appears that Africans of the Windward Coast and Senegambia regions provided South Carolina with the majority of its forced laborers for nearly forty years. 127 567 175

Table A.1 represents my calculation of the ethnic origins of slaves entering South Carolina during the middle period of the international slave trade. It was compiled from a tabulation of lists of cargoes published by Elizabeth Donnan. Table A.2 is a rough numerical calculation of slaves identifiable by African origins entering Charleston during the middle period of the trade. Since many cargoes did not indicate size, our estimate for this unknown was based upon the average number of slaves on vessels which did indicate the size of their cargo. Deliberately ex- 175 567 128

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TABLE A.1

*Number and Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 102 | 32.4 |
| Windward Coast | 90 | 28.6 |
| Gold Coast | 54 | 17.2 |
| Bight of Benin | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 25 | 7.9 |
| Angola (including Gaboon and the Kongo) | 35 | 11.1 |
| Others: Whydah, Bance Island, Isle de Los | 9 | 2.8 |
| Total | 315 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935) vol. 4, passim; and *South Carolina Gazette*.

TABLE A.2

*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)*

| | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Est. Slaves* | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
| Senegambia | 66 | 10,499 | 36 | 5,724 | 102 | 16,223 |
| Windward Coast | 65 | 11,135 | 25 | 4,275 | 90 | 15,410 |
| Gold Coast | 37 | 6,240 | 17 | 2,856 | 54 | 9,096 |
| Angola | 33 | 7,480 | 2 | 454 | 35 | 7,934 |
| Bight of Benin | | | | | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 18 | 3,343 | 7 | 1,302 | 25 | 4,665 |
| Others | 7 | 956 | 2 | 274 | 9 | 1,230 |
| Total | 226 | 39,653 | 89 | 14,885 | 315 | 54,538 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

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cluded from tables A.1 and A.2 are those vessels which indicated only the West Indies as the source of origin. Such listings meant the slaves were purchased in the West Indies from an arriving African cargo, or that the ship had stopped in the West Indies and disposed of most of its African cargo. Cargoes listed as simply from the West Indies were usually quite small and often contained Creole New World-born slaves.

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As discussed in the text, research indicates that the majority of slaves in Carolina by 1740 were chiefly from Kongo-Angola. This was also the largest group imported into South Carolina during the entire slave trade as illustrated in table A.3, which was taken from Philip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade*. However, Curtin's percentages may be misleading for purposes of examining African cultural influence in coastal Carolina because he lumps the entire slave trade period together. Up to 1740, the end of the first period of the Carolina trade, Kongo-Angolans were the majority. But as evident from tables A.1 and A.2, during the period of high economic growth and large-scale slave importation in the Sea Island region, these Africans composed a relatively small percentage of total cargoes with known coastal origins. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region do not again figure heavily in South Carolina trade until the nineteenth century. Curtin has no separate breakdown for these years (1804–1807), when many Kongo-Angola peoples were imported (see tables A.4 and A.5) chiefly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of up-country plantations and new territories. At the time, South Carolina was the only state importing slaves and supplied other states as well. In the nineteenth century, despite the emergence of Sea Island cotton as an export of growing significance, many coastal and Sea Island planters were well supplied with slaves and expressed strong hostility to reopening of the international trade in 1803. Concerned about the depreciation of their own slave property, as well as the prospect of slave revolts, these planters were instrumental in the near-defeat of the bill to reopen the African slave

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TABLE A.3
*Percentage of Slaves of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1733 to 1807*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Senegambia | 19.5 |
| Windward Coast (including Sierra Leone) | 23.1 |
| Gold Coast | 13.3 |
| Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3.7 |
| Angola | 39.6 |
| Mozambique, Madagascar | 0.7 |
| Total | 100.0 |

*Source:* Philip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison-University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 157, Table 45.

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TABLE A.4
*Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. of Cargoes* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Senegambia | 11 | 7.5 |
| Windward Coast | 44.5 | 30.5 |
| Gold Coast | 23.5 | 16.0 |
| Bright of Benin, Bight of Biafra | 3 | 2.0 |
| Angola | 55 | 37.7 |
| Others | 9 | 6.3 |
| Total | 90.0 | 100.0 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

TABLE A.5
*Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)*

| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *Cargoes with Numerical Count* | | *Cargoes without Numerical Count* | | *Total Cargoes* | *Total Slaves (Est.)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | *No. of Cargoes* | *No. of Slaves* | | |
| Senegambia | 4 | 290 | 6 | 73 | 10 | 435 |
| Windward Coast | 33 | 4,374 | 16 | 2,096 | 49 | 6,470 |
| Gold Coast | 16 | 2,416 | 7 | 1,057 | 23 | 3,624 |
| Angola | 50 | 14,440 | 5 | 1,694 | 55 | 16,134 |
| Bight of Benin | | | | | | |
| Bight of Biafra | 6 | 1,809 | 1 | 301 | 7 | 2,412 |
| Others | 2 | 473 | — | — | 2 | 473 |
| Total | 111 | 23,802 | 40 | 5,221 | 151 | 29,023 |

*Source:* Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol v. 4, passim.

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trade in South Carolina. Thus, Philip Curtin's percentages, which cover the years 1733–1807, are too broad chronologically to adequately represent the pattern of the slave trade in regard to cultural geography.

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In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits provided what appeared to be a good source of ethnic information. Using raw material supplied by Elizabeth Donnan, Herskovits developed a numerical tabulation of slave imports into South Carolina for the years 1733–1785 in

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TABLE A.6
*Number of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1733 to 1785 (Middle Period)*

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| *Coastal Region of Origin* | *No. Imported* |
|---|---|
| Origin given as "Africa" | 4,146 |
| From the Gambia to Sierra Leone | 12,441 |
| Sierra Leone | 3,906 |
| Rice and Grain Coasts | 3,851 |
| "Guinea Coast" (Gold Coast to Calabar) | 18,240* |
| Angola | 11,485 |
| Congo | 10,924 |
| Mozambique | 243 |
| East Africa | 230 |
| Total Imported from Africa | 65,466 |
| Total Imported from the West Indies | 2,303 |
| Total Number of Imports | 67,796 |

*Herskovits notes that of this number only 1,168 slaves were brought in ships sailing from "Benin," "Bonny," "New Calabar," and "Old Calabar." Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 305 n.

*Source:* Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston-Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.) p. 48.

order to determine ethnic origin and influence among Africans imported into that state (see table A.6). However, Herskovits' computation somewhat confuses the issue of provenance in regard to the Sea Island region because it is based only on the available number of slaves from various regions rather than on the number of cargoes as well, and the percentage of cargoes from a particular area. In many cases, neither Donnan nor the Charleston newspapers (which were her main source) reported the number of slaves in a given cargo. Donnan's information on total yearly imports was not based on individual computation but derived from annual figures printed in newspapers that did not distribute imports on the basis of coastal origin. Thus, Herskovits apparently tabulated only cargoes which listed the African *coastal origin* and indicated the *size* of the cargo as well. This makes his numerical tabulation unreliable.

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Another problem with Herskovits' tabulation for this study is that his estimates partly cover the period in which the Sea Islands were only sparsely settled (the early period). Hence, we cannot obtain a clear indication of the ethnic origins of Sea Island Gullahs from Herskovits' information. It seems that a more reasonable estimated of sources of or-

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igin can be obtained by using the *number* of cargoes of known African origin, as is done in table A.1, rather than using *cargo size* as a primary indicator. Yet, both table A.1 and table A.2 illustrate that during the middle period of the slave trade a large, new migrant group was added to the African-Carolinian populatior..

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121 6. Levine, *Black Culture and Consciousness*, 36–37, 43, 49–51, 75–77.
113 7. Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), ix.

8. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 191.

[114] 9. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 92. For a discussion of how Raboteau's view "minimizes the contribution of African ritual traditions" see Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion in the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 40–46.

10. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 152.

11. Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4.

12. Ibid., x.

13. Edward H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 23–35.

14. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapters 5 and 6.

114 15. Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New
113 York: Vintage Books, 1983). Years ago, Harding explored relationships between religion and resistance among slaves. See his "Religion and Resistance among Antebellum Negroes, 1800–1860," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, eds., *The Making of Black America* I (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 179–97.

16. Harding, *There Is a River*, Introduction.

17. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), passim.

18. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but especially xvi–xvii, 3–149, 280–84, 597–98, 658–60.

19. Meier and Rudwick, *Black History*, Chapter 3 and 258–65.

20. See for example Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) 18–35; E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle without Class?" *Social History* 3, no. 2 (1978): 134–57; Eric Perkins, "Roll, Jordan, Roll: A 'Marx' for the Master Class," *Radical History Review* 3, no. 4 (1976): 41–59; Gutman, *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, 309–20; For the most recent interpretation in support of paternalism, see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987) 103–57, 195–241.

114 21. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 283. According to Elkins, the typical American slave
• 567 was labeled "Sambo" in Southern lore. "Sambo" was "loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing: his behavior full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration." The "Sambo" of the Old South was compared by Elkins to what he termed a similar personality type, the prisoners of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The author states that they were one and the same historically, both products of a "closed" and "authoritarian" system. This personality type developed in the United States and in Nazi Germany but not in Latin America, according to Elkins, because Latin American institutions protected slaves while American institutions did not protect slaves nor German institutions protect Jews. Stanley Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 82, 63–79, 73, 136–37, 175–217.

114 22. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 209–232.
113 23. Ibid., 281.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 212.

26. Ibid., 283–84.

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121 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.
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113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

*Prologue*

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling
567 represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. John
113 M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the University of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The*
113 *Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume,
199 *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968;
113 repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New
114 York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Lin-*
113 *guistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

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124 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

[101] 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

[567] 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*; Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy. "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

[113] 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

175 567 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 175 113 [567]

18. Charles Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC. See also Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 218–19; Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), I: 244–45; *SCA*, July 14, 1863 and December 29, 1843; Allen Diary, 18, 127–28, 151–54.

19. For an extensive bibliography on works about Gullahs and the need for more modern approaches, see Mary A. Twining, "Sources in the Folklore and Folklife of the Sea Islands," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 39 (1975): 135–50; In 1980 the *Journal of Black Studies* devoted an entire issue to Sea Island culture. Twining and Baird, eds., *Journal of Black Studies*; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, passim; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), passim. 113

20. Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 291; Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," quoted in Edwin C. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79; Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed. and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), 13–14, 76–79; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row. 1965), 72–76; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860" (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16–17; Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Henry Irving Tragle, *The Southhampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Materials* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Rev. Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism Among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 79–79. 175 567 668 797 113

21. Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 16–18; 80; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), passim; Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism*, 13–34, HSSCC; Report of the Board of Managers of the South Carolina Missionary Society, in *SCA*, January 3, 1851. 175 567 797 113

## *1. Gullah Roots*

1. James Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers: A Study of the Atlantic Slave Traders, 1441–1807* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 38; Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 34–36; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: Precolonial History, 1450–1850*, 175 113

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originally published as *Black Mother* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 103; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 34–40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), passim; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 14–20; The term Upper Guinea Coast has altered over centuries. Here our definition is taken from Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2, 7; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935), vol. 4, *The Southern Colonies*, passim; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1975), 58–60.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 131; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156; Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review* 33 (1927–28): 816–17; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734; London: Frank Cass, 1971), 173–74; William Smith, *A Voyage to Guinea* (London: John Nourse, 1744; London: Frank Cass, 1967), 135; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 56–68; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, 17–18; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 35; Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers*, 58–59.

3. Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, 282.

4. Ibid., II:xxxi–xxxiii, 355; IV:301, 382.

5. Wood, *Black Majority*, 301–4, Appendix C, 333–41.

6. Douglas L. Wheeler and Rene Pelissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 28–51; Davidson, *African Trade*, 144–52; Donnan, *Documents*, II:xvii–xviii; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37. Roger Bastide has written that the official documents concerning the Portuguese trade were burned after slavery was suppressed "in an effort to expunge a blot on the country's escutcheon." See Roger Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretations of Civilizations*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), 33.

7. Jan Vansina, "Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 375–90; Walter Rodney, "Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 431, 440; Quoted from Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37–38.

8. Vansina, "Trade Routes," 375–83; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), passim; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 9–19. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 38; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 157, Table 45.

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9. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 59–67, 82–102, 125–33; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (October 1764): 487; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 143; Augustine Smyth et al., *The Carolina Low Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 173; Vass, *Bantu Heritage*, 3–5; Wood, *Black Majority*, 96–130, 195–217, 272–326; Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 11–15.

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10. Wood, *Black Majority*, 52–153, 324–35. From 1741 to 1743 a prohibitive duty was imposed. In 1744 four African cargoes arrived. No slave cargoes entered Charleston in 1745 and from 1746 and 1748 another prohibitive duty was in effect. Three African cargoes arrived in 1749 and 1750, respectively. By 1752 the trade was once again in full swing. Donnan, "Slave Trade before the Revolution," 807–8; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 9–10; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 42–43. 175 113 567 [669]

11. Wood, *Black Majority*, 148, 323; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 69–70; 72; Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1730–1760* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 206, 230–32. Rice was never raised to any large extent on the Sea Islands since salt water in poisonous to the rice plant. Some Sea Islands did have a few fresh water ponds where rice was grown, but the amount was small and only for local consumption. Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of the North Carolina Press, 1930), 18; Frederick V. Emerson, "Geographical Influences in American Slavery," *Geographical Society Bulletin* 63 (1911): 108–9. [669

12. William A. Schaper, *Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 51; Emerson, "Geographical Influences," 108–11; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 386–88; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 35, 37, 46–47; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1728–1765*, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 37–38; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 84; Peter Wood offers interesting evidence which points to Africans' immunity to certain diseases, such as malaria. Yet, as he states, this was not "absolute." Moreover, Todd L. Savitt notes that malaria certainly took its toll in human losses among slaves. He maintains that some blacks did possess an inherited immunity to one or another strain of malaria. But adds that even adult African-born slaves had to go through a "seasoning" period because the "strains of malarial parasites in this country differed from those in their native lands." The "acquired" immunity that blacks reportedly developed was "risky," according to Savitt, since this involved repreated, uninterrupted exposure to malaria over a period of years. Furthermore, we must rely heavily on the words of colonial whites with a vested interest in rationalizing that blacks were more suited to labor in the Carolina swamps and marshes. Africans may have had a varied immunity to certain diseases, but it appears unlikely that this determined white attitudes toward black labor. For Wood, See *Black Majority* 85–88, 90–91. See also Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illiois Press, 1978), 21–26.

13. Schaper, *Sectionalism* 55–56; Emerson, "Georgraphical Influences," 112; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 40–46; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–19; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 267–69; Donnan, *Documents*, IV: passim; See Appendix A.

14. Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 48; Philip M. Hamer, et al. eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), IV: 294–95. 175 113

15. *SCG*, July 14, 1759.

16. Hamer, *Laurens Papers*, I:252, 331.

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17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114, Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42, Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

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20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

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21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 136–67.

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23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

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26. Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27A, 27B, WPA, SCL; Lowrey, *Old Plantation*, 83–87; Towne Diary, 98; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folk-lore Society 1923), 211–13; E. Horace Fitchett, "Superstitions in South Carolina," *The Crisis* 43 (1936): 360–71; Henry F. Davis, "Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 245–49; Leonora Herron and Alice M. Bacon, "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," *Southern Workman* 24 (1895): 118; Louis Pendleton, "Notes on Negro Folklore and Witchcraft in the South," *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 301–17; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 216–21; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 834–36; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; Charles A. Raymond, "Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 27 (June–November, 1963): Part I, 478–80, Part II, 676, Part III, 821; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 113 567 • 771

27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 771 113 [171]

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592. [171]

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

### 3. *Missionaries and Masters*

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The* 175 797 113

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*Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 25; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 196–97. There was a tendency among some early missionaries to indiscriminately refer to Indians and Africans as "blacks." See Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 39, n. 20.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 37–38; Samuel Thomas to Dr. Bray, January 20, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Thomas Nairne to Dr. Marston, August 20, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 2.

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3. South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8; William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Gilbert Jones to SPG, November 16, 1716, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 13, series B, vol. 4 (1).

4. Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

5. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 5.

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6. Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 19; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; Robert Stevens to SPG, February 21, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 2, series A, vol. 2.

7. Frank Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle, the Papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston, 1707–1716* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 118–19; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

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8. Thomas Naire to Dr. Marston. August 20, 1705, SPGLL; Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28 SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 20; Frank J. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 127–30; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 111–16; Verner W. Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 1670–1732 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 168–69, 184–85.

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9. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 81, 99.

10. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Wood. *Black Majority*, 150.

11. Verner W. Crane, "Dr. Thomas Bray and the Charitable Colony Project, 1730," *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, 3d. ser. (January, 1962): 58–61; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 168–69; Henry A. M. Smith, "Purrysburgh," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10 (October, 1909): 189–91; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 1–18.

12. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 18–19.

13. Smith, "Purrysburgh," 187–95; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 17–18; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 506; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–96; "Letters Showing and Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January, 1916): 69–92; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139–42; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, June 20, 1834.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68, 69–70, 72; Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–26.

15. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–74; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colo-*

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*nial Slavery*, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606.

16. A. S. Salley, ed., *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726–1812* (Columbia: State Co., 1919), 22–25; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; repr. from 1820 ed.), 379–81; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 72–74; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 602–3.

17. John Wikhead to SPG, September 26, 1715, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

18. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL.

19. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL; Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 20, 1712, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 7; Letters of J. Ottolenghe, July 12, 1758, SPG, London Ms. of Dr. Bray's Associates, Letters from the American Colonies, BX 19, reel 10; Klingberg, *Carolina Chronicle*, 118–19.

20. *SCG*, May 4, 1734; Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapter 10; *SCG*, April 16 and 23, 1737; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 342.

21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19.

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51.

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13.

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

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*First Baptist Church of South Carolina, 1683–1883* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodland, 1899), 7, 39, 56–59, 84–86, 94–97; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 1–79, 221–26, 242–52; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848), 700–702; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 172–73; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 26–35. There is some controversy over Screven's actual arrival with the largest group of Baptists. The Charleston Baptist Church maintains that the date of its establishment and Screven's arrival is 1683. Baptist historian Joe M. King places it at 1696. Here we use the generally accepted date of 1683. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 13.

27. Samuel Thomas to SPG, January 25, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Le Jau to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

28. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28, SPGLL; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 74–75; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 25–35.

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29. Francis Le Jau to SPG, February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 7; William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 497–501.

30. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptist Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98; New Jersey prescribed death for slaves convicted of murder, arson, mutilation or rape of a white woman, and castration for attempted rape. The Lords of Trade (in London) denounced such "inhumane penalities on Negroes," and the Privy Council voted to disallow the law. See Edgar McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 84–85; *Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey* 42 vols. (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society), 3:473–74; W. L. Grant and James Munro, eds. *Acts of the Privy Council: Colonial Series, 1613–1783*, 6 vols. (London: Wyman Publishers), 2:848.

31. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98.

32. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 14–17, 26–35.

### 4. *Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening*

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1. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 77, 81, 308–9; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 180, 185–88; Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 207–8; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–96.

2. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to England* (London: James Buckland, 1740), 5; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 418–19, II: 60, 139–43; John Pollack, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 3–10, 47–54, 62–68; *George Whitefield's Journals* (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1960; repr. unabridg, from 1905 ed., with unpubl. Journal, first publ. 1938), 82–93, 156–59, 302–11, 571–88; Sir James Stephens, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1837), 382–83, 389–90.

3. Whitefield, *Journals*, 165.

4. Ibid., 302–5; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 45–50, 63–71.

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51. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 6–9; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 1–2.
52. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
53. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
54. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 13.
55. Ibid., 14, 36–37.
56. Ibid., 15–28, 31–33, 36–39.
57. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 45–56, 364, n. 3; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 27, 61.
58. Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 96–98; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 400.
59. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 484, 498–501 and II: 436–38; Anon., probably George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America* (London: J. Hart, 1743), 3–6; Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery," 243–56.
60. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 438; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 5–6; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 162.
61. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 499–509; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–22; Joseph Ottolenghe to SPG, December 4, 1751 and July 12, 1758, SPG, London Mss. of Dr. Bray's Associates; Habersham to William Knox, July 17, 1765 and November 26, 1770, *Habersham Letters*, 38, 95–99, 102, Wood, *Black Majority*, 324–25; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 40; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–86.
62. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 160–65; Darold D. Wax, "Georgia and the Negro Before the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1967): 73–75.

### 5. *An Almost Chosen People*

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1. Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), Bibliographic Note; Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September, 1863): 295; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 11–12.

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2. Robert Starobin, ed., *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 11; John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 132–37; updated ed. of *Insurrection in South Carolina: The Turbulent World of Denmark Vesey* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1964); Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, 1744–1849, SCHS; William Jones to Samuel Jones, Jane Bruce Jones Mss, 1784–1831, SCL; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 4–14, 18, 21–22, 57–59, 111; Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 133–36.

3. Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition* 6 no. 3 (1985): 57–58; Joseph Cepas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1938), 17, 19–24; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 285–307, 314–35; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 31–36; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 157. Although Morgan offers no explanation for the discrep-

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175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
•567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
112 Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of the difference between the two colonies.

[669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
567 Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern*
113 *World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 118.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Common House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

175 8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its
113 harshaness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

17 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*
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17 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10,
113 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

175 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöepf,
•567 *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29; Avonor Samuel to William
113 Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahn, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP;
113 Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New
[567] York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel
[669] G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 66–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

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29. Ibid., 113–30.

30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

17 797 113

31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

175 113

32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

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38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

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42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

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44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

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51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

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54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

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*American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University 19 (1941): 3, 7; Wilfred D. Hambley, "Initiation of Boys in Angola," *American Anthrologist*, 37, ser. 2, (1935): 36–40.

28. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

29. Ibid. and June 20, 1934.

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30. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–90. The First African Church's association with white ministers and with the regional Baptist Association was anything but smooth. Because many members were slaves, the African Church was subjected to jurisdictions contrary to Baptist policy. In January 1833, Marshall was barred from preaching in his own pulpit, and the Church expelled from Georgia's Sunbury Association. This struggle and turmoil lasted for five years. The Church managed to keep its status, but lost many members before returning to the good graces of white Baptists. See Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–94.

31. *CAJ*, October 4, 1833.

32. Ibid.

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33. John Coburn to the Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 16, HSSCC.

34. John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 14, 1834, January 31, 1834, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836. Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, July 29, 1836; Pierce Butler to James Smith; March 19, 1839, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 38 Letterbook 1838–1840, HSP; *SCA*, June 26, November 13, 1840.

35. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 9, 1839, 18 and December 25, 1844, 19, HSSCC.

36. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14, HSSCC; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 71–72; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 35; *SCA*, February 23, 1844; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, January 13, 1847, 11, and February 10, 1855, 18, HSSCC; *SCA*, May 25, 1855; *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 13, 1860, HSSCC; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 188.

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37. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but see especially 3–7, 91–93, 119–20, 135–36, 89–91, 597–98, 658–59; Records of Coffin Point Plantation, St. Helena Island, 1800–1821, SCHS; John Stapleton Papers, St. Helena, 1790–1839, SCL: Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, Beaufort Township Library; Kemble, *Journal*, 42–45, 75; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of A Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986) 30, 55; Diary of Laura M. Towne, Penn School Papers, SHC; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 74–77, 104, 108–12; Major Pierce Butler to John Cooper, March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

38. Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 134–35; R. King, Jr. "On Management of the Butler Estate and Cultivation of Sugar Cane," *Southern Agriculturalist* (December, 1828): 597; Kemble, *Journal*, 42. For a different version, one which views the power of the driver as representing an enlargement of black autonomy for Lowcountry slaves in general, see Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the*

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*American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88.

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21.

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchman Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21.

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal*, 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27.

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

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17 Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing
•567 Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Ed-
113 dings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wahsh* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

[197] 48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

17 50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6;
113 ickl to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

797 52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

793 53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

17 56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York:
113 Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*,
[797] February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Mission* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14-15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

[797] 61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

17 64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare
797 Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who ar-
533 gues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–
113 84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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113 stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

175 2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society
797 Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6,
1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor &*
113 *Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert,
*Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist*
*Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10,
[795] BC; see Appendix C.[A] Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist
Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

175 3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1895*, December 21, 1831, 11, February 18,
1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church,"
797 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian
planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the
•567 Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference*
113 *of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC;
*CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834,
BC.

4. Appendix C,[A] see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

175 8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839,
113 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A, [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1839, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerusulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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175 113 •567 BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145, 147, 151.

[795] [794] 46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197, November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

175 113 47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

175 113 795 794 49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

175 113 685 55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

[795] [794] 56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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57. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Allen Diary, 37, 71, 87–88; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Whipple, July 3, 1863, AMA; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 32–33, 40–41.

58. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 377; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 674; Allen Diary, 32, 143; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158–59, 162, 179–81, III (3) 273–75.

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59. Allen Diary, 47–48, 103, 118, 136; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 150–54, 164–65.

60. Allen Diary, 48, 62, 72, 84.

61. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 456–58.

62. Ibid., 124.

63. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, March 31, 1849, 133, May 5, 1849, 134, June 30, 1849, 135, BC.

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64. Thomas Wentworth Higginson to Louisa Higginson, October 23, 1863, Papers of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Allen Diary, 91–92; Typescript copy of Diary of Laura M. Towne (varies from Ms. Diary), April 3, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. I, SHC. Theodore Rosengarten perhaps in support of arguments favoring paternalism on the Sea Islands (a point on which we disagree), maintains that black sentiments toward masters "were sometimes not always understood or accurately rendered by the people who solicited information." He cites by example, Laura Towne's reaction to Clarence Fripp's relationship with his slave Rachel. They lived together openly, and during the war, Fripp deeded over his plantation to Rachel. Towne said Fripp "led an infamous life, too bad to write of, to vile to speak of." Rosengarten implies that Towne's disgust toward Fripp centered on his living with Rachel. Yet Laura Towne was not so naive as to condemn Fripp for this alone, However, she was very upset upon learning that Clarence and his two brothers passed Rachel around for sexual favors. "She lived with her master and his two brothers infamously and her children are almost white," wrote Towne. Thus Towne reacted to the wanton license exercised by the Fripps toward slave women. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 166; Towne Diary Typescript, February 14, 1864, Penn School Papers, vol. 2, SHC.

65. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 162–274; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 358–61, 450–53; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 34; Fripp Diary, 60; Allen Diary, 103; Towne Diary, 14, 20.

66. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 214–20; Towne Diary Typescript, April 3, 1862; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 593.

67. *Minutes, Prince William Baptist Church*, May 20, 1865, 107, SCL.

68. March 14, 1824, in Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Black Swamp Church Mss., SCL; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158; William Tillinghast, *Address to Baptist Ministers of the U. S. Who Hold Slaves by A Minister of the Ministerial Conference of the Black River Association* (Antwerp:, 1845), New-York Historical Society.

69. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 3–4; November 25, 1849, 9, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, April 9, 1841, 15, BC.

70. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1839, 9, BC.

71. Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 158–61; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 201; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

72. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 374–76.

73. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 155; Laura M, Towne to Wendell Phillips Garrison, June 8, 1867, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room Cornell University.

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779) (795)

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972) II (2) 180–81.

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-trestment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 175 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. (701)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## MY FATHER WAS BORN A SLAVE

567 291 My father was born a slave. He was fourteen years old before he had a shoe on his foot. And across the hills of South Carolina you could track him. They had big snows in the winter, and he wrapped his feet in gunny sacks. He said you could track him through his blood in the snow as he went out to bring the cows home during those snowy nights. In the morning he'd get up and run the cow up from where he slept all night to warm his feet, warm his hand with the warmth of their bodies. He was fourteen years old before he had his first pair of shoes.

567 (563) My grandmother was half Indian. 'Course the Indians are stubborn, supposed to be. And being a half Indian and then being a slave also, she was very stubborn. She said that her master was a very cruel man. Since she was stubborn, he'd take her by the ears to the corner of a house, and just bang her head against the corner until she'd bleed. Come out covered in blood.

She died in the insane hospital in Columbia. You couldn't find three square inches on her head where there wasn't a scar when she died. And well, you find naked places all through her head where she was beaten until she be beaten into unconsciousness. Sometime she come to herself under a tree; Master had knocked her out. In her latter years it was discovered that during one of those forays the skull was crushed into her brain. The older she got, the worse it got. So she died at the age of seventy-seven, right there in Columbia Hospital. I knew her. I went to her funeral.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN PEACE DIDN'T DECLARE

● 567 My grandmother was Hannah Seabrook. She raised me up and told me a lot about Rebel Times. Old Hannah Seabrook was a cooker and a washer. Her first husband got sold. Yes sir! They sell my father's daddy. Sell him for money.

When my father was coming up he used to have to go see what old Master wanted him to do. He was just a boy and couldn't do none of that heavy work. So the old Master would have him shine he shoes. One day he found some finger marks on 'em and knock my father down the stairs. Good thing I wasn't living in those days--you would of had to kill me first. But that was in the time when peace didn't declare.

567 197 When the war came through, my daddy, Cyrus Jenkins, was just a young boy. That time he was in the creek--had to dig the mud and mud the field for what they gonna plant that year. My daddy just up and ran off with the Yankees. He followed the Yankee until peace declared. My grandma didn't see him for four years. When he come back Grandma went to the depot. When she see her one son she drop her little bit of clothes and blud the son. That's right, had only one raggedy soldier coat and nothing else but that.

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

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## SHE TAKE THE SCRAP AND MAKE A LITTLE DRESS FOR ME

I born in 1878, the twentieth day of November. I was my ma's seventh child. Everybody run for give me name. I grow up in the white people house. I do the small things--I could thread needle for grandma, man. And they make me a little dress, you know. I even wash the Missus' feet. That's right, sir! That's right! Wash her feet in the basin. And when she was the only dressmaker 'round the village, she take the scrap and make a little dress for me.

My grandma had a scarf handkerchief--a white handkerchief she brought from Rebel Time, and when she died I tie he head with that. That's right. Yes ma'am!

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
• 567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were opened to share the growing export trade with the initial port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown, sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of the present linguistic study.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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175 the Civil War, a combination of planter bankruptcy, successive years of disastrous flood tides, and the opening up of lands further west which could be cultivated by machinery instead of expensive hand labor, put an end to the rice economy. The economic base of the district again became chiefly forest products. In the early 1900's the former rice plantations were bought up by rich Northern industrialists for use as vacation homes, bringing welcome outside money to an economically depressed region.

175 •567 The close relationship between rice as Georgetown's economic base and the large numbers of African immigrants brought to this district can be seen in the South Carolina figures for slave importation during the period of the establishment of rice as a major crop. Rogers reports, "From 1720 through 1726 the average annual importation was 616 slaves. The average for the years 1731-1738 was 2,089. The opening up of the lands around Georgetown was one of the chief reasons for the increase" (1970:29). Most of the slaves were bought in Charleston and then transported up to Georgetown by boat through Winyah Bay. A few, however, were brought directly from West Africa through the Georgetown port, with 112 in 1774 being the largest number reported by Rogers. For a five-year period between 1735 and 1740, a full seventy-percent of the slaves brought to South Carolina seem to have come from the Angola region of Africa (Wood, 1974:335), long considered a possible source of the term Gullah used for both

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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the coastal blacks and for their language. Other large numbers came from the Coast of Guinea, Gambia, the Gold Coast, the Windward Coast, and other undesignated parts of West Africa. Very few originated in the West Indies during this period. From reports of travellers and missionaries, indications are that the earliest slaves imported from the West Indies around 1709 spoke a more standard variety of English than did the large number of immigrants who came directly from West Africa (Wood, 1974:175). Hancock (1975) maintains that the variety of English spoken in Barbados, the source of the first South Carolina slaves, was never a creole, but was a local metropolitan variety of English. For the direct ancestor of Gullah, Hancock posits a Guinea Coast Creole which developed in the latter half of the sixteenth century on the upper Guinea Coast, and was brought to the new colony by the slavers and immigrants from that area. While the time and place of origin of the language adopted by the immigrants from West Africa may be impossible to determine with certainty, the conditions for the development of an interlanguage were present. Large numbers of people were uprooted from their homelands and cultural traditions and thrown together with others of similar status, speaking several different languages and needing to communicate with each other on a frequent basis.

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The language background of the European settlers in the Georgetown district was primarily English, although some

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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175 French Huguenot families were in their number and were allowed to use the Book of Common Prayer in a French version (Rogers, 1970:20). The early landowners were usually sons of English and French planters in the Charleston area, trying their luck in the northern frontier. To the west of Georgetown proper, in what is now Williamsburg County, townships were established by Scots-Irish and Welsh settlers. Scots were frequently merchants and officeholders in the district. From such a mixture, it is safe to assume that it was not always the standard English dialect of southern England which was spoken by the European landowners and their overseers to the West African slaves. The McDavids (1951) and others have noted the preservation of seventeenth century English dial. forms in isolated Gullah-speaking areas.

175 567 (162) Very early in the history of the Georgetown district, Africans outnumbered Europeans. Federal census figures of 1830 indicate that 1,940 white persons and 18,000 persons of color (both slave and free) resided in the district (Wikramanayake, 1973). An important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which constituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite. A Grand Jury Presentment in Georgetown for the fall term of 1835 reported

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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175 that ten masters of 1,700 slaves had been absent from their
• 567 property for the last twelve months, and that some 15,000 slaves on the tide swamp plantations were managed by no more than forty proprietors during the summer months (Wikramanayake, 1973:158-9). The general picture which emerges of the district in the century between 1730 and 1830 is that of a region whose population was overwhelmingly of West African descent, whose economy was based on intensive hand labor of a crop familiar to many of these immigrants in their homelands, and whose most prevalently spoken language was an English creole.

175 While in its more prosperous days Georgetown was a cultural center and was far from isolated either economically or socially from other populous centers in the state its position after the Civil War was one of geographic isolation in important respects. With the fall of the plantation economy, boat traffic along the extensive network of rivers in the county was no longer reliable nor frequent. The rivers and marshes which had provided the flood waters for the rice fields impeded the building of roads. As late
484 as 1918, a trip inland to the state capitol, some one hundred miles away, could be a two-day trip over unmarked sand or mud roads (Vaughan, 1969). Until the major bridges were built to span the rivers emptying into Winyah Bay in the early twentieth century, a trip from rural areas to the county seat at Georgetown for supplies or legal transactions could

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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[174 [01] or wrongly, as far back as 1822 the official governing body of the City of Charleston regarded Gullah as a corrupted form of Angola.

A second, more probable suggestion is that Gullah comes from the name of the Liberian group of tribes known as Golas living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast. These Golas were formerly numerous and powerful, but have now dwindled to a small remnant tribe dwelling some thirty miles inland from Monrovia, the chief sea-port of Liberia. "The dialect of the West Coast, from which came these Gullah negroes," says a leading authority[1] on the subject, "was early commented upon as peculiarly harsh, quacking, flat in intonation, quick, [101] clipped, and peculiar even in Africa. Bosman, the Dutch sailor, described its peculiar tonality, and calls its speakers the 'quaquas, because they gabbled like geese'."

[174 .567] Whether originally from Angola or from Liberia, these Gullah tribesmen after their enforced immigration to our shores formed a distinct and peculiar group. Their resolute and persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing [197] their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia coast.[2]

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[1]Mr. John Bennett of Charleston, author of *Master Skylark*, *Madame Margot*, etc., who has been studying the Gullah language and history for a score of years. His article "Gullah; A Negro Patois" (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Part I, Oct., 1908; Part II, Jan., 1909) is a most scholarly and penetrating treatment. The present paper draws deeply from it, as also from the work of Mr. Gonzales. Mr. Bennett feels strongly that the Angola derivation for Gullah is quite without foundation; and [127] reiterates his belief in a personal letter to the writer: "God alone knows all the sources of Gullah, (as a language) its vocables, its accents, etc.; but its name came from that odd, primitive people, back of Monrovia, whose name has been spelled various ways, but which, as we have it, is Gullah."

A third derivation, almost certainly wrong, may be mentioned in passing. Rev. Robert Hamill Nassau, M.D., who was for forty years a missionary in the French Congo, thought the Gullahs might come ultimately from a powerful tribe of Camel or Cami Negroes called Gwalla.

[2]Many of these Negroes were brought to the West Indies and the Carolinas at an early date. The earliest were tempered by servitude in the islands of Bermuda, the Bahamas, Jamaica, San Domingo, etc., before arrival in Carolina. Later the untempered Africans were brought direct from the West Coast to Charleston.

An instance of the marked individuality and persistence of Gullah, even under adverse conditions, is told by John G. Williams in *De Ole Plantation*, (Preface V.): "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District,

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175 •567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucra- [248] tive under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[1]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

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[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

"If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers.'" *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

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000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

175 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special .569 quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[8]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[9] in the broom-sedge

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[197] [8]Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[569] [9]How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

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175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.' Living close to nature they are

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[567] case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognizing him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

'This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

[113] For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

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114 neither Daddy Jack's personality nor dialect ever approxi-
538 mated the appeal and charm of Uncle Remus. Of this
dialect Harris remarks in his Introduction: "It is the
(197) negro dialect in its most primitive state—the 'Gullah' talk
of some of the negroes on the Sea Islands, being merely
a confused and untranslatable mixture of English and
African words."

The most notable early success in Gullah was won by Charles Colcock Jones, Jr., of Georgia, in *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, 1888. Colonel Jones, a careful
(197) lawyer, handled the dialect correctly, and recorded with great exactness and without embellishment the stories as they were told him on the plantation." His collection, like that of Mrs. Christensen, contains the earlier analogs of many of the Uncle Remus stories.

How directly and immediately these Georgia and South
538 Carolina coast tales are derived from African originals
191 may be gathered from Mrs. Christensen's description of
her collection as "comprised of verbatim reports from
178 numerous sable story-tellers of the Sea-Islands, some of whose ancestors, two generations back, brought parts of the legends from African forests."[9]

114 During the decades following the work of Harris, Page,
538 Jones, and Mrs. Christensen, the short-story of local color and, the regional genre sketch became widely prevalent,

[9]Mr. Gonzales authoritatively says of his work: "One familiar with Negro speech
(191) recognizes that these tales are recorded as they fell from Negro lips, and as such they must be regarded, as far as they go, as the most authentic record of Negro myths on
(178) the continent—probably the originals of many of the 'Uncle Remus' stories, for the slaves first came from Africa to the coast, bringing with them their myths and legends which gradually infiltrated into the hinterland." *The Black Border*, Foreword, p. 16.

[10]See her Preface, XII, XIII. Her informant gives the following account of the
(567) source of his stories, (which will likewise serve as a sample of Mrs. Christensen's Gullah dialect): "But I was gwine to tell you 'bout my ol' gran'daddy. I ofting yearly him tell how 'e was bring ober from Arfrica in a ship when 'e was a boy. De white man lef' de ship behin' and gone asho' in a small boat; an' when dey meet up wid my gran'daddy an' a whole parcel more, young boys like, all from de same village, dey hire dem wid piece ob red flannel an' ting for go long wid dem. But when dey git dem on bo'd de ship dey bring dem ober to dis country an' sell dem for slave. Dey bring my gran'daddy to Charleston an' ol' Marse Heywood buy um. When I was a small bedie boy 'e ben berry ol', too ol' for work, an' I use for hab it for my task for min' um. So 'e tell me heap o' dese story, ef I only could 'member um, dat 'e use to yeardy way ober in Arfrica." Pages 4, 5.

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19 fied form of English," both in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, with elision of difficult sounds, shortening of words, modification of every difficult enunciation, and a minimum of forms for person, number, case, and tense.

Thus, simple to begin with and uniformly responsive to all possible leveling influences, Gullah is as nearly an uninflected tongue as it is possible to conceive.

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19 175 •567 "George Philip Krapp in "The English of the Negro" (*American Mercury*, June, 1925) gives the following conjectural picture of its origins: "The assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once. Though the historical evidence is not as full as might be wished, the stages can be followed with some certainty. When the Negroes were first brought to America they could have known no English. Their usefulness as servants, however, required that some means of communication between master and slave should be developed. There is little likelihood that any masters exerted themselves to understand or to acquire the native language of the Negroes in order to communicate with them. On the contrary, from the very beginning the white overlords addressed themselves in English to their black vassals. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of English this would be. It would be a very much simplified English—the kind of English some people employ when they talk to babies. It would probably have no tenses of the verb, no distinctions of case in nouns or pronouns, no marks of singular or plural. Difficult sounds would be eliminated, as they are in baby talk. Its vocabulary would be reduced to the lowest possible elements. In short, it would be a language of very much the same kind as those which have developed elsewhere under similar circumstances. It would have resemblances to the Beach-la-Mar of the Western Pacific, the Pidgin English of China, and the Chinook jargon of western America. As the Negroes imported into America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another, they themselves were driven to the use of this infantile English in speaking to one another."

See also a similar account by James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1925, pp. 42, 43.

The actual historical picture is thus sketched by Mr. Bennett: "At the time of the arrival of these negroes in the American provinces a considerable proportion of the population was composed of white bond-men, indentured mechanics and 'redemptioners', the laborers of the colony, among whom the newly-arrived negroes learned their English. Their vocabularies were small and very markedly dialectal, in the majority of instances a dialect which had been handed down from father to son for several generations, preserving closely the peculiarities of earlier times, in many cases Elizabethan and Jacobean.

"The Africans, plastic as they are by nature, quickly lost their own language, and acquired imperfectly the dialects of the British peasantry among whom they worked, and by whom very generally they were directed. The main reason was, perhaps, that, at the height of the trade, owing to the danger of conspiracy, large groups of negroes upon great plantations and in any considerable establishments, were generally made up, by preference, of negroes of different tribes, speaking languages and dialects unknown to one another. They were mostly young, for youth retains no lasting memories and acquires a new language with greater ease.

"The new negroes were parcelled out among the early bond-servants, and, later, among the trained servants, preventing their congregating in a body, hastening their familiarity with their new duties, and more quickly learning the language of their monitors and wardens. This plan was operative from very early days in obliterating the many African dialects and tongues native to the Negro slaves." Personal letter to Professor Yates Snowden, of the University of South Carolina, Jan. 23, 1918.

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533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."[40]

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much [569] nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. [114] Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.[41]

They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Chris- 569 tianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 114 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 178 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery 177 played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas.[42] But back

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[40]Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

[41]*Ibid.*, Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

[42]"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

[43]For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. [529] This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

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533 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial
•567 characteristics which were the really creative factors in
114 the spirituals; and second, the particular environment
178 which alone of all possible localities has called them into
177 being.[21] This combination created them; Christianity shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipa-
533 tion even to the present day, the same yearning note has
152 persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities
178 have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of lib-
567 erty for the slave people have signalized the better civili-zation, and there still remains among the Negroes the same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful, rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[22] On internal evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of 1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[23] and the many songs
533 of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness," which are
152 distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad
(522) appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the complement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(520) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

[21]With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around
(113) Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Sebayler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[22]Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

[23]See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in
(113) Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring
829 up trouble for yourself. In Macterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad-
• 567 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch
[535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the
181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*,
177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of
567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[3] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

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their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings" at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same procedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing something that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to consider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[6] It seems to me that the attitude of the whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

[6] Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.

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181 aloof, and never lose a chance to mislead and to poke fun at the white man behind his back. But I have noticed that they often reflect the treatment meted out to them in slave days. Geoffrey Gorer, in *Africa Dances*, calls attention to this fact: "If you can watch a man dealing with negroes you have no need to ask his opinion about them; and if you can watch a man's negroes you will know the chief points of his character. They mirror their masters faithfully and terribly." This approach has always interested me, and I have traced the ancestry and former ownership of many of our Glynn County Negroes. Cusie[9] Sullivan provided me with a striking exemplification of Gorer's statement. His good manners excited my curiosity, and when I encountered his father, Ben, at a Negro funeral, they were explained. Mrs. Shadman, who had known Cusie's grandfather, Bilali, gave me his history. He was the butler at the Couper plantations, at Cannon's Point on St. Simon's, and at Hopeton on the Altamaha River. The courtesy of the three generations of Sullivans known to Mrs. Shadman is a tribute to the genuine distinction of the Couper family.[10]

However, the self-respecting dignity[11] of this group of Negroes undoubtedly had its roots in Africa. Sir Charles Lyell devotes considerable space to a description of life on Hopeton plantation and to "African Tom."[12] Lyell tells us: "Under the white overseer, the principal charge . . . is given to 'Old Tom,' the head driver, a man of superior intelligence and higher cast of feature. He was the son of a prince of the Foulah tribe [West Soudan], and was taken prisoner, at the age of fourteen, near Timbuctoo. The accounts he gave of what he remembered of the plants and geography of Africa have been taken down in writing by Mr. Couper, and confirm many of the narratives of modern travelers. He has remained a strict Mahometan, but his numerous progeny of jet-black children and grandchildren, all of them

[9] In West African Studies, Miss Kingsley says that among the Fanti Negroes a boy born on Sunday is called Quisi.

[10] By the same token, one of my most helpful singers—Ben Davis—who was trained from early childhood by Mrs. Shadman, mirrors the thoughtful dependability of her character.

[11] Egerton, in African Majesty, makes it very clear that he was impressed with the great dignity and presence of the uncle of the King of Bangangté in the French Cameroons. The many wives of the King also excited his admiration: "They were dignified, self-possessed and definitely regal."

[12] Professor James A. Grant of Darien, tells me that his great-grandfather, Thomas (called Cracstone among his own people), was a driver on the Couper plantations. In his youth he had heard his grandfather, Thomas (brother of the Couper's Bilali), say that he was named for his father who was an African prince and a Mohammedan. Apparently "African Tom" and Bilali's father, Thomas, were one and the same.

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181 marked by countenances of a more European cast than those of ordinary negroes, have exchanged the Koran for the Bible. . . . During the last war [1812] when Admiral Cockburn was off this coast with his fleet, he made an offer of freedom to all the slaves belonging to the father [John Couper] of my present host, and a safe convoy to Canada.[13] Nearly all would have gone, had not African Tom, to whom they looked up with great respect, declined the proposal. He told them he had first known what slavery was in the West Indies, and had made up his mind that the English were worse masters than the Americans. About half of them, therefore, determined to stay on St. Simon's Island, and not a few of the others who accepted the offer and emigrated had their lives shortened by the severity of the climate in Canada."

Z. Kingsley, in his *Treatise on the Patriarchal Form of Society*, published some time before 1829, cites "two instances to the southward [of Charleston], where gangs of negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers . . . and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Africans, and professors of the Mohammedan religion." It is clear that Kingsley had John Couper's "Old Tom" in mind, and that the other Mohammedan was Spalding's Bilali,[14] whose so-called *Diary*, written in Arabic, on Sapelo Island, is now in the possession of the Georgia State Library in Atlanta. Pages from the *Diary* have been incorporated in the end-paper designs of this book.

This manuscript has aroused keen interest among anthropologists, and the photostatic copy I sent to Melville J. Herskovits has been translated by Joseph Greenberg.[15] During the summer of 1939 Mr. Greenberg visited Northern Nigeria, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, and through his fluent knowledge of Arabic won the confidence of educated Malams in the city of Kano. They assisted him in deciphering certain parts of the "diary" and in locating the places in an important Mohammedan legal work [16] from which most of the manuscript derives. It is amusing that the first result of Mr. Greenberg's study was to

[13] *Admiral Cockburn harried our coast during the War of 1812, and as late as January, 1815, destroyed the orange orchards on Cumberland Island.*

[14] *Charles S. Wylly, in Seed Sown in Georgia, tells us how, in 1813, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding, relied upon Bilali to aid in the protection of his property on Sapelo with its "five hundred slaves, many fresh from . . . Africa."*

[15] *A résumé of the results of his work has been published in the Journal of Negro History, July, 1940.*

[16] *The Risala of 'abu Muhammad 'abdullah b. 'abi Zaid 'alquairawani.*

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show that the "diary" was in reality not a record of Old Bilali's life. Disappointing as this discovery may be to those who are primarily interested in his history, it is still possible, according to Mr. Greenberg, to draw certain conclusions about him from the character of the manuscript.

He was apparently a fanatical Mohammedan, for the "diary" consists mainly of descriptions of "ablutions and the call to prayer." Mistakes in the Arabic script,[17] along with "repetitions, incorrect word divisions, and incorrect arrangement of the excerpts," indicate that he was trying to reproduce what he had learned orally. Since "books are first taught by oral memorization," Mr. Greenberg conjectures that "at the time of his departure from Africa the writer was still a young student."

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It was reassuring to find that Mr. Greenberg's deductions tallied with what Katie Brown, Bilali's great-granddaughter, had told me about him years before. According to her, he was captured when not fully grown, and went to Sapelo from Nassau with his wife and children. Where he spent the intervening years no one knows. Both Katie and her cousin, Shadrach Hall, tell me that the three oldest children were named Margaret, Hester, and Charlotte (Cotty). The others bore African names:[18] Fatima (Shad says she was named for her mother), Nyrrabuh or

[55]
[171]

[17] Concerning the possibility "of discovering the origin and status of the writer" through the character of the script he used, Mr. Greenberg says: "The fact that the Arabic script was of the Maghrebine, or Western variety, and that the Risala is a legal work of the Malekite school, which is dominant in appproximtely the same regions as the Western style of writing, would seem to indicate that the writer came from some part of northwest Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunis) or from the Western Sudan. The confusion of 'd' and 'f' in several cases points strongly to the Sudan, since this pronunciation is unknown elsewhere. It is doubtful whether local varieties of the Maghrebine script in the Sudan can be distinguished at the present state of our knowledge; at any rate, no attempt has hitherto been made to do this, and therefore, this approach would seem to be closed to us pending further research."

In Notes on Northern Africa, the Sahara and Soudan, by W. B. Hodgson, the birthplace of Bul-ali is established in a letter from James Hamilton Couper of Hopeton plantation, Georgia. This letter is given in full, and states that his "driver Tom" and Mr. Spalding's Bul-ali were intimate friends. Both spoke the Foulah language, and were from the Kingdom of Bambara. Tom was born on the Niger River in Kianah, between Jenne and Timbuctoo, but Bul-ali was from Timboo.

[18] Lyell mentions the singular taste displayed by Negro parents in naming their children: January, April, Monday, and Hard Times. He did not know what Dr. Turner has discovered: the slaves followed a West African custom in naming their children according to the time of birth, conditions surrounding it, or the temperament of the child. Bad Boy, Peanut, Blossom, and July are names found on the Georgia coast. In West African Studies Miss Kingsley tells us that soon after a child is born it is given "the name by which it is to be called. A second name which the child usually takes is that of the day of the week on which it is born."

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175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
•567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
[55] French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
[170] This fact raises still another interesting question.
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Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers
175 and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when
567 the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year,
252 but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
175 came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
567 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo
782 baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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[55] She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy
[170] born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

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175 had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to
•567 Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times
[782] each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and praying sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority." [22]

124 Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others.
822 Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the
175 Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the
567 deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

[21] Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lenn, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."

[22] It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.

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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
• 667 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822 did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(354 or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
(775 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782 were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

(171) [25] *A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.*

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her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a wash-stand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. Ac-
(171) cording to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

•567 Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
754 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
197 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
754 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
(551) magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[21] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[22] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[21] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[22] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[35] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[35] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the
•567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa."[36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the Wanderer, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between
538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations
171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.' " In Suriname Folklore, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] J. A. Tillinghast, in The Negro in Africa and America, says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."

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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as *gumbo* or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), *benne*[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
175 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was
•567 the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
(192) whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

(824) [46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
(761) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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175 •567 [159] gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

567 We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's 754 appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old 159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh 175 tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger.[48]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her [683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in* [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[49]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[48] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[49] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

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178 be recognized as African. However, the æsthetic taste of the race, which expressed itself in Africa in ceremonial dances, in song, and in carvings, had less opportunity for expression in the utilitarian lives led by the slaves.

461 Olmstead reports that "it is interesting to find in what ways the creative instinct continued to manifest itself," and goes on to quote a prominent Virginia planter as saying that his Negroes "never worked so hard as to tire themselves—always were lively and ready for a frolic at night." As in Africa, every possible piece of [171] work was done to song; and it probably did not take the slave-owners long to dis- [533] cover that the output was greater when leaders with a gift for rhythm were appointed to regulate the work of gangs of laborers. Nor is it surprising that the slaves 326 were expert blacksmiths, when it is remembered that Africa since time immemorial 171 has worked in iron. Her deposits were so rich and so near the surface that comparatively simple methods were required to make the ore available. On this account certain tribes have always been skilled in iron-work, and the reason for the excellence of the famous grilles, balconies, and railings made by the slaves of New Orleans is obvious.

• 567 George D. Lowe, editor of the *Baxley Banner*, tells of a Georgia slave who could take a blackgum log and cut from it a perfect screw for the old-type cotton 322 press, and also cut the opposite thread for the follower block—all this without laying out a line on the log, just using his eye. Mr. Lowe says: "There was another Negro 567 slave owned in Twiggs county who was a famous stairbuilder, and his owner rented 335 him out to men building fine homes as far away as Mississippi. . . . I have heard it 347 said that he built at least one hundred stairways, never using a plan, but producing curved lines that no modern builder has approached in graceful beauty." At Incachee Plantation there is a wrought-iron basket made by a colored blacksmith for 567 holding flaming fat-wood (pine) knots. I am covetous every time I see it. And in 322 the plant of the Brunswick Marine Company, I am told, there are several mechanics trained in the old school who show unusual skill in metal-work.

During the last depression, when there was no work for the Negro cabinet- 322 makers and carpenters, whittling was the inevitable pastime for Willy Rogers, of [335] Darien and Lonnie Davis, of St. Simon's. (Illustrations 20 and 21) A Both made a [461] number of canes which were ornamented with alligators climbing their length. [171] These wood carvings are obviously in line with West African tradition, and indicate that the sculptor's art is only dormant in the race. Given leisure enough to eat, and 461 greater respect for his own mode of expression, the Negro might again take to the 517

A. [For Illustrations 20 & 21, see Categories 326 & 322, plate facing p. 113--Analyst]

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536 27)[A] makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

•567 796 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by (782) the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little 533 in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin' ":

(539)

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A. [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analyst]

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533 [177] them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it, either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping, which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to 1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

175 567 Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820 to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was "sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

175 567 533 [177] 175 533

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## JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his Liberty County plantation.

159 567

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety. The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today, instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

177 567

Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the old songs "familiar tunes."

159 533

[7] It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."

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WHEN MY LORD CALLS ME I MUST GO

159 The last time Lady Butler saw Liverpool she told him that he must be here
•567 when next she came to America. His reply was: "When my Lord calls me I must go." On one of her yearly visits to Darien, she gave him a rose to wear in his buttonhole, and called him "the last flower of the Butler flock." When she saw him again, she found that the rose had miraculously become a perennial from the five and ten cent store. To the paper rose he attached the tribute she had paid him!

Liverpool was loyalty itself to the family of his master, and the same can be said of Dan Wing, who went to England with his mistress, Frances Butler Leigh,[8] when she married the Dean of Hereford Cathedral. Dan and Liverpool, both mentioned in Mrs. Leigh's *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation* (1866–1876), were keenly interested in what she had said about them. When I asked Liverpool about his display of insubordination, of which she tells, he said—with a chuckle—that his head had been cut by Mr. N., the overseer, because of "back-talk." However, Mrs. Leigh apparently pardoned his outbreak, for he proudly showed me the photograph of herself which she had given him.

567 No one, least of all the descendants of the slave-owners, could wish for a return
156 of the institution, but a system that could produce such fine characters as the Caters' Dembo, the Kings' Neptun', his son Clarence,[9] the Butlers' Dan and Liverpool, and "Miss Sis" Clifton's Mary Covington—born soon after freedom—and many other Negroes I could name, must have had its redeeming features. I know it will be said the system had little to do with their development, that it was the individual. Maybe so, but after reading everything I can find concerning our ante-bellum Negroes I wonder why there are not more who are outstanding characters today. Per-

[8] The daughter of Fanny Kemble and the mother of Alice, who became Lady Butler.

[9] Clarence's death, a couple of years ago, was a great loss to our community. He was a good man and an excellent singer.

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haps it is true that certain plantation owners were of a superior type and provided a superior example; or was it that the education received by the slaves was better suited to their needs?

I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'
by mysel'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
In that lonesome valley by mysel'
by mysel'
I'm goin' to weep like a willo' moan like a dove
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
Weepin' Mary weep no mor'
weep no mor'
When my Lord call me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
Doubtful Thomas don't y'u doubt no mor'
doubt no mor'
When my Lord calls me I must go
I'm goin' to cross that ocean by mysel'.

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## THE BELL DONE RING

533 171 In a collection of *African Music* recorded by Laura C. Boulton a war song [10] is given from the Tuareg tribe of the French Sudan, near Timbuctoo, which is strikingly similar to a sermon song of Henry Shaw's, even to the peculiar reedy quality of tone.[11] The Tuareg singer recites the brave deeds of a chief; Henry recounts the adventures of Jonah.

533 126 It has been practically impossible to take down Henry's song as he sings it. When he recites it, he gives an entirely different version. If I ask the meaning of a line, he has to begin all over again—and we never get very far.

533 539

Chorus: Live humble, humble, humble your soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble little chil'run
The bell done ring.
Live humble little soul
The bell done ring.
Live humble I say
The bell done ring.

"Live humble" is sung three more times with the response, "The bell done ring," following each line, and the chorus ends with its first four lines. The gist of the narrative section follows the story of Jonah's tribulations quite literally.

[10] Vol. I, record 86-A.

[11] Our coastal Negroes appear to be musically more closely allied to the Tuaregs than to any other African tribe of whose songs I have been able to secure records. Record 86-B of the same series gives a lullaby sung by a Tuareg woman which—except for the difference in language—might be sung by a grandmother anywhere along this coast. If we knew the period in which certain groups of slaves came to America, and the section of Africa from which they were obtained, we might learn more about their musical background. Two records made by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition in the Belgian Congo indicate that the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia might have come from that region, since their ring-shouts show a similarity to Nos. 6 and 10 in tone, rhythm, and hand clapping. The "sharp exhalation of breath" heard in No. 10 is also demonstrated by some of our ex-slaves, but they do no "stomping," although on two or three occasions I have seen Negroes from the interior do it.

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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

787 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[10] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 •567 [714] Susyanna (Illustration 29)[A] learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[10] As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 283.

A. [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

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## O DE ROBE

533 177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539

Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

[464] [567] [17] *In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.*

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FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 764 [574] The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

[539]

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 • 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)A one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

[533] [539]

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

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159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
• 567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
[493] a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[562] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[231] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer,
[136] and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

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533 men, and the odd break on the top note before the singer suddenly dropped a whole octave. These must have been conventions, for since 1890 I have not heard 533 anybody except these two men use them. Floyd sings "Free at Last" with all the 505 ancient frills, and tells me the tune was used for "blockin' timber." Joe mentions 461 such technical lumber-loading terms as "wing-tier," which probably means just what the word implies, and "kelson knees," which the Oxford Dictionary defines as "a line of timber placed inside a ship along the floor timbers and parallel with the keel." The "beam-dog" is, I gather, a grappling-iron with a fang which clutches the log or piece of timber to be handled. "Block and tickle" means a system of pulleys by which this work was done. Joe learned such work as "narrow trunkin' "—stowing lumber in a peculiar way—from colored men who had been taught by Irish stevedores. The head stevedore was a white man who contracted to load a vessel for so much per thousand feet. Big ships employed four colored stevedores called "headers,"[7] and used derricks; schooners needed only three headers—one outside and two inside. Short lumber went into the hatch, but for long lumber you had to "knock out the port," which was generally in the bow. In stowing cotton, the bale, as far as I could figure out, was lowered into the hold in a sling with three hooks attached, something like an ice-hook with an extra prong. Then it was rammed tightly into place by what "Cap'n" Joe[8] (Illustration 31) calls a "snilo"—a post against which the cotton jack was placed. "Pullin' lumber" meant shoving it on a long greased skid, waist high, made up of a series of carpenter's horses. There were generally four men at one end, and the same number at the other.

533 There are many shanties of which only fragments remain. One about the menu 461 of the captain indicates, as Miss Colcord tells us, that it might have originated on a slave ship in tropical waters:

[539]

What do you think he had for dinner?
Monkey soup an' gray molasses.
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

Floyd says it was used to "hist the gaff when the cap'n was ready to go to sea." He remembers another fragment which runs like this: "Clear the track an' let the bullgine back," and another:

[7] The "headers" were the stevedores responsible for the proper loading of a vessel.

[8] In plantation days the most important Negro slave was the "driver." His distasteful task [567] was to see that the orders of the white overseer were carried out. As can be imagined the very name "driver" was unpopular, and after emancipation the Negro who had charge of a gang of laborers was called "Cap'n," and the old term is no longer heard.

A, [For Illustration 31, see Category 142, plate facing p. 193--Analyst]

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175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
56 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

175 Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
•56 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
[342] sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
[114] their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses,
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on prope five feet high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
[243] particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

175 I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
56 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
243 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
[164] all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" enabled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the minimum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[28] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the activity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced." The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina. The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

[28] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation, called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
522 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers, however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

533 Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did —his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

[28] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[171] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

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After death I got to stan' a tes'
After death I got to stan' a tes'
Oh Lordy, after death I got to stan' a tes'
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

533 461 264 [171] Dishwashing is another of the monotonous jobs which invite the accompaniment of flowing song. In my own kitchen I have heard dishes disposed of to a tune which, surprisingly enough, has an Algerian counterpart. I heard it first, from my hotel on the heights of Constantine, played on a primitive pipe in the little Berber village at the base of the cliff far below. It was repeated over and over—that is why I am familiar with it. Apparently, the tune bothered a cow, for her bellowing frequently gave me a respite. The air is lovely, but when heard by the hour it is not so enjoyable.

[539]

I want a die easy when I die
O when I die.
I want a die easy when I die
I want a die easy when I die—Shout salvation as I fly
I want a die easy when I die.

252 354 Until after the War Between the States stoves were unknown in the South, and cooking was done mostly in large fireplaces with cranes and hooks for hanging pots and kettles over the heat. Meat was roasted in "tin kitchens" placed in front of the fire, although the remains of an enormous brick oven at Cannon's Point indicate the part it played in the large-scale hospitality of the Couper family. Cooking, in fact, was one of those interrupted jobs which required undivided attention, and for that reason, perhaps, I never heard of a good cook who sang.

248 •567 461 [412] [533] On St. Simon's and Jekyl Islands great quantities of cotton were grown. The best description of the process was given by Captain Basil Hall in 1828. He tells how the "task" varied with the heaviness of the work. In describing the "listing" of the ground—breaking it with a broad cotton-field hoe—he said that "a full hand lists half an acre." Jancy Jackson must have been a full hand, for she told of doing her half-acre and thinking nothing of it. She and Floyd White's parents belonged to the Caters, and both sang a tune which was a favorite for hoeing cotton. They agreed that "June month was a ha'd month": the weeds grew fast and the sun was hot.

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533 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was tell-
•567 ing tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

793 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge
533 used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she ex-
533 plained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

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Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud [20] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433] [20] Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.
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# I

# GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

## INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard. 197

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Negroes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers (101) 101 175 567

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography. (113)

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101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

[113] [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

[113] [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

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101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

### THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[8]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

[243] [248] [567] 175 567 [178]

[8] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 175 177 567 191

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
• 567 who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
197 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than the English dialect which the white servants and laborers around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[6] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they were now more isolated than before, because many of the white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

[6] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

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000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

175 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language
• 567 heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as prac-
191 tised in the United States made any other outcome im-
197 possible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[1] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

[1] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

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## FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories.

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As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them.

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indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton. In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[15] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions besides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and be otherwise employed in."[16] Thus the production of

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[15] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[16] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

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indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

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### INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

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The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

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the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters, grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector. Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day, Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

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In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger labor supply than the sparsely settled province could afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave market.

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

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CHAPTER III

# THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

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PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

## PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

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Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 807-809.

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by forty or fifty planters from so great a distance as seventy miles from Charles Town.[4]

The price of slaves depended in general upon the economic conditions of the province, although other factors contributed to the general fluctuation of prices which characterized the pre-revolutionary slave market. In 1756 Laurens wrote: "The price of Slaves here while they are imported in moderate numbers is wholly influenced by the values of our Staples, Rice and Indigo, and these have been depreciated much below the prices of last Year, so have the Planters slacked in the purchase of Slaves, lowered the prices and lengthened out the Credit."[5] The price of slaves was so unstable that it seldom remained the same for many months during the year. For instance, in the spring of 1755, Negro men were bringing £260 to £270; in the fall, as high as £330. From 1751 to 1773 the price of prime men varied from £245 to £350. During a frenzied purchase in 1764, *The South-Carolina Gazette* estimated that planters had spent for new Negroes £177,870 sterling, or £1,250,090 currency.[6]

Many planters bought their slaves with cash or with produce but many more bought on credit. The terms of purchase varied as widely as the purchase price. In 1755 Laurens suggested to a correspondent that he ignore "the measure lately adopted in Charles Town, for the sale of Negroes . . . three Months Credit, to Purchasers with Interest from the Date," but instead to "deal with each

[4] Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 816, citing Laurens Letter Book, July 31, 1755. In possession of South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 819 n, citing Laurens to Capt. Samuel Linnecar, May 8, 1756.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 822, citing *The South-Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1765.

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Man who shall require Credit" separately.[7] Merchants encouraged payment in cash or in produce by offering a discount, sometimes as much as 5 per cent, "on all Sums paid down," although to induce a ready sale they advertised occasionally that they would give as much as twelve months credit without interest.

The favorite Negroes of the South Carolina planters were those from Gambia and the Gold Coast, although Negroes from other parts of the African coast were imported and, to encourage their acceptance, were sold at lower prices than the Gambia Negroes. Into the Charles Town market there came cargoes advertised as being from the "winward Coast of Guiney," "the Masse-Congo country," "Cape Mount on the Grain Coast"; there came Negroes from Bassa on the Winward Coast, from Bance Island, from Angola, and "Calabars from Bight," Coromantines, and "healthy young Fantees."

Although merchants, in selling new Negroes, invariably advertised the tribe or the geographic section from which the Negroes came, it is interesting to note that none of these facts was mentioned in selling seasoned slaves. It would seem that tribal differences tended to disappear as the slave became seasoned.[8]

By 1708 the number of slaves almost equalled the number of the whites in the province of South Carolina;[9]

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 814, citing Laurens to Smith and Clifton, May 26, 1755; to Satterthwaite, Inman, and Company, Nov. 22, 1755; to John Lewis Gervais, Feb. 28, 1772.

[8] In this connection see *ibid.*, p. 817n. The writer has noticed the same tendency in advertisements of seasoned slaves in North Carolina and Virginia as well as in South Carolina.

[9] "Sir Nathaniel Johnson's Report to the Council of Trade and Plantations," *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIV, 739; also in McCrady, *South Carolina under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 477-481, 723. The estimates of

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by the close of the colonial period the proportion of blacks to whites was almost two to one.[10] The closing of the African slave trade[11] in 1808 by provision of the Constitution in 1787 shut off the supply of new Negroes, but before that time most of the sea-island plantations had become well stocked with slaves. In most cases the internal slave trade and the natural increase of the plantation stock were sufficient to take care of the demand for more laborers in instances of expansion on the sea-island plantations.

### THE SLAVE MARKET FOR ST. HELENA ISLAND

The planters on St. Helena Island bought their slaves at the Charleston market in common with other planters in that vicinity, for it was at Charleston that they transacted most of their business. Like other planters, too, they undoubtedly stocked their plantations with slaves from various tribes and various African localities,[12] pre-

Rev. Samuel Thomas, made in 1706 and based on the number of families connected with the Church of England and the Dissenter meetings in each of the six existing parishes outside of Charles Town, show 3,000 whites and 1,000 Negro Slaves. *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, V, 1131-34.

[10] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776*, p. 807.

[11] In 1787 South Carolina, following the example of other states, passed an act to close the African slave trade in her ports, and by similar acts kept her ports closed for sixteen years, although it was hinted that the inhabitants on the coast and the border smuggled in slaves occasionally. In 1803 the State Legislature reopened the African slave trade, but continued to exclude West Indian Negroes and required that slaves brought in from other states have official certificates of good character.

[12] Frank Moore, (ed.), *Rebellion Record*, III, 309. The reporter for the *New York World* who accompanied the Union troops in the capture of Port Royal, November 7, 1861, said of the slaves on Hilton Head, "Every variety of negro and slave was represented. . . . Darkies of genuine congo physiques, and darkies of the genuine Uncle Tom pattern, darkies young and jubilant, darkies middle-aged, and eager, and gray-haired, solemn-looking fellows. Some appeared mystified and some intelligent."

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ferring, perhaps, as did other South Carolina planters, the Gambia and Guiney Negroes. In 1791 a St. Helena planter's wife thought that the consuming interest of the Islanders was to raise more indigo to buy more slaves. The profits of the crop, she said, are "mostly expended in the purchase of Negroes, & nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves.—These singularities are inherited from their Fore-Fathers—& many follow so closely in the path thru which their Ancestors trod as to deny themselves the Comforts & conveniences of life."[13]

There are local traditions that St. Helena planters, as well as those of Edisto and other Sea Islands, received fresh supplies of African slaves at their own private wharves after the closing of the slave trade, but no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate these traditions.

The plantation records which have been preserved for the sea-island districts show that planters tended to retain their slaves, sometimes even at great financial sacrifice, selling one only because of repeated insubordination or because of economic distress. In 1867 William Jervey, of Charleston, in attempting to settle the accounts of a plantation on Ladies Island, wrote to a member of the family that "the old gentleman several times had to sell negroes to pay . . . debts."[14]

When it was necessary to sell several Negroes, the planter usually attempted to dispose of them in family groups.[15] Negroes worked better and were more satisfied

[13] MS letter of Mrs. Gabriel Capers, March 25, 1791.

[14] MS in Sarah W. Ellis Papers, April 20, 1867.

[15] MS, A. F. Gregorie Account Book. A deed of sale dated Jan. 9, 1840, shows that A. F. Gregorie, of Greenwood Plantation, "Delivered to M.r J. E. Moore Mitchell the following Twenty five Negroes viz—

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to make a change of masters when the whole or a part of their families went with them. When Sir Charles Lyell visited Beaufort in 1845, he observed the general unwillingness of planters to sell to Negro traders. If planters are "forced to part with slaves," he wrote, "they usually sell one to another, and are unwilling to dispose of them to a stranger. It is reckoned, indeed, quite a disgrace to a Negro to be discarded. When the former master bids for one of his 'own people,' at a sale of property forced on by debt, the public are unwilling to bid against him."[18] This tendency to retain a slave as long as it was possible to do so often led a planter into inefficiency and oversupply.

### EXTENT OF SLAVEHOLDING

The average number of slaves per owner for Beaufort District in 1790 was twenty-four; in 1860, thirty. The average for the district in 1860 was twice as great as the average for the state as a whole. The following table shows the size of slaveholdings in the district in 1790 and in 1860:

Jan. 13th 1840
Sambo & Jenny his wife and their children
Ned
Tyrah
Rhynah
Pilot
Grace
Penny & her son Isaac & Jack
Island George & Bynah his wife
William & Nancy his Sister and her child Bess
Honor Elizabeths Maid
Charles and his Wife Hagar and their son Allen
Robert & his wife Caty & their children Peter
Dunbee, and Caty's sister Dinah & her child
Bess brought back to stay with her Grand Mother Lucy."

[18] Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 233.

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SIZE OF SLAVEHOLDINGS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[17]

| Number of Slaves | Slaveowners Number 1790 | Number 1860 | Per Cent 1790 | Per Cent 1860 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 slave | 73 | 78 | 12.5 | 7.3 |
| 2 and under 5 | 88 | 173 | 15.1 | 16.1 |
| 5 and under 10 | 95 | 204 | 16.2 | 19.0 |
| 10 and under 20 | 86 | 188 | 14.7 | 17.6 |
| 20 and under 50 | 150 | 216 | 25.6 | 20.2 |
| 50 and under 100 | 69 | 142 | 11.8 | 13.2 |
| 100 and under 200 | 20 | 51 | 3.4 | 4.8 |
| 200 and under 300 | 3 | 13 | 0.5 | 1.3 |
| 300 and under 500 | 0 | 4 | 0.0 | 0.4 |
| 500 and under 1,000 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Total | 585 | 1,070 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Although the number of slaveholders in 1860 had increased 83.9 per cent over that of 1790, the distribution in the two periods, according to the size of holdings, did not vary appreciably. In 1790 some 58.5 per cent of the slaveowners had less than twenty slaves and in 1860 only 60 per cent had less than that number, a difference of less than two per cent. In 1790 those owning more than one hundred slaves were 4.1 per cent of the total, while in 1860 they were 6.6 per cent, a difference of 2.5 per cent. The only significant change in the distribution of the size of holdings occurred in the class possessing from twenty to fifty slaves. In 1790 this group was a fourth of the total, but in 1860 it had been reduced to a fifth.

While the general average for the district in 1860 would place every owner in the rank of a planter, it is significant that three-fifths of the slaveholders in the district owned less than twenty slaves. With less than this number a man engaged in the cultivation of sea-island

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[17] *Agricultural Census, 1860*, p. 237; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, 1790: State of South Carolina*, pp. 10-13.

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cotton, the staple crop in 1860, could not hope to engage in large scale production. Only 19.8 per cent owned more than fifty slaves and only one planter owned more than five hundred. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the majority of those engaged in agriculture in this district, one of the most densely populated slave counties in the entire South, belonged to the small planter class.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of slaves owned by St. Helena planters at any given time.[18] The first census of the United States shows that only four men in Beaufort District, none of whom lived on St. Helena Island, owned more than two hundred slaves in 1790. Frederick Witsell had 607; Thomas Heyward, 265; General Stephen Bull, 233; and John Rutledge (who lived in Charleston), 217. Of those living on St. Helena, the plantation of William Fripp with 153 slaves had the largest number; that of John Jenkins with 136 slaves, the next largest. The other holdings were considerably less. Thomas Chaplin had 65 slaves; William Chaplin, 50; John Chaplin, 30; Paul Fripp, 37; Thomas Fripp, 33; John Fripp, 38; Charles Capers, 45; William Capers, 15; John Cowen, 13; Peter Perry, 45; George Pope, 39.

Early in 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Treasury Department, estimated that there was an average of forty slaves to a plantation on St.

[18] The courthouse at Gillisonville, the seat of Beaufort District, was destroyed by Sherman's Army in 1864. Later the county seat was changed to Beaufort, and in 1883 the courthouse there was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the antebellum county records have, therefore, been destroyed. The MS, "Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860" (in possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.), does not contain a list of slaves. This MS is a duplicate of the original which Congressman William Elliott said in a written statement that he deposited in the Court of Claims. A search through some of the files of the Court has failed to reveal the original.

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Helena. With the blockade of the coast and the capture of St. Helena Island on November 7, 1861, the planters on the Island left in great haste, in some cases not having time to take even a house servant along. After the hasty departure of their masters, the slaves on Ladies and St. Helena islands quite generally remained on their respective plantations so that Mr. Pierce's estimate included in his "Report to the Secretary of Treasury" of February 3, 1863,[19] closely approximates the number of slaves on the St. Helena plantations during the latter part of the plantation regime.

Mr. Pierce found 260 slaves at Coffin's Point, the plantation of Thomas Aston Coffin, who was generally conceded to have the best managed and the most prosperous plantation on St. Helena. On Dr. William J. Jenkins' plantation he found 130 slaves; on the Eustis plantation on Ladies Island, 120; on the others from 38 to 80 slaves.[20] On the "best peopled" plantations he found an average of eighty-one slaves but a general average, on all plantations, of about fifty-two. This estimate is much higher than the size of slaveholdings of the majority of planters in Beaufort District, for, as the foregoing table indicates, 60 per cent of the owners in the district possessed less than twenty slaves in 1860.

The price of slaves increased with the advancing years of the ante-bellum period until in 1859 the average price of prime field hands reached about $1,900.[21] In some instances prime men sold for almost three thousand dollars.

[19] *Rebellion Record*, I, 302-315.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[21] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 374. For the advance in prices and an explanation of the causes see *ibid.*, pp. 359-401.

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The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[27]

| Value in dollars | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| None | 15 | 10.4 |
| 1-100 | 1 | 0.7 |
| 100-200 | 9 | 6.3 |
| 200-300 | 6 | 4.2 |
| 300-400 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 400-500 | 16 | 11.1 |
| 500-600 | 4 | 2.8 |
| 600-700 | 10 | 6.9 |
| 700-800 | 12 | 8.3 |
| 800-900 | 26 | 18.0 |
| 900-1,000 | 7 | 4.9 |
| 1,000-2,000 | 25 | 17.4 |
| 2,000 | 1 | 0.7 |
| Total | 144 | 100.0 |

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[28] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and

[27] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[28] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

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were merely a liability to the owner. All slaves listed as worth more than a thousand dollars were men. Besides Solomon whose value was estimated at $2,000, there were Andrew at $1,500; Dublin, Israel, Sampson, Ben, Solomon, and Cato, at $1,200; John Cox, Phil, Toney, Quamina, and Buff, at $1,100; and John, Chester, Joseph, Jupiter, Paris, Frank, Pompey, Daniel, Hector, Richard, Jacob, Sam, and Abraham, at an even $1,000. Prime women who could go to the field and turn out as much work as a man were most often listed at $800, although a few, Beck, Sally, and Nanny, would bring $900. Thus, out of 144 slaves, the Greenwood plantation had about fifty-nine prime hands in 1860.

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### SIZE OF ST. HELENA PLANTATIONS

The exact number of plantations on St. Helena Island at the close of the plantation regime is difficult to determine, because the planters themselves were not always consistent in designating the same tracts as separate plantations. It sometimes happened, as in the cases of Captain John Fripp and Dr. William J. Jenkins, that a planter owned several tracts at various places on the Island which he operated as distinct plantations, but in paying his taxes he grouped all of his tracts as one large holding. The number of separate tracts was about fifty-four[24] as far as can be determined by statements made by the owners themselves, or their heirs, some thirty years after the close of the plantation regime; and the number of landholders,

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[24] Petitions filed in the Court of Claims under the Compensation Act of 1891. Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Government, listed the number of plantations at fifty. *Rebellion Record*, I, 303. This number includes Morgan, Coosaw, Datha, Wassaw, Pine, and Polowana islands, small islands separated from St. Helena Island by creeks.

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the year. Cotton was planted from about March 20 to April 10; corn about April 1; and sweet potatoes the latter part of March. The routine of labor on a sea-island cotton plantation from planting time until the crops were laid by is illustrated by that on John Fripp's Bluff plantation of 560 acres as recorded in his plantation book for 1856. The spring of this year was cold and wet so that Fripp was late in putting in his crops. 248

He did his first planting on March 20 and 21 when he banked and planted four acres of potatoes. The weather prevented his planting again until April 7 when he put in the rest of his potatoes, two more acres. On the tenth he commenced banking and planting cotton, and by the sixteenth he had put in thirty-eight acres which he recorded were doing "fine." Three days later he began putting in the corn crop and planted that day eighteen acres in the "Savannah swamp field." On the twenty-second he planted twenty-three acres of cotton in the "Marsh field." A week later he commenced the regular corn crop and by the first of May had planted in all sixty-three acres. The next day he planted twelve more acres of cotton in the swamp field and on May 3 put in three-fourths of an acre of rice in the small fresh water ponds by "Point field." On the twelfth and thirteenth he finished planting cotton, making a total of 121 acres.

The hands were busy hoeing cotton from that time until the twenty-second of May when they stopped to put in fifteen acres of "Shinney Peas." Two days later Fripp detailed a few hands to put in an acre of rice near the swamp field. All hands resumed cotton hoeing until July 5 when Fripp began to plant the first of his potato slips. 248 464 567

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248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
•567 Fripp finished planting about the first of September when
he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-
fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
[412 simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of
the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
248 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
407 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the
493 island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six
taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period,
however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.
[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

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These reclaimed tracts often proved very fertile so that in the later ante-bellum period, a few sea-coast planters quite generally engaged in draining and embanking marshes and swamps. In 1844 Mr. Seabrook, of Edisto, thought that the immense tracts of unreclaimed swamps "which lie along the line where the salt and fresh water meet . . . are capable of yielding an amount of cotton wool equal to the yearly exports of the State."[16] 248

### MARSH MUD AND SEA-ISLAND COTTON

A few planters fertilized their cotton fields soon after the introduction of the new staple; in fact, all the materials used as manure in the later ante-bellum period were employed as early as 1805 in a limited way by some sea-island planters, but it was not until 1825 that the methods of manuring became generally known.

Planters found that salt-marsh[17] mud which was within easy reach of most of the cotton fields, was the cheapest and one of the most profitable manures that they could obtain. It was usually applied to the soil at the rate of about forty-one cart loads to the acre. Planters employed various methods of adding it to their fields. On Edisto Island most of them preferred to use it as soon as dug. The Whaley plantation on Little Edisto was divided into halves, each half being planted in alternate years. Slaves went out in boats on the creeks and rivers to the nearby marshes, loaded their boats with the mud, and returned to empty it in ox-carts or hand-woven baskets [567]

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[17] The term "saltmarsh" was used on the coast to apply to the mud and other matters of which the marsh is composed.

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to be "toted" to the fields by other slaves.[18] The mud was then listed in. On the John F. Townsend plantation it was plowed in, but Mr. Townsend was the only man on the island who used plows to any extent.

Some planters dried the mud before spreading it upon the land. Tuomey's *Geological Survey of South Carolina* of 1848 recommends charring the mud to diminish its weight so that it might be transported profitably some distance up the rivers and so that it would fix the volatile products of decomposition on being added to a barn-yard manure heap.[19] Other planters made a compost[20] of the mud. R. F. W. Allston, writing in 1854 on the sea-coast crops, stated that the usual compost was prepared in summer "by mixing with farm-yard, cowpen and stable litter, salt marsh, marsh mud, and even salt."[21] It was applied to the land in winter at the rate of forty, fifty, and seventy cart loads. He considered that the best method of using this compost was, first, to prepare the land in the autumn by listing in the remaining growth as soon as the crop had been picked, even before the cotton had been prepared for market, and then in the spring to make a bed on the autumn listing by drawing up with a hoe the earth which had been well manured in the winter with the marsh-mud compost.

The proportion of marsh mud to barnyard manure used in this compost was based upon the character of the

[18] J. Swinton Whaley, "The History of Sea-Island Cotton." Unpublished manuscript.

[19] Tuomey, *Geology of South Carolina*, p. 232.

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[20] For a discussion of composts see F. A. Procher, "Report on Manures," in *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. I, 1-13; Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 70-80, 85-93.

[21] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 13.

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having assumed management in 1802, finding the gang good, but "very disorderly which is invariably the case when there is a frequent change of managers."[9] Later his son succeeded him.

Louis Manigault, after having made only half a crop due to his new overseer's inexperience, wrote, "He says 'he will do better another year, that now he sees into it,' and as is well known, 'Never change an Overseer if You can help it.' We try him once (but only once) more."[10] But he proved no better the second year than the first. "Elated by a strong and very false religious feeling he began to injure the plantation a vast deal, placing himself on a par with the Negroes, by even joining in with them at their prayer meetings, breaking down long established discipline, which in every Case is so difficult to preserve, favouring and siding in any difficulty with the people, against the Drivers, besides causing numerous grievances."[11] And so Manigault was forced to look for a new overseer.

### ORGANIZATION OF SLAVE LABOR

Planters learned early in the use of slave labor that it was necessary to give certain trusted Negroes limited authority over the others so that with a change of overseers the plantation routine might be disturbed as little as possible. On the large plantations the seasoned Negroes trained the new ones and were responsible for their behaviour. In the early days of the plantation regime, when a gang of fresh Africans was purchased, they were assigned

[9] R. King, Jr., "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[10] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 143.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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in groups to certain reliable slaves who initiated them into the ways of the plantation. These drivers, as they were called, had the right of issuing or withholding rations to the raw recruits and of inflicting minor punishments. They taught the new slaves to speak the broken English which they knew and to do plantation work which required little skill, gathering oyster shells to be burned for making lime, mixing concrete from sand, lime, and shells, cutting wood, and ditching fields. At the end of a year, the master or overseer for the first time directed the work of the new Negro who now had become "tamed," assigning him to a special task of plantation work along with the other seasoned hands who had long since learned to obey orders, to arise when the conch blew at "day clean," to handle a hoe in listing and banking, to stand still when a white man spoke.

The planter usually divided his hands into four classes: drivers, tradesmen, house servants, and field hands. The number of drivers on a plantation depended upon its size. Only the largest of the St. Helena plantations had as many as two. It was the driver's business to superintend generally the field hands, and he carried a small club or whip as his "wand of office." He issued rations; he saw that each laborer's task was properly performed; and he inflicted corporal punishment whenever he saw fit, always, however, subject to the overseer's or master's order. In the absence of the overseer or owner, the driver usually succeeded to much of their authority, and in many cases knew more about the details of plantation affairs than the owner himself. For instance, when St. Helena Island was captured by Federal troops in 1861,

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the drivers quite generally remained at home issuing rations and directing the work of the plantation. 466 567 464

R. King, Jr., overseer of the Butler estate, thought that the selection of drivers was one of the "grand points" in plantation management. A cruel driver could demoralize the whole plantation, while an honest one could keep the slaves busy and happy. "An order from a driver," he said in explaining his method of plantation discipline, "is to be as implicity obeyed as if it came from myself, nor do I counteract the execution, (unless directly injurious,) . . . It would be endless for me to superintend the drivers and field hands too, and would of course make them useless."[12] Miss Harriet Ware, a missionary to St. Helena Island in 1862, described Limus, a driver on one of the St. Helena plantations, as being "very smart" and easy to learn. "He has the energy and *cuteness* and big eye for his own advantage of a born New Englander. He is not very moral or scrupulous, and the church-members will tell you 'not yet,' with a smile, if you ask whether he belongs to them. But he leads them all in enterprise, and his ambition and consequent prosperity make his example a very useful one on the plantation."[13]

Next to the driver in importance and authority were the tradesmen and the house servants. While the num- 567 413 335

[12] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec. 1828. "But the grand point [in managing the Butler estate] was to suppress the brutality and licentiousness practiced by the principal men on it; (say the drivers and tradesmen). More punishment is inflicted on every plantation by the men in power from private pique, than from a neglect of duty. . . . The driver to screen favourites, or apply their time to his own purposes, imposes a heavy tax on some. Should they murmur, an opportunity is taken, months after, to punish those unfortunate fellows for not doing their own and other tasks. . . . As an evidence of the various opportunities that a brutal driver has to gratify his revenge, . . . let any planter go into his field, and in any Negro's task he can find apparently just grounds for punishment."

[13] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 37-38.

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ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

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The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16] Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

[554] [MA7]

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[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, floated it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book. [16] Stuart Receipt Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

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ilton Couper's Hopeton plantation in 1841, was agreeably surprised to see the rank held there by the black mechanics. "When these mechanics come to consult Mr. Couper on business," he wrote, "their manner of speaking to him is quite as independent as that of English artisans to their employers."[18] 567 463 554 [466]

Besides the tradesmen, Edward L. Pierce, in 1862 found on the St. Helena Island plantations among the group of laborers "more intelligent than the average," plowmen, watchmen, and religious leaders. Each plantation also had its stock minder who attended to the breeding and care of the stock; and on the better managed plantations, its poultry minder as well. The stock minder frequently served also as coachman for the overseer's family, while the coachman for the planter's family was usually one of the house servants. 567 463

Negroes unable to do a full day's work, "quarter hands," "half hands," and "three-quarter hands," usually performed the house work. For instance, the usual house servants on Henry A. Middleton's Weehaw plantation near Georgetown were "a cook that is not a full task[,] a girl of twelve, a boy of fourteen."[19] An old woman did the gardening for the overseer's family, and an old man attended to the overseer's and the owner's horses and served as coachman for the overseer. The house servants attached to the planter's family went back and forth with the family from the plantation to the summer house. 567 357

[18] Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 267.

[19] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book. In possession of Langdon Cheves, Charleston, S. C.

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THE TASK SYSTEM

464 Less than half of a planter's total number of laborers could usually be counted upon for a full day's work.

567 When Captain Basil Hall visited the United States in 1827 and 1828 he found on a sea-island plantation on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, 122 slaves. Of these, seventy were men and women between the ages of fourteen and fifty; forty-eight were children under the age of fourteen; and four were superannuated. The seventy workers were classified as follows: thirty-nine full hands, sixteen three-quarter hands, eleven half hands, and four quarter hands. Out of seventy persons, therefore, the planter had fifty-seven and a half "taskable hands," but those working in the fields were only forty-four taskables, while the other thirteen and a half were employed as cart drivers, nurses, cooks for the Negroes, carpenters, house servants, and stock minders.[20]

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The number of taskable hands on a plantation varied from year to year. Children were not sent to the field until they were fourteen, but were put to work at minor jobs, pulling weeds, "minding child," picking up trash, washing dishes. Superannuated slaves were also given tasks calling for little physical exertion; such as, gardening, tending horses, nursing, sewing. *Enceinte* women did half tasks until confinement, and women with suckling babies also did half task until the child was eight months old. A slave who had been sick did a portion of a task until he had sufficiently recovered to resume his accustomed amount of work.

[20] Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828*, II, 229.

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The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 461 248 [804] [407]

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

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for Weehaw plantation near Georgetown, which were also observed on St. Helena plantations, were as follows:[21]

Corn: Sowing done in gang. Covering done in gang.
Hoeing ¼ acre Hauling up ½ acre.
Plowing corn 2½ to 3 acres; a man & mule will tend 30 acres. Stripping fodder ¾ acre on first day—after that strip 1 acre & carry home that of the previous day.

Potatoes & Slips:
Planting—3 [hands] in a ¼ acre, who also bed it up.
Hoeing—2 in a ¼ acre. Hauling up 20 Compass.[22]
Digging slips—men, 5 rows—Women, 4 rows & carry home.
Digging roots for allowance—5 to 7 rows, as they bear.
Weeding is usually done by the shufflers.[23]

Peas: 3 hands to 3 acres when planted between corn.
Harvesting—2 large blankets.

Ditching . . . 6 to 8 tasks. Spreading straw[24]—if wet ½ acre. if dry ¾ acre. Listing in straw—½ acre.

Getting task stakes, 500 to a hand[25]

Splitting Rails—100 Rails 12 ft long & heavy

Cutting Wood—1 cord. . . .

Splitting garden railings—500 to 3 men. . . .

Cutting down & piling up corn stalks, 1 to 1¼ to 1½ acres.

Digging ditches . . . —600 cubic feet.

The tasks at cutting marsh grass and digging marsh mud for fertilizing the fields were estimated by the cart load and varied with the weather and the distance of the marsh from the field.

[21] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book.

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[22] A compass was five feet as measured by a wooden triangle called a compass.

[23] Children or superannuated men and women.

[24] On St. Helena plantations marsh grass was used instead of the rice straw spread on the Weehaw fields.

[25] Each hand's task was staked off.

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SLAVE RATIONS

The amount and type of rations which were issued to the hands varied with the plantation. For instance, four different plantations on Edisto Island observed the following practices.[26] One plantation master issued to each hand one bushel of potatoes a week from about October 1 to February 1, and then one peck of corn, ground or unground as preferred, or one peck of broken rice. The owner gave out meat occasionally. On another plantation the rations were: one bushel of potatoes, or ten quarts of corn meal, or eight quarts of rice and four quarts of peas. In addition to this, the slaves, numbering 170, were allowed during the year twenty barrels of salt fish, two barrels of molasses, and fresh meat occasionally. On a third plantation the diet was varied by a weekly ration of a half bushel of potatoes, six quarts of meal, and twenty-one pounds of fresh meat, or ten quarts of meal or rice. A fourth plantation gave out, in addition to the usual half bushel of potatoes, a quart of vegetable soup once a day during hard labor and twice a week at all other times.

In 1862 Edward L. Pierce reported that the customary rations issued by St. Helena planters were a peck of corn a week to each hand and meat at Christmas and in June when work was hardest.[27] While a few plantations allowed meat only at Christmas, a few others dealt it out as often as once a month or once a fortnight. Some plantations also gave molasses and sugar occasionally. Children were allowed from two to six quarts of corn a week, the amount varying with the age of the child. Edward S. Philbrick, one of the Government's superintendents of

[26] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 134.
[27] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.

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plantations in 1862, reported that Thomas A. Coffin gave his 250 slaves twelve beeves in summer and four at Christmas, four barrels of molasses in summer, and from April to June, when work was heavy, two pecks of corn and two and a half pounds of bacon per slave.[28] He also regularly gave every hand a quart of salt a month and every man two "hands" of tobacco a month and four "hands" at Christmas.

In addition to the rations issued by the master, the slave might gather from the plantation creeks and rivers all the oysters and crabs which he desired. The practice in regard to the fish varied with the plantations, as will be indicated later.[29] Each family was also given a small patch of ground, about one task, back of the cabin to cultivate as desired. Most families planted three or four rows of corn and put the rest in potatoes. They ate part of the corn, but fed most of it to the pig and chickens which each hand was permitted to keep. Some planters on St. Helena even permitted their Negroes to have cattle. Nor did the hands usually eat their stock and poultry, but sold it to the master or to the island storekeeper or to merchants in Beaufort.

When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation on St. Simon's Island in 1828, he found that the master's family was supplied entirely with poultry and eggs by his Negroes at these prices: eggs, 12½ cents a dozen; chickens, 12½ cents each; fowls, 20 to 25 cents each; ducks, 50 cents each.[30] They were given the liberty to carry their produce to a better market if they could find one. With

[28] MS in Port Royal Correspondence. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.
[29] *Infra*, p. 142.
[30] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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the money thus obtained they bought extra clothing, coffee, sugar, and what was with them the chief necessity of life, tobacco.[31] 567 432

R. W. Roper estimated in 1844, in an address delivered in Columbia, S. C., before the State Agricultural Society, that it cost a planter $11.52 annually to feed a slave.[32] His estimate was based upon the following rations: twelve bushels of corn at 50 cents a bushel, twelve quarts of salt at 1 cent a quart, two pounds of bacon a week at 4½ cents a pound, and twelve pounds of tobacco a year at 6 cents a pound. While the prices quoted in 1844 were, of course, not the same for each year of the ante-bellum period, they approximated fairly closely the general average. 567 435

Clothing cost the planter considerably less. St. Helena planters ordinarily allowed each slave two suits a year, one for summer and another for winter. Thomas A. Coffin, of Coffin's Point plantation, gave out in April for every 200 hands 500 yards of men's blue cotton cloth, like the material used in workmen's clothes in the North, 600 yards of coarse unbleached cotton shirting for the men, 600 yards of the same material for women's underclothes, 600 yards of calico in gay colors for frocks, 100 handkerchief pieces, and 100 straw hats for men. In November he issued 550 yards of stout woolen cloth for men's clothes and 600 yards of thinner woolen for women, 1,200 yards of unbleached cloth for shirts and underclothes, 100 turban handkerchiefs for the women, 100 warm caps for the men; 200 pairs of shoes, and 67 blankets of assorted sizes. The house servants got hose and flannels in addition to 567 291

[31] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 310.

[32] R. W. Roper, "Address," *Southern Agriculturist*, new ser., V, no. 3, p. 89.

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567 291 these supplies,[33] and the drivers four suits a year, instead of the usual two suits received by field hands.

567 291 435 Roper estimated that the average yearly cost of clothing was $6.12 a slave as follows: six yards of woolens at 55 cents a yard, six yards of summer homespun at 10 cents a yard, a pair of shoes at 90 cents, a hat, cap, or handkerchief at 25 cents, a blanket every three years at $4 a blanket, and needles, thread, buttons, and trimmings at 24 cents a year.[34] This estimate brought the average cost of food and clothing to $17.64 a slave.[35]

567 435 Upon adding to this estimate the expense of providing a house, medical care, and incidentals, one finds that the cost to the master amounted to a little less than $50. When it is remembered that two or more slaves were fed and clothed for every taskable hand, it will be seen that the cost per hand ran between $75 and $100 a year, equivalent to wages of about $7 or $8 a month. In 1860 a day 465 laborer was receiving in South Carolina 82 cents a day without board and a farm hand $11.37 a month with board, only a few dollars more than it cost a planter to maintain each taskable hand.[36] When it is considered that 567 433 slaves, unskilled and often poorly supervised, cultivated only six acres to the hand, it will be seen that the plantation operated not only at a low wage level, but also at a low level of efficiency.

567 342 The type of houses provided for the slaves varied with the plantation management, as did every other phase of the plantation routine. When Timothy Ford, of Morris

[33] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

[34] Roper, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[35] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 135. Louis Manigault, of Argyle Island, estimated that food and clothing for 1838 cost him about $21 a slave.

[36] *U. S. Census of Mortality and Miscellaneous Statistics*, 1860, p. 512.

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Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

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[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.

[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.

[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.

[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.

[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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567 342 William Howard Russell, who visited Barnwell Island in April, 1861, several months before the capture of the region by the Federal Army, has left a vivid picture of the Negro quarters on the Trescot plantation:

> [361] [235] The huts stand in a row, like a street, each detached with a poultry-house of rude planks behind it. . . . No attempt at any drainage or any convenience existed near them, and the same remark applies to very good houses of white people in the south. [364] Heaps of oyster shells, broken crockery, old shoes, rags, and feathers were found near each hut. The huts were all alike windowless, and the apertures, intended to be glazed some fine day, were generally filled up with a deal of board. The roofs were shingled, and the whitewash which had once given the settlement an air of cleanliness, was now only to be traced by patches which had escaped the action of the rain.[42]

Captain Basil Hall, another English visitor to the United States, found the quarters on Edisto Island at a much earlier date, "uncommonly neat and comfortable." He thought the "cottages" might "have shamed those of many countries" he had visited. Each was "divided into small rooms or compartments, fitted with regular bed places"; all had chimneys and doors, and some, though only a few, possessed the luxury of windows. There was one cabin to every five persons.[43] In 1846 Sir Charles Lyell described the Negro houses on Butler's Island as "neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children." On Hopeton plantation he found the Negro houses "as neat as the greater part of the cot-

[42] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, pp. 146-147.
[43] Hall, *Travels in North America in 1827 and 1828*, II, 210, 211.

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

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Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

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## MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

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Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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Doctor; and since the Proprietor never grudges a Doctor's bill, however large, he has a right to expect that the Overseer shall always send for the Doctor when a serious case occurs."[45] But the Overseer was cautioned against permitting persons to lie up when "there was nothing or little the matter with them."

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Many plantations had hospitals, or "sick houses," as the Negroes called them. The hospital on Prospect Hill plantation on Edisto Island was a brick building. Sir Charles Lyell found the hospital on Hopeton plantation in 1845 to consist of "three wards, all perfectly clean and well-ventilated." One was for men, another for women, and a third for lying-in women.[46] The hospital was in charge of the mistress of the plantation, or the overseer's wife, assisted by a Negro woman whose special task it was to look after the sick. Sir Charles observed that the Negroes refused to take medicine from any hands other than those of their master or mistress. When a Negro child was sick it was usually the mistress who sat up all night giving medicines rather than the mother. After Mrs. Trescot, of Barnwell Island, had been up all night nursing a Negro woman, she said to her English guest next morning, "When people talk of my having so many slaves, I always tell them that it is the slaves who own me. Morning, noon, and night, I'm obliged to look after them, to doctor them, and to attend them in every way."[47]

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Since the owner and his wife or his overseer attended to all the simple illnesses of his people, he sometimes attempted to school himself in medical knowledge. The

[45] *DeBow's Review*, XXI, 38; Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 116, 120.
[46] Lyell, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[47] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 141.

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*Southern Agriculturist*, in an article on "The Plantation Doctor," issued the warning that "the planter of all others, should be acquainted with medical remedies, to cure those diseases and injuries to which his Negroes, from their occupations, are so frequently liable."[48] The planter might obtain for his own instruction in the treatment of minor diseases numerous books of "family medicine." One such book, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*,[49] published in Charleston in 1848, lists all the diseases common to the Negro together with the treatment therefor.

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Despite the planter's own ministrations, his plantation medical bill was often high. Miss Mary B. Elliott's Account Book gives the medical bill for her plantation for seven of the years between 1837 and 1849. It was lowest in 1849 at $25 and highest in 1845 at $124.94 with an average for the seven years of $68.89. E. M. Whaley's bill of 1862 for his Little Edisto Negroes whom he had moved to Georgia amounted to $329.50. The bill, which is itemized for the year, indicates that the doctor was frequently called at night to treat a sick Negro. For six days in April the doctor visited Jim every day and gave him medicine, charging $2.50 or more a visit. From November 4 to December 2 he visited Louisa's child, sometimes every day, at other times only once a week.[50] Some planters made a contract with their doctors to attend to their Negroes at a given price per head for the year. For example, a planter near Savannah paid his doctor a flat rate of $1.50 a slave, while a certain Dr. Pritchard

[48] *Southern Agriculturist*, X, 561.
[49] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*.
[50] MS in Whaley Papers dated December 6, 1862.

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offered his services to another planter in that vicinity at $1.25 a head.[51] On St. Helena Island at least four of the planters were doctors.

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Negroes seem to have been especially susceptible to cholera, "peripneumonia," and dysentery, or bloody flux, as it was most commonly called. When once cholera appeared among the Negroes, it usually could not be controlled until several had died. In 1852 and again in 1854 cholera swept off many of the best slaves on Louis Manigault's plantation on Argyle Island, Georgia. After these losses, Manigault bought 771 acres of "high land" on the Georgia main which he used partly for cholera camps and for the summer residence of the Negro children.[52] In 1855 when about fifty cases of cholera appeared among James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation Negroes, he wrote to his son in alarm, "The causes I cannot discover, they [the Negroes] live at various settlements, are employed in every kind of work, and have the same food."[53]

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Couper considered "peripneumonia" almost as alarming as cholera.[54] "Peripneumonia" was the ante-bellum term for pleuropneumonia, a combination of pleurisy and pneumonia. Although it did not occur in epidemics, it was nearly always fatal to the slaves. Although dysentery did not always appear among the plantation Negroes in a severe form, in 1857 Henry A. Middleton, Jr., lost forty of his people on Weehaw plantation, near Georgetown, from an epidemic of this disease.[55] After the epidemic,

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[51] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 166.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 143.
[53] Couper-Wylly Papers, March 9, 1855.
[54] *Ibid.*, April 13, 1857.
[55] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[58] 567 164 [758] [743]

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[58] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attachment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his grave.[57]
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### INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disastrous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
758 cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
567 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
758 land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the
759 plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[59]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[60] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[61]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[59] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[60] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[61] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
862 plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[62]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
[164] as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[62] *Ibid.*

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between 1833 and 1850. Within a period of five years William Jenkins lost three infants in succession. 165

Data for the comparison of the death rate of whites and Negroes in the ante-bellum period are meager. The death rates for Charleston from 1830 to 1845 are as follows: 165 567

COMPARISON OF WHITE AND BLACK DEATH RATES IN CHARLESTON*

| Year | Deaths Per Thousand | |
|---|---|---|
| | Whites | Blacks |
| 1830 | 25.4 | 25.0 |
| 1831 | 21.4 | 26.3 |
| 1832 | 19.2 | 18.1 |
| 1833 | 18.2 | 17.9 |
| 1834 | 23.8 | 22.7 |
| 1835 | 23.2 | 21.5 |
| 1836 | 24.6 | 51.0 |
| 1837 | 21.1 | 21.4 |
| 1838 | 54.6 | 30.3 |
| 1839 | 33.4 | 25.6 |
| 1840 | 19.7 | 21.5 |
| 1841 | 15.2 | 22.3 |
| 1842 | 19.9 | 20.9 |
| 1843 | 16.4 | 30.4 |
| 1844 | 14.4 | 23.1 |
| 1845 | 18.9 | 20.6 |

The death rate of the whites was highest in 1838 when 54.6 persons per 1,000 died due to an epidemic of yellow fever, and lowest in 1841 when only 15.2 per 1,000 died, with an average for the sixteen years of 23.1 per 1,000. For the blacks the death rate was highest in 1836 when 51 per 1,000 died from an epidemic of cholera, and lowest in 1833 when only 17.9 per 1,000 died, with a general average of 24.8. The general average for the whites was lower by only 1.7 persons per 1,000 than the general average for the blacks. At the same time the average 000

* J. D. B. DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 294.

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000 death rate for the whites in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1840 was 23.2 per 1,000 and for the blacks 32.3 per 1,000.[64]

• 567 163 165 The data available showing the ratio of births to deaths in the slave population of the sea-island region are likewise meager. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book records the births and deaths on his plantation from 1845 to 1860, as follows:

BIRTHS AND DEATHS ON WEEHAW PLANTATION, 1845-1860[65]

| Year | Births | Deaths | Increase | Decrease |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1845 | 21 | 24 | .. | 3 |
| 1846 | 17 | 20 | .. | 3 |
| 1847 | 28 | 16 | 12 | .. |
| 1848 | 21 | 25 | .. | 4 |
| 1849 | 22 | 20 | 2 | .. |
| 1850 | 26 | 9 | 17 | .. |
| 1851 | 18 | 19 | .. | 1 |
| 1852 | 25 | 20 | 5 | .. |
| 1853 | 29 | 22 | 7 | .. |
| 1854 | 24 | 20 | 4 | 4 |
| 1855 | 25 | 59 | .. | 34 |
| 1856 | 27 | 11 | 15 | .. |
| 1857 | 22 | 40 | .. | 18 |
| 1858 | 28 | 14 | 14 | .. |
| 1859 | 20 | 18 | 2 | .. |
| 1860 | 31 | 20 | 11 | .. |
| Total | 384 | 357 | | |

Beginning in 1845 with approximately 252, the slave population of Weehaw plantation showed after sixteen years an increase of births over deaths of 27, giving an increase of 10.7 per cent in the slave population. The number of deaths was highest in 1855 when an epidemic of whooping cough and measles among the children brought the number up to 59 and lowest in 1850 when

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] The high death rate is probably accounted for by the fact that planters usually included stillbirths in the numbers of deaths.

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only nine died. The number of births was greatest in 1860 with thirty-one and lowest in 1846 with only seventeen.

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Some idea of the child-bearing period of the slave women on St. Helena Island may be obtained from records in the John E. Fripp papers. One record gives a list of births from 1802 to 1860. Of the twenty women whose child-bearing records seem to have been complete, two women had ten children each; one, nine children; two, eight children; three, seven children; one, five children; four, four children; four, three children; and three, two children. It is possible to ascertain from the records at what age ten of these women first bore a child. Die, who was the youngest mother in the group, was fifteen when her first child was born; Jenny was seventeen; Daphney, eighteen; Jane, Judy, Matilda, Olive, and Martha, nineteen; Doll, twenty; and Hetty, twenty-two. Four of Hetty's ten children died in infancy as did four of Olive's eight children. The others lost from one to two children each.

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### PLANTATION PROFITS AND LOSSES

James Hamilton Couper, who administered the James Hamilton estate for forty years, often said that the estate realized a higher percentage of profit on an investment in Schuykill River bonds issued by the city of Philadelphia than it did upon an investment in 600 slaves and 1,500 acres of Georgia seacoast farming land.[66] Data for a tract of 800 acres of this estate raising sea-island cotton have been preserved as follows:

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The proportion of whites to blacks remained practically the same during these three decades, the whites being 15.8 per cent of the total population in 1840 and 16.8 per cent in 1860.

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Even with such a small percentage of whites in the population, there were, as Mrs. Capers suggests in 1791, social classes among the whites. There were three general classes with various shadings of social differentiation between them: the "genteel," the middle class, and the poor. Some of the "eminent planters," of whom Mrs. Capers spoke, belonged to the gentry. They were the ones whose sea-island cotton sold at the top prices. They educated their sons in England in the days before the Revolution and afterward in South Carolina or in the North. They spent the hot summer months at a health resort; they had their hunting clubs and their literary societies. They entertained on their plantations and at Beaufort and Charleston.

The middle class was composed chiefly of the overseers and trades people, although no strict line was drawn between classes. It sometimes happened that an overseer was himself a planter and a member of the gentry. Even on St. Helena Island there were storekeepers who sold small supplies to the planters and traded with the slaves. The agent for the Federal Government found a German storekeeper on the Island in 1861 who had taken considerable quantities of cotton in payment of debts which he claimed some of the planters had allowed to accumulate.[18]

It has often been claimed that St. Helena's Parish con-

[18] MS in Port Royal Correspondence.

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CHAPTER VII

# THE SLAVE COMMUNITY

## THE SLAVE AND THE LASH

•567 461 THE EVERY-DAY life of the slave people on a St. Helena plantation was by no means crowded with constant toil. In the late spring when the cotton had to be hoed at the critical stages and again in the autumn when [466] the cotton was in "good blow" they might work from [431] "day clean" to "fust dark," but these were unusual periods, and, as a reward for the extra labor, their masters dealt out choice rations of molasses and meat and passed around presents of tobacco and gay headcloths. The ordinary task of a full hand kept him in the field only four or five hours a day so that the "smart" ones were habitually through by two o'clock. Only the "t'ick headed" remained as late as five. The rest of the day was theirs to spend as they chose.

000 A southern youth, Hamilton Couper, who had spent all his life on his father's sea-island cotton and rice plantation on the Georgia coast was surprised to find the white servants working so hard in New Haven where he was attending Yale. The Irish maid-of-all-work in his rooming house, so he wrote to his mother, "does more than any 567 servant I have ever seen."[1] The Honorable Amelia Murray of England who visited Couper's parents at their Hopeton plantation was also impressed with the difference in work required of the southern slave and the northern "saucy help." "I never saw servants in any old English family," she observed, "more comfortable, or more de-

[1] Couper-Wylly Papers. Hamilton Couper to Mrs. J. H. Couper, 1846.

[p. 124]

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voted; it is quite a relief to see anything so patriarchal, after the apparently uncomfortable relations of masters and servants in the Northern States."[2] Sir Charles Lyell, another distinguished English guest in this coastal family, thought the condition of the slaves was "more like that formerly existing between lords and their retainers in the old feudal times of Europe, than to any thing now to be found in America."[3]

Even the slaves themselves admitted that they were generally well-treated. All on St. Helena Island agreed that, while most of them had "good Massa," certain planters were "Massa Debil heself."[4] The Coffin Negroes reproached the northern missionaries who came to the Island after the capture of Port Royal in 1861 with the fact that there was no "confusion" when they belonged to "Ole Massa."[5] Yet other Negroes were careful to show the missionaries their scars from the lash, and one woman solemnly reported that four babies had been "killed within her by whipping."[6] Miss Laura M. Towne found in one dining room "a whipping-post and pulley for stretching and whipping,"[7] which was probably a fly brush with which some facetious person had tried Miss Towne's credulity.

There was far less cruelty practised on the sea-island slaves than northern sympathizers were inclined to be-

[2] Murray, *Letters From the United States, Cuba and Canada*, p. 220.
[3] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 261.
[4] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers, Port Royal, May 18, 1862.
[5] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 165.
[6] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 58. For other instances of cruelty practised by St. Helena planters see Sarah M. Grimké, *American Slavery As It Is*. It must be remembered that this book was published to prove a case against slavery and that many of the accusations are obviously absurd.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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lieve. Whipping made a rebellious and sullen slave who shirked his work and stirred up trouble. This was the reason that a driver was permitted to inflict stripes only in the presence of the overseer and that some planters forbade whipping altogether. No driver on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island was permitted when R. King was overseer to inflict punishment until after a regular trial. "When I pass sentence myself," said King, "various modes of punishment are adopted; the lash least of all,—Digging stumps, or clearing away trash about the settlements, in their own time; but the most severe is, confinement at home six months to twelve months, or longer."[8] All planters admitted that punishment was necessary in order to carry on the plantation routine; it was inherent in the system of slave labor; but the lash was the least effective mode.

### CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Before 1860 it had frequently been pointed out by travelers in the South and by masters themselves that the coastal Negroes, especially the sea-island Negroes, were less advanced culturally than the "Up-Country," or Piedmont Negroes, because they had less association with civilizing forces. It was evident to even a casual observer that on the sea-island cotton plantations, where the slaves had contact with few whites except the overseer and his family and but little intercourse with the slaves of other islands or even of other plantations on the same island, they must remain more stationary than where they equaled in number the whites or even formed a minority, as was true in a large part of Piedmont South Carolina.

[8] *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828, p. 524.

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Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9]

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When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island

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[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

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after the Federal occupation in 1861. Arthur Sumner, from Cambridge, Massachusetts, tried to describe to his cousin their way of speaking. "These negroes speak with an inarticulate jabber. The sounds roll around in their great chops, and come pouring out through their huge mouths, so that I find it easier to understand a foreign language than confused utterance. Their idioms, too, are funny. I told Byron, a boy who waits upon me, that I was going to distribute clothing on his place. 'Talk *we* house?' said he:—meaning, 'Are you speaking of our house?' . . . Byron came to me with a message from his mother—'Ma says if you give her some trade'—Imagine such a sentence uttered as if it were a word of many syllables. Can you make it out? . . . 'Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread?'"[11]

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These missionaries from the North, who, of course, knew nothing first-hand of slavery, thought that the St. Helena Negroes were the most degraded and backward of all the coastal slaves in the South.[12] After the northern whites had become acquainted with other sea-island Negroes from such places as St. Simon's Island, Georgia, and Edisto Island, South Carolina, who were quartered temporarily on St. Helena Island by the Federal Army, they were still of the opinion that the St. Helena slaves were the most retarded in the South except those on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Arthur Sumner wrote late in 1862, "The Georgia and Florida negroes are vastly superior in appearance, character, and intelligence, to the natives of these Islands. It is the testimony

[11] Arthur Sumner Papers. Port Royal, May 18, 1862. The last word was pronounced as if spelled tred, not trade.

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

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of all those who knew the South, that the colored people of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[13] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should have been less advanced than those even of neighboring islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

[13] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

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to Beaufort, Charleston, and the North. Some of the St. Helena people were as alert and ambitious as the whites themselves. Charles Ware, of Massachusetts, in 1862 described Charles, the carpenter on Hope plantation, as "a man after my own heart." "He attracted me first by his dignified and respectful demeanor, and by his superior culture. He has a little touch of self-consideration. He, more than any other negro I know, seems to me like a white person."[15]

### SOCIAL CLASSES

The Negroes themselves perhaps unconsciously set a premium on a knowledge of "buckra" ways, for they placed in the upper classes of their social scale those who had superior advantages of learning the customs of the dominant race. The "swonga" people were the drivers who took their orders directly from the overseer, the house servants who were intimately associated with the master's and the overseer's families, the mechanics who were permitted to hire their own time from their masters and work in Beaufort or Charleston. To this group also belonged any among them who from superior rank or intelligence acted as their official or self-appointed leaders. The religious leaders and the plantation watchmen were usually "swonga" Negroes, as were also the witch doctors and those who could boast of physical prowess. It is obviously difficult to point out definitely the various gradations in the social classes among the slaves, but in general the drivers and mechanics stood at the head, followed by the house servants, and at the bottom of the scale stood the field hands.

[15] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 82.

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Edward S. Philbrick was surprised in 1862 to find the St. Helena Negroes so sensitive to social distinctions and "caste feeling." "There is no race in the world," he wrote from Coffin's Point plantation, "with whom a little *state* gives so much power as the African. They have always been accustomed to see men of any power treated as such, and receiving the attention corresponding thereto. They have always seen a white man on a horse, and have got to think it so far a badge of power & caste, that they will hardly lift their hats to a white man on foot. In fact the Negroes themselves, while moving about from one plantation to another always find some old mule to straddle & look down with contempt upon a 'walking nigger.'"[16] Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary like Philbrick, also observed the Negroes' sensitiveness to class feeling. Upon visiting two Negro women, she was made to understand that they were "both of the colored aristocracy, had lived in the best families, never did any work to speak of, longed for the young ladies and young 'mas'rs' back again, because April was the month they used to come to Beaufort and have such gay times."[17]

## SLAVE MARRIAGES

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The amount of interference in the domestic life of the slave varied with the opinions and attitudes of the master. A Charleston planter told his English guest, Captain Basil Hall, in 1827, that he made no attempt to regulate the habits and morals of his people except in matters of police. "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till the next day," he said. "The

[16] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce, March 27, 1862.
[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 14.

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567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give up their African customs of polygamy and accept the Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

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567 177 584 St. Helena planters quite generally required their slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to impress the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 585 177 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might request that the ceremony be performed at once, whereupon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

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burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accompanied by no disgrace or punishment other than that inflicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy between the white men and the Negro women on St. Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in 1861.

There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Harper, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of "poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watching until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening without any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of "mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23] On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy, lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave to mourn and there he slept at night. After several months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

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his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) [837]

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

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huge logs hollowed at one end. At these, two stood with their rude pestles striking alternately up and down. After the corn was shelled, the driver poured all upon a large hide or blanket and measured each person's portion into a basket, made by hand from pine straw and palmetto. After receiving the corn, the women ground it into grits, each waiting her turn at one of the hand-mills near the cornhouse.

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With the aid of her children, the mother prepared supper from the rations just issued, supplementing the corn and salt pork with "turnip salad" or cow-peas from the "patch" back of the cabin, sweet potatoes roasted in the ashes, oysters or crabs from the creek, or with luxuries which she had bought at one of the island stores. Into the black pot placed on a bed of coals on the hearth went the grits to be boiled until thick and tender, or, perhaps, vegetables and fat pork might be cooking there. If so, the corn meal, which had come out of the mill together with the grits, would be made into a pone, cooked either on the open hearth or, if the family were thrifty, in a frying pan over the coals. The elders first helped themselves from the pot, and then turned it over to the children who ate to their satisfaction, and finally relinquished it to the dogs, invariably a part of the slave family, who licked it clean for the next meal.[25]

(23) (264)

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The mother also prepared the hasty breakfast eaten just after the conch blew at "day clean," if, indeed, the workers took time for breakfast, and filled her own and

[25] See Laura M. Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[28] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 452 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[28] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
• 567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have advised the people to set the women in their proper place —never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.; and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
855 mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

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shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

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Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home life in the slave family that there was in the free family, nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought also that there was little family affection among them. Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

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### LEISURE TIME

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When task was done, the slave was his own master within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The slave had several ways of making money for his own use, in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usually received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

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[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

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to dispose of eggs, coopers' wares and canoes, but required that they be home by twelve o'clock unless by special permission.[35] When it became illegal for a slave to hold personal property, the master, overseer, storekeeper, and slave all found ample means of evading the law as the cases arising on this statute indicate. Masters often paid their people for extra work done on the plantation, such as, gathering corn blades for fodder or collecting rice straw. Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, gave her slaves 5 cents a pound for blades.[36] The master also gave them presents of money, especially at Christmas or New Year.

By thus being permitted to possess personal property of his own, the slave felt his condition to be less abject. Some planters tried to help their people to accumulate more than they could ordinarily obtain through the sale of "nigger truck" so that they might have some degree of independence. James Hamilton Couper set apart a field for the benefit of twenty-five picked men and allowed them half of their Saturday's labor in which to work it. He required all to work faithfully in the common field during the first year, and at the end of that time divided the $1,500 arising from the sale of the crop equally among them. But when they were left to work the field as they chose, they did very little and at the end of two years abandoned it entirely.[37]

While some slaves wisely spent their money for comforts which the master did not provide, others laid out their pittances in indulgences: liquor, tobacco, and fancy

[35] "On the Management of the Butler Estate," *Southern Agriculturist*, Dec., 1828.

[36] Elliott Account Book.

[37] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

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clothes. An English visitor at Hopeton noticed that whenever the mistress paid a visit to Savannah she was overwhelmed with commissions from her slaves who wished to obtain the latest fads in articles of dress, "of which they are passionately fond." "The stuff must be of the finest quality, and many instructions are given as to the precise color or fashionable shade. White muslin, with figured patterns, is the rage just now."[38]

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The Negro spent a part of his spare time in simple recreation. Indeed, many masters thought that he spent most of it that way. If a tidal creek bordered the plantation, as was true of most plantations on St. Helena Island, the master permitted his people to fish freely for crabs, shrimp, bass, whiting, and catfish, sometimes, however, reserving for his own use the choicest sea foods, such as shrimp and whiting. It was seldom that a master permitted his people to go at will in boats upon the creeks, and only by special permission could they go upon the Sound for one of the most exciting of all water sports, drum fishing. In the fishing season, it was customary for the master to commission a certain number, usually three or four picked men, to do the drum fishing for the week, the fish, of course, being intended for the master's table. But when the men came in with a big catch, probably as many as five or six twenty-five pound fish, the fishermen not only had their reward from the catch, but the steaks were distributed among all the people as well. The slaves invariably considered the head the choice part of the fish. Even today it is not difficult to start an argument over who shall claim the head when a fish is about to be divided.

[38] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, p. 265.

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By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 223 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[39] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 535

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[39] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

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which they sang with evident delight."[40] Captain Basil Hall, who was rowed down the Altamaha in a cypress dugout by "five smart negroes," was impressed by the "wild sort of song" with which they accompanied their labor. He thought the song "not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen at Bombay."[41] Whitelaw Reid, who heard the Negroes singing at "Brick Church" on St. Helena in 1865, described their song, "Roll Jordan Roll," as having "a curiously monotonous melody."[42] Miss Towne thought that the St. Helena folk "in their lowest state . . . could always do one thing well—sing." "At first," she said, "they sang melody alone, but after having once been given the idea of harmony, they instantly adopted it."[43]

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A holiday was always the occasion for much singing, dancing, and general merrymaking. It was the custom on St. Helena Island to give the Negroes Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday, three days at Christmas, and an occasional day at the end of a hard season of work. These were holidays which the master set aside for his people and instructed his overseer to observe. P. C. J. Weston clearly indicated in his "rules to the overseer" the holidays which he wished the Negroes on his South Carolina rice plantation to have:

No work of any sort or kind is to be permitted to be done by negroes on Good Friday, or Christmas day, or on any Sunday, except going for a Doctor, or nursing sick persons; any work of this kind done on any of these days is to be reported to the Proprietor, who

[40] Bremer, *Homes of the New World*, p. 393.
[41] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 228.
[42] Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 103.
[43] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901.

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will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest, and [except by] those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.[44] 567• 527

Most of their holidays the slaves spent "pleasuring themselves." Christmas was the great event of the year, for it was at this time that the master distributed rewards to his people as well as extra provisions of beef and molasses and "hands of tobacco." The master of at least one sea-island plantation also provided his slaves with "plenty of whiskey." At the end of the three-day orgy the Negroes were often "completely done up with eating, drinking, and dancing."[45] [273]

A holiday was also the occasion for many requests to visit the island stores and neighboring plantations, but most planters discouraged inter-plantation visits and required the overseer and the drivers to check up frequently on the activities in the "street." An overseer was supposed to see that all was well in the quarters before he went to bed, and the drivers were also responsible for keeping the street quiet. It was by this means rather than by the patrol system that sea-island planters kept peace on their plantations at night, although occasionally the planters or their overseers joined in "riding a patrol." No slave was permitted either by law or by plantation regulation to be absent from home without a ticket. While some planters permitted every well behaved slave to have one whenever he requested it, others issued tickets more [574] 567

[44] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 117.
[45] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

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reluctantly. To check upon the comings and goings of the people it was customary to have "list" twice a day on Sunday when the names of all the men were called, from which none was excused except those who were sick or who had tickets. At the evening list "every negro must be clean and well washed."[46]

### RELIGION AND EDUCATION

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While it is undoubtedly true that some planters in the early days of the introduction of slave labor into South Carolina were hesitant about allowing their Negroes to become christianized for fear that it might elevate them above their chattel state,[47] by the opening of the antebellum period masters quite generally came to look upon the conversion of the Negroes as one of the justifications of slavery. They not only encouraged the various religious denominations to send missionaries to their slaves, but they often built plantation churches for the special use of the Negroes and permitted their sons and daughters to instruct the slaves from the Bible. Missionaries, appointed by the church but chiefly paid by the planters, preached to the Negroes and catechized them. Ministers prepared special sermons and catechisms for them. Bishop Meade of the Episcopal denomination published his *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for servants, to be read to them in families* in Richmond in 1836, and the second edition of Rev. Charles C. Jones' *The Catechism for*

[46] Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[47] *The South-Carolina Gazette*, March 27, 1742.

"WE [the Grand Jury at Charles Town] present, . . . that, by influence of . . . HUGH BRYAN, Great Bodies of Negroes have Assembled together on Pretence of religious Worship, Contrary to Law, and destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Inhabitants of this Province."

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*Colored Persons* was published in Savannah in 1837. These are only two of many such works published in the South. 567 797

The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist denomination collected for their missions to the Negroes between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars in 1837 and in 1840 reported nineteen missionaries, thirteen missions, 232 plantations administered unto, 5,482 members, and 3,811 children.[48] Very little data can be obtained concerning the activities of the Baptist denomination among the sea-island Negroes, although it is known that more of them adhered to the Baptist faith than to any other. In the summer of 1838 a revival of religion commenced among the Negroes of Liberty County, Georgia, and spread throughout the entire coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia, continuing for two years. During that time the Congregational Church in Liberty County and the Baptist churches throughout the region greatly added to their colored membership.[49]

In addition to the space reserved for slaves in the rear and in the gallery of "Brick Church" on St. Helena Island, practically every plantation had its own "praise house" where the people held their weekly services. In case the planter provided no separate building, services were held in the cabin of the religious leader. Miss Towne wrote to a friend shortly after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the praise house was "always the cabin of the oldest person in the village of negro houses."[50] She was 567 796 346 567 346

[48] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, pp. 82, 83.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[50] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 20.

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doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the plantation where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[51] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[52]

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Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing, pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members of a church.[53] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine one word 'ginst t'oder."[54] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

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[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[52] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[53] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[54] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.' "[55]

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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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•567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
535 first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
535 by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
567 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything
796 so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 27n; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C. Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances, and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect or striking resemblance to some form or type which has been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

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They were also quick to follow the custom of the whites in "churching" offending members. "The discipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

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The church was not only responsible for giving Christianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teaching a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

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175 General W. T. Sherman, in command of the "Expeditionary Corps" arriving at Port Royal, as this region was now to be called, on the fleet in command of Captain DuPont, described in two official reports conditions as he found them after the battle:

> The effect of this victory is startling. Every white inhabitant has left the island. The wealthy islands of Saint Helena, Ladies, and most of Port Royal are abandoned by the whites, and the beautiful estates of the planters, with all their immense property, left to the pillage of hordes of apparently disaffected blacks.
>
> . . .
>
> The surrounding country evacuated by the whites, as described in my last, has upon it an abundance of valuable property, including ungathered crops and cotton mostly gathered. I have directed all the means of transportation, such as boats, scows, wagons, &c., to be collected for the use of the Army; but in regard to other private property, such as can be made of no injury to us in the operations of the enemy, I have directed not to be interfered with. This, however, is a difficult matter, and there exists too great a propensity to rob and pillage the houses and plantations left in charge only of the blacks.[3]

175 .5 Later Hazard Stevens who also witnessed as an officer of the Federal Army the capture of Port Royal attributed much of the looting to the Negroes whom he de-

"The facts are briefly these. So soon as it was understood by the St. Helena Company that a retreat of our forces from Bay Point might become necessary, every hand was employed and every individual busied in gathering together the flats and boats from every quarter of the Island. This duty was rendered doubly arduous by the unwillingness displayed by some of the negroes, who shrunk from executing the order from fear, and in many instances secreted themselves at the appointed time. So excited and disorganized had they become from fear inspired by the terrible cannonading only three miles distant from their point of rendezvous, that it was found necessary to have the flats, as they were manned, each superintended by a member of our little company, who were instructed to make an example of the first rebellious negro who hesitated to row."

[3] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 6, 188.

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scribed as being in "the densest ignorance, some of them the blackest human beings ever seen, and others the most bestial in appearance." "These ignorant and benighted creatures flocked into Beaufort on the hegira of the whites," wrote Stevens, "and held high carnival in the deserted mansions, smashing doors, mirrors, and furniture, and appropriating all that took their fancy. After this loot, a common sight was a black wench dressed in silks, or white lace curtains, or a stalwart black field hand resplendent in a complete suit of gaudy carpeting just torn from the floor. After this sack, they remained at home upon the plantations, and reveled in unwonted idleness and luxury, feasting upon the corn, cattle, and turkeys of their fugitive masters."[4]

The Negroes were inclined to hold aloof from the invading army. They had been told by their masters that the enemy was likely to seize them and carry them off to Cuba. They, who were accustomed to look upon persons even from neighboring islands as "foreigners," were startled by the presence of so many white persons. The officers had expected to put the Negroes to work at once in getting ready the new camps, after the example of General Butler, who had earlier captured Hampton Roads and solved his labor problem and the status of the Negro simultaneously by declaring the slaves contraband of war. But, after the army had been at Port Royal more than a month, the Negroes still were suspicious. A great many would come in to watch the operations of the white soldiers, bringing with them wives and children, but when work was suggested most of them would again take to the

[4] Stevens, *Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, pp. 354, 355.

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woods and the swamps, often leaving their families to be fed by the army.[5] By February, 1862, however, 600 Negroes had collected at the Federal camp at Hilton Head.

The Negroes on the islands more remote from Beaufort and Hilton Head quite generally remained on their respective plantations under the direction of the drivers who still held the keys to the corn-houses. With the same sense of responsibility that they felt before their masters fled, they dealt out rations and directed the work of the field hands. In one instance a Federal agent was called upon to settle a dispute between a driver and a field hand, as being the only white man to whom an appeal might be made. The driver was refusing the hand his peck of corn because he had been absent visiting his wife on a neighboring plantation when the corn was gathered, the work having been done after "gun shoot," as the Negroes termed the battle of Port Royal. The hand protested that he had helped to plant and hoe the corn and had been absent when it was gathered only because of sickness. Upon this evidence the agent advised the driver to deal out the peck, and the driver promptly did so.

The St. Helena Negroes seem to have had little part in the looting of their masters' houses. They were accustomed to the absence of their owners and to seeing the "big house" closed many months during the year. They could not believe, as the soldiers told them, that their masters were gone for good. After a while they did begin to take a few simple articles such as sugar and soap,[6] and

[5] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 202.

[6] Their attitude is in striking contrast to that of the Combahee River Negroes who usually to a man went off with the Federal Army when a raid was made up the River. On one such occasion, seventy-three Negroes on the plantation where

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later, when they saw the soldiers entering the houses, they also took pieces of furniture, but by far the greater portion of valuables was taken by the soldiers and Government agents.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE CONQUERING ARMY

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When the Federal Army captured Port Royal, it found that it had also taken possession of some ten thousand Negroes who might be "contraband of war," but whose status was doubtful, nevertheless. They could not be treated as northern laborers, put to work at the camps, and then ignored. It was even possible that the Army might in the last extremity have to feed and clothe them. But in the meantime there were valuable provisions for the Army on the plantations and valuable crops in the fields which could not be left to the uncertain course of the Negroes.

One of the first orders to the troops was to collect boats and mules for transportation service and corn and cattle for the commissary. Edward L. Pierce later reported that the Army had taken nearly all the corn from Ladies Island, hoping that the surplus on St. Helena would be sufficient to feed the Negroes of both islands, and from all the plantations it had taken the workable mules and horses and many of the oxen, which they slaughtered for beef, sometimes killing as many as "fifty or more head on a plantation."[7]

two Federal boats anchored aided in the destruction of their own and three neighboring plantations. They set fire to the "big house," containing a library of 3,500 volumes, to the steam threshing mill, rice barn, corn house, kitchen, storeroom, mule stable, and three Negro houses. They put on board 6,000 bushels of rice from the plantation barn and then, with their clothing tied in bundles and with their chickens and pigs squealing a protest, climbed on the vessels to the last woman and child. See *Charleston Mercury*, June 19, 1863.

[7] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, p. 319.

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To the Treasury Department, the War Department turned over the task of collecting and selling the cotton. For this purpose, Secretary Chase hastily appointed certain men whom he called cotton agents to direct the work of the Negroes. William H. Reynolds, lieutenant colonel of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Artillery, was appointed resident agent and placed in charge of the cotton agents. His motives appear to have been superior to those of many who worked under him. In making a report on the progress of work to Secretary Chase the first of the year he wrote:

> I find on most of the Plantations corn, and Sweet Potatoes, in sufficient quantities to support the Negroes.
>
> I have made arrangements to furnish them with salt, molasses & other small stores in moderate quantities deducting the cost of these articles from the amt due them for labor.
>
> . . . I find it is impossible to hire the Negroes by the day, on many of the Plantations, & have authorized my clerks to allow them a dollar for every four hundred pounds of stone cotton which they deliver at the steamboat landing, paying them partly in m. & the bal in Clothing & Provisions—[8]

Edward L. Pierce, a special agent for the Treasury Department, who arrived at Port Royal a few weeks after the cotton agents, found some of them practicing "a reign of terror over the Negroes." One of them, a carpenter from New York City, had the "profoundest contempt" for his laborers.[9] Others also wrote of the dubious practices of the cotton agents. "Mr. Whiting has not been a Government agent for two months," Miss Towne wrote indignantly in 1862, "and yet he lives in Government

[8] Port Royal Correspondence. Wm. H. Reynolds to S. P. Chase, Jan. 1, 1862.
[9] *Ibid.*, Edward L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, March 30, 1862.

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property, making the negroes work without pay for him and living upon 'the fat of the lamb,'—selling too, the sugar, etc., at rates most wicked, such as brown sugar, twenty-five cents a pound; using Government horses and carriages, furniture, corn, garden vegetables, etc. It is too bad. The cotton agents, many of them, are doing this."[10]

While the cotton agents promised wages to the laborers, they were slow to pay, for the Department expected the fund arising from the sale of cotton to take care of the expense of picking it. The difficulty in getting the Negroes to work, together with the difficulty in getting the cotton ginned and to the New York market, added to the delay. The agents had expected to bale the cotton on the plantations, but the Negroes had quite generally broken up the gins so that most of it had to be sent to New York for this purpose. Consequently, it was April, 1862, before the Negroes received any pay for their labor, and then some of it was in orders on the agents' stores where prices were high. Consequently, the Government was facing general discontent and uneasiness among the Negroes only a few months after having taken them under its protection.

At the time that the Treasury Department was assigned the task of marketing the cotton, it was also given jurisdiction over the operation of the plantations and, consequently, the general welfare of the laborers on them. As early as January 15, 1862, General Sherman had applied to headquarters for authority to put into operation

[10] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 55, 61. See also pp. 16, 17, 66, 67.

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a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department. He wrote to the adjutant-general on this date:

> For the future maintenance of these people some system must be established, and one which will permit them to sustain themselves; but before they can be left entirely to their own government they must be trained and instructed into a knowledge of personal responsibility—which will be a matter of time. I have, therefore, the honor to recommend that suitable instructors be sent to them, to teach them all the necessary rudiments of civilization and secondly, and in the meantime, that agents, properly qualified, be employed and sent here to take charge of plantations and superintend the work of the blacks until they are sufficiently enlightened to think and provide for themselves. They should receive wages, and the profits of the plantations, after all expenses are paid, should go to the Government. I can see no other way to lay a groundwork for future usefulness with this unfortunate class of people.[11]

The next month General Sherman issued an order appealing to the benevolent people of the land "in behalf of the helpless blacks of South Carolina within the limits of his command."[12]

When the Treasury assumed the responsibility of the Negro, Secretary Chase had in mind some such plan as Sherman had already suggested. It occurred to Chase that here was an opportunity to test the ability of the Negro to exercise freedom in case it were eventually given him. Under a fostering benevolence, the Negro was to be given the chance of revealing his capabilities. Out of the battle of Port Royal there gradually arose in the minds of those in the North the scheme for a great social experi-

[11] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 218.
[12] *House Ex. Doc. No. 142*, 41st Cong. 2d Sess.

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ment which would form some basis for a decision concerning the status which the Negro should be given after the war.

To put some such scheme in operation the Department chose Edward L. Pierce, a young abolitionist of Boston who had studied in Chase's law office. He had been at Hampton, Virginia, and after he was mustered out of military service in July, 1861, went to Washington where he had occasion to relate some of his recent experiences with the Negroes to Secretary Chase. This fact together with their personal friendship was perhaps responsible for the Secretary's sending Pierce, then practicing law in Boston, a wire December 21, 1861: "If you incline to visit Beaufort in connection with contrabands and cotton, come to Washington at once."[13] On the twenty-fifth Pierce conferred with Chase and, on January 13, 1862, left New York City for Beaufort to make an investigation of social conditions among the Negroes under the temporary appointment as special agent for the Treasury Department.

Pierce found the "contrabands" discontented with the treatment they had received at the hands of the cotton agents and the Army. They were suspicious and reticent. When asked if they desired to be free, they would often answer, "De vite man do w'at he pleases wit' us. We yunnah niggers now, Massa."[14] But, concluded Pierce, "in spite of their condition, reputed to be worse here than in many other parts of the rebellious region, there are such features in their life and character, that the opportunity is now offered to us to make of them, partially in

[13] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 54.
[14] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 308.

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this generation, and fully in the next, a happy, industrious law-abiding, free and Christian people, if we have but the courage and patience to accept it."[115] Whereupon he outlined a plan to the Secretary by which he thought this ideal might be realized.

He was much opposed to the plan of leasing the plantations with the people upon them to the highest bidder, as the cotton agents had recommended. Instead, he would propose a system of superintendents of plantations whereby certain men, carefully chosen for the position, should be appointed to manage the cultivation of the plantations, their chief object being "to promote the moral and intellectual culture of the wards" and "to prepare them for useful and worthy citizenship." The superintendents, who were to be selected "as carefully as one would choose a guardian for his children," were to have complete authority on their respective plantations subject only to a director-general. The superintendents were to be compensated by a good salary, say $1,000, and the laborers by a standard wage graduated by the wants of the laborers and the ability of the Government to pay, this ability to be determined by the profits arising from the cultivation of the plantations. He thought, however, that the Government should be able to allow rations and 40 cents a day.

As a part of the plan, Pierce advised the Government to send missionaries "to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature" and teachers to instruct the laborers in reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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salaries of these persons, Pierce thought that the Government could rely upon private benevolence.[16]

While Pierce's "Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," of February 3, 1862, which at once received wide publication, was for the most part enthusiastically received in the North, there were some who thought that he went too far in presuming upon the Negro's ultimate citizenship. Even his personal friends in Congress refused to support the plan, and President Lincoln did not wish to be troubled with "such details"; for, so Pierce thought, he approached the great question of the status of the Negro "slowly and reluctantly."[17] Chase seems to have been well pleased with the report and at once put it in operation.[18] In looking about for the proper person to put this difficult and important experiment into effect, it was natural that the Secretary should choose the father of the plan.

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Although the Department had adopted the plan of superintendents, it had no funds with which to pay them. At this critical stage the Educational Commission, organized in Boston February 7, 1862, and the Freedman's Relief Association, organized in New York on the twentieth of the same month, volunteered to pay both superintend-

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

[17] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 65.

[18] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. The authority by which the Treasury Department assumed the responsibilities outlined in the report was based upon the Act of July 13, 1861, by which the President was authorized to permit commercial intercourse with any part of the country in a state of insurrection under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The act authorized the Secretary to appoint the officers needed to carry into effect such permits, rules, and regulations. President Lincoln sanctioned the enterprise in a note to Pierce, February 15, 1862, and the War Department approved the plans in an order to General Sherman which he made a part of General Orders, No. 17.

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lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government.

In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the careless and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward

[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

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S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve without remuneration in this social experiment, contributing himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St. Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

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[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[28]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[28] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863. 175 657 423 651 [567)

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34] 175 657 466 [427)

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis- 175 657 658 427

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves
433 better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but
511 they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

### WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superin-
175 tendent under Philbrick for the Government and later re-
•569 mained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his
659 scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private
181 funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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*meum* and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in making claims,—these are the traits which try us continually in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us despair of their improvement—at least, in the present generation. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.'"[8]

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Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Government's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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872 [175] grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 [46] [567] As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were.

175 527 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[32] [273]

574 527 175 Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[32] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over [505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84]

The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of Jan- [567] uary not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

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[For the interaction of the storyteller and his/her audience in the narration of a tale, see Category 538.]

● 571

[For the interaction of the storyteller and his/her audience in the narration of a tale, see Category 538.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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209 other. During the entire course of a sermon, they will turn around only to nod agreement to each other, to say, "Amen," or just to recognize each other's presence before resuming their former positions. This behavior is observed more often in men than in women or children, though I have seen it in young boys during the course of a storytelling event in Nigeria and on the Sea Islands.

538 191 The expectation of audience participation among Sea Island and Nigerian audiences contrasts rather sharply with the behavioral expectations of most Western audiences, who sit in silence, not necessarily because they do not enjoy the message of the speaker but because silence is a cultural sign of respect and courtesy. It is not known whether responding is characteristic of all African or related cultures, but Ruth Finnegan relates an identical practice, "replying," used by the Limba speakers of northern Sierra Leone: the audience assists the speaker by answering, "Me!" According to Finnegan, replying

> also refers to the actions of the listeners when someone is making a formal speech; they should not interrupt the flow of his presentation but should "reply" to his argument, perhaps by echoing his words or answering his rhetorical questions, perhaps by only a grunt or murmur at suitable intervals; in this way they are thought to play the important part of supporting or noting his main points as they are made. "Replying" in song is also an important practice, applied in particular to the way in which the women as a group reply in chorus to the song of a soloist, and in this way take an essential part in the whole activity.[11]

538 591 191 The practice of listener response in communicative events not only is common in storytelling, sermons, and speeches but is a vivid part of daily social interaction in Igbo, Ibebio, Yoruba, and Sea Island communities. The act of responding is a method of showing approval and understanding—or disapproval or misunderstanding.

538 For a speaker's listeners to be verbally responsive to his cues during the time he is speaking is a very good indication that they agree with or understand what he says. If they sit quietly and do not respond verbally during the course of the speaking event, then the speaker can be assured that they have either not enjoyed his presentation or not understood what has been said. Thus understanding the importance of

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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171 roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society.[28]

Viewed in this light, the power of Poro-Sande, of the ancestors, and of *minkisi* were key unifying socioreligious forces. Each was effective because of divine supernatural intervention which demanded individual and group propriety. God gave Upper Guinea peoples Poro-Sande, gave *minkisi* to the BaKongo, and transformed the ancestors into spiritual guardians. Hence God was not only a Supreme Spirit but a lawgiver as well. The supernatural existence of Poro-Sande was thus ordained and the pantheon of Poro-Sande spirits, through association with God, decreed laws, set standards, modes of behavior, worship, and customs. The "captured spirit" in each *nkisi* was incarnated power sent directly from *Nzambi* (similar perhaps to the Christian Holy Ghost). Ancestors were the emissaries of the withdrawn Supreme Deity. This idea of the remoteness of God, noted by writers and observers, is disputed by some recent African scholars. Still both sides of the debate acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Deity in African spiritual concepts, and that God had agents through which divine will was dispensed. This provided a linkage of spiritual virtue with communal responsibility. The attributes of God (discussed earlier), corresponded with characteristics of harmony and social order, the antithesis of bush living which was a wild, antisocial state of consciousness. Similarly, Gullahs who accepted Christianity associated community socialization with religious piety. The laws of God were synonomous with correct conduct toward other members of the slave quarters. In maintaining this African socioreligious connection in the American ambiance, bondspeople operated on an internal logic that excluded planters, overseers, and even white Christian ministers. There was a parallel between the structural configuration of what became Gullah folk religion and composition of social order in the quarters. Thus in Gullah antebellum communities their interpretations of spirituality played a major role in attitudes toward collective accountability.[29]

171 African codes of ethics stemmed from spiritual orientation. Moral defects were considered spiritual flaws in traditional society and a blight on one's character. Individuals were expected to be guided by ethics characteristic of God, the ultimate source of moral order. Patriarchs, diviners, ancestors, and other spirits that one met in the sacred grove

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than
178 I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant
867 peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different
869 thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn,
829 it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is
829 very different now.
[791] There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make
178 life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't
829 go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them
207 time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

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571 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible.
574 But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

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And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you's And Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

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A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## I LIKE THE HISTORY OF IT, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT

178 829 You might take the position that people who live in the culture recognize it as something real great. Most of the time people from outside recognize it a whole lot more than the people that live it everyday. You're talking about people who have done a lot of hard work and been through a lot of hell. But if you can come in and see it, it's so nice and quaint. "I just love to see the quaint little way that they talk," and so on. Folk don't see themselves in that way. Many folk have tried to get rid of that culture that you're talking about.

I don't miss being in Moving Star Hall at all. The way that I like to miss Moving Star Hall and some of the things of the past is to reminisce. But I would not like to be back in it. I like the history of it, and to know that I have been a part of it. I do miss that tradition when Moving Star and all the lodges (527) used to come together on Labor Day. That was a festive time with food and a parade. They used to play flute and drums. That was really exciting.

At certain ages we used to go to Moving Star Hall, and the young people would stand outside and burn tires until almost time for them to have whatever they're going to eat and then you're going to go inside. That's the part that really used to be nice because guys would be talking so much jokes, those stories about the monkey and the baboon; people doing the dozens.

People probably do miss things like the Hall, but there is a lot of commu- (571) nity concern and coming together still going on. I still have certain places on the island where I will go on a Thursday or a Friday night, and I'll just slip in and catch up on everything that has gone on. You just sit and all the information passes on. There's a kind of camaraderie that comes out of that.

I always believe that things just move to other levels. Another generation takes it to another level.

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793 morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794 minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
794 vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
• 571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

464 island; businessmen and teachers born on the island lived in
484 adjacent mainland communities. On the mainland two subgroups
57 of blacks could be distinguished. An educated elite has owned
554 land for several generations since the Civil War and held
184 important positions in the churches, schools, and--to a limited extent--in government. The majority of mainland blacks, however, do not own land, are poorly educated, and have traveled little. Island residents hold higher social and economic status than this poorer group of mainland blacks, but have been more limited in their occupational choices than
184 the elite group. The social and economic differences between
197 members of the closed community on the river island and the two groups of mainland blacks are reflected in linguistic choices made by the three groups. For comparative purposes,
121 the speech of selected members of the lower mainland group
197 will be compared with that of the island community. The claim will be made that opportunity to participate in social situations in which a given language variety is used is a more important influence on choosing to use that variety than simple contact with its speakers. Members of the lower mainland group retain a higher percentage of creole features in their speech than do island residents, despite the latter group's greater geographic isolation.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well
[761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the
[574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will
787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the
[845] other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [20]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at
535 church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

• 574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

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178 I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant
867 peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different
869 thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn,
829 it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

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178 go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them
829 time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you
209 watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

178
829 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more
571 friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible.
• 574 But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles further. 512 During the day, the only men usually on the island [732] are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily [734] sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for [855] very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By 512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from 505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special [574] occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men some-
505 times go across the water again for recreation in town.
(574) Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity
365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major
207 source of recreation for most families in the evenings.
517 Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the after-
206 noons and evenings. Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat
504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be
505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are resefved for the major social activities
(438) of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for
(574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the
512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or
796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island.
(493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and
491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 764 The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad. As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right. [574] Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

[539]

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 567 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)[A] one of the most picturesque characters of Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:

[533] [539]

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

### TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

> My pretty pink, I really think
> That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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III

273 Thou art my love, and I am thine,
• 574 I drew thee for my valentine.
576
539

IV

The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

*Other Verses*

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de veek I vear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
*Did he preach it!*

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



X

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•574
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Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
They give me this jolly red nose.

XI*

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

*This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

273
574
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578
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*Play Rhymes and Games*[23]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

539
524

II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[23] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



will pay for it. The two days following Christmas day; the first Saturdays after finishing threshing, planting, hoeing, and harvest, are also to be holidays, on which the people may work for themselves. Only half task is to be done on every Saturday, except during planting and harvest, and [except by] those who have misbehaved or been lying up during the week.[44] 567 527

Most of their holidays the slaves spent "pleasuring themselves." Christmas was the great event of the year, for it was at this time that the master distributed rewards to his people as well as extra provisions of beef and molasses and "hands of tobacco." The master of at least one sea-island plantation also provided his slaves with "plenty of whiskey." At the end of the three-day orgy the Negroes were often "completely done up with eating, drinking, and dancing."[45] [273]

A holiday was also the occasion for many requests to visit the island stores and neighboring plantations, but most planters discouraged inter-plantation visits and required the overseer and the drivers to check up frequently on the activities in the "street." An overseer was supposed to see that all was well in the quarters before he went to bed, and the drivers were also responsible for keeping the street quiet. It was by this means rather than by the patrol system that sea-island planters kept peace on their plantations at night, although occasionally the planters or their overseers joined in "riding a patrol." No slave was permitted either by law or by plantation regulation to be absent from home without a ticket. While some planters permitted every well behaved slave to have one whenever he requested it, others issued tickets more [574] • 567

[44] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 117.
[45] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 232.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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872 grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, (175) charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon [46] Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, [567] so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plan- 527 tation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They [273] are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[82]

•574 Although there were occasions when people from all 527 parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings, 175

[82] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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St. Helena Island



or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[32]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the store, people from all over the Island erected their stands until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

[32] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

●575 Kpelle FD6
Mende FC7

[For additional information on the Poro-Sande secret societies, see the NN23 Sea Islanders file, 3: Creel, Category 171, pp. 45-51 *passim*.]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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South Carolina



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ture, the long march, and the Middle Passage. Later discussion on Gullah folk religion will offer interpretations of how functional and ritualistic features of Poro-Sande Societies specifically, and other initiation rites generally, may have merged with Gullah versions of Christianity. This was especially apparent in that Gullah folk religion served as a cultural and community building force and a means of instilling individual self-worth among bondspeople.

### *Religion and Order in Traditional Society*

171

Both Islamic and traditional African religions, similar to Christian spiritual belief, adhered to a kind of monotheism. For non-Moslem Africans the Supreme Being or Sky God had many names. Akan-Ashanti referred to God as *Onyame*. Bantu peoples called God *Nzambi*. Among the Mende God was *Ngewo* and to the Gola *Daya*. The Supreme Deity was generally considered omniscient, omnipotent, and creator of all life. God represented the highest values—kindness, justice, sincerity, and mercy. Thus in African perceptions, God was no fomenter of mischief or ill will. Unlike Jehovah, God was not to be feared, and no prayers needed to be offered. Evil came from other sources, not the Creator. Although God was not accorded worship through libation and was invisible, allegiance was rendered, and the Deity's ultimate power over humans was recognized. "Nzambi possesses us and eats us," or "he is gone, Nzambi has willed it," were central themes in some BaKongo proverbs and songs.[11]

Belief in afterlife was integral to traditional African religion. But Africans did not view the future world with fear, nor, as in Christianity, as a place of dispensations for rewards and punishments in a strict sense. In this land of the dead where life continued, there was no sickness, disease, poverty, or hunger. But underworld inhabitants retained the positions of their earthly hierarchy. Death was a journey into the spirit world, not a break with life or earthly beings. The idea of the perpetuity of life through time, space, and circumstance was common to African religious culture, and the complexity of this belief system is typified by BaKongo cosmology and concepts of the four moments of the sun. Using the sun through its course around the earth, the BaKongo pointed out the four stages which make up one's life cycle: (1) rising—meaning birth, beginning, or regrowth, (2) ascendency—meaning maturity and responsibility, (3) setting—implying death and transformation, (4) midnight,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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began among the Gullahs and the other ended, or if in slavery a shared authority and governance was practiced. Among Windward Coast Africans authority rested with two bodies—the chief and his elders, and cultural authority, which consisted of Poro and Sande leaders. The latter was called the Poro Council. "All grave and problematic questions touching the interest of the section or tribe in general were handled by this Poro Council, and their decisions, after due deliberation, were preemptory." Among the BaKongo, governance was far more centralized and hierarchical. Authority was in the hands of a king, and on the village level, a chief, who might have advisers, among whom was a medicine man *(Nganga Nkisi)*.[28] But the importance of the priest in all African societies may explain the continued presence of the spiritual parents. Because spiritual parents, like their African counterparts, held their positions for life, and since they comprised the "religious court," they possibly represented the communal soul of the people while the elder personified the individual soul in a more Christian context. From the spiritual leader a Gullah candidate not only received religious guidance but also instruction in conduct or "manners," thus preserving values as well as maintaining authority. Different social conditions make it impossible to actually compare types of instruction given to African and Gullah initiates. But in both situations such qualities as good conduct, allegiance, generosity, and group responsibility were emphasized. Secret society initiates received a rich background in physical survival, social interaction, instruction in ethnic-group history, and art. They were also schooled in their particular occupation for the future. For Gullah "seekers," instruction was probably a mixture of Christianity, Africanisms, and practical information. Candidates were taught how to pray, an interpretation of the nature of God and Christ, concepts about death, and especially about the realities of life, all within a context relevant to their circumstances as bondspeople.[29]

When African initiates left the bush, they returned to the village as "reborn," and were said to have "crossed the water." Their former existence was obliterated—old animosities, debts, even crimes no longer existed. The person was entering a new life with new responsibilities. Neophytes were expected to take their place in the village, to serve it when called upon, and to obey its regulations as interpreted by the Poro Council. When initiates were led back to the village, they underwent a washing ceremony in the creek or river. After "washing," new members were dressed up for their final return. Parents publicly expressed pride

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1989) 1989
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South Carolina
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THE STRUGGLE HAS COME WITH ESAU

He's a self-made man—what you call pulling up by your own bootstraps. Everybody here live practically on the same level, but Esau is in a class all by himself.

When we first came to Johns Island in '36 I saw there was a future for Esau. He used to come to me for night teaching. I taught him, right here in my house, to continue his English and grammar and reading. Then, when he stopped coming here, he went to night school at Burke in the city and developed and increased his knowledge.

There's not another one here like him. I knew his father. He belonged to this church, but his father was not that type of person. He was the kind of "you doing too much, Esau . . . ." You know.

We have a civic organization here on Johns Island and Esau is the president. He's tried to let other people take over, but we elect somebody, he serve maybe three months and give it up, and Esau just have to take it back over again. That's why he's stayed in office so long. Others become discouraged and quit. But he hasn't ever become discouraged. He just work on through.

There's always two groups when somebody like Esau builds himself up—one that appreciates and another that doesn't think too well of it. I think now most everybody sees what he's done and I don't think he has

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
345 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting best eighty-
525 something to twenty.
873

Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
345 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
345 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

159 I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
185 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN
159 IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT
185
873

We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
[794] vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
511 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
• 575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall ~~hab~~ manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977). 113

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5. 113 626 794

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70. 113 175

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22. [794] [592]

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592. [576]

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13. [431]

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acts*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the
197 features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the
[576] [177] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

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[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1930), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gulliah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

121 become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of
197 early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The
[576] conflicting feature of these two notions is evident.
[177] Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.
121 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable
197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent
174 with the research which places West Africa as the origin of the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders:

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
(Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela-
174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands
178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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194 speaker of unadulterated Gullah gives a mouth-full-of-
126 mush effect, rolling out his short-clipped words with a rapidity which is amazing to those who think that all Negroes drawl. An accurate recording of this pure type is very difficult, and, when done, gives a peculiar result indeed. Jones, Gonzales, Whaley, and a few others have
[114] succeeded very well in reducing it to writing. Their results are quite different from those of Mrs. Christensen and Mrs. Parsons, in part because the latter collected their stories from people who spoke a modified Gullah.[9]

Two persons rarely hear the same sounds exactly alike. If they do, they will probably represent them differently in writing. Some dialect writers, having achieved the "accurate recording" state of mind, carry the thing to the extreme and spell phonetically many words which are pronounced in the standard way by Negroes and white people. For example, a writer who would spell his own pronunciations of *little*, *victual*, *about*, in the standard way, is sometimes guilty of representing Negro speech as *littul* or *lit'l*, *vittle* or *vittul*, and *uhbout* when the Negro and the standard pronunciations are alike.

539 The following specimens will not only serve to intro-
[19] duce the reader to the phonology, grammar, and idiom of the dialect, but will give him some idea of the variations due to locality and to the method of recording.

1[10]

Buh Lion bin a hunt, an eh[1] spy Buh Goat duh leddown[2] topper er big rock duh wuk eh mout an der chaw. Eh creep up fuh

[576] [9] Like everyone else, these Negroes have "company manners." When talking to a stranger, especially to a white man, they tend to tone down their speech so that it is more easily understood than is their ordinary conversation with one another.

[113] [10] From Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*, p. 38. Explanatory notes are printed below each of the excerpts which follow.

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177)

*Toasts*[20] 273 574 576 539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children*.

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III

273 Thou art my love, and I am thine,
574 I drew thee for my valentine.
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IV

The glass is full of water
And the pail is full of wine,
The world is full of boys and girls,
But, honey, you are mine.

*Other Verses*

I

Some people have one coat,
T'ank God, I got two.
All de week I wear a ragged coat,
On Sunday my long-tail blue.

II

I went to de jail-house on my knees,
Firs' t'ing I saw was a pan o' peas.
Peas was red an' meat was fat—
Got stuck on de jail-house jus' fuh dat.

III

I went to de hen-house de odder night,
It was awful dark an' I had no light.
Only de roostah givin' out de hymn,
Givin' out de hymn fuh de hen o' prayah.
*Did he preach it!*

IV

'Possum on de 'simmon tree
A-winkin' down on me.
I pick up a stick, an' I was so shy,
I pop um across ol' 'possum's eye.

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V

'Possum on de 'simmon tree,
Sparrow on de groun';
'Possum t'row de 'simmon down,
Sparrow shake um 'roun'.

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VI

Hawk an' buzza't went to law,
Hawk come back wid a broken jaw.

VII

When I been a little boy
I stayed by myself.
All de bread an' cheese I git,
I put um on de shelf.
De rat an' mice, I nevah see de like.
Rough shirt, standin' collah,
'Nough to make a niggah hollah.
Walk in, John, I'll be yo' frien',
I'm ridin' on a pickynut tree.

VIII[21]

I had a little pony,
His name was Dimple Gray.
I len' him to a lady,
She ride him miles away.
She whip him, she lash him,
She ride him t'rough de mire.
I wouldn' len' my pony 'g'in
Fo' all de lady hire.

IX

All of a row,
Bend a bow,
Shot at a pigeon
And killed a crow.

[21] Compare a similar rhyme, with tune, given by Parsons, p. 185.

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X

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Nose, nose, jolly red nose.
What gave you that jolly red nose?
Nutmegs and cinnamon, spice an clo'es,
They give me this jolly red nose.

XI[22]

There was an old man
And he had a calf,
And that's half.
He took him out of the stall
And put him on the wall,
And that's all.

XII

Since that lady gave you that box,
You look like you are going to have the chicken-pox.

Since people walk on the street,
You are name the days of the week.

Since people don't always go to work on time,
I am writing rhymes.

Where are you going, Jack?
You look like you just come back.

Hello, Si.
You look like you going to cut some rye.

Where is my dog
I took for the frog
That was sitting on the log?

[22] This and the one following were written down and turned in by pupils in two of the Island schools. Apparently they are attempts at original rhymes.

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Where are you going, Mary?
You look so contrary.

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*Play Rhymes and Games*[22]

I

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo,
Ketch a neighbor by 'e toe,
If 'e holler, let 'im go.

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II

Ink stink, tobacco stink,
Ketch a neighbor by his toe,
If he holler, let 'im go.

III

Eeny, meeny, dilly, deany,
Hit um a lick an' John de guney.
Time, time, American time,
Eighteen hundred an' ninety-nine.

IV

Cod fish, cod fish,
How many cod fish do you wish?
Four spell four an' you're clean out
Wid yo' mudder dirty dish clot' in yo' mout'.

V

William, William, thrumble toe,
He's a good fisher man.
Ketches hen, put um in de pen.
Wi', bri', limber lock,
T'ree geese in a flock,
One flew eas', one flew wes',
One flew over de cuckoo nes'.
O-U-T spells *out*,
You ol' dirty dish rag, *you!*

[22] I-VII are counting-out rhymes. No. VIII is a hide-and-seek form.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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248 175 [657] men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded [492] the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the [493] rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy [292] calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

794 •576 175

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune:

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2]

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Bap-
567 tist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery"
584 and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as
(836) defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the ma-
(583) jority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> (587) If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for
(765) a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
> . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds
(586) her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth
567 and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs
581 simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted
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how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life."[73]

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Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

175 567 581 585

> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slavery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were separated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

175 581 585

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU GOT TO WORK LIKE THE DEVIL

159 46 241 Oh Jesus, that hoe! When I married to Josh, I couldn't lift the ground. Didn't know nothing 'bout lift ground. Josh, he work in the field. Milk the cow, then plow, man, plow. Sometime he dig the bed so wide if you reach your hoe, you better have a good long hoe stick.

(429) (492) We used to work for our rent and our food. You got to work like the Devil! Plant your cotton. Plant your corn. You have to work five task for that land and that house. Take oxen and plow. You have to work that 'fore you work your crop. That's you house. That's the rent. If he calls every week, you'll have to go.

159 (412) In 1918 we move to our own place, where I am now. Josh go in the road and cut all them bush. Work with the ax and hoe. Some people carry the ax, some carry the hoe. Chop them bush. Cleared out the way for the cart and buggy come down. Then we had a crowd of children in there. And we had 'tato. When you throw 'em on the ground, just like somebody throwing dice on the floor. I had eleven head of children. And every one of my children had children. With the grands and the great-grands I have a hundred and forty-odd.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE RAISE GOOD THAT TIME

I was raised right around here. Know the Bligens long before I ever marry they daughter. I know Bligen long time. My wife. All nice people. If they weren't nice people, I don't go in their family, I be in some other family. Nice people, man.

159 • 597 They like me too. 'Cause I have plenty manners to them. Course I raise up that way, 'cause I raise up through the old school. Plenty manners. You had to have manners to them old people that time, 'cause in that time anybody could of lick you, you been sassy with any people. But now, we don't do that.

159 See if anybody lick me, outside my aunt what raise me, if I go home and tell Auntie that somebody lick me, I get some *more* lick. The best thing I do, keep my mouth shut and take what I get. Oh we raise good that time. Now things changed a whole lot. But I try to raise my children like I was raised.

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect.
In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the
discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[579] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obe-
dient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated.
In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child
who has been socialized properly.

The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
861 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
177 on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in
the environment which act to make for proper rearing of
children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it
and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands
the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles
makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the
proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the
situation this way: "d paren should be shame while d roun
en de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no
choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind
ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible fer d chil, dey
must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no wat
goina happen ta d chilln ta dae. Ef d paren dan't see ta

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[782]

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[794] [571]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 697 [461] The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 811 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently 577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea 673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that 685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.

[31] In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the [171] Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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114 174 tribe in the Hamba basin of Angola."[7] Hence Turner allows for both possibilities in the origin of the term. Linguist P. E. Hair observes that, given this Gola association, it is curious that Turner found almost no Gola language terms. Hair has another insight. It is generally conceded that Turner may have exaggerated the amount of African influence in Gullah, but also that he "conclusively" demonstrated it had "more" 'Africanisms' than any other dialect in the United States. But, says Hair, it has gone unnoticed that "a remarkably large proportion of the 'Africanisms' cited by Turner came from the Sierre Leone region." Of the 3,500 words listed by Turner and used in Gullah, only 500 are "working vocabulary" terms with known meaning. Of the latter number, 350 are terms used in conversation. The Sierra Leone proportion is about 20 percent. Also, the shortest list is terms from Gullah stories, songs, and prayers. There are 85 such terms and 63 percent are Mende and 21 are Vai. Says Hair, "thus the Sierra Leone region makes virtually a clean sweep of this list."[8]

Of the 3,000 personal names with "suggested" derivations, Hair states that even here the Sierra Leone influence is prominent. He suggests that Turner missed other ethnic identifications of Windward Coast origin (Bullom, Limba, Kissi, and Gola for instance), because "no dictionary or informant was available."[9] This indicates a greater Upper Guinea influence than scholars have previously recognized. Most have concentrated on the Kongo-Angolan influence, as indeed from first appearances, does Lorenzo Turner.[10]

101 (567) African-American slaves who inhabited the Georgia coast were called Geechees, but had essentially the same culture as Gullahs. Linguistically speaking, Turner uses both terms interchangeably. He lists *gizi* as Mende and defines it as "a language and tribe of the Kissy country (Liberia)." Both Golas and Gizzis shared the same cultural institutions—Poro and Sande—as indeed did the Mende, Vai, Bullom, and others over a wide geographical area. Today *Geechee* is a folk term, generally used as a provocation. In this context it means "country." The term is generally used (578) between intimates in a joking manner, or intended as a challenge to fight.[11]

174 55 One final point on linguistic considerations regarding Gullah origins. Several Gullah personal names identified by Turner and listed with West African equivalents relate to Windward Coast secret societies. For example, Gullah *beri*, and *berimo* are listed as Vai. The former Gullah name refers to ". . . a branch of the society known as pora . . . a 'ceremonial

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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124 114 113 *of the Linguistic Circle of New York* 7 (April, 1951): 82–83; P. E. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *Sierra Leone Language Review* no. 4 (1965): 79–84; Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 3–14.

[101] 7. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 194. Gullahs often referred to themselves as "countrymen," as a way of identifying themselves as African-born. When asked what their language was, they would reply, "the way we talk." Mary A. Twining and Keith E. Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," *Journal of Black Studies* 10, no. 4 (June, 1980): 398; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84.

8. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 79–81.

9. Ibid., 83.

[567] 10. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, passim; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade;* Wood, *Black Majority*. Wood does suggest, however, that the Windward Coast slaves had a special appeal and significance because South Carolinians recognized their familiarity with rice, the colony's main export. The Windward Coast was also called the Grain Coast and in specific areas the Rice Coast. As Wood observes, "Throughout the era of slave importation in South Carolina references can be found concerning African familiarity with rice." Wood, *Black Majority*, 59–60. Daniel Littlefield further explored Wood's idea and provides an exception to the general emphasis on Kongo-Angolan influences. See his *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). Another important author, the late Walter Rodney, also early recorded the significance of Upper Guinea in the transatlantic trade, although Rodney was not specifically writing about South Carolina. See his *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

• 578 113 11. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 91, 194; Twining and Baird, "Introduction to Sea Island Folklife," 397–98.

12. Turner, *Africanisms in Gullah*, 63, 151, 189; see Chapters 2 and 9.

174 13. Ibid., 136, 138; Wood, *Black Majority*, 131, 302, 334–39; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2, 107, 108; Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in Gullah," 83; Kloe, "Buddy Quow," 87; Cassidy, "Place of Gullah," 7–14. Linguist Ian Hancock believes that KiKongo speech "cannot be counted as a contributing factor to Gullah," despite the large numerical representation, because BaKongo peoples did not go through a creolization process. He argues, even more forcefully than Hair, for Upper Guinea Coast influences since some of these Africans already spoke a creole because of contact with whites on the Guinea Coast. While assessment of Upper Guinea linguistic impact appears sound, Turner, Cassidy and others continue to support significant Kongo and Gold Coast influences. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–32.

[113] 14. Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 154, 161; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958 repr. from 1941 ed.); Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Chapter 2; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 151–57, 178–203.

125 561 113 15. Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964).

16. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

17. Diary of William F. Allen, 25, 44, 83–84, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1773–

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THE STRUGGLE HAS COME WITH ESAU

159

He's a self-made man—what you call pulling up by your own bootstraps. Everybody here live practically on the same level, but Esau is in a class all by himself.

When we first came to Johns Island in '36 I saw there was a future for Esau. He used to come to me for night teaching. I taught him, right here in my house, to continue his English and grammar and reading. Then, when he stopped coming here, he went to night school at Burke in the city and developed and increased his knowledge. 159 873

There's not another one here like him. I knew his father. He belonged to this church, but his father was not that type of person. He was the kind of "you doing too much, Esau . . . ." You know. 159

We have a civic organization here on Johns Island and Esau is the president. He's tried to let other people take over, but we elect somebody, he serve maybe three months and give it up, and Esau just have to take it back over again. That's why he's stayed in office so long. Others become discouraged and quit. But he hasn't ever become discouraged. He just work on through. 159 575

There's always two groups when somebody like Esau builds himself up—one that appreciates and another that doesn't think too well of it. I think now most everybody sees what he's done and I don't think he has 159 578

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his
578 own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 There's been a great awakening through television and through the
177 news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?
829

Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[189] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.

443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
689 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

159
443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
345 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and work-
347 shops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

561 sta on d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb for d chilin to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long to exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma dae" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

861 Still another point to be considered in looking at
562 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
[578] differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

562 86 [198] The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining. [578] Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a common behavior of males. The reason for fighting as a [177] more frequent behavior of males on James Island was explained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders to mainland patterns.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" enabled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the minimum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the activity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced." The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina. The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-

[25] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

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As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

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Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

177 Only twice since the turn of the century has there
579 been a large scale threat of open conflict between the
races. The earliest threat was in 1922 and was caused by
the beating of a Black woman on the island by a White man.
The island's men set out to retaliate. Whites were at-
tacked and beaten in Charleston and atmosphere was tense
throughout the county. Then in 1970 the city sanitation
and hospital workers went on strike. As the months past
without much movement toward settling the disagreements
the Black now jobless community became increasingly tensed
and similar repeats of attacks on Whites by Blacks were
reported.

177 The relationship between the races has never been
"peaches and cream." Because Whites maintain a tight hold
on the economic patterns on the islands, islanders are to
some degree reluctant to physically express their feelings.
[579] Shooting incidents between the races, while not common, can
be anticipated from time to time. The older islanders who
[466] have slaved in the fields of the large farmers have not
[465] forgotten the degrading condition under which they were
economically obligated to function for some thirty-five
cents per day. Younger islanders, also well aware of this
history, simply refuse to repeat the pattern. The extent
to which they are successful in breaking down the colonial
economic patterns on the island will determine the future
of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong udduh tings." [65]

Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daughter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old. A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large

* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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621 given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the commu-
602 nity. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

621 Membership is most often established through oral transmission of
602 lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the
613 difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The
[609] islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

596 As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is
581 a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts
588 until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted
586 under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course,
593 as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the rela-
596 tionships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law
[888] antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

582 Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus mar-
000 riage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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584 and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

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> [586] her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth
567 and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted
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how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life.[73]

Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slavery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were separated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
•581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
793 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
(554) sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
(797) ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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St. Helena Island



567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
837 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
(144) more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
•581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
567 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
581 "poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
(165) ing until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24]

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women.

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

175 657 585

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

175 797 581 585 837 657

Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

175 657 795 797

[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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621 given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the commu-
602 nity. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

621 Membership is most often established through oral transmission of
602 lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the
613 difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The
[609] islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

596 As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is
581 a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts
588 until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted
586 under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course,
593 as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the rela-
596 tionships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law
[888] antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

• 582 Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus mar-
000 riage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 [836] [583] Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865: 175 567

> Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67] 688 795

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68] 175 567

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures. 175 567 795 688 [684]

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions 175 567 584

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## IT'S TOUGH TO RAISE FIVE CHILDREN—SURE IS

I get married to the church. And I had the reception in Robbie Fields' store. They had wine and piccolo playing, and dancing. I danced once. But I couldn't dance 'cause my dress was too long. Long white dress, white shoes and white veil 'cross my hair. Lot of people came to the church and lot of people at the store. They had as much in the yard as was in the store, couldn't come in. I guess 'round about three hundred head. Big wedding.

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We was young children, growing up together. I met him long time ago, but I didn't realize that was to be my husband today. I remember he was picking the potato on the farm and I had to go work that morning and he

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
•584 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
404 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round
(465) thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of
(855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] [177] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give [595] up their African customs of polygamy and accept the Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 St. Helena planters quite generally required their slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to im- 177 press the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting 584 parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might 585 request that the ceremony be performed at once, where- upon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, 177 might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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## DRUMS AND SHADOWS

829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn
533 drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a
782 great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(585) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(795) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh
(783) ribbuh.[63]

"Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take
534 a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life."[73]

Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slavery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were separated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
793 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
(554) sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
(797) ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## IT'S TOUGH TO RAISE FIVE CHILDREN—SURE IS

I get married to the church. And I had the reception in Robbie Fields' store. They had wine and piccolo playing, and dancing. I danced once. But I couldn't dance 'cause my dress was too long. Long white dress, white shoes and white veil 'cross my hair. Lot of people came to the church and lot of people at the store. They had as much in the yard as was in the store, couldn't come in. I guess 'round about three hundred head. Big wedding.

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We was young children, growing up together. I met him long time ago, but I didn't realize that was to be my husband today. I remember he was picking the potato on the farm and I had to go work that morning and he

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## ZION

533 Most Negro weddings, in church or out, are conducted, I am told, without
• 585 music; but when Ben Davis was married, this song was used with telling effect in the Frederica African Baptist Church. Two ushers walked from the altar with lighted lamps in their hands, and met the bridal party at the door. Two little girls headed the procession and strewed flowers in its path. Ben, with the maid of honor, was followed by the bride on the arm of the best man. To the music of "O Zion—when the bridegroom comes," sung by the guests who filled the church, the participants moved to the altar, where the ushers put down their lamps, and Joe Lowman, the preacher, was waiting for them. When Lowman asked Ben: "Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife?" Ben spoke up "good and strong": "Yes suh!" When the same question was asked of Norah, her answer was very weak. This did not satisfy the parson: "Answer as though you mean it. This ain't for today and tomorrow, this is a lifetime business!" Everybody laughed. Lowman, after the usual procedure, offered a prayer and ended the ceremony by telling Ben to "salute the bride."

533 Besides being used in church and at praise meeting, I find "Zion" was one
[461] of the favorite rowing songs of the Butler oarsmen. Tall, lean Liverpool, who looks like an Arab sheik, showed us how he rowed to its rhythm:

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Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come
Don't you be like the foolish virgin
When the bridegroom come.

Chorus: O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
(Zion)
O Zion
When the bridegroom come.

Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come
Have oil in your vessel
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



533 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
539 When the bridegroom come
585 Keep your lamp trimmed and burnin'
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come
Five were wise an' five were foolish
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come
What did the foolish say to the wise
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come
Lend us some of your oil
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come
We will enter into the marriage
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come
We will all go out to meet them
When the bridegroom come.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

36. ZION

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Andante
p
Don't you be like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride-groom come, Don't

like the fool-ish vir-gin when the bride - groom come

mf
Oh Zion, Zion Oh Zion, Zion

Oh Zion when the bride - groom come.

C.C.

[p.160]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] [177] [595] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give up their African customs of polygamy and accept the Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 177 584 St. Helena planters quite generally required their slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to impress the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 585 177 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might request that the ceremony be performed at once, whereupon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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St. Helena Island



567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
•585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
837 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
[144] more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
567 life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
581 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
"poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
[165] ing until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night.[24] After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 657 797

the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

175 657 797 75 064

Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

175 657 585

To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

175 657 585

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

175 797 581 585 837 657

Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

175 657 715 797

[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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621 given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the commu-
602 nity. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

621 Membership is most often established through oral transmission of
602 lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the
613 difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The
[609] islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

596 As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is
581 a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts
588 until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted
586 under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Dis-
593 agreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course, as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the rela-
596 tionships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law
[888] antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

582 Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus mar-
888 riage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 567 584 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Baptist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery" and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 [836] [583] Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> [587] [765] If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
>
> . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds [586] her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 567 581 597 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings."[55]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
(737) satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
(593) so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
(343) house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
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* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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[For information on generational differences in attitudes toward, and application of discipline within the household unit, see Category 861.]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before 342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are [177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that [827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and orderly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as [592] ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is 171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba,
[171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised
[562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
• 592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should
593 live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very recently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as
177 those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
857 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the
171 Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening
461 around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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159 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though
539 Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the [197] words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings • [592] in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by [171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Is-
539 landers', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977).

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Root to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Christ Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5.

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70.

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22.

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592.

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13.

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Christ Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

.000 of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEA
ISLANDERS BLACK WORK FORCE

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464 The following 1970 census figures are for the rural non-farm population of Charleston county and as such can only serve as an indirect indicator of the characteristics of the Black Sea Island labor force. These figures will be followed for comparison with those generated by a more specific survey of the islanders sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

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162 The total number of persons in the rural labor force is 12,485. This work force is comprised of 8,014 males and 4,606 females. Jobs in different areas of manufacturing engaged the highest number of workers (2,319). The wholesale-retail trades employed 2,271 workers. The personal service industry which includes private household workers was the next big employer (1,970). Five hundred and eleven workers were employed in the agricultural industry.

434 While the median annual income of rural families was $6,895, 28.4% of this population had incomes below the poverty line. The income deficit of this segment was $2,152. There were 2,390 families with these incomes under
434 poverty level. Female head of households had a median
592 income of $3,816. This 1,271 member female work force had
464

434 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio
•592 for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the
464 families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 15,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned
464 less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey re-
794 ports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

464 The discrepancies between these figures are apparent.
794 First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accu-
114 racy of the latter figures. However, the methodological limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

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121 African and the child rearing practices of Black American parents a clear conception of Sea Island child rearing beliefs and practices may be an essential prerequisite. Until this prerequisite research is completed, projected relationships between Sea Island and West African child rearing must be viewed as merely conjecture. The intent of this investigation is to outline the child rearing discipline habits of Sea Islanders.

THE SEA ISLAND FAMILY

121 861 Because of their lower socio-economic status the use of physical punishment manifested in parental discipline may be commonly reported by Sea Island parents. However the factors of isolation and clearly defined social patterns may negate that of socio-economic status, and have the effect of diminishing the use of physical punishment. Or these factors may have the opposite influence of increasing the use of physical punishment.

121 592 861 The relatively small living space of Sea Island households coupled with a high proportion of extended family situations could produce a high use of physical punishment in discipline. Similarly the low educational attainment levels and occupational status would suggest high use of physical punishment among Sea Island parents. That whipping as a form of discipline commonly found among West African peoples would be also common to Sea Island parents is

121 178 861

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## CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY

121 In order to generate the information outlined under the study purposes, Sea Island family units were the most appropriate source of data. With the same aim, these family units were identified in each of the five Sea Islands communities. The cross-generational interest of the study was satisfied by the membership of each family unit.

### STUDY DEFINITIONS

121 •592 Family Unit.--The family unit consisted of six members. A unit contained three groups with two (sex-paired)* members in each group. The three groups of a family unit were: (1) grandparents, (2) parents and (3) children. Group I members were grandparents, either of maternal or paternal linkage. Group II members were parents and siblings of group I members. Group III members were children. Group III members were either adopted, step and/or the own children of group II members.

Family Unit Structure.--Unless conceptualized in exaggerated forms, the comparison of the structural resemblance

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*There were more female members in group I. The ratio was nineteen females and nine males.

121 of the Sea Island family unit to traditional concepts of
592 the extended family would be erroneous. The extended design on the islands is the family gap. Within this gap elder or grandparents either share or maintain a separate dwelling. The family gap living situation is the most prevalent family structure on the Sea Islands. In this structure whether or not grandparents maintain separate or shared living quarters has little to no effect on their roles and functions; therefore, the extended versus nuclear family design was irrelevant and was not used.

121 STUDY SAMPLE

Sample Source.--Family units resided on the five Sea Islands of Charleston County, South Carolina. These islands, listed sequantially in terms of distance from Charleston City, were James, Johns, Yonges, Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands.

Sample Size.--The sample size consisted of fourteen family units; six members were in each unit. The total size of the sample was eighty-four respondents.

Same Conditions.--Four family units were from James and four were from Edisto Islands. Two family units each were from Johns, Wadmalaw and Yonges Islands. There were a total of twenty-eight members in each generational group. There were forty-seven females and thirty-seven males.

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

592 However this is not the total explanation. It is also
184 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
857 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
861 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
[867] These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
593 In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "an ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

561 of not completing tasks were harsh because chores were
593 meaningful to the household. It is reference to this
178 agrarian life and the demands for the obedience of children
861 upon which grandparents draw. That the generation of par-
592 ents now share significantly different childhood references
than their parents merely illustrates the component of
change in the agricultural habits on the islands. In agree-
ment with this, parents reared in more distant households,
where the farm habit is comparatively more active tend to
mirror the views of the preceding generation. A similar
positive relationship between exposure to the farming habit
and the cohesiveness of discipline behavior across the two
generations exist on the near islands. The generational
differences found in this study can certainly be attributed
to the farming versus non-farming pattern. This rationale
was expressed vividly by Grand Flower, who at 78 years sees
big differences in the rearing habits of her day and those
of today. "Billie, let ma tell ya son, we haad no timb fer
fooln. Wen d cock taak en bernean we up wete de fas cro.
I go ta git d waata on me sista she giz d wod. Wey be fa
d life ob dae comin we haad d bakfaz redi. Abta we done
wete d poz en plata wen goin ta d fiel. Dey we waak puen
sed en d grum or piken en pulen dat wat don redi, we dey
til d timb com n fer fix d supa den bak ta dat huse we goin.
We giz d mel fer d men fak, den we carie it ta d fiel we

561 sta en d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb fer d chilln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long to exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma das" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said often and sometimes more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished sometime than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

Still another point to be considered in looking at
861 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
562 differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of
[578] the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

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## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 178 177 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the tested generational relationships were significant. These differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now 464 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes 177 this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston. 861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. The more demanding work requirements which accom- 861 panies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed. 178 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder is- 561 landers base their discipline references was unknown to 593

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
583 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
•592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
593 also that there was little family affection among them. Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
461 within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
461 in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 13.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to discipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
• 592 desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
[848] the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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[For information on generational differences in attitudes toward, and application of discipline within the household unit, see Category 861.]

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789 (115) mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[59a]

(845) 775 "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz bawn wid a caul [4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[59b] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.

• (593) (115) "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh [48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

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* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh
787 fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson,"[22a,*] he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl[4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

789 "I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
754 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub[10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's
791 aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

[351] The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days • [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he 775 nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. 776 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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Georgia



262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings."[65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
(737) satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
• (593) so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
(343) house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231 * *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the community. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course, as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the relationships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus marriage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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538 skilled speakers as well as dancers and singers, while women are ex-
462 pected to be responders, doing the clapping and rhetorical backup. Though some women do tell tales, they most often do so in the privacy of their homes when the men are away. Likewise, the Igbo, Yoruba, [171] and Ibebio women seldom tell tales in the company of men, although alone, or in the company of other women and children, some of the Sea Island and African women are avid storytellers.

538 On occasions when a storytelling contest was held at the community store during my stays on the islands, many women came to hear the stories, though few of them actually told tales themselves. Miss Myma, the elderly Sea Island lady with whom I resided and who accompanied me to most preplanned telling sessions, always told the first tale, but more in an effort to sanction and add approval to the occasion than as a traditional practice. Several women with whom I had spent time over a seven-year period came to the storytelling contest but bluntly refused to tell any stories. After the session ended and the men
538 were awarded the prizes by the island judges, these women approached
123 me and asked that I come by their homes the following day. I did so and was told many tales, as well as given many folk remedies, cures, and songs. One lady, highly respected in the community, permitted me to hold two storytelling contests at her home. However, she refused to come outside to listen to the tales because the audience was comprised [562] primarily of men. I learned that women are not expected to participate in activities that are considered primarily male-oriented activities. Within the Sea Islands as well as within certain African communities, only women who are elderly or held in fairly high social esteem can participate in such activities without fear of censure.

538 Most of the tales told by women and elderly men are told during the daylight hours just after lunch when they take a break from the
461 daily chores just to "catch some breeze" or "sit in the cool." One elderly gentleman, nearly one hundred years old now, often entertained me for hours with tales, historical events, and reminiscences before he resumed his afternoon plowing with his favorite mule. This man is
592 particularly interesting because he firmly believes that a man should live apart from his wife and family. Until his wife's death very re-
593 cently, she lived in a fairly large, modern dwelling with her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren while he lived in his shanty located behind the main house and near the other homes within his yard area. His wife prepared his meals and brought them to him at

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as
177 those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
857 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the
171 Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening
461 around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 177 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

*Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife [855] and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the [603] kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a certain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 177 I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding [593] there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 177 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they ha their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily livin

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
•593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are
603 generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and con-
fining which should allow for further test of this rela-
tionship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons:
(1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-
economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island com-
munities are cohesively structured. This community cohe-
siveness is reflected in their practice of the discipline
philosophy of two for one. Under this practice any mis-
behaving child can be disciplined by any member of the com-
munity. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child,
the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent.
The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the
neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again
beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and
(2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on
the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, The Role of the Father in the Family, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect.
In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the
discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[577] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obe-
dient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated.
In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child
who has been socialized properly.

The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
861 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
177 on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in
the environment which act to make for proper rearing of
children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it
and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands
the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles
makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the
proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the
situation this way: "d paren should be shami while d roun
en de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no
choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind
ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible for d chil, dey
must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no waat
goina happen ta d chilln ta dae. Ef d paren dan't see ta

861 177 it quik, dey is head fer d fira on brim stan. But it ain't dey falt."

861 184 177 The relationship being described here explains the higher tolerance of today's parents and is explicable in part by generational differences and in part by the exposure element-distance from mainland. In the case of exposure, the more distant Gullah families are more isolated from the mainland socializing influences. An effect of this more limited exposure is more adherence to "the discipline habits of ole." This adherence was reflected in the lower tolerance (reaction ratio) of parents on the distant islands. In further explanation, the work habits of women on the near islands contribute to their being the most tolerant parents. The occupational habits of these women frequently take them into the households of White families of higher economic status. When this Gullah parent is exposed to an alternate discipline pattern, this exposure may then underly the differences in tolerance found between sexes and islands.

593 861 184 The tolerance of differences may only be a function of exposure time. The case here is that parents who are engaged in the work force spend less time with their children than do older parents. Hence the working parent would not be as quick to react to disobedience on the part of children than would grandparents who are actively engaged in child

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

However this is not the total explanation. It is also
592 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
184 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
857 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
861 These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
[867] with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
[593] In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "on ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

561 of not completing tasks were harsh because chores were
593 meaningful to the household. It is reference to this
178 agrarian life and the demands for the obedience of children
861 upon which grandparents draw. That the generation of par-
592 ents now share significantly different childhood references than their parents merely illustrates the component of change in the agricultural habits on the islands. In agreement with this, parents reared in more distant households, where the farm habit is comparatively more active tend to mirror the views of the preceding generation. A similar positive relationship between exposure to the farming habit and the cohesiveness of discipline behavior across the two generations exist on the near islands. The generational differences found in this study can certainly be attributed to the farming versus non-farming pattern. This rationale was expressed vividly by Grand Flower, who at 78 years sees big differences in the rearing habits of her day and those of today. "Billie, let ma tell ya son, we haad no timb fer fooln. Wen d cock taak en bernean we up vote de fas cro. I go ta git d wnata on me sista she giz d wod. Wey be fa d life ob dae comin we haad d bakfaz redi. Abta we done wote d poz en plata won goin ta d fiel. Dey we waak puen sed en d grun or piken en pulen dat wat don redi, we dey til d timb com n fer fix d supa den bak ta dat huse we goin. We giz d mel fer d men fak, den we carie it ta d fiel we

561 sta en d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb for d chilln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long to exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma dae" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beatn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

Still another point to be considered in looking at
861 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
562 differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of
[578] the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the
178 tested generational relationships were significant. These
177 differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now
464 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes
177 this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston.
861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. The more demanding work requirements which accom-
861 panies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed.
178 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder is-
561 landers base their discipline references was unknown to
593

86 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
56 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not being transferred to this generation of young islanders. In this light, the childhood histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen how the harsh work habits required in farming families demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the burden of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobedience than parents are today. The reason given was again differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
86 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because they spend time with their children. For the farming parents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tolerance level, and that isolated households operate in an <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
86 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vein, strived to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
86 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This relationship was explained along two lines. The first was the status that the male child has on the islands. Here a dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping."[33] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[33] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

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567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
837 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
[144] Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
567 life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
581 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
•593 "poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
[165] apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
ng until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

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his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[324] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) (837)

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[324] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

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her husband's pails which they took to the field with them for dinner.[20] 567 224

If the wife were frugal, she might have a portion of the weekly rations left when Monday came around again, and these she might either feed to her pigs and chickens or sell to the overseer or to an island storekeeper. The money was hers to use for the good of the family, but it was hers, nevertheless. It was the woman of the family who, with the aid of her children, worked most of the family patch, and it was usually the woman who marketed the produce and pocketed the money received in exchange. 567 462 432 [231] [434]

The planters helped to make of woman the dominant sex in the family life of the slave by the position which they gave her in the plantation regime. The cabin was hers. The children, too, were listed on the plantation records as belonging to the mother. Seldom was the father's name indicated. Thus a person might go through life known as Binah's Toby or Moll's July. Likewise the mother had the privilege of naming the new baby unless she graciously yielded the right to its father or to a friend or relative. In this right she often exercised a singular taste, for one child might be called Jupiter, another Quash, a third January, and a fourth Hard Times. 567 562 [551] [553] [551]

Miss Towne was amused at the jealousy of their "natural rights" which the men on St. Helena Island began to show after that region had come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Army during the Civil War. "Political freedom they are rather shy of, and ignorant of," she 562 593

[20] Some planters, as it has already been pointed out, delegated plantation cooks to prepare the noon meal for the field hands so that they might have something hot to eat at this time. Some planters also allowed an hour's rest at nine o'clock for breakfast. [461]

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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have advised the people to set the women in their proper place—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.; and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

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shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

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[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

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567 Obviously, there was not the opportunity for home
264 life in the slave family that there was in the free family,
583 nor was meal time the institution that it was in the white
592 family, for there was rarely to be found in the slave cabin
567 a "family table."[32] Some observers of slave life thought
also that there was little family affection among them.
593 Edward S. Philbrick wrote to a friend that there was far less family affection and attachment among members of slave families than existed among the Irish peasants, adding, however, that he did not know "how much allowance to make for their being so much less demonstrative in their emotions, and more inured to suffering."[33]

### LEISURE TIME

567 When task was done, the slave was his own master
461 within the limits of plantation regulation. He might go home to work on his piece of ground, tend his pigs and chickens, play with his children, or fish in the creek. The
567 slave had several ways of making money for his own use,
461 in which he was encouraged by his master. As has already been pointed out, the black people ordinarily supplied
432 their masters with chickens and eggs for which they usu-
434 ally received the market price.[34] They often sold their hogs and the truck from their garden patches; they wove baskets, and made boats and canoes. An overseer on the Butler plantation on St. Simon's Island said that he regularly allowed a certain number to go to town on Sundays

[32] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304. "Except on Sundays, these people do not take their meals at a family table, but each one takes his hominy, bread, or potatoes sitting on the floor or on a bench, and at his own time. They say their masters never allowed them any regular time for meals." In this connection see *supra*, p. 137n.

[33] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 15.

[34] *Supra*, p. 86.

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567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give [177] up their African customs of polygamy and accept the [595] Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 St. Helena planters quite generally required their 177 slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to im- 584 press the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might 585 request that the ceremony be performed at once, where- 177 upon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

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[For information on generational differences in attitudes toward, and application of discipline within the household unit, see Category 861.]

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439 437 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 156 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

• 596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family communities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

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621 602 [423] Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island communities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

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given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the community. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course, as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the relationships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus marriage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

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592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the
177 age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
857 twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience
171 and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
517 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

•596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

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596 to their families and neighbors and appear to enjoy companionship and group cooperation more than solitude and isolation. This social sharing
538 and seeming congeniality is as vivid in their literature as it is in their daily lives. An overt expression of group participation is witnessed in the interplay between speaker and audience in folktales, speeches, and sermons. In Sea Island public speaking, the audience is as important for a good performance as the performer himself. As in Africa, the best audience is a lively audience: one in which the listeners participate actively in the narration by responding to certain cues from the performer. In really exciting performances speaker and audience become so intermeshed and such oneness is achieved that it may appear that the response is an actual part of the tale itself. This is particularly true, of course, for tales well known to both audience and performer.

538 Unless tales are told in the privacy of a home with very few lis-
171 teners, the speaker will rarely begin a performance without some "warming up." Among the Igbo and Ibebio, for example, formal folktales are preceded by songs and selected tales called (in Igbo) *akuko eji awake nti*, which means the first tale told to awaken or to enlighten the ear so that it absorbs the real meaning of what follows. Among the Igbo, before any tale begins, the speaker greets his listeners by saying "Chakpii [Are you ready?]." And the listeners respond, "Haa [We are ready to welcome your story!]." (These words are repeated at the end of each story, where they may be read as, respectively, "My story has ended" and "Thank you, storyteller, for your tale.") While the islanders do not seem to have any tale prescribed for the sole purpose of opening telling sessions, they do have some patterns for preparing to tell informal folktales.

The timing and atmosphere are very important to telling, hearing,
538 and collecting good tales. If the audience is not properly prepared, the occasion is not conducive to good tales. The atmosphere must be relaxed; the teller not only must be willing to tell a tale but must have an audience and sufficient time to tell the story. The more listeners, the better the tales seem to be. In large groups, even when a storytelling event has been planned, it often takes quite a while for a session to begin. The pattern seems to be that everyone in the group will at first pretend not to know any stories, or even how to tell one. If it is known that one of the people in the group is a good performer, then someone may point him out and ask him to tell a tale. He of course refuses.

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159 was another woman's man, I excused myself and walked back down
[123] the lane to Miss Myma's house.

A few years ago Ida Mae lost her mother, and a while later her
159 father. As the oldest, she had to move back home to become the head
of her extended family, according to traditional Sea Island practice.
•596 Among those who now needed her was John, a mentally retarded cousin around thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. She told me that the reason she could not accept a ticket to come and visit me was that she could not trust anyone else to take care of him. John frightened me when I first met him, not because he was retarded but because he was alert enough to know the value of money and, running out to my car when I drove up, grabbed my arm and demanded, "Quarter, quarter, quarter." He would not let go until someone had given him a quarter. Later I realized that was how he managed to have money to buy pop and ice cream whenever someone went to the store: everyone who came to Ida Mae's house had to give John a quarter. He was purported to keep them in socks, hidden somewhere around the house.

I last saw Ida Mae in the summer of 1984. She had lost weight and no longer had the old sassiness in her walk or devilishness in her eyes. After all, she has to take full responsibility for more than twelve people now, and surely that is enough to drain some of the spunk out of even the sassiest of women. Nevertheless, as she sat on her front porch fanning flies and rocking her new grandbaby, a gentleman drove up, got out of his car, and said that since it was "hot too much" out, he thought she might like a little ice cream to cool her off. She took a long draw from her cigarette, turned, gazed intently into his eyes, and smiled just enough for him to see the glint of her gold tooth.

159 I found that Ida Mae's presence served as a welcome catalyst for
spontaneous, ribald storytelling. Although she was unbeatable at play-
[538] ing the dozens, she was not herself much of a storyteller. Because of her life-style she felt she was an outcast in the community. She seldom ventured far from home, unless she was going to work in the field; seldom associated with women other than those who played cards with her daily; and seldom attended church. Thus she had little opportunity to come in contact with language other than the creole, and as a result, her speech was more characteristic of contemporary Gullah than most.

115 *Ozzie Rivers, Mr. Hampy* (Happi), was a very religious, serious man who could sit for hours sermonizing and philosophizing about

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# Conclusion

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[di lɔd ẽ bɪnɔ muβ mi mɔŋtɪn
bɔt i bɪn gɪβ mi siçɹɛt ɸə klɒɪəm]

*God didn't move my mountain,*
*but he gave me strength to climb it.*

177 During my search for Africanisms in the Sea Island culture
178 over the past ten years, I have seen that some of the old traditions are dying out while others remain intact. Each year I see something different, hear more old tales, and learn another old word. It is hard to measure the precise impact of new pressures on the islands. But the islanders are beginning to lose their geographical isolation, and they are thus being forced to alter a culture which has existed and served them well since the first importation of African slaves to the island shores.

177 Some elements are resistant to change. The extended family is
178 remaining intact because the islanders are still in a majority. Though their communities are being diluted by outsiders, their family norms
• 596 are less open to invasion. The islands are still sectioned off into family communities where all persons remotely related to the family have the right to live. This housing tradition will be difficult to disrupt, though it may be easier to displace. The pressure of nearby resort areas has encouraged land take-overs at some spots, and taxation and other legal means have been used to force homeowners to leave (see Appendix 4). A However, when the islanders are obliged to move, most often they relocate at a place where relatives offer them a piece of land on which to build. Thus the cohesiveness of the family structure continues to prevail.

A. [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

[p. 147]

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V Island by sex by questions one thru thirteen.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

I a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

II a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_o$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

III a) $H_o$: $M_1 = M_2$
Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_3$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

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DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

The research is not clear on how discipline is applied in extended family situations. In households in which grandparents are present there is more opportunity for value transmission. One result may be less variation in discipline behavior across generations. The extended family structure no doubt adds to the chance for value conflicts to occur. However, the high cultural status accorded Sea Island elders may tend to negate the chance for the occurrence of value conflicts. It is also likely that younger Sea Islanders whose values conflict with their parents may

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are
603 generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of <u>the discipline philosophy of two for one</u>. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, <u>The Role of the Father in the Family</u>, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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439 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and
437 told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable
156 insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in
596 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family commu-
621 nities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to
596 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called
423 "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the
•602 primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island commu-
(423) nities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

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621 given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the commu-
602 nity. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

621 Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one
602 is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the
613 difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The
[609] islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

596 As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is
581 a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts
588 until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted
586 under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course,
593 as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the rela-
596 tionships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law
[888] antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

582 Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus mar-
000 riage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
•602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

Historically, the economy of the island was based
243 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
433 there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
[464] Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
[423] majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 199 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

*Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife (855) and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a cer- (603) tain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 199 I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents (593) cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 199 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of eldors in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly
those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are
•603 generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than
paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the
household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of <u>the discipline philosophy of two for one</u>. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, <u>The Role of the Father in the Family</u>, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [29]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at
535 church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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115 829 duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

787 When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

845 They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem [791] tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign ley will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all [777] deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

824 "But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh 777 bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[24c] said Susie.

764 In this community as in many others strangers are not al-
• 609 lowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to
764 their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey [775] alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

115 "I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
[783] tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [33] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[MM] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a
764 fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
• [609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[3] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[26] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

535 "One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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123 arriving at New Jerusalem African Methodist Episcopal Church. I attended church service because one must go to church to see the greatest gathering of people, and one must have the minister's sanction for one's work if one is to gain cooperation during the research. I was introduced to the congregation, and after the service the islanders were warm and hospitable, as is the custom on the church ground and as is common practice in many southern communities. But once we left the grounds, most members of the community became very conservative and even hostile concerning the mechanics of their culture. Their reactions to me followed a specific pattern. First they asked, Whose daughter are you? Because I was not the daughter of anyone on the island, the next question was, Who are your people here? As I had no relatives on that island or any island, the next question was, Whom did I know, or whom was I visiting? When they learned that I neither knew nor was visiting anyone, [124] most interviews ended on the spot—even though most people had promised at church to offer their assistance.

Quite by coincidence, I gave an elderly lady a ride to Charleston. As I drove along the winding roads, she told me that she lived alone, loved to crab and fish, and took a "nip" for her arthritis every now and then. She had lived in the Wadmalaw community all her life and had a host of relatives and friends on neighboring islands up and down the Carolina/Georgia coast. She knew the traditions; later, she would be instrumental in helping me to learn them. Because this lady was socially active and was held in high esteem, she was ultimately able to provide me with acceptable answers to the questions Sea Islanders ask of all new faces. I became Miss Myma's "granddaughter" who lived away and came to visit every summer.[1] (My greatest accomplishment would be finally getting her to leave Wadmalaw and come to Michigan to visit me.)

123 Having a person well known and well respected to provide a lin-
609 eage helped in my approaches to the community. But since most people born on any given island know each other, I soon realized that I had the status of "outsider," and no outsiders, black or white, are welcomed warmly into Sea Island activities or viewed without suspicion until they have spent considerable time among the people, performing daily tasks and becoming involved in daily living activities. The people have long been ridiculed for their speech, life-style, and mannerisms. In addition, they are very much aware that their culture has been a topic of interest to folklorists, linguists, historians, and others since the

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123 early twentieth century.[2] Thus they are quite naturally suspicious of
[609] anyone taking notes, carrying equipment, or wandering about unaccompanied by a resident. The islanders are a proud, perceptive people and can very soon sense insincerity and patronizing attitudes. It generally requires more than an offer of cash payment, gifts, or other remunerations to motivate them to assist a researcher's study. Though it was not my original plan to become indoctrinated into Sea Island
[461] culture through hard labor, I learned very quickly that most of the islanders are active, "going" people. Those who are not engaged in city jobs are likely to be fishermen, farmers, carpenters, housewives, basket weavers, market people, or laborers in the produce fields. Often workers allowed me to accompany and assist them, and I found that the rewards for becoming involved in daily life through hard work were great indeed. Returning home from a day in the fields in an open-bed truck, listening to the islanders laughing, joking, and planning for the weekend, made the tasks I had accomplished that day seem easier. Equally important, I obtained some of the most interesting speech data while learning to make baskets or working in an okra field.

114 After five years of gathering information on the Sea Islands, I went to Africa in 1978 to compare the Sea Islanders' language and culture with the patterns of some of their ancestors. The Nigerian villagers' welcome was far warmer on my first introduction to their communities than the Sea Islanders' had been. Many of the elderly Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio women had never seen an African-American woman and walked some distances to see the *Indocha*, or what was termed a "white-black woman." The label was used not out of disrespect but for lack of a better one to refer to a person born from African heritage but raised speaking a European tongue. After I explained my purpose for coming far "across the water," I was never in need of anyone to assist in any efforts. The villagers were as eager to hear what words, customs, and traditions the Gullah speakers retained as I was to tell them. Their eagerness was sharpened by their fervent hope that somehow some of the language, literary traditions, and social customs had derived from their particular culture, whether Igbo, Yoruba, or Ibebio. Life among these people was fascinating and amazingly similar in some ways to the life patterns of the Sea Islanders, even after the passage of centuries. It is about these similarities in language, literature, and culture that I promised to write this book.

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178 tions, and a good education does not include the old vocabulary. The
199 children do, however, still learn to speak and understand Gullah: they
[192 return home from school and community to extended families where older members are responsible for their discipline and training; the church services are rendered in an elite variety of Gullah; the schoolteachers are from the islands and often chastise the children in Gullah; and most of all, the islanders are in a majority and Gullah, not standard English or a variety thereof, is the accepted language of the community. In the near future, therefore, some version of Gullah will probably continue to exist as the language of the home and of the community.

181 Finally, the islanders remain as conservative about their culture as
•609 they ever were. As I have noted, they are hostile to strangers, and word of outsiders carries quickly. No one, black, white, or otherwise, can escape their cultural interrogations. They will want to know who each newcomer is, and why this person has arrived. But it is not true, I learned, that the islanders will remain hostile. Once one establishes oneself within a community (which often takes years to do), one will receive all possible warmth and hospitality and all the help one might need to carry out one's work.

000 In writing this book I promised to tell the story of the islanders as I saw it, and to the best of my ability, that is what I have done.

The end of that one!

[p. 150 is blank]

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# Notes

## Preface

121 1. For a note on the usefulness of interdisciplinary approaches see David DeCamp, 113 "Toward a Generative Analysis of a Post-Creole Speech Continuum," in *Pidginization* 114 *and Creolization of Languages*, ed. Dell Hymes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 369.

127 2. For a detailed discussion of field procedures in general see Kenneth Goldstein, *A* 113 *Guide for Field Workers in Folklore* (Hatboro, N.C.: Folklore Assoc., 1964).

3. See ibid., p. 21.

122 4. Juanita Jackson, Sabra Slaughter, and J. Herman Blake, "The Sea Islands as a 113 Cultural Resource," *Black Scholar*, March 1974, pp. 32–39.

5. For further discussion of entrance into Sea Island communities see Patricia 123 Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah: Sex, Age, and Mobility" (Ph.D. diss., Stan- 113 ford University, 1976).

6. Goldstein, *Guide for Field Workers*, p. 173.

## Introduction

554 1. The titles *Mr.* and *Miss* have more significance in Sea Island communities than 123 they do outside. They are used in daily interaction with those who are felt to have earned particular respect, becoming part of their names.

123 2. See Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (Chicago: University 609 of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 11–12. 113

## Chapter 1

131 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," 113 p. 32.

2. These estimates were derived primarily from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester (BCD) Council of Governments' *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region*, 1980.

113 3. For a detailed discussion of the folk life and language of Sandy Island and the

[p. 169]

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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## CONCLUSION

178 538 (533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth,[11] *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*,[12] besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu."[13]

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] (83) [171] [11]Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'tonsts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'tons'' he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

[12]One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

[13]Bennett, II, 52.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the community. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course, as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the relationships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus marriage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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# *Pin Point*

361 PIN POINT, A NEGRO COMMUNITY ABOUT NINE MILES southeast of Savannah, is scattered over some twenty or thirty acres on a peninsula overlooking Shipyard Creek. 342 Many of the small wooden cabins are neatly whitewashed and are half hidden by shrubbery and spreading oaks. 351 Flowers and vegetables are planted in the most advantageous sunny spots near the houses and most of the yards are enclosed by picket fences, giving a cozy and pleasant privacy. 363 The lanes, little more than wagon tracks, twist in and out and across the settlement. [361] The informal and haphazard scattering of the houses, with high shrubbery bordering the lanes, gives an effect that is pleasing and unusual.

368 Pin Point has a church, a pavilion on the tidewater creek, and a crab cannery. 366 The men and women who do not work as domestic servants at the nearby country places find employment in the crab cannery or fish and crab and shrimp [464] for themselves. The life is quiet, soothed by the smell of the salt marsh.

• 621 It is only when some great excitement takes place, a stirring religious service, a dance at the community pavilion, a death,[37b, c] or some scandal concerning a neighbor, that quiet Pin Point bestirs itself. Recently, one of the fishermen ventured into the foreign waters of the Ogeechee about ten miles [165] distant and there he was almost devoured by an alligator. All that was left of him, "the ham," was given a burial[2] amid the loud lamentations of his relatives and neighbors.

181 The people are, almost without exception, black or dark
142

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439 437 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

## Social Structure

177 156 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in 596 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family communities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and peo- 621 ple remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to 596 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called 423 "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the 602 primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island communities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a (423)

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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621 602 613 Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The 609 islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

596 As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is 581 a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts 588 until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted 586 under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course 593 as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the relationships 596 inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law 888 antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

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175 567 794 799 The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the elders] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

175 567 794 Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

175 567 (621) Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

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175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

[533] The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[795] church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
567 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
794 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House contin-
[674] ued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
621 law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626] House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368] plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them
175 during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
567

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
888 ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
538 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

.621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
621 nities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These
861 factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of child rearing within a West African heritage. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
• 621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of the discipline philosophy of two for one. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, The Role of the Father in the Family, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

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115 Georgia but still retained many pleasant recollections of the days of her early youth. She had heard of many African customs and went on to tell us some of these.

829 "I heahd many time bout how in Africa wen a girl dohn lack jis lak dey should, dey drum uh out uh town. Dey jis beat duh drum, an call uh name on duh drum an duh drum say bout all duh tings she done.[26] Dey drum an mahch long an take duh girl right out uh town.

"Girls hab tuh be keahful den. Dey caahn be so triflin lak some ub em is now. In Africa dey gits punished. Sometime wen dey bin bad, dey put um on duh banjo. Dat wuz

• 626 in dis country."

This being "put on duh banjo" was unintelligible to us and we asked for an explanation.

"Wen dey play dat night, dey sing bout dat girl an dey tell all bout uh. Das puttin uh on duh banjo. Den ebrybody know an dat girl sho bettuh change uh ways."

829 The story of flying Africans was a familiar one to the old
789 woman and she said that her mother had often told her the following incident which was supposed to have taken place
567 on a plantation during slavery times.

"Duh slabes wuz out in duh fiel wukin. All ub a sudden dey git tuhgedduh an staht tuh moob roun in a ring. Roun dey go fastuhnfastuh. Den one by one dey riz up an take wing an fly lak a bud.[68b, 69c] Duh obuhseeuh heah duh noise an he come out an he see duh slabes riz up in duh eah an fly back tuh Africa. He run an he ketch duh las one by duh foot jis as he wuz bout tuh fly off. I dohn know ef he wuz neah nuff tuh pull um back down an keep um frum goin off."

115 As we left, Priscilla accompanied us down the walk to the gateway. She was reluctant to see us go and until the last minute regaled us with a variety of stories.

We had learned that an elderly Negro named Lawrence Baker * lived out on the Ridge Road near the Ridgeway Club.

* *Lawrence Baker, the Ridge Road, near Darien.*

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it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

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Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977). 117 113

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5. 113 626 794

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70. 113 175

7. Lawton, "Religious Life,". 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22. [794] [512]

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592. [576]

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13. [431]

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 hearted, he don't care what the people said, but he going on. He is a won-
474 derful conqueror, I tell you that.
443 And John Smalls, he just stick and stand right there as a sale-man. Sell
185 in the store. He is the head of buying for the store. Bill Saunders is the Manager of the store. And I am the Treasurer. Mr. Jenkins is the President. So we stick and stand, thick and thin, right there.

159 I think this the best place on Johns Island. I say to myself, "is a Chris-
578 tian place" because the good Lord help us so far in all these years. We ain't had no bad quarrels yet. 'Cause they always divide a row. I not say no row
629 don't be there. They be there. But if they know, Esau or John, they will divide the row. They will ask them nicely to quit. Or they put them out. We never had nobody hurt one another yet.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## NOW WE CALL IT SEA ISLAND CENTER

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443 The Progressive Club grew a little bit. We finished paying for the old
474 building. Then after we have taken out what it takes to run the store for the
185 year, each member (thirteen people) gets a dividend. The first year it was twenty-five dollars. Next year each person got thirty dollars. I felt like it was some motivation for all of them to find out that we are now getting something back.

159 And then I said to them that since this building was bought old and is
185 about to outlive its usefulness, that we need to build something that will be
345 serviceable to not only this community, but for the whole sea islands. I
347 thought that a place large enough for basketball and other games and workshops would be something that could bring in other people to give ideas what could be done for the community and other communities. I suggested to them that this ought to be done. I felt like if we got together and work heartily together, cooperatively together, that it could be done.

We have one or two person oppose my idea about a huge building like that, for fear that we wouldn't be able to pay for the thing, or that we wouldn't even be able to get it built to start with. One of the members stated that he hoped he could live long enough to see one side of the wall go up. When I was told that, I said maybe he didn't feel he have long to live. I guess he was surprised to see it go up.

159 One member couldn't believe that Negroes could get together and pool
185 their money and buy something and get along all right. It took me ten years to convince him. He told somebody that when I first started the Progressive Club he thought I was looking out for Esau Jenkins and the family. This person told me, "But I found out when you went and bought that place. The money was loaned to you, and you put all as many names as possible on

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
• 627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
886 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

758 Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care
743 Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to
177 go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly
[741] by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open and close.

758 My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in
185 1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and saw the intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I know I said to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island twenty." Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charles-
74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
668 people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands.
185 Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant work-
74 ers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Wash-
177 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

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361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

• 632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One,
115 through natural ability, has held the office almost from the founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em [789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people 774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see 787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day [115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I 789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. 754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69c]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

• 632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two 115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were [301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;* his [789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

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"I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place." [15]

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"Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

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"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm." [8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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177 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the
668 NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs* v. *Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs* v. *Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the
177 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Car-
668 olina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding
875 any city or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

In 1957, with training and assistance from
891 Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau
875 Jenkins began the first citizenship education school
•641 on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher. The classes did not merely
666 stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
[668] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of citizenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
874 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson de-
641 veloped the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
563 rights groups turned their attention to voter regis-
[668] tration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[668] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

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On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em—dum-de-dum-dum-dum—right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 873 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 873 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

159 873 641 666 185 We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

159 873 185 Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

(666) Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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*Mr. Myles Horton**

## THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185 The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(875) Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

(533) Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns. Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide leadership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

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Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teachers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

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The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recognition. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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[p.200]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the con-
666 stitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.
153 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read
666 and write.
185 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
[212] students was on that first night.

871 The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
872 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
185 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

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In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

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We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

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One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ON JOHNS ISLAND KNOW WHAT AN IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAD

There were tens of thousands of teachers and students who went through that program. It lasted until 1970, and I think that what happened is that foundations thought that we had achieved what we were working for. We had the Voting Rights Bill and we had accomplished desegregation and we had gotten blacks elected to office in all these different states, so the money started drying up for the program.

The curriculum we developed on Johns Island became the curriculum that went all across the South. It was all the things the people had said they wanted to know and learn. I don't think the people on Johns Island know what an impact the program they were involved in had—how it went so far and so wide.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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# AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizneship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship (668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 533 114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field [P 235-A]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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inquire too closely, to cultivate the plantations, employ the Negroes, and teach them the ways of civilization. For one thing, this system was far more economical than that pursued in 1862 and 1863. The social experiment which had been started so enthusiastically had been an expensive enterprise,[37] and the Government, now more interested in winning the war than in "civilizing" ten thousand coastal Negroes, turned the responsibility over to someone else. Saxton's powers were now very much limited, but he still retained supervision of "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products." With the Port Royal experiment the Government began the policy of protection which later it was to apply to the Negro throughout the South during the period of Reconstruction.

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### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

The men and women led by Edward L. Pierce who reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, took seriously their charge to train the "contrabands" for citizenship. A few failed in this arduous undertaking because of their incapacity to govern men, but none failed from lack of purpose or unwillingness to endure hardships. Some even died at their posts, victims of smallpox and of the fevers from which the former masters had annually fled to the health-resort towns.

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[37] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 118n. "Taking the plantations as a whole, the Government lost in 1862 the whole $200,000 which it had cleared from the planter's big cotton crop of 1861." But see also *House Ex. Doc.* no. 72, 37th Cong. 3d Sess. in which Secretary Chase outlined on Feb. 18, 1863, the expenses of the Port Royal experiment. The receipts were $726,984.10 and the expenditures $225,705.34, giving a balance on hand of $501,278.76. The majority of the receipts arose from the sale of the confiscated cotton.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 A superintendent's work kept him busy early and
657 late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[38] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In
175 addition to these duties which were essential to the culti-
657 vation of the land the superintendent was expected to
641 attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[39]

195 One of the most serious problems which the superin-
657 tendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers.
466 They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

[38] *House Ex. Doc. no. 142*, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[39] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## WE CAN HAVE SOME SAY AS TO WHAT'S GOING TO BE DEVELOPED

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We've been meeting and talking about heirs' property and how to get it cut up now so that folk don't lose all of it. There are so many people involved, all it takes is for one person to sell out. Once that one sells and some stranger gets in, he can force a partition suit, and they may end up losing a whole tract of land. What we've been trying to do is tell them how to get it partitioned among family members. So if one wants to sell, fine. He will just have that acre or so. But not the whole tract going out from under them.

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I'm talking to them about taxes and the importance of paying those taxes. And we're notifying people when we see their land up for sale for nonpayment of taxes. I'm talking to them about making wills. If you don't make a will that's where all these heirs come in. It's just so much to keep up with.

Being a lawyer is something I always knew I wanted to do, from the time I can remember. And my intentions were always to return to Charleston and Johns Island. This is where I wanted to be. I love this place.

We can have some say as to what's going to be developed—what's going to go up and where it's going to go up. That's still open to us.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863. 175 657 423 651 (567)

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34] 175 657 466 (427)

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis- 175 657 658 427

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[15] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[15] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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By plantation rule and by law of the state only one slave to a plantation was permitted to carry a gun for hunting, and he did so only to provide ducks for the master's table or to kill the crows and blackbirds which ate the seeds and the young plants in the fields. 567 411 223 656

The Negroes were also fond of singing and dancing, and most planters indulged them in this propensity. One South Carolina planter who had been having trouble in disciplining his slaves supplied his people with fiddles and drums and "promoted dancing." To his gratification the ill temper of the slaves disappeared and peace was once more established on the plantation.[29] Their dancing was a sort of shuffle which animated the whole body, and was performed individually rather than by couples. The dance was usually held at night in the open or in one of the cabins and the entire group participated in the merrymaking. Miss Towne frequently complained after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the Negroes on her plantation had been up singing and dancing all night. 567 533 535

Most visitors to the Sea Islands wondered at the slaves' "passionate fondness" for singing. Fredrika Bremer, a Scandinavian visitor to coastal South Carolina, was of the opinion that "one must see these people singing if one is rightly to understand their life." After attending a Negro church service, she declared that "they sang so that it was a pleasure to hear, with all their souls and with all their bodies in unison; for their bodies wagged, their heads nodded, their feet stamped, their knees shook, their elbows and their hands beat time to the tune and words 567 533

[29] N. Herbemont, "On the Moral Discipline and Treatment of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, IX, 70-75.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia

# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

* *Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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South Carolina



its community outreach activities were continued. The Penn Center, currently directed by Emory Campbell, acts as an information and referral source, provides such social services as visiting families to help them select food crops, and educates in matters including use of land and landownership.

Bill Jenkins was working for Penn Community Services in the early 1970s when he helped put together a program called Black Land Services, in response to a number of requests for help in retaining ownership of land. He is now active in the South Carolina Land Owners' Association, an offshoot of the National Association of Land Owners, which presently operates only in Mississippi and Alabama. Faced with serious cutbacks in funding and manpower, the South Carolina Land Owners' Association is not able to be as active as it once was, but Jenkins and co-worker Joe McDermott continue their educational activities in the islands on a reduced scale.

The desire of the dominant society to reclaim the Sea Islands, though shortsighted, nonetheless seems likely to prevail. As Ed Brown puts it, "The industry is there." The displacement that has already occurred will have long-term repercussions. "The social consequences of the pressures from development on the Sea Islands will be seen another five to ten to fifteen years," notes Emory Campbell. "It's subtle now but we at Penn Center see it as a very serious problem—serious today as it is going to be serious in another ten to fifteen years."

The islanders' ineffectiveness in resisting the often reckless advances of developers must be laid at the door of the very insularity that for so long protected their culture. Adherence to traditional ways has by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force. The price they are paying now is one more legacy of slavery.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

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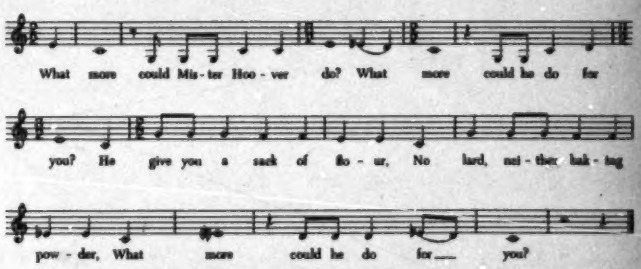


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Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

**THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS**

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My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

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The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project. That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And the women, five cents.

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The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

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Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

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Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Belle Green*

**ALL MY OWN GONE**

159 Sometime I stand here in the nighttime, ain't but me in one little room to sing. Then I study, you know, my mind run across, and he run on the old man. I just stop, sit down, and me heart get full. The other day I couldn't eat no supper. Me heart fill, and I feel full up the whole afternoon. Couldn't do nothing. I just maybe could of get a little bit wood then.

Now I can't testify like I used to. 'Cause I ain't able. My heart been bad for so long. I just trying to hold up. But they know me; all they at Moving Star Hall know me. I full of fire too. I been way down, but the Lord lift me up. Make me feel good the week out. I just pray to make my voice come back. Give me my voice back as I does been, one time before I die.

(657) When you get an old woman, and you can't go, the government take care of you. That's what got me today. Government got me.

Threescore and ten, that's seventy years I come to this day, but I ain't got much more. So I'm trying to be as close to the Man as I can now. But thousands and thousands have gone. All my own gone. Just a branch now, like a tree put out branch.

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later, when they saw the soldiers entering the houses, they also took pieces of furniture, but by far the greater portion of valuables was taken by the soldiers and Government agents.

### THE PROBLEM OF THE CONQUERING ARMY

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When the Federal Army captured Port Royal, it found that it had also taken possession of some ten thousand Negroes who might be "contraband of war," but whose status was doubtful, nevertheless. They could not be treated as northern laborers, put to work at the camps, and then ignored. It was even possible that the Army might in the last extremity have to feed and clothe them. But in the meantime there were valuable provisions for the Army on the plantations and valuable crops in the fields which could not be left to the uncertain course of the Negroes.

One of the first orders to the troops was to collect boats and mules for transportation service and corn and cattle for the commissary. Edward L. Pierce later reported that the Army had taken nearly all the corn from Ladies Island, hoping that the surplus on St. Helena would be sufficient to feed the Negroes of both islands, and from all the plantations it had taken the workable mules and horses and many of the oxen, which they slaughtered for beef, sometimes killing as many as "fifty or more head on a plantation."[7]

two Federal boats anchored aided in the destruction of their own and three neighboring plantations. They set fire to the "big house," containing a library of 3,500 volumes, to the steam threshing mill, rice barn, corn house, kitchen, storeroom, mule stable, and three Negro houses. They put on board 6,000 bushels of rice from the plantation barn and then, with their clothing tied in bundles and with their chickens and pigs squealing a protest, climbed on the vessels to the last woman and child. See *Charleston Mercury*, June 19, 1863.

[7] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, p. 319.

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To the Treasury Department, the War Department turned over the task of collecting and selling the cotton. For this purpose, Secretary Chase hastily appointed certain men whom he called cotton agents to direct the work of the Negroes. William H. Reynolds, lieutenant colonel of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Artillery, was appointed resident agent and placed in charge of the cotton agents. His motives appear to have been superior to those of many who worked under him. In making a report on the progress of work to Secretary Chase the first of the year he wrote:

> I find on most of the Plantations corn, and Sweet Potatoes, in sufficient quantities to support the Negroes.
>
> I have made arrangements to furnish them with salt, molasses & other small stores in moderate quantities deducting the cost of these articles from the amt due them for labor.
>
> . . . I find it is impossible to hire the Negroes by the day, on many of the Plantations, & have authorized my clerks to allow them a dollar for every four hundred pounds of stone cotton which they deliver at the steamboat landing, paying them partly in money & the bal in Clothing & Provisions—[8]

Edward L. Pierce, a special agent for the Treasury Department, who arrived at Port Royal a few weeks after the cotton agents, found some of them practicing "a reign of terror over the Negroes." One of them, a carpenter from New York City, had the "profoundest contempt" for his laborers.[9] Others also wrote of the dubious practices of the cotton agents. "Mr. Whiting has not been a Government agent for two months," Miss Towne wrote indignantly in 1862, "and yet he lives in Government

[8] Port Royal Correspondence. Wm. H. Reynolds to S. P. Chase, Jan. 1, 1862.
[9] *Ibid.*, Edward L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, March 30, 1862.

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a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department. He wrote to the adjutant-general on this date:

> For the future maintenance of these people some system must be established, and one which will permit them to sustain themselves; but before they can be left entirely to their own government they must be trained and instructed into a knowledge of personal responsibility—which will be a matter of time. I have, therefore, the honor to recommend that suitable instructors be sent to them, to teach them all the necessary rudiments of civilization and secondly, and in the meantime, that agents, properly qualified, be employed and sent here to take charge of plantations and superintend the work of the blacks until they are sufficiently enlightened to think and provide for themselves. They should receive wages, and the profits of the plantations, after all expenses are paid, should go to the Government. I can see no other way to lay a groundwork for future usefulness with this unfortunate class of people.[11]

The next month General Sherman issued an order appealing to the benevolent people of the land "in behalf of the helpless blacks of South Carolina within the limits of his command."[12]

When the Treasury assumed the responsibility of the Negro, Secretary Chase had in mind some such plan as Sherman had already suggested. It occurred to Chase that here was an opportunity to test the ability of the Negro to exercise freedom in case it were eventually given him. Under a fostering benevolence, the Negro was to be given the chance of revealing his capabilities. Out of the battle of Port Royal there gradually arose in the minds of those in the North the scheme for a great social experi-

[11] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 218.
[12] *House Ex. Doc. No. 142*, 41st Cong. 2d Sess.

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ment which would form some basis for a decision concerning the status which the Negro should be given after the war.

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To put some such scheme in operation the Department chose Edward L. Pierce, a young abolitionist of Boston who had studied in Chase's law office. He had been at Hampton, Virginia, and after he was mustered out of military service in July, 1861, went to Washington where he had occasion to relate some of his recent experiences with the Negroes to Secretary Chase. This fact together with their personal friendship was perhaps responsible for the Secretary's sending Pierce, then practicing law in Boston, a wire December 21, 1861: "If you incline to visit Beaufort in connection with contrabands and cotton, come to Washington at once."[13] On the twenty-fifth Pierce conferred with Chase and, on January 13, 1862, left New York City for Beaufort to make an investigation of social conditions among the Negroes under the temporary appointment as special agent for the Treasury Department.

Pierce found the "contrabands" discontented with the treatment they had received at the hands of the cotton agents and the Army. They were suspicious and reticent. When asked if they desired to be free, they would often answer, "De vite man do w'at he pleases wit' us. We yunnah niggers now, Massa."[14] But, concluded Pierce, "in spite of their condition, reputed to be worse here than in many other parts of the rebellious region, there are such features in their life and character, that the opportunity is now offered to us to make of them, partially in

[13] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 54.
[14] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 308.

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this generation, and fully in the next, a happy, industrious law-abiding, free and Christian people, if we have but the courage and patience to accept it."[18] Whereupon he outlined a plan to the Secretary by which he thought this ideal might be realized.

He was much opposed to the plan of leasing the plantations with the people upon them to the highest bidder, as the cotton agents had recommended. Instead, he would propose a system of superintendents of plantations whereby certain men, carefully chosen for the position, should be appointed to manage the cultivation of the plantations, their chief object being "to promote the moral and intellectual culture of the wards" and "to prepare them for useful and worthy citizenship." The superintendents, who were to be selected "as carefully as one would choose a guardian for his children," were to have complete authority on their respective plantations subject only to a director-general. The superintendents were to be compensated by a good salary, say $1,000, and the laborers by a standard wage graduated by the wants of the laborers and the ability of the Government to pay, this ability to be determined by the profits arising from the cultivation of the plantations. He thought, however, that the Government should be able to allow rations and 40 cents a day.

As a part of the plan, Pierce advised the Government to send missionaries "to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature" and teachers to instruct the laborers in reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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salaries of these persons, Pierce thought that the Government could rely upon private benevolence.[16]

While Pierce's "Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," of February 3, 1862, which at once received wide publication, was for the most part enthusiastically received in the North, there were some who thought that he went too far in presuming upon the Negro's ultimate citizenship. Even his personal friends in Congress refused to support the plan, and President Lincoln did not wish to be troubled with "such details"; for, so Pierce thought, he approached the great question of the status of the Negro "slowly and reluctantly."[17] Chase seems to have been well pleased with the report and at once put it in operation.[18] In looking about for the proper person to put this difficult and important experiment into effect, it was natural that the Secretary should choose the father of the plan.

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Although the Department had adopted the plan of superintendents, it had no funds with which to pay them. At this critical stage the Educational Commission, organized in Boston February 7, 1862, and the Freedman's Relief Association, organized in New York on the twentieth of the same month, volunteered to pay both superintend-

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

[17] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 63.

[18] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. The authority by which the Treasury Department assumed the responsibilities outlined in the report was based upon the Act of July 13, 1861, by which the President was authorized to permit commercial intercourse with any part of the country in a state of insurrection under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The act authorized the Secretary to appoint the officers needed to carry into effect such permits, rules, and regulations. President Lincoln sanctioned the enterprise in a note to Pierce, February 15, 1862, and the War Department approved the plans in an order to General Sherman which he made a part of General Orders, No. 17.

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cents and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived $200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.[19]

### THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.[20]

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

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[19] Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen.*

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, p. 315.

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lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government.

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In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the careless and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward

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[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

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S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve without remuneration in this social experiment, contributing himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents generally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St. Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to only $40,000.[23]

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[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181. [23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

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The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. 'They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

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They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

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[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[26]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[26] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

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175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
•657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount realized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
657 of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
241 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of
423 the old plantation system. He would divide the plantations among the people, allotting the Negro families as much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the basis of what they raised. This plan the government finally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[429] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
657 sion into three areas and appointed a general superintendent over each. The local superintendents in charge of plantations were answerable to their respective general superintendents.[32]

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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175 tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for
657 Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 out-
658 lined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of plant-
429 ing under the system arising out of the sale of planta-
tions:

> 175 I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—
> 658 or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this,
> most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one
> 657 of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be
> given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and em-
> 248 ploy some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the
> privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and
> which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our
> salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that
> I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I
> have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and
> before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more.
> The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules,
> carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows
> & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when
> the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a
> formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has
> undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the
> profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no
> more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the
> ensuing year.[35]

175 The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of
657 government-operated plantations and was content until
the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to
exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, per-
mitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

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inquire too closely, to cultivate the plantations, employ the Negroes, and teach them the ways of civilization. For one thing, this system was far more economical than that pursued in 1862 and 1863. The social experiment which had been started so enthusiastically had been an expensive enterprise,[37] and the Government, now more interested in winning the war than in "civilizing" ten thousand coastal Negroes, turned the responsibility over to someone else. Saxton's powers were now very much limited, but he still retained supervision of "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products." With the Port Royal experiment the Government began the policy of protection which later it was to apply to the Negro throughout the South during the period of Reconstruction.

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### TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

The men and women led by Edward L. Pierce who reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, took seriously their charge to train the "contrabands" for citizenship. A few failed in this arduous undertaking because of their incapacity to govern men, but none failed from lack of purpose or unwillingness to endure hardships. Some even died at their posts, victims of smallpox and of the fevers from which the former masters had annually fled to the health-resort towns.

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[37] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 118n. "Taking the plantations as a whole, the Government lost in 1862 the whole $200,000 which it had cleared from the planter's big cotton crop of 1861." But see also *House Ex. Doc.* no. 72, 37th Cong. 3d Sess. in which Secretary Chase outlined on Feb. 18, 1863, the expenses of the Port Royal experiment. The receipts were $726,984.10 and the expenditures $225,705.34, giving a balance on hand of $501,278.76. The majority of the receipts arose from the sale of the confiscated cotton.

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175 A superintendent's work kept him busy early and
•657 late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[28] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In
175 addition to these duties which were essential to the culti-
657 vation of the land the superintendent was expected to
641 attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[29]

195 One of the most serious problems which the superin-
657 tendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers.
466 They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

[28] *House Ex. Doc. no. 142*, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[29] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

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the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

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Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

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To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

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The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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175 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of
•657 training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of planta-
658 tions in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them
891 to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of
657 the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of
175 morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less
657 of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general
181 manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

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suspect that most abolitionist views of their character are exaggerated in their favor."[52]

### THE LAND SALES

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Congress by Act of August 5, 1861, levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on all the states and territories for the purpose of conducting the war, of which South Carolina's quota was $363,570.66.[53] To collect the tax in the eleven insurrectionary states, Congress passed an act, June 7, 1862, calling for the appointment of direct tax commissioners. Collections were made in all the southern states during the war and after its close either by voluntary payment or by sale of land. Commissioners sold land for the non-payment of taxes in Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina, but in every state except that of South Carolina the lands were bid in at the tax sales by the commissioners for the United States. The presence of the northern missionaries in the region of the tax sales altered the situation in South Carolina.

The commissioners for South Carolina, W. E. Wording, W. Henry Brisbane, and A. D. Smith, having been appointed, ordered the first sale of land to take place at Beaufort, February 11, 1863. The land to be sold was that in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes in Beaufort District, the area occupied by the Federal Army, and included the whole town of Beaufort. Many friends of the Negro both at Port Royal and at the North objected to a sale under the Act of June 7, for they wanted some special

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[53] By Act of Congress approved July 1, 1862, the operations of the Act of August 5, 1861, were suspended until April 1, 1865, except for the collection of the first annual tax, and by Act of June 30, 1864, it was further suspended until additional legislation.

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provision whereby land might be reserved for the ownership of the Negroes. A. D. Smith, chairman of the commission, was himself eager for some such provision to be made. In his preliminary report to Secretary Chase of January 1, 1863, he wrote meaningfully:

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> The great object to be attained is the proper, permanent, and efficient organization of a system or systems of labor for the freed people. . . . The essential prerequisite . . . to this end is to obtain such a control of and title to the soil as will enable it to give a fixed and permanent character to whatever measures may be inaugurated for the organization of their industrial and social energies. All this, by the operation of the act of June 7, 1862, is placed within the grasp of the government. There can be no doubt that the government will be reimbursed many fold, even in a pecuniary point of view, for any appropriation it shall make, or outlay incur, in inaugurating this system.[84]

Miss Towne claims responsibility for the idea which made possible the establishment of such a scheme. "General Saxton is much opposed to the sale of the land to speculators," wrote Miss Towne, February 1, after a visit from him. "He thinks they ought to be preempted by the people, or else so divided and sold that the people can buy, and not be left a prey to greedy speculators and large landholders." Miss Towne suggested that General Hunter stop the February sale as a military necessity, and "General Saxton caught at the idea."[85] General Hunter immediately issued the order against the sale, and the commissioners, after striking off one lot in Beaufort, adjourned until further notice.

[84] *Senate Ex. Doc.* no. 26, 37th Cong., 3d sess.
[85] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 100, 101.

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175 one of Boston, in the project, and on March 9 bought 6,795 acres, valued by the commissioners at $24,120, for about $7,000, eleven plantations including Coffin's Point, Fripp's Point, Cherry Hill, Pine Grove, John Fripp's Big House, Mulberry Hill, Corner Farm, two plantations on Ladies Island, and Morgan Island.[58] For the most part he employed to help him in the experiment the superintendents and teachers who were already on the plantations. After conducting the enterprise for two years with many vexations and losses, he began to sell the land in 1865, some plantations to white men from the North, others in small tracts to Negroes. He got from $5 to $10 an acre for land for which he had paid a little more than a dollar.[59]

The land bid in for the United States had been bought with the idea of providing for military and naval purposes and with the hope eventually of placing land within the reach of the Negro. The President's instructions to the tax commissioners of September 16, 1863, outlined a plan whereby this hope might be realized. After listing
175 the land to be reserved for military and naval purposes,
423 providing for land to be sold to men serving in the army,
• 659 navy, or marine corps, and setting apart thirty-six school farms of 160 acres each, he directed that all parts of certain tracts not otherwise appropriated be surveyed into twenty-acre plots and sold to "heads of families of the African race, only one to each, preferring such as by their good conduct, meritorious services, or exemplary character, will be examples of moral propriety and industry to

[58] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. But see *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 172.
[59] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 277, 296, 315, 324, 326.

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those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[60] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction.

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On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[61] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[62]

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[60] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc. no. 146*, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[61] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[62] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

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General Sherman, after having finally reached the sea in his famous march thereto, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865, setting aside "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida," for the freedmen, and especially reserved the islands for "the sole and exclusive management" of the Negroes.[63] The order, however, specifically exempted from its operation those whites who had bought land at the tax sales. Saxton, who was authorized to put the terms of the order in operation, at once began to settle Negroes on the land. No Negro, however, acquired the title to the land by virtue of General Sherman's order. Later, Congress, for the relief of those who had been settled on abandoned plantations, ordered, in an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau Act of July 16, 1866, a sale of most of the public land at $1.50 an acre to "such persons and to such only as have acquired and are now occupying lands under and agreeably to the provisions of General Sherman's special field order." This same act called for a sale of the school farms in St. Helena's Parish at $10 an acre.[64]

Before the Government had sold all the land which it had taken over in 1863 for the non-payment of taxes, the possession of it had become an irksome problem, grievous alike to the Government and to the people who were trying to rehabilitate the region after the War. Money was scarce and the buyers few. It was not until 1876 that the Government finally disposed of all the land.

[63] *House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.
[64] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, secs. 6-12.

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248 175 (657) men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded (492) the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on (493) foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy (292) calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

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[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

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an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[8] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[8] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

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175 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves
433 better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but
511 they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

### WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superin-
175 tendent under Philbrick for the Government and later re-
567 mained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his
•657 scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private
181 funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

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*meum* and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in making claims,—these are the traits which try us continually in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us despair of their improvement—at least, in the present generation. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.' "[8]

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Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Government's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

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I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

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him, ere he will gain all his rights; but I would rather, for his own sake, see him oppressed for generations, than be spoiled and petted as he has been here. He would come out of the struggle more manly and self-reliant.[7]

Philbrick had been opposed from the first to giving the Negroes anything except in payment for services actually performed. He observed in the autumn of 1862 that they were more economical of food than they had been in the spring when they thought that the Government would ration them as their masters had done. Philbrick would have followed the same rule in regard to tools, paying them wages enough to enable each person to buy his own hoe and spade. The superintendents were likewise opposed to the Government policy of selling land to the Negroes at a special price. After the sales had been effected and the Negroes had been in possession of their holdings for more than a year, Philbrick was of the opinion that "no race of men on God's earth ever acquired the right to the soil" with so little effort as the Negroes on St. Helena. He thought that they would have been better off had they paid the market value of the land, "because they would use the land for which they had paid full price more economically, would be likely to get more out of it, and would be taught a feeling of independence more readily than by being made the recipients of charity."[8]

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Philbrick himself had acquired his land at a lower price than the Negroes had paid, but he overlooked this fact in evaluating the Government's policy toward the N[illegible] attempting to put into

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operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to ways of thrift and independence. Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro worked for his employer less than three months in the year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 6*, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
• 657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
736 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

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ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

175 658 871 175 871 872 (659) 175 872

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

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[29] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

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In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by the United States for naval and military purposes and some for "school farms," the profits from which were to be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government had come two years later to accept it. But General Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted them to do so free of rent, provided that they live on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis-

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

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175 tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for
657 Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 out-
658 lined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of plant-
427 ing under the system arising out of the sale of planta-
tions:

175 I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—
658 or, as we style each other a speculator? I have been forced to this,
657 most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one
248 of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and employ some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more. The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules, carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the ensuing year.[35]

175 The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of
657 government-operated plantations and was content until the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, permitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.
[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

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175 Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and
657 funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise
795 meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend
797 communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

175 The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which
657 Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on
658 every plantation who should conduct classes several hours
871 a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[40]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[40] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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175 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of
657 training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of planta-
658 tions in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them
871 to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of
657 the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of
175 morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less
657 of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general
181 manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

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the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

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It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits."[26]

175 658 871

In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc.* no. 79, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Wording, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

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ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

175 658 871 175 871 872 [659]

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**"MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"**

159 666 871 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**WE'RE NOT FOR SALE**

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 871 661 185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

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people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school, plus transportation to take them to and from school."

The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm. Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
474 Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
592 somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
666 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask, "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
474 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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871 641 185 [664] We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

871 668 In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

871 641 666 185 [875] We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

871 668 641 666 185 One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
94 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[134] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[137] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party
• [665] needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community,
so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already
there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was
741 done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put
together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice
land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where
Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[934] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people
were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their
own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made
743 the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
[429] have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using
it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it
could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

[743] [731] [734] [362] [873]

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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177 668 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs* v. *Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs* v. *Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the 177 668 875 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Carolina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding any city or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

891 875 641 •666 In 1957, with training and assistance from Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins began the first citizenship education school on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher. The classes did not merely stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
[668] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
641 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home
871 to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
563 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
[668] rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[668] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[794] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
[795] pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
494 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
529 on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[872] (p.xii-B) cation and voter registration.
•[666]

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MR. JENKINS, I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO BECOME A REGISTERED CITIZEN."

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On Johns Island, in the year of 1948, I saw the condition of the people who had been working on the plantations for many years. And I knew that we were not able to do the things that would need to be done unless we could get people registered citizens.

I operated a bus from Johns Island to Charleston carrying people to their jobs. So I decided to get a group in the bus in the mornings and teach them how to read the part of the Constitution that we have to read before we are able to become registered citizens.

One of these mornings I was teaching the group to read the Constitution, a woman by the name of Alice Wine said to me, "Mr. Jenkins, I would like very much to become a registered citizen, but I cannot read this Constitution because I did not get but just so far in school, and I cannot pronounce these words. But if you are willing to help me, I will show you that I would be one that would be willing to vote in every election."

So I decided to pay more attention to her, and I helped her at more times than I do the regular times when we have school in the bus, to get her prepared to register.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY READ AND GET A PAPER

I come around to registering through Mr. Esau Jenkins. I used to ride his bus, and he said, "I want to carry you down to register." I said, "I can't read those hard thing yet," and he get the book and he start to learn me.

He start to help me read and when I get to them hard words I feel like jump it. My tongue so heavy until I couldn't pronounce the words, you know. But he said to me, "No, the hard word is the things for you to learn." And so me and them girls (and some of the girls could read 'em—dum-de-dum-dum-dum—right on through, right on through, but I couldn't do it), we tried 'em.

Then he take we up to a registration board on Society Street, and we get in line. Everybody read and get a paper, read and get a paper. And I be in line next to this girl, and she read and she stammer. And then the man put me for read, and I read those things just like I been know 'em. And I didn't know them things, I swear!

Mr. Jenkins figure I going fail. He been right outside there on the corner for listen. And when I come out he said, "Miss Wine, you get it?" I say, "Yes, sir." Say, "Well, sir!" I say, "I thought I couldn't read them hard thing." Them thing was *too* hard!

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 873 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 873 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult-school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

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We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

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Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## "MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"

159 666 871 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE'RE NOT FOR SALE

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 871 661 185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
891 scratch to seventh grade.
177 So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
185 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
[661] know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
[465] —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

878 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
873 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
494 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember
● 666 not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
● 66 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
474 Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
692 somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
197 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
66 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
64 "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
185 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."

So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
474 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
185 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## OUT OF EGYPT I AM GOING TO CALL MY SONS

159 185 Now if anybody is happy, it ought to be Esau Jenkins, the person who is talking here to you. Why? Twelve years and some months ago in this community, I organized a club—what we call the Progressive Club.

443 474 You folks have helped me start as a man and form a group. You are selling groceries, you are selling gasoline. Besides that, some time the early part of this month you have paid out all your debt and yet left $175 to add to your store.

159 185 When I organized this Progressive Club, I could count the number of voters on my one hand, and I don't have but five fingers.

178 In tweive years you have caused this whole island to change. Today you got school buses running by your door and picking up your children, carrying them to a high school on Johns Island. Today you can say that my children will be educated—at least get a high school education on Johns Island.

(666) Today you could say in the last election we built up our voting strength so high until the white men in Charleston have to ask us to be in the polls on Johns Island and Edisto and Wadmalaw. Negroes have helped work for the Democratic party.

Now you could not have said that twelve years ago because you didn't vote. You didn't have a school. But today you have children getting ready to compete with anybody's children, because of your cooperation.

My friends, I want you to help me that I may go on, come what may. There are any number of times that I have walked alone. There are a lot of people who are afraid, because if they be seen walking along with me, the white folks might say, "Well, he is one of these persons who are fighting me."

But share it with Esau Jenkins, and thank God that God has helped us. We made an achievement that we are not ashamed of. You don't know how much you have done, friends—how many people are talking about what you have done; how many people are reading about what you have done.

Together let us go—sisters, brothers, blacks, whites, yellows, whatnot. We are all God's people, so we got to go together. And friends, I think all over the world today, people who love freedom are saying this morning, "Out of Egypt I'm going to call my sons."

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*Mr. Myles Horton**

## THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185 The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(875) Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

(533) Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

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the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns. Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide leadership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teachers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recognition. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school, and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

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*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the constitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.

666 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women
153 ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read and write.

666 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that
185 I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
895 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
(212) students was on that first night.

871 The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
872 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
185 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
● 666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ON JOHNS ISLAND KNOW WHAT AN IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAD

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There were tens of thousands of teachers and students who went through that program. It lasted until 1970, and I think that what happened is that foundations thought that we had achieved what we were working for. We had the Voting Rights Bill and we had accomplished desegregation and we had gotten blacks elected to office in all these different states, so the money started drying up for the program.

The curriculum we developed on Johns Island became the curriculum that went all across the South. It was all the things the people had said they wanted to know and learn. I don't think the people on Johns Island know what an impact the program they were involved in had—how it went so far and so wide.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYTHING IS CHANGED NOW

I still vote. I want to vote for right, but I don't get it. My mother always told me, "You see somebody that jump, you jump too. Cause you, one, can't do nothing. Among the majority, your word just go for nothing." But the people gave us our right, seems like they take our right from us. But it don't stop me from vote. I still vote for the President.

And everything is changed now. The world so tough today.

The older people sang "I Will Overcome" because they had a hard time. They had to row boat to go to the city and carry their peas and corn and potatoes, rice and things. They had a hard time, living and raising their children. Them people had to work with their children on their back. Rebeltime people were mean. But God changed those people. That's a just God. He don't walk knock-kneed. Those oldtime foreparents was something else, I tell you. And one of these days they were able to overcome. They were able to buy the land. Money was scarce, but they had a chance to pay a dollar or two dollars for a piece of ground.

[For a discussion of the development of Denmark Vesey's conspiracy and insurrection in South Carolina, see the NN23 Sea Islanders file, 3: Creel, Category 175, pp. 150-166.]

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[For a discussion of the development of Denmark Vesey's conspiracy and insurrection in South Carolina, see Category 175, pp. 150-166.]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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native state to separate South Carolinians from one another on the basis of skin and hair. Blacks and whites could not legally associate except in the sanctioned roles of subordinate and superior. Not only were most black citizens disfranchised at the polls, blacks were systematically separated from whites in schools, in jobs, and in public accommodations. The policy was called segregation, or Jim Crow, and it was very thoroughgoing. Behind the mask of civility, our harsh racial caste system branded all black South Carolinians as inferior.

Segregation was characterized by two sets of almost everything: there was one set of churches, stores, funeral homes, and drinking fountains for black Carolinians and another for white Carolinians. Black students were relegated to Jim Crow schools, black travelers to the back of the Jim Crow bus, and black moviegoers to the Jim Crow balcony. And there were separate neighborhoods for blacks and whites. It was not difficult to tell which were which: the pavement ended where the black neighborhoods began. But not everything came in pairs. Some things, such as parks, libraries, and swimming pools, were rarely available to black Carolinians at all.

Anyone could tell that the segregation laws were unconstitutional on their face: they violated the constitutional requirement that states not deny the equal protection of the laws to any citizen. But the system of segregation was even more subtly entrenched in South Carolina law and practice than that. It was also characterized by discriminatory enforcement of other laws that were not in themselves discriminatory. And social services were administered on a discriminatory basis. As a result, black Carolinians had less than half the chance of finishing high school as white Carolinians and less than a third the chance of finishing college or entering a profession. Moreover, black Carolinians had the prospect of earning less than half as much as white Carolinians, were twice as likely to be unemployed or imprisoned, and could expect a shorter life span.

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Until the mid-twentieth century the only organization in South Carolina explicitly dedicated to racial advancement was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP). At the time Septima Clark began teach-

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177 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the
668 NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs v. Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs v. Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the
177 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Car-
668 olina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding
875 any city or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

891 In 1957, with training and assistance from
875 Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau
641 Jenkins began the first citizenship education school on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to
666 be the first teacher. The classes did not merely stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
• [668] spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
641 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home
871 to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
563 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
[668] rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
[666] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son,
[123] Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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545 [P ix-B]

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cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who was born and raised on Johns Island and became one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were interviewing people for the update to this book, Septima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

000 159 871 [128] 159 875 [668] 159 [P-XIII-A]

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159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(668) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston County Democratic party. He ran for state senate and received support in both the black and white communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital radio station in Charleston that consistently addresses social issues as well as responds to the musical tastes of the community. He was the principal mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has improved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who finished high school left the area to find work.
(489) Now, with improved transportation, it is possible for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
(241) island. The resort developments and the new small businesses offer some employment, but farming,
(198) long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
311 declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
433 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns Island have held onto a firm determination to live in their traditional community, and many of their hopes and dreams are still in place.

179 Development on Johns Island has taken two
199 forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all along the coastal islands south of Washington, D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged resort communities with condominiums, hotels and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some economic and social benefits to island residents, both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy visitors from outside the region and offering only menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black and white landowners has been meeting regularly to design their own development plan that may

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871 563 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, previously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with (691) (668) the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [757] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 793 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People [MAY] to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

(668)

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.

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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

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CHORUS

Hold on mem-ber, hold on, um, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on. Some - time I up, some - time I down, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

VERSE

CHORUS

Hold on, my dear sis - ter, hold on, Lord, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(ALTERNATE CHORUS)

Hold on, won't you hold on, Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

♩=54 (represents a composite tempo)

(CHORUS)
Hold on, member, hold on,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(VERSE)
Sometime I up, sometime I down,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

(CHORUS)
Hold on, my dear sister, hold on, Lord,
Keep your eyes on that prize, hold on.

This song has an interesting history. When Guy first spent time on Johns Island and sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow," which he had learned from Pete Seeger in the 1950s, Mrs. Wine said, "Oh, I know a different echo to that," and sang, "Keep your eyes on the prize." Guy later passed these words on to the young people then involved in the civil rights movement. Those words became the ones sung all across the South as part of the movement. [114] [668]

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871 the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their
641 community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns.
666 Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide lead-
185 ership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander
(875) to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

871 Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teach-
875 ers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima
185 Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

641 The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the
871 origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a
185 vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recogni-
(668) tion. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a
(875) teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school, and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 641 185 [669] We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

871 668 In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

871 641 666 185 [895] We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

871 668 641 666 185 One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

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# AFTERWORD

•668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship (668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 533 114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field (P 235-A)

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•668 533 114 secretary and native of the Nashville sit-ins, brought some of us together and told us that a white folk singer was coming to lead us in songs. I was also told that, though he might sound different, we were not to laugh when he sang because he was a true friend of the movement and had been tested and tried during the sit-ins in Nashville. Well, the singer was Guy Carawan, who immediately pulled out his guitar and began to play and sing. I remember hearing for the first time songs such as "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?," "Wasn't That a Time!," and hearing the name of Pete Seeger and the Weavers. I remember experiencing no feelings for the soft, flowing ballad style of "Flowers." But when Guy sang "Ol' Blue," he hit familiar territory. None of us had heard the song, but we could feel the story. We requested it over and over again.

Guy spent the rest of the week with us and accompanied us on our freedom songs. He later showed up again and again in mass meetings all over the South and asked me to help him organize several workshops that brought songleaders from the movement together with traditional singers such as Doc Reese from Texas and the Georgia Sea Island Singers from St. Simons Island with singers and song organizers from the topical and folk song revival from the North. Len Chandler, Alan Lomax, Theo Bikel, Phil Ochs, and Tom Paxton were new names we learned during this time.

114 529 533 545 Then in December 1964 Guy and his wife, Candie, invited us, the Freedom Singers from Atlanta, to a festival on Johns Island. There we met Esau Jenkins, who took us to the Progressive Club and a singing. The Georgia Sea Island Singers were there and I heard the Moving Star Hall Singers for the first time. I had never heard or seen this song style before. Led by Janie Hunter and Benjamin Bligen, the singing sounded ancient and the shouting and rhythms more complex than anything I had ever attempted myself.

533 I will never forget the waves of sounds sweeping into each response after a call by Benjie, or

(P. 235-B)

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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

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[For a discussion of the development of Denmark Vesey's conspiracy and insurrection in South Carolina, see Category 175, pp. 150-166.]

[For a discussion of the development of Denmark Vesey's conspiracy and insurrection in South Carolina, see the NN23 Sea Islanders file, 3: Creel, Category 175, pp. 150-166.]

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Sunday as a day of pleasure. Certainly, it was difficult to convince slaves that they should be more exemplary than their masters. These early Carolinians were described as a boisterous lot, frequently engaging in "cursing, swearing, drinking and gaming and barbarous misuse of their Negroes." For ministers and missionaries then, there was the double obstacle of combatting "the strong prejudices" of Africans "grown in years," and "the backwardness of masters."[46] 175

Not all masters were "backward." Some, such as Hugh Bryan, were atypical in that instead of depriving slaves of Christianity, it was sometimes forced upon them. Bryan was accused of inciting the St. Helena slaves to revolt in 1741, when he was probably just attempting to provide religious instruction. His utterances may have generated some discontent among the slaves since he counseled in words similar to those used by Whitefield in his letter to slaveholders. But Whitefield was speaking to masters not to slaves. As ill-advised and eccentric as Hugh Bryan's statements may have been, he was a planter, and as his letter of apology reaffirmed, was in sympathy with the planter cause. He soon settled down to a less public life. But his diary and letters indicate that the spiritual welfare of his slaves was a continual concern. Still, he seems to have been no more successful in creating a change of heart among his bondspeople than he was in mastering his own sense of sin and guilt. Some slaves were baptized and admitted into the Stoney Creek Church, as demonstrated by the church register. Their numbers were small, probably household servants. And, slaves were listed only for baptism, while the baptism, marriage, and burial of whites was recorded.[47] [669] [567]

Of course, church lists do not tell the whole story. And while few slaves cared to convince the Stoney Creek white membership that they had a "true experience," some probably had to listen to sermons and instruction in their "duty." Certainly Bryan's slaves were rarely deleted from his fervent prayers. He found them inattentive and continued to pray for them. "My servants were called to prayers, but none came," he wrote on one occasion. On another he wrote of it being "a time of trial and uneasiness from the disobedience of servants. . . ." Thus the slaves heard but did not listen and Bryan's frustrations for his soul and theirs seemed to weigh heavy on his heart.[48]

It was a strange relationship between master and slaves. Bryan seemed sincere although his own spiritual enthusiasm was often mixed with periods of gay indulgence and the conviviality so common among individ-

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and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 533 539

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originally published as *Black Mother* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 105; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 34–40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), passim; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 14–20; The term Upper Guines Coast has altered over centuries. Here our definition is taken from Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2, 7; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935), vol. 4, *The Southern Colonies*, passim; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1975), 58–60.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 131; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156; Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review* 33 (1927–28): 816–17; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734; London: Frank Cass, 1971), 173–74; William Smith, *A Voyage to Guinea* (London: John Nourse, 1744; London: Frank Cass, 1967), 135; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 56–68; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, 17–18; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 35; Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers*, 58–59.

3. Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, 282.

4. Ibid., II:xxxi–xxxiii, 355; IV:301, 382.

5. Wood, *Black Majority*, 301–4, Appendix C, 333–41.

6. Douglas L. Wheeler and Rene Pelissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 28–51; Davidson, *African Trade*, 144–52; Donnan, *Documents*, II:xvii–xviii; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37. Roger Bastide has written that the official documents concerning the Portuguese trade were burned after slavery was suppressed "in an effort to expunge a blot on the country's escutcheon." See Roger Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretation of Civilization*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978), 33.

7. Jan Vansina, "Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 375–90; Walter Rodney, "Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guines Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 431, 440; Quoted from Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37–38.

8. Vansina, "Trade Routes," 375–83; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), passim; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 14–19. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 38; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 157, Table 45.

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9. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 59–67, 82–102, 125–33; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (October 1764): 487; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 143; Augustine Smyth et al., *The Carolina Low Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 173; Vass, *Bantu Heritage*, 3–5; Wood, *Black Majority*, 96–130, 195–217, 272–326; Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 11–15.

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10. Wood, *Black Majority*, 52–153, 324–35. From 1741 to 1743 a prohibitive duty was imposed. In 1744 four African cargoes arrived. No slave cargoes entered Charleston in 1745 and from 1746 and 1748 another prohibitive duty was in effect. Three African cargoes arrived in 1749 and 1750, respectively. By 1752 the trade was once again in full swing. Donnan, "Slave Trade before the Revolution," 807–8; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 9–10; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 42–43. 175 113 567 [669]

11. Wood, *Black Majority*, 148, 323; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 69–70; 72; Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1730–1760* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 206, 230–32. Rice was never raised to any large extent on the Sea Islands since salt water in poisonous to the rice plant. Some Sea Islands did have a few fresh water ponds where rice was grown, but the amount was small and only for local consumption. Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of the North Carolina Press, 1930), 18; Frederick V. Emerson, "Geographical Influences in American Slavery," *Geographical Society Bulletin* 63 (1911): 108–9. [669

12. William A. Schaper, *Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 51; Emerson, "Geographical Influences," 108–11; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 386–88; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 35, 37, 46–47; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1728–1765*, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 37–38; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 84; Peter Wood offers interesting evidence which points to Africans' immunity to certain diseases, such as malaria. Yet, as he states, this was not "absolute." Moreover, Todd L. Savitt notes that malaria certainly took its toll in human losses among slaves. He maintains that some blacks did possess an inherited immunity to one or another strain of malaria. But adds that even adult African-born slaves had to go through a "seasoning" period because the "strains of malarial parasites in this country differed from those in their native lands." The "acquired" immunity that blacks reportedly developed was "risky," according to Savitt, since this involved repreated, uninterrupted exposure to malaria over a period of years. Furthermore, we must rely heavily on the words of colonial whites with a vested interest in rationalizing that blacks were more suited to labor in the Carolina swamps and marshes. Africans may have had a varied immunity to certain diseases, but it appears unlikely that this determined white attitudes toward black labor. For Wood, See *Black Majority* 85–88, 90–91. See also Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illiois Press, 1978), 21–26.

13. Schaper, *Sectionalism* 55–56; Emerson, "Georgraphical Influences," 112; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 40–46; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–19; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 267–69; Donnan, *Documents*, IV: passim; See Appendix A.

14. Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 48; Philip M. Hamer, et al. eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), IV: 294–95. 175 113

15. *SCG*, July 14, 1759.

16. Hamer, *Laurens Papers*, I:252, 331.

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51. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 6–9; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 1–2.
52. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
53. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.
54. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 13.
55. Ibid., 14, 36–37.
56. Ibid., 15–28, 31–33, 36–39.
57. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 45–56, 364, n. 3; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 27, 61.
58. Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 96–98; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 400.
59. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 484, 498–501 and II: 436–38; Anon., probably George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America* (London: J. Hart, 1743), 3–6; Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery," 243–56.
60. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 438; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 5–6; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 162.
61. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 499–509; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–22; Joseph Ottolenghe to SPG, December 4, 1751 and July 12, 1758, SPG, London Mss. of Dr. Bray's Associates; Habersham to William Knox, July 17, 1765 and November 26, 1770, *Habersham Letters*, 38, 95–99, 102, Wood, *Black Majority*, 324–25; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 40; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–86.
62. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 160–65; Darold D. Wax, "Georgia and the Negro Before the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1967): 73–75.

### 5. *An Almost Chosen People*

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1. Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), Bibliographic Note; Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September, 1863): 295; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 11–12.

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2. Robert Starobin, ed., *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 11; John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 132–37; updated ed. of *Insurrection in South Carolina: The Turbulent World of Denmark Vesey* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1964); Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, 1744–1849, SCHS; William Jones to Samuel Jones, Jane Bruce Jones Mss, 1784–1831, SCL; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 4–14, 18, 21–22, 57–59, 111; Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 133–36.

3. Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition* 6 no. 3 (1985): 57–58; Joseph Cepas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1938), 17, 19–24; Peter H. Wood. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 285–307, 314–35; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 31–36; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 157. Although Morgan offers no explanation for the discrep-

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175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
112 Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of the difference between the two colonies.

• [669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
567 Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern*
113 *World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 138.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, 'n terms of its
175 harshaness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition
113 from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

17 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*
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17 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10,
113 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

175 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöpf,
567 *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29; Avonor Samuel to William
113 Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahn, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP;
113 Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New
[567] York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel
[569] G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 66–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

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Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he "could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming. 175 797 567

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary, "these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin: [681] [673.

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats belonged to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gullahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident, 17 681 567 797 673

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since this regulation took place within a religious context, ostensibly under the rubric of Christianity. High and low seats in Gullah society assumed a meaning different from African Poro-Sande society. But the function of regulation and community control was still present. The Gullahs reserved the "low seat" for those who betrayed community interests by divulging "the secret of stealing," undoubtedly from the master. This demonstrates the seriousness of solidarity among the people. Thus picking up the benne seed was reserved for the worst of crimes "according to their view of the crime." While the Methodist missionary believed the slaves had incorrect ideas about who should be punished, slaves themselves were using an internal logic with little reference to Protestant conceptions of sin. This Gullah interpretation of sin was at variance with their Christian instruction. A sense of contrition for the safety and peace of the plantation or out of fear of the Christian God was not a motivating issue. For the Gullahs, moral guilt fell on those who forsook socioreligious authority and loyalty in the slave quarters. The presence and influence of black leadership was also revealed as the "punishments" were administered by a "priest." This implies no relationship to the Christian church to which some of the slaves belonged. Missionary Turpin believed the rites strangely akin to Catholicism. Obviously they were not. But in West Africa Poro-Sande priests and priestesses were responsible for administering justice and punishment. Thus this role had some cultural-historical continuity. Slaves saw nothing incongruous about adopting elements of Christian religion and adapting those to aspects of their traditional spiritual heritage still serviceable in the New World setting.

The penance for the "sin" of divulging the secret of stealing was no brief activity, but a rather trying feat. A "gentleman" residing on Bull's Island informed Turpin that an individual usually could not pick up all the scattered benne seeds in one night. And "if it was not done in one night they had to continue until they did it." Thus while the benne seed ritual was not comparable in degree to African punishments instituted by the Poro Council for community crimes, there is a symbolic reference. While representing a form of censure for erring members, it was not the way "Christianized" slaves were expected to interpret the concept of "sin." Turpin stated in his report that having to contend with "all this superstition and ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism," he had added few church members. Nor, reported Turpin,

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did he strive to do so, "but rather . . . to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict."[28]

Planters in the May and New River Mission region were offended by statements implying that they tolerated practices such as the one Turpin discussed. Sea Island Baptists felt under attack for not instructing black converts in "true" principles of Christianity and for baptizing slaves without scrutinizing their religious life. Turpin was smarting from the cold reception he received from planters. Turpin did in fact infer that some planters were aware of and permitted un-Christian practices among slaves baptized as Baptists. It was after all a "gentleman" of the Island who had explained to Turpin the workings of the benne seed penance he had observed. Methodist unpopularity among Sea Island planters was recognized at the Missionary Society Headquarters. Soon after the report was circulated, Turpin was removed from the May and New River Mission, and assigned to the John and Wadmalaw Islands Mission in the Charleston District. Turpin insisted, however, that he did not intend to discredit the planters. Nor, he said, did he mean that planters knowingly sanctioned "corrupt" practices among the slaves. Turpin merely wished to point out how irreligious so-called converted slaves were. Through the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, he made a somewhat cynical apology, which undoubtedly did little to assuage the ire of Sea Island planters:

> But it [the report] appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons, notwithstanding though, it has been said that I have "shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it was hit the Episcopalians." If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended, I feel it my duty to heal the wound.[29]

Turpin had indeed offended the planters, especially his comments on the slaves' lack of "truly religious" training, despite Baptist church membership. He believed that the "converted" slaves made a mockery of Christianity. These slaves who "scarcely ever saw the pastor" of their church were members of the First African Church in Savannah. Andrew Bryan's nephew, Andrew Marshall, was the pastor. In 1830, church membership was 2,417. Although a black church, whites were responsible for control and for the conduct of its members. Whites came to the

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175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
795 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat."

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[54]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle (789) an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
• 674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had (533) taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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674 682 533 spired a ballad. Attributed to no single author but apparently added to from time to time, the ballad now runs:

682 533 539 674

On duh thuteent day ub May
Yuh could heah ole Bo-Cat say,
"Git muh deed an policy.
Tun it in duh ashes way."

Den ole Catherine she begin tuh inquyuh.
Didn know ole Bo-Cat had dem in duh fyuh.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Put uh in duh boat,
Dey begin tuh float,
Dey float tuh duh Raccoon Keys.
He knock uh on duh knees.
Catherine holluh, "Wa-Wan-Wa."
Bo-Cat make uh "Na-Nan-Na."
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh bres
An duh oah done duh res.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh back
An duh oah miss an crack.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Wen Bo-Cat wehn back home
He meet uh daughtuh all alone.
Uh daughtuh say, "Bo-Cat, Bo-Cat,
Weah my mama is?"
Bo-Cat tun right out he head
An he tro uh cross duh bed.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

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674
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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body

764 wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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674 anybody view uh face aw lay deah hans on uh[31] wuz sho a
682 pity.[32]
764 "Ebrybody wuz at duh fewnul. Come frum miles roun tuh pay deah las respecks tuh a po wife murduhed by uh huzbun on Friday duh thuteent.

"Duh body wuz brung frum duh unduhtakuh's pahluh straight tuh Sweet Fiel ub Eden Chuch at duh Pint. Chuch so crowded yuh caahn hahdly see duh coffin up in front. We sing hymns, an den wen duh singin hab die out an yuh could heah jis a lill hummin heah an deah, somebody stan up an say, 'Catherine De Lanzy wuz a sistuh ub duh Lawd.' 'She sho wuz,' somebody else say. 'She wuz a chile ub Jesus an she walk in duh way ub righteousness.'

"Dis staht off duh whole congregation an deah mustuh bin neah a hundud people git up an gib testimony bout Cather-
[152] ine's goodness. Some people cry an scream wen dey tell duh congregation wut a fine uhmun she bin.

"Den duh remains wuz took tuh duh cimiterry neah duh chuch an buried. Duh whole time we sing hymns an sway tuh duh soun uh duh music. Ebrybody tro a hanful uh dut in duh grabe an[33] wen duh grabe digguhs fix duh moun, we put some uh Catherine's tings on duh top. Deah wuz a lill flowuh vase wid duh bottom knock out, an a lamp chimney, an some puhfumery bottles, an duh pitchuh she made ice watuh in jis fo Bo-Cat tuk uh off.[47] Den duh ministuh nounce dat duh fewnul suhmon wuz tuh be preach at duh annyul memorial wen dey pray fuh ebrybody who die durin duh yeah.[42] An den das all an we wehn home."

"Why was Limerick De Lancy called Bo-Cat?" we asked.
551 "Deah ain no signifcunse tuh dat. I hab a frien dat ebrybody call Friday but[20] uh name is Lula. I hab a cousin name Augus Bond an a son name May Bud simply cuz he wuz bawn in May. One uh muh brothuhs wuz call Baby Head cuz at birth he wuz a tiny baby wid sech a great big head.

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175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

[533] The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[795] church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
567 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
794 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
[674] the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
621 law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626] House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368] plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
175 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
567

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
674 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
178 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

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Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he "could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming.

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary, "these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin:

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats belonged to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gullahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident,

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since this regulation took place within a religious context, ostensibly under the rubric of Christianity. High and low seats in Gullah society assumed a meaning different from African Poro-Sande society. But the function of regulation and community control was still present. The Gullahs reserved the "low seat" for those who betrayed community interests by divulging "the secret of stealing," undoubtedly from the master. This demonstrates the seriousness of solidarity among the people. Thus picking up the benne seed was reserved for the worst of crimes "according to their view of the crime." While the Methodist missionary believed the slaves had incorrect ideas about who should be punished, slaves themselves were using an internal logic with little reference to Protestant conceptions of sin. This Gullah interpretation of sin was at variance with their Christian instruction. A sense of contrition for the safety and peace of the plantation or out of fear of the Christian God was not a motivating issue. For the Gullahs, moral guilt fell on those who forsook socioreligious authority and loyalty in the slave quarters. The presence and influence of black leadership was also revealed as the "punishments" were administered by a "priest." This implies no relationship to the Christian church to which some of the slaves belonged. Missionary Turpin believed the rites strangely akin to Catholicism. Obviously they were not. But in West Africa Poro-Sande priests and priestesses were responsible for administering justice and punishment. Thus this role had some cultural-historical continuity. Slaves saw nothing incongruous about adopting elements of Christian religion and adapting those to aspects of their traditional spiritual heritage still serviceable in the New World setting.

The penance for the "sin" of divulging the secret of stealing was no brief activity, but a rather trying feat. A "gentleman" residing on Bull's Island informed Turpin that an individual usually could not pick up all the scattered benne seeds in one night. And "if it was not done in one night they had to continue until they did it." Thus while the benne seed ritual was not comparable in degree to African punishments instituted by the Poro Council for community crimes, there is a symbolic reference. While representing a form of censure for erring members, it was not the way "Christianized" slaves were expected to interpret the concept of "sin." Turpin stated in his report that having to contend with "all this superstition and ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism," he had added few church members. Nor, reported Turpin,

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did he strive to do so, "but rather . . . to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict."[28]

Planters in the May and New River Mission region were offended by statements implying that they tolerated practices such as the one Turpin discussed. Sea Island Baptists felt under attack for not instructing black converts in "true" principles of Christianity and for baptizing slaves without scrutinizing their religious life. Turpin was smarting from the cold reception he received from planters. Turpin did in fact infer that some planters were aware of and permitted un-Christian practices among slaves baptized as Baptists. It was after all a "gentleman" of the Island who had explained to Turpin the workings of the benne seed penance he had observed. Methodist unpopularity among Sea Island planters was recognized at the Missionary Society Headquarters. Soon after the report was circulated, Turpin was removed from the May and New River Mission, and assigned to the John and Wadmalaw Islands Mission in the Charleston District. Turpin insisted, however, that he did not intend to discredit the planters. Nor, he said, did he mean that planters knowingly sanctioned "corrupt" practices among the slaves. Turpin merely wished to point out how irreligious so-called converted slaves were. Through the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, he made a somewhat cynical apology, which undoubtedly did little to assuage the ire of Sea Island planters:

> But it [the report] appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons, notwithstanding though, it has been said that I have "shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it was hit the Episcopalians." If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended, I feel it my duty to heal the wound.[29]

Turpin had indeed offended the planters, especially his comments on the slaves' lack of "truly religious" training, despite Baptist church membership. He believed that the "converted" slaves made a mockery of Christianity. These slaves who "scarcely ever saw the pastor" of their church were members of the First African Church in Savannah. Andrew Bryan's nephew, Andrew Marshall, was the pastor. In 1830, church membership was 2,417. Although a black church, whites were responsible for control and for the conduct of its members. Whites came to the

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APPENDIX B

# *Excerpts from a "Missionary Sketch" Written by Thomas D. Turpin to the Christian Advocate and Journal, January 31, 1834.*

. . . the number of adults to whom I had access in preaching were about 1,000, one third of whom were in the Baptist Church and in the negroes societies, and almost all of them under Baptist influence; and that a great many of those lived on an island who scarcely ever saw the pastor of the Church to which they belong. Hence they had societies organized among themselves; and that those societies were very corrupt, and appeared to be very much under the influence of Roman Catholic principles; and that they did penance, and the following was a specimen, viz; that they had three degrees of punishment, and that the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third, a quart of corn; and that they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; and that it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing; and if it should be divulged by any one member, that one had to go on the low seat, or pick up the benne seed. I observed, having to contend with all this superstition and

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797 ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism, that I had added very few to the Church; and I had, moreover, strived very little to do this, but rather strived to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict.

But it appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons. Notwithstanding, though it has been said, that I have shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it has hit the Episcopalians. If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended I feel it my duty to heal the wound.

797 795 In regard to the words Baptist influence, it has also been observed, that it has generally been received as intending to mean that the whites have knowledge of those corruptions among the negroes, and tolerate them. I had no such meaning. I simply meant that the negroes were under the peculiar influence of the Baptist tenets. Now, unless the Baptist tenets tolerate the doing of penance (which the world knows to the contrary), it could not mean that they tolerated these things among the negroes. It is notorious that almost all of the negroes in the bounds of my mission are prejudiced in favor of the Baptist Church.

• 681 As it respects the picking up of the benne seed, it has been said that it was not a very likely thing that it could be done in one night. In answer to this, I heard a gentleman say, no longer than last week, that the rule was, if it was not done in one night, they had to continue until they did it—Again, as regards those of whom I spoke, who scarcely ever 795 saw the pastor of the Church to which they belong, they were a set of negroes belonging to Andrew Marshall's church of Savannah. It may be objected that Andrew Marshall is nothing more than a negro. If he is, that does not derogate at all from the truth of the assertion made in the letter stated above. The negro has been authorized by the Church to preach and baptize.—He has done it, and he has baptized a great many in this low country; and those of whom I spoke are in that number. He is the only pastor that those negroes have on the island. He never comes to see them, nor any other Baptist minister. Therefore the facts remains, there are many negroes on Bull's Island that scarcely ever see the pastor of the Church to which they belong. This is the light in which I in- (797) tended it should be received . . . the little negroes improve on the mission, but the adults are about the same as represented in the above statement.

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# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, •682 as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday 754 morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

363 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently 361 surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people 771 are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie
(789) smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell
(533) Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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533 spired a ballad. Attributed to no single author but apparently added to from time to time, the ballad now runs:

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On duh thuteent day ub May
Yuh could heah ole Bo-Cat say,
"Git muh deed an policy.
Tun it in duh ashes way."

Den ole Catherine she begin tuh inquyuh.
Didn know ole Bo-Cat had dem in duh fyuh.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Put uh in duh boat,
Dey begin tuh float,
Dey float tuh duh Raccoon Keys.
He knock uh on duh knees.
Catherine holluh, "Wa-Wan-Wa."
Bo-Cat make uh "Na-Nan-Na."
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh bres
An duh oah done duh res.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

He knock uh in duh back
An duh oah miss an crack.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

Wen Bo-Cat wehn back home
He meet uh daughtuh all alone.
Uh daughtuh say, "Bo-Cat, Bo-Cat,
Weah my mama is?"
Bo-Cat tun right out he head
An he tro uh cross duh bed.
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body

764 wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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674 anybody view uh face aw lay deah hans on uh[31] wuz sho a
682 pity.[32]
764 "Ebrybody wuz at duh fewnul. Come frum miles roun tuh pay deah las respecks tuh a po wife murduhed by uh huzbun on Friday duh thuteent.

"Duh body wuz brung frum duh unduhtakuh's pahluh straight tuh Sweet Fiel ub Eden Chuch at duh Pint. Chuch so crowded yuh caahn hahdly see duh coffin up in front. We sing hymns, an den wen duh singin hab die out an yuh could heah jis a lill hummin heah an deah, somebody stan up an say, 'Catherine De Lanzy wuz a sistuh ub duh Lawd.' 'She sho wuz,' somebody else say. 'She wuz a chile ub Jesus an she walk in duh way ub righteousness.'

"Dis staht off duh whole congregation an deah mustuh bin neah a hundud people git up an gib testimony bout Cather-
[152] ine's goodness. Some people cry an scream wen dey tell duh congregation wut a fine uhmun she bin.

"Den duh remains wuz took tuh duh cimiterry neah duh chuch an buried. Duh whole time we sing hymns an sway tuh duh soun uh duh music. Ebrybody tro a hanful uh dut in duh grabe an[33] wen duh grabe digguhs fix duh moun, we put some uh Catherine's tings on duh top. Deah wuz a lill flowuh vase wid duh bottom knock out, an a lamp chimney, an some puhfumery bottles, an duh pitchuh she made ice watuh in jis fo Bo-Cat tuk uh off.[47] Den duh ministuh nounce dat duh fewnul suhmon wuz tuh be preach at duh annyul memorial wen dey pray fuh ebrybody who die durin duh yeah.[42] An den das all an we wehn home."

"Why was Limerick De Lancy called Bo-Cat?" we asked.
551 "Deah ain no signifcunse tuh dat. I hab a frien dat ebrybody call Friday but[30] uh name is Lula. I hab a cousin name Augus Bond an a son name May Bud simply cuz he wuz bawn in May. One uh muh brothuhs wuz call Baby Head cuz at birth he wuz a tiny baby wid sech a great big head.

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754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gomuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knecs an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn." *

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[8, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch
789 uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he
• 682 was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz
[789] cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

[753] Another resident who neglected these precautions said she became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a
[789] root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

761 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to
754 witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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have a tradition of politeness. Among the Limba of Sierra Leone for example, "shame" (Kulaku) and "honor" (yiki) are spoken of often. According respect to leaders, strangers, one's wife, and her relatives, is of great importance. Fear of shame is a very real sanction in everyday life. Rudeness or abusive behavior also brings shame, which only an apology can erase. Ceremonious welcomings involving hand shaking are greatly stressed among Africans. Thanks, greetings, and farewells are often reinforced by a gift, approved of as much for its token value of "giving the words weight," as for its economic worth. A gift of a fowl, eggs, or rice is commonly offered when guests arrive. A physician assigned to the colony of Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century, wrote that the people possessed a "great share of pride, and are easily affected by an insult." They could not even bear a harsh expression, or raised voice without distaste. One of the severest insults toward an African was to "speak disrespectfully of his mother," which the Africans called "cursing her." More recently, a researcher in the Kongo was told that there were two things he should know right away about BaKongo peoples. "The first is that we all came from Mbaza Kongo. The second is the importance of good manners."[11]

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Aside from a spirit of cooperation, Gullahs used their religion to foster a sense of justice. Undoubtedly, since they were exploited so unjustly on all quarters, it was important that among each other fairness predominate. The power of the community and the extent to which slaves could pursue their indignation against erring members was not always peaceful, and could reach extreme proportions. Jenkins Mikell's recollection of a grisly event on Edisto Island represents a case in point. Crimes within the slave quarters were infrequent, but they did occur:

> Early one morning, we were awakened by the repressed excitement we felt around the dwelling. We soon found that all the people on the home place were in a terribly wrought up state and waiting for the Master to appear. A murder had been committed among them. A man had killed his wife in anger. The poor woman had been found dead hanging by her neck to the rafter of the cabin, and the guilty husband had run away and left her there. He was caught during the day . . . he was tried and convicted and remanded to the scene of his crime for execution. . . . On the day of his execution very little work was done in the community by the negroes. All attended the tragic scene. His coffin was made on the plantation and placed in a wagon. The doomed man, tied, seated upon this coffin rode six miles to the place of execution, and by his side seated on the same gruesome seat was his companion in guilt—a woman. She was made to witness at close quarters his dreadful end. She returned to the place of burial,

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[432] or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that helped me to educate most of my children.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

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682 Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood,

159 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any
171 money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should
not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't
682 listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down
and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1949 a pro-
185 gressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

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754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gomuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn."*

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[6, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 567 [159] gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

567 754 159 175 We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her [683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in* [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?

[50] Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."

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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865:

> Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67]

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68]

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures.

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions

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ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out. 175 731

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23] 731

### THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while 175 837 684

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
•684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
[848] desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
745 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
•685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[33]

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "houserent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145, 147, 151.

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46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197, November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wister, Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

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47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

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49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

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55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

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Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[33]

175 795 794 688 569

Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

[797]

> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[34]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

175 795 794 685

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 567 land, but many were taken forcibly. Gullahs risked and often lost their lives to flee, telling horror tales of death and suffering inflicted upon anyone suspected of desiring either to remain on the Sea Islands or escape from the mainland where the planters "refugeed." The fact that they continued to flee under these circumstances is the best testimony to their sense of independence and will to freedom. One such incident was told to Laura M. Towne:

> A woman today just escaped from her owners on the Mainland. She said she had hard work to escape, sleeping in the marsh and hiding all day. She brought away her two little children. Her master had just whipped her oldest son almost to death because he was suspected of trying to join the Yankees.[45]

Although the Battle of Port Royal ended in an easy Northern victory and occupation, the rest of South Carolina remained in Confederate hands. Planters fled the Sea Island region but returned, sometimes under cover of darkness, hoping to force slaves back to the mainland. Blacks and whites picketing the region could not place men at every landing spot and Gullahs lived in apprehension of the slaveholders' return. Susannah's master returned several times, once telling slaves to burn the cotton. "Why for we burn de cotton? Where we get money then for buy clo' sho' and salt?" So instead of burning cotton, they guarded it nightly. Women kept watch and men stood ready to defend their interests when the alarm sounded. At the Oaklands plantation of rebel Baptist Dr. Sams, a field hand named Cupid told Charlotte Forten how his master had daringly returned to St. Helena, risking capture by Northern soldiers, solely to retrieve slaves. Sams attempted to cajole Cupid into cooperation:

> He ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he [Sams] came to look for them, not one of his "faithful servants" was to be found.[46]

688 795 To the end Baptists had "faith" in the "faithfulness" of their slaves, apparently believing that the white church had secured fidelity among the Gullahs. Just how far some whites took this assumption is illustrated

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865: 175 567

Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67] 688 795

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68] 175 567

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures. 175 567 795 (688) [684]

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions 175 567 584

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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567 795 793

ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C. Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances,

567 795 787

and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect or striking resemblance to some form or type which has been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 795 688

They were also quick to follow the custom of the whites in "churching" offending members. "The discipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

567 795 212

The church was not only responsible for giving Christianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teaching a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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871 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, pre-
563 viously all white, became the high school for all island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for six years. Brought by the Justice Department with
•{691} the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County
{668} School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
177 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
185 know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing
[661] to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
177 —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
872 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
873 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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692 I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember
666 not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran . the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
[474] Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
[692] somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to Negroes would need their vote.

159 One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
177 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
666 "What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
664 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."
185 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better, make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
443 buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
474 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

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As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

175 793 692

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 993 692

the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

175 692

It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits." [26]

175 658 871

In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc. no. 79*, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Wording, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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•695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account" of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

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"That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

"You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; *too* long buffo' me shum, me yerre um.'"

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh.'"

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah.'"

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?'"

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

"Bennett I, 340, 341.

"'I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); *too* long *before* I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

"I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear us; cars hear yonder same as hear here."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made
•697 it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon
[461] I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He
877 laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently
577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea
673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that
685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.

[171] [31] In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supported themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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correspondent goes on to tell of the difficulties encountered by the Governor of Kenya in stamping out what we consider crime. "Imprisonment is found to be no deterrent. Nor among the Kikuyu does an ex-convict lose caste in the tribe. After he is released from jail the sacrifice of a single goat puts everything right. A new suit of a white tunic and shorts is thoroughly enjoyed by native prisoners for theft in East Africa. Fines are not always a success because the native, well-fed, housed and clothed at government expense, actually enjoys his term as a vacation."

697 Our own prison camp in Glynn County formerly offered an example of the same problem. A colored convict whose time was up pleaded with Mr. Higgenbotham—who was the court of last appeal at the camp—to be allowed to stay. A living being hard to get nowadays, he figured he could not provide for himself as well as the county did.[33] But the authorities were firm, and he was obliged to move on. Of course, he knew how to get back if times were too hard. It is the same with us, as in Africa, when it comes to any stigma being attached to a Negro who has served a [554] term in jail or spent time on the chain-gang. Ex-convicts assume the same status in their community as they enjoyed before the county forcibly detained them.

Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations. Of course there were abuses, but they also occur within prison walls—only there they are not so readily found out.

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Chorus: Drinkin' of the wine—wine—wine
Drinkin' of the wine
O—yes—my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

[33] *My corner was for years the favorite resting-place at noon for the convicts when they worked on the island. I saw the substantial rations served them, and it is no wonder the discharged convict felt he could go farther and fare worse. I also observed that the model prisoners were well treated. One day I overheard a guard say very hospitably to one of my Negro singers, who was working for me: "Want to come back?" With a good-humored chuckle, the man replied: "No, thank you." It seems that he had been mixed up in a drinking affair in which a knife had figured. He told me he had run away, but had found the world a hard place to live in—so he had come home, surrendered, and taken his medicine. The guard said he had been a star prisoner.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Eatin' of the bread—bread—bread
Eatin' of the bread—O yes my Lord.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If my mother ask for me
Tell her Death done summon' me.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

If y'u get there before I do
Tell my Lord I'm comin' too.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

Ain' but one thing I done wrong
Stayin' in the wilderness mos' too long.
I oughta bin to Heaven ten thousand years
Drinkin' of the wine.

(repeat chorus)

## WHEN I'M GONE TO COME NO MO'

533 Nobody but a Negro could employ such entrancing elaborations as occur in the singing of "Gone—gone—gone," and no transcription could possibly give it. Our musical method is opposed to that of the Negro, and, try as we may, we cannot achieve his strange inflections, nor place emphasis as he does. A song may appear perfectly simple, but try to learn it, and the simplicity vanishes.

533 The first time I heard this song, a gang of Glynn County convicts was using
•697 its rhythm to heave great clods of black earth out of the tide-water creek behind my house. The leader was such an excellent singer that I asked the guard how soon he was due to be free. The man did not have much more time to serve, his record on the gang was good, and his last offense was nothing more than taking a stool he fancied from an office; but he was a repeater. He just could not leave other people's property alone. Even though I coveted his voice, obligation to the community would not permit me to encourage his presence on the island:

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*The Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Colored Regiment. Harper's Weekly.*

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witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She noticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but Maurice's story was a tragic one:

His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' rationalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ, were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival.

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative inclinations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by General David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much:

We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

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World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12]

For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time, but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future.

The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization, there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails,"but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But

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175 177 •701 the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]

Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the botton of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

17 701 In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory, mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

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dition to Florida, one of the black preacher's exhortations was reportedly "worthy of a place in 'American Oratory.'" He urged the men to seek the post of danger and fight bravely. "He who is de fust man to get on de boat," he rallied, "and de fust to jump on shore, him, if he fall, will be de fust to get in heaben." Then, as if himself in the midst of battle, and aroused by the occasion, he added fervently: 17 701

'An' when do battle comes—when you see de Kunn'l put his shoulder to de wheel, and hear de shot and shell flying all around like de rain drops, den remember dat ebery one ob dose shot is a bolt of de Almighty God to send dem rebels to deir eberlasting damnation.[16]

Sacrifices for freedom were not only made by Gullah soldiers, for the war effort was a community enterprise. The men's absence from the plantations placed the burden of breadwinning solely on the women, who shouldered it admirably. Gullah men had at first objected to the women working in the fields because this labor had taken such a heavy toll on female health. But women insisted on working "fur pay," and did so "with a will," sometimes working two tasks in one day. Thus, while the men went off to fight or to work as laborers for the army, field work continued. Women, boys, and girls worked side by side, planting, hoeing, picking, sorting, ginning, and packing the cotton. They also raised vegetables and poultry for consumption and to sell. The women were ambitious and disciplined, laboring with "tireless energy" when working for themselves and their families. Sometimes they even managed to attend newly established schools in order to "catch a lesson." As a way of further supporting loved ones away with the regiment and the army, the women wrote letters. Many of the Northern women's "spare time" was spent writing words of love and encouragement dictated by the freedwomen.[17] It was a period of optimism, when social relations knitted over generations proved tenacious and steady. This was also a time when the faith of the bondspeople seemed to bear fruit. 17 722

The subject of freedom was often symbolically and thematically expressed in Gullah spirituals. While these "prayer songs" appear to be a portent of the future in a Christian context, they contain ambiguity that implies otherwise. Double meanings and surrogates abounded, and Gullah spirituals could often be interpreted in several ways. For example: 17 533 (539)

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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

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When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

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Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had developed over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779)

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81. [795]

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 173 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. [701]

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 62–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

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25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

### 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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for all cotton planted, distributed among them according to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were slow to grasp the significance of wages.[26]

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Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

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The confusion resulting from the order disorganized the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes were taken from the fields without being permitted to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however, sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

[26] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

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themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down by the soldiers.[27]

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In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier-General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instructions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.
[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

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an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[8] All but Edgar W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war, retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a hunting preserve. 175

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which "Government" offered all volunteers led many a St. Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his "plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure" himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens, fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares. 175 433 434 (657) (702) (423)

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities several times interfered to prevent what they consid- 175 433 511

[8] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

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28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

## 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
236
434 They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came
along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
735 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a
824 special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water
on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet.
342 And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, every-
thing—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
(354) lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the
winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
342 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give
354 it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind
of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a
common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and
cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two
green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That
was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three
places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down
from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think
there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen
one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
492 over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you
know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
•722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The
army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to
change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

[197] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

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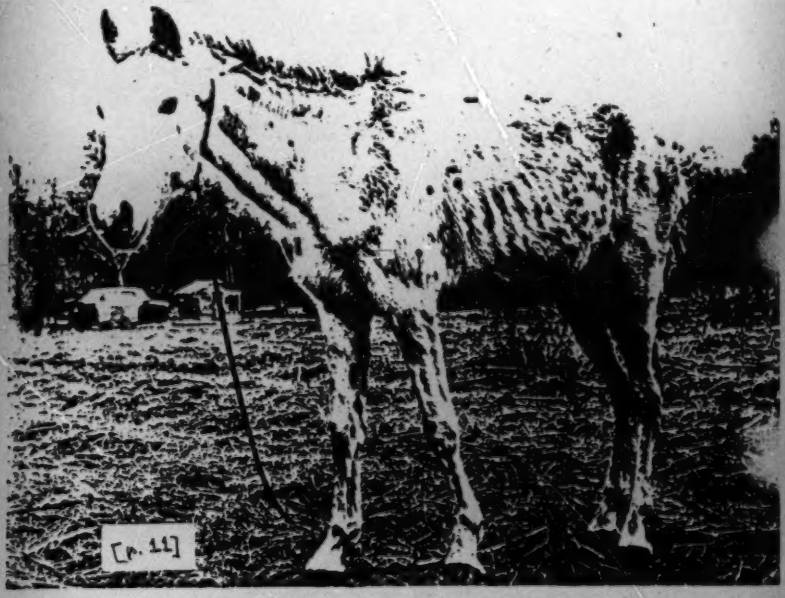

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

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I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, i see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

[804]

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## IT'S A SMALL PLACE, BUT I RATHER HAVE ALL MY FAMILY TOGETHER

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I lost my house, a seven-room house, but I feel like it is the Lord's will. 'Cause I was burning oil stove from '41 up to now, and this have never happen to me before.

One day I went to work. I wash Tuesday night and leave a tubful of clothes for my daughter who always takes care of the house, and I told her to hang the clothes out. So she take my little battery radio in the yard under the tree, and she was hanging up the clothes, and when she look up, she saw smoke. She ran back to the house, but she couldn't even get in; the fire knock her back. She remember one of my little grand was sick in the house, and all she could do is run in the house and grab her. My son Johnny grab the rest of the children and take 'em over to my neighbor house and somebody call me.

One of my neighbor call me on my job, and my lady brought me home, must be about seventy mile an hour. I didn't feel so bad then, 'cause I thought fire engine would save at least some the furniture, but then I could see the housetop was falling in.

Then when everybody was together talking, I was sitting off by myself on Moving Star Hall, was thinking what would be best. I didn't feel like going anywhere far from the neighborhood. I have different friends offer me to come stay with them, and Mr. Jenkins, the place I raise on, he had a little empty house there, but I didn't want to go there either. I always want to be close to my meeting—Moving Star Hall.

So my neighbor, Nancy Field, she give me this little place she had built for the Florida people when they come. Those Florida people, they come 'round every year for season to pick tomatoes and thing, and she kept that little place for them. They just stays in it for a season—they'll stay any kind of where, you know.

It's a small place, but I rather have all my family together. If all of us have to sleep in one bed, I rather have all together. She kept manure and corn and all such of things in there, and all the rat been in there, but I was happy for it. I just get out and by my children, daughters, son, husband,

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1969
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159 they help me, and couple days we had it clean out, so now is clean enough
73 to sleep in and eat in. We just work night and day. I sit up 'til two o'clock
some nights. My son Johnny, he makes two window so it's light now. Then
354 we go and buy a wood heater so it's very warm and comfortable.

159 We getting 'long all right. I realize God give and He takes. He take down and He can build back up. He took everything from Job—wife, children, Job have seven boys. His wife say Job ought to curse God and die. But Job say, "You speak as a foolish. When I curse my God and die, what will become of me? But I'll wait on my appointed time until my change will come." So I'll wait, 'cause I know soon or late there will be some change. If you only got faith in God, won't have nothing to worry about.

And everybody was so nice to me, and that one important thing make me feel good. All my friends from here and everywhere come and give; those who don't have to give, come with a word of encouragement. I appreciate everything they did. My brothers, my sisters, my daughters, friends, what they don't have to give, they come and sit and talk and sing together encouragement, and this make me understand that this is the Lord will.

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7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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That was what you call a cyclone. It was first called an autumn storm. But that was a cyclone. There has been several since that one, but none quite like that one. But I remember it well... I was about eleven years old then. It was the storm of (18)93, and it started on a Sunday morning. Still, Miss, I could tell you about it as well as if it happened just yesterday.

The weather looked hazy, just a little hazier than it looks right now. My mother, she was in church. My father was a member of the Baptist church down the road... I was the eldest boy of several children. We, in addition to one of my uncles from Hart, were living near where those Davis boys live now far in the corner section. My uncle Oliver, and Benjy Hart's eldest son, Lonza, came over Sunday after the old people ... to pass the day with me. Well, my mother left me home to cook dinner. Whereas, I told the visitors, I said: 'Some men say, "Man, my wife is not home." They often say, "I'll starve, because there isn't anything here to cook."' But, young lady, I cooked dinner for them. I didn't wait until they came from church. So I took charge; I prepared a feast for my uncle, my nephew and myself. And the later it became, Miss, the weather began to close in. The sun was shrouded with clouds and it began to drizzle rain.

Just after Yatta came home—I called my mother Yatta. Her name was Liza, but you know, I was reared by the old people then when one's mother was called such-and-such. I won't speak of it now. I called her Yatta. Well, she came home a little before the old man. She came in dripping from the rain. Then, a while later, my father appeared on the horse. I could see him coming with the umbrella over him. And young lady, as the evening wore on, the sun hung lower, heavier and heavier in the sky. (Narrative continues at length.)

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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248 The southern sea coast is subject to autumnal storms
132 which occasionally destroy the planters' entire crop. Sir
Charles Lyell, in his second visit to the United States in
133 1841 and 1842, commented upon this fact, mentioning
that in 1756 the entire coast from St. Simon's Island,
Georgia, as far north as Charles Town (Charleston) was
overflowed, the sea rising six feet above its ordinary
level.[44] Parts of the Sea Islands were under water in
248 1804 and 1824. In the latter year the crops were un-
usually promising. John Couper had matured a crop of
132 some six hundred bales worth $90,000, but he lost most of
the crop in twelve hours by the hurricane of September
[136] 14.[45] The next year his crop was nearly destroyed by
caterpillars. On September 8, 1854, the coast was again
[130] visited by a destructive hurricane,[46] and since the ante-
bellum period by two, one in 1893 and one in 1911, which
have caused great suffering and loss of life.

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## THE PLANTER AND HIS FACTOR

The very uncertainty of the crop, as well as the nature of it, tied the planter to the system of factorage so well known in England and other countries long before the settlement of the American colonies. Commission merchants in Charleston and Savannah readily credited sea-island cotton planters who might in one year make enough to pay off the debts of several years accumulation. It was customary, therefore, for the planter to spend his money before

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 253.

[45] Couper-Wylly Letters. May 24, 1828, John Couper to his brother James Couper.

[46] U. B. Phillips, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Plantation and Frontier*, I, 141.

11; Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. At [342] the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] There were some who still [492] rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in [493] northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-[292] stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 •731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out. 175 731

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23] 731

## THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while 175 837 684

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me.
123 Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field
behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed
751 it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

159 In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

142 Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had
nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that
159 glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that
[302] was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the
[732] reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first
[301] got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were
(874) orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around
505 the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles
512 further. During the day, the only men usually on the island
(732) are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily
(734) sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for
(855) very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By
512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from
505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special
(574) occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
94 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[737] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[665] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[734] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made
743 the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
[429] tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

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Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

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While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

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Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

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He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

(743) (739) (734) (362) (873)

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

(162)

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles 512 further. During the day, the only men usually on the island [732] are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily [734] sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for [855] very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By 512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from 505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special [574] occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 offered his services to another planter in that vicinity at
758 $1.25 a head.[51] On St. Helena Island at least four of the planters were doctors.

567 Negroes seem to have been especially susceptible to
164 cholera, "peripneumonia," and dysentery, or bloody flux, as it was most commonly called. When once cholera appeared among the Negroes, it usually could not be controlled until several had died. In 1852 and again in
[165] 1854 cholera swept off many of the best slaves on Louis Manigault's plantation on Argyle Island, Georgia. After
[734] these losses, Manigault bought 771 acres of "high land" on the Georgia main which he used partly for cholera camps and for the summer residence of the Negro children.[52] In 1855 when about fifty cases of cholera appeared among James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation Negroes, he wrote to his son in alarm, "The causes I cannot discover, they [the Negroes] live at various settlements, are employed in every kind of work, and have the same food."[53]

Couper considered "peripneumonia" almost as alarming as cholera.[54] "Peripneumonia" was the ante-bellum term for pleuropneumonia, a combination of pleurisy and
[165] pneumonia. Although it did not occur in epidemics, it was nearly always fatal to the slaves. Although dysentery did not always appear among the plantation Negroes in a severe form, in 1857 Henry A. Middleton, Jr., lost forty of his people on Weehaw plantation, near Georgetown, from an epidemic of this disease.[55] After the epidemic,

[51] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 166.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 143.
[53] Couper-Wylly Papers, March 9, 1855.
[54] *Ibid.*, April 13, 1857.
[55] Weehaw Plantation Book.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THIS WAS A KINDA POOR COUNTRY

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There were ten children in my family. Daddy was a foreman for Mr. Jenkins, and he have his own garden. I work in it. All work in it. Pick lima beans, pick cotton, tie the two cotton pod in the bag, and put a string on 'em, and hang the bag around your neck, and go to each one of those cotton bush, and pick the cotton, and stuff 'em in the bag. They was paying two cents a pound. Make thirty-five or forty cents a day. Man is getting forty cents a day.

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We wasn't making enough to afford a good living. My daddy, he make a living out the creek. He catch fish and we go around and sells 'em—a whole string for ten cents. Me and my sister Florence, we goes around with white dishpan on we head and sometime make two dollars. And two dollars would give you a box of food that time, 'cause food was very cheap. You could buy three cent worth of sugar, and you get a whole big piece of fat meat like that for a dime. You get a sack of grits for about fifty cent. Food was much cheaper than it is now. That's how we make living. Plant plenty of sweet potato, plenty peas and corn, and raise hog.

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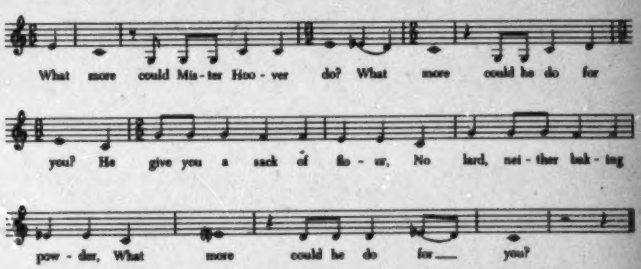
Then we had flat flour. That's when President Hoover had chair. We had to go 'round to Mr. Walpool yard. They used to haul the flour there in one those big van truck, and load up his barn with this flour. Then all the colored and white had to line up and call by name, and they give you a bag of flat flour. 'Til we finally made a song out of it:

(533)
(539)




(252)

Everybody so hungry, so want the flour. We have to mix the flour, didn't have no grease, no lard. Just put 'em in the pan and bake. Some people could afford to buy baking powder and fix it good. But who couldn't, just had to bake it—sprinkle some flour on the bottom of the frying pan so it won't stick.

But after he turned out and President Roosevelt took seat, then we began to live a little better life. I don't think just the Negro was glad; I guess some of the white too was glad when President Roosevelt took the chair. This was a kinda poor country.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THOSE WERE ROUGH DAYS

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•735 My wife and I've been here since '36. No pastor had lived here the last forty years before we came. And of course by not living with the people, they couldn't know their need and their desire. They wanted somebody to come and live with the people—that's why we came.

159 The first thing I found here was extreme poverty. That was during the
735 days of the Depression, and there was no work except the WPA project.
735 That white schoolhouse out there was built as a WPA project. The men on
659 the farms were working for seven cents an hour. Oh yeah, seven cents. And
[465] the women, five cents.

735 The men plowed; the women did all the farm work. That time they
659 didn't have planters to plant the potatoes. They cut the potatoes, dropped
462 them in the field, and the men did all the work with the plows. That give
241 pretty good farm employment. You had a number of men running plows, the women go along and drop the potatoes, and that give them a good day's work—several days' work in springtime. That give them employment during the planting season.

And the cabbage plant out by hand. Nowadays some have a planter. Some children worked then, but they didn't have too many children that time. There hadn't been so much marrying and going on.

735 Those were rough days. Food was short, scarce, didn't have much. The
[262] most they ate those days, they ate rice, grits and canned tomatoes. They bought their tomatoes at the store. They were cheap then. They bought the
[243] grits. Some made their own grits. They had a few mill. And they used to raise their own rice. There were a lot of rice farms around. They had a way of cleaning it and milling it.

735 Most of 'em were poor. Had no income. Very little income. They lived
432 out of the creek. In the summertime they had crabs and shrimp, and in the
226 wintertime had oysters. You could buy right at your door about three times
434 a week, undressed shrimp—five cents a plate. In the wintertime we buy

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[redacted]

[p.9]

4: Carawan & Carawan B.Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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735 433 226 434 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a living. Anything they could do to make a living.

They used to gather moss—this same moss. Every month a man came along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had 735 824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 342 (354) The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything—cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 342 354 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape—outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 493 492 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all over the island. They used carts and that little tacky—pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## 722 WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors—didn't have the man-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## WE DO EVERYTHING FOR WESELF

159 Old times we never buy food. Man, you *never* used to buy nothing that
•735 time. Money use to never worry people but pay church and buy little things
241 what you want or something like that. People raise the apple, they raise the fig tree, raise the plum, all kind of different thing. But now you got to see money. Money! You got to go for make money to buy. Is harder now. You
(435) got to work so hard to get a little bit of money. In that time you could get a quart of grits for two cents.

My daddy farm for heself. He raise he own food. We raise all vegetables. Something to keep in the barn in the winter. He plant corn, plant peas. He have sons plow. I do some too. And after we do all that, then they harvest 'em there in the barn. Then you ain't have to work in the winter.

(443) Them times just a couple of stores, but you have to walk over seven
(438) miles to it. They sell food, but when you can plant your own, you make
(231) your own living. We have plenty chicken and have eggs and have plenty cows and have the milk. And my mother made butter—we own butter. Have we own churn and everything. Do everything for weself. So we never buy.

(251) Those times people raise the tomatoes and the okra and can it. And they do that right now. They can it, they fix the bean, they dry the beans and the peas. They cut up the okra and they dry that.

159 My mother didn't never buy no kind of food. They make soap. They
735 make plenty soap. But what they make it out, I don't know. They grind
(438) corn and make flour and grits. And we have the mortar and beat the rice.
(388) And meat, we kill the hog and put 'em in salt. End of the year, they put up hog. Kill the cow and have beef meat.

(252) Daddy go in the creek and get we tub of fish—plenty fish that time.
(251) Get the fish out the creek—oshters, crab, mushel. Then we use to get them
(226) cookies five for a penny. Now cost penny a piece.

For clothes my daddy and mother they buy the cloth and make it. My
(294) mother had a machine and he do all his sewing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## WE BEEN CLIMBING ON THE ROUGH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

159 735 From the time I have sense enough to recollect in this world, we have trouble and crosses, ups and downs. We been climbing on the rough side of the mountain—climbing up, falling back, grabbin' bottom.

Way back yonder, in 1893, we had to work for something to eat. Work on the white folks' farm, move from place to place, eat with stick for spoon. (262) Got oshter, fish, crab and 'tato. Get corn meal, carry 'em to the mill and grind 'em and eat corn meal. Sweet potato. All that just to bring us this far. And I say thank God that I live to see light come into the world. Wise man from all part of the world come into *this* world. The world is lifting up more and more.

My old parents didn't see these things—automobile, airplane. We come (501) from rowboat time. Had to row from home to town and back. Sometime I have to stay a whole day; have to wait on the tide, all that to row. And God spare us live to see this day.

(492) We used to drive with ox and cart, haul wood with old oxen, plow with (493) oxen. All that. Today no oxen. Nothing but car and truck and bus and trailer and all kind of thing like that.

159 Old days you couldn't eat nothing but 'tato and peas and corn and corn 735 flour and crab and all like them. Well these days it's Christmas every day. Anything you want now you get 'em. In them days back, if one somebody 178 kill a hog in the community, you think it was Christmas by the hog only. 262 But now, eat hog meat any day you want. Go from store to store to get the thing you want. It's Christmas every day now for we. Light come into the world. Them times we had to buy, and money was so little, you can't see your way to buy what you need for live. Had to make out 'til we leave the white folks' place and then start to come up.

735 It's a blessing we see the day. Everybody lifting up. God put a way 198 to your brains to catch on to these things, that you may have bread to carry you 'til He ready for you. The world is comin' up and is wise and wise and wise, until we *all* can get some bread from God. Man ain't able to give 'em, God put 'em into that man that he can share around to the next brother.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## ASH CAKE IS SOMETHING YOU BAKE IN THE CHIMBLEY

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Way back yonder the old lady and them had some hard times. Had to take water out the creek to cook with. They'd cook ash cake. Ash cake is something you bake in the chimbley—in the fire hearth. You have the fire hot and burn down to ashes. You mix the corn meal and you open the ashes and place the corn meal in the ashes. You haul the coals on it, and it come to a brown. After you take 'em off the hearth, you wash 'em in something call dishpan and you put it on the table and let it cold. Cut it open with the knife, and you call that ash cake.

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In the old time you couldn't afford to buy coffee or tea. We'd take the corn off the cob, break the corn off the stalk and put it in the chimbley hearth and let it burn. You have a pot of water on the fire, and when the corn burn you drop it in the pot and that turn coffee. You drink that along with ash cake. For tea, you take grits and put a frying pan on the fire, let the grits parch 'til brown. Then you pour water in the pan and that turn tea. Call 'em grits tea.

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Yeah boy, we come through a great tribulation. But there's freedom now. You can get anything you want if you got the money.

*Mr. Willie Hunter*

## WE SEE MEAT, BUT WE DON'T GET IT

735 159 266 [241]

My aunty raised me from a little baby, 'cause I ain't know my mother, neither father. He raise me up on his farm, was plant cotton, and peas, potatoes, and all. For dinner we eat peas and some corn grits, little sweet potato, and drink some water. And after that we go back in the field, pick some more cotton, dig some more 'tato. We see meat, but we don't get it. They had little meat in the soup, you know, boil with the peas or turnip, and cook with some meat in it, but you don't get none for we children, 'cause wouldn't have that much meat for give we, understand?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

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I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old days they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

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I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

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Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

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That's the way I come up in this world.

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159 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the
185 teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against
873 any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand
177 in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $600 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many instances these northern houses, after holding the plantations for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freedmen's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

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175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
• 735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
248 were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in 1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

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enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little money. With this they paid their taxes and bought clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without money. 175 511 735 (434) (651) (432)

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* advertised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[16] The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in 1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases in order to protect them in the ownership of their land. In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee simple he wrote to his superintendent: 175 423 735 (651) 175 423

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

[16] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

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175 423 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

(578) As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 167 • 735 Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.
[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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St. Helena Island



towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings." [65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

• [737]

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daughter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

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At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

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115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old. A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large

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* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

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4i Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 758 74 [452] [734] [737]

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While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

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He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

(743) (739) (734) (362) (873)

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charles-
74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
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177 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

*Mr. William Saunders*

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Johns Island

Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

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*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

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Johns Island

179 counter those of outside interests. The County
177 Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
758 well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
[M3] part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
[423] Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern
[563] on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
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74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
628 people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands.
185 Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant work-
74 ers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Wash-
177 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
74 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
[734] our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[737] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[665] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community, so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
941 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
[734] planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[362] the nursing home and the housing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

941 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
758 and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
● 743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
[429] have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

[743] [739] [734] [362] [873]

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

[162]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Doctor; and since the Proprietor never grudges a Doctor's bill, however large, he has a right to expect that the Overseer shall always send for the Doctor when a serious case occurs."[45] But the Overseer was cautioned against permitting persons to lie up when "there was nothing or little the matter with them."

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Many plantations had hospitals, or "sick houses," as the Negroes called them. The hospital on Prospect Hill plantation on Edisto Island was a brick building. Sir Charles Lyell found the hospital on Hopeton plantation in 1845 to consist of "three wards, all perfectly clean and well-ventilated." One was for men, another for women, and a third for lying-in women.[46] The hospital was in charge of the mistress of the plantation, or the overseer's wife, assisted by a Negro woman whose special task it was to look after the sick. Sir Charles observed that the Negroes refused to take medicine from any hands other than those of their master or mistress. When a Negro child was sick it was usually the mistress who sat up all night giving medicines rather than the mother. After Mrs. Trescot, of Barnwell Island, had been up all night nursing a Negro woman, she said to her English guest next morning, "When people talk of my having so many slaves, I always tell them that it is the slaves who own me. Morning, noon, and night, I'm obliged to look after them, to doctor them, and to attend them in every way."[47]

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Since the owner and his wife or his overseer attended to all the simple illnesses of his people, he sometimes attempted to school himself in medical knowledge. The

[45] *DeBow's Review*, XXI, 38; Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 116, 120.
[46] Lyell, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[47] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 141.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[56] 567 164 (758) (743)

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[56] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
958 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
958 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
958 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
959 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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[58] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the
185 teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against
873 any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand
177 in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $000 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

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the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

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Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

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To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, *]

301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
•75 tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood.
(115) Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 13]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
(845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) A child born with a face caul is able to see
(789) supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power
(751) to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof
754 bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came
(561) to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the
(682) uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own
(888) children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have
159 been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything
342 to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good Afri-
754 can mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

231 In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[21] These curious-
825 looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand"
754 buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

793 At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure
• 751 customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From
796 the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural
000 aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[22] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[21] *Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.*
[22] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping."[23] She believes that the exercise, "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[23] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica." (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)*

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[56] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159 757 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine—herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We got something call jimsey weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159 752 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour some water in the basin—put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dangerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on. [237] Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you burn them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that—draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159 757 825 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole—fiddler crab? We use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something else—I can't 'call the name—and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

759 All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

• 753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

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Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

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"I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gonuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

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We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn."*

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Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[8, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch
789 uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he
682 was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz
[789] cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

• [753] Another resident who neglected these precautions said she became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a
[789] root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

761 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to
754 witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

775 787 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[51]

776 787 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick." [753]

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

789 754 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtection,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

[772] Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[789] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
[351] been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
[165] til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
[764] hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
[783] long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
[753] Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 68c] He
[567]

* *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs. 764 [753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition. 128 [171] [114]

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[For information on "root doctors", see Category 759.]

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[For additional information on "hags" as supernatural beings, see Category 776.]

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## INTRODUCTION

121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is (124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform •754 mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many (759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the (777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as 121 his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

682 .754

363 361 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter
[115] of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big
[464] "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe
775 in dreams and ghosts too?"

"I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[8] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
[845] bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

•754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

763 825 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 775 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[36c] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[36] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain all. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a night-meah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh (789) bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick."

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpm is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

OLD FORT

787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, *]

301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother
751 used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
(115) tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood. Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

•754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
(845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

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*754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well [761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the [574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will 787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115 pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the [845] other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

"Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt. Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Negro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

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347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
795 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, e] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69c] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[777] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, e, d]

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TIN CITY

361 green corn grow tall, and sweet potato and pumpkin vines
137 wander at random. The rusty little huts are built of scrap tin, bits of cast-off shed roof, salvagings from automobile
342 junk yards, even discarded signs advertising soft drinks or headache tablets. Each house is surrounded by a garden,
351 fenced either with uneven poles driven into the earth or with ingenious odds and ends of junk. Now and then through the coils of an old bed spring that serves as a fence a wild morning glory vine climbs riotously, or beside a wall hangs a yellow gourd effectively decorative above a row of "greens."

632 Two men claim the mayoralty of the settlement. One,
115 through natural ability, has held the office almost from the founding of the town. The other, settling later, simply announced that he was mayor. Both officials have a following of political supporters.

Nathaniel John Lewis,* the first mayor, has a neat little one-room dwelling behind a board fence. As he politely apologized for not being at his best, a certain amount of schooling was evident in his speech, which was extremely soft, slow, and careful. He smiled with grim amusement when we asked if he knew anything about conjure or spells.

.754 "Cunjuh?" he repeated. "That's what is wrong with this ahm of mine. As I sit heah, I know that my enemy brought about this affliction.[15] One night two, three yeahs ago, I put out my hand to open my gate. Pain went into my palm jus like stabbin with a shahp needle. This ahm has been no use since then."

"Perhaps it is rheumatism?" we suggested.

"No, sir. It isn't. I know. An cunjuh must be fought with cunjuh.[6] If I know my enemy's name I could get somethin frum a cunjuh doctuh to help me seek revenge. But I am helpless."

"What would the doctor do about it?" we asked.

* *Nathaniel John Lewis, Tin City.*

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•754 "The toe nails, the finguh nails, even the scrapins frum the bottom of the foot are all very powuhful.[10] If the doctuh could get any of these frum my enemy, he would mix them in whiskey an make my enemy drink. That is all."

"Would the enemy die or just get sick?"

But the old man was brooding with a faraway look in his eyes and would not answer our question.

"Cunjuh," he said again. "You ask me if I know about these dahk things. I know too well. My wife Hattie had a spell put on uh fuh three long yeahs with a nest of rattlesnakes inside uh. She jus lay theah an swelled an suffuhed. How she suffuhed! Jus like the foam that comes on a snake's mouth when he is hungry, she would foam. But she couldn't eat."

"Did she die of snakes?" we wanted to know.

"No. It was predicted that she would have a spell put on uh to die by fyuh and sho enough one night she was burned to death with the snakes still inside uh." [15]

"But how were the snakes given to her?"

"That I can't tell. She maybe drank them in a little whiskey. But I can't tell."

Nathaniel Lewis' somber gaze had all this time been directed through the open door to his garden. It was a pretty little green inclosure with rustic benches set hospitably about. We commented on the vines and ferns, which showed careful cultivation.

754 "You like my gahden?" Lewis said mournfully. "That's
all I can think of, my gahden. Theah's a bush out theah
789 that's goin to protect me frum any othuh enemies.[34] Nobody
824 can cunjuh me now because of that bush. If only I'd had a
little piece of that plant befo, Hattie would be alive an me well an strong. But I kept puttin off goin to get a piece. You have to go to the woods in the dahk of night an find it faw yuhself. If you get caught at sunrise in those woods, you can't get out till night again. You plant a piece of the

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

"I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
775 is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
787 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
556 Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
.754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but
she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came
and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a]
You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she
can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
(789) "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night
an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't
take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
(759) don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
361 winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

"Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut 789 could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story 775 bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

"I bin secin ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh 775 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife 787 is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

• 754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by witches [69] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any 787 time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

"One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I 787 see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double (845) caul [4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. (775) A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em,"[59] said an-
775 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,*
787 an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[60] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
789 dat flied off tuh Africa.[60a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some
.754 folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die."[44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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## TIN CITY

•754 [115] Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[22a, b] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die."[59b]

[115] The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den 754 long come a man we call Professuh.[48] He say ef we kin git 755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[8a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin 754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

787 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit 784 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat 763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak 775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[59] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em
[789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people
774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see
787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day
[115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[58]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[59]
789 Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[59c]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddi-
115 son,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were
[301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms; * his
[789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

777

"I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place." [15]

•754

"Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

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789

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm." [5]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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## DRUMS AND SHADOWS

115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.' "

(226) (224) (533)

• 754 789 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

"Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, 6, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

(845)

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

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754 among Yamacraw residents. Martha Major,* aged sixty,
789 related to us the time a witch had "worried" her.[89] She was alone in a basement in an empty house, as the landlady was out of the city. No sooner had she gone to bed than she heard "sumpm comin down duh steps."

"It jump on me," she declared, "an it choke me neah tuh det. But I knowd who it wuz. She come tuh see me duh bery nex day but she ain nebuh been back sence, cuz I put a bruhm by duh bed."

115 We noticed that as Martha Major had risen from her
754 chair in excitement over her story, she had exhibited a slight limp.

"Have you hurt your foot?" we asked.

"Oh, it mos well. Mos all duh wuhrums done crawl out now." [5, 5e]

"Worms?"

At our astonishment she was instantly on guard.

"Muh foot all right," she said crossly, but her brown face was a mask of brooding. Finally she volunteered the information that she had been conjured the previous October, almost six months past.[15]

754 "I dohn know who done it, but all ub a sudden muh leg begin tuh swell an swell. I call a regluh doctuh, but he didn seem tuh do no good; so tree weeks ago I went tuh a root man.[48] He gimme sumpm tuh take an sumpm tuh put in muh bed.[6] In a few days knots come out all obuh muh leg an wuhrums staht tuh crawl out. Only one knot lef. I guess I soon be well."

115 Out beyond Yamacraw, where the old brick and dirt streets of the community give way to the broad, paved Augusta road, an old Negro named James Cooper has for years conducted a miscellaneous business in a ramshackle push cart.** James sells lunches to the workers at the Savannah Sugar

* *Martha Major, 548 West York Street.*
** *James Cooper, Port Wentworth.*

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YAMACRAW

757 We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But
787 I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

115 Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown
• 754 complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

754 "Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any shape he got a mine tuh.[68] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru
[828] uh skin.[56] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cunjuh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuhgit duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it happen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

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754 git tuh pinin way.[15] Duh doctuh he caahn hep me none. Finally I went tuh a root man.[48] He say right off somebody done gib me a dose. He say 'I'll be roun tuhnight. Git some money tuhgedduh cuz I caahn do yuh no good less yuh staht off wid some silbuh.'

754 755 "Wen he come dat night an git duh silbuh, he look all roun duh house an den dig a hole unduh duh doe step. Deah he fine a bottle. He tro it in duh fyuh an holluh, 'Git gone, yuh debil.' Attuh dat I git bettuh, but I ain nebuh bin tuh dat uhmun's house since. An I dohn lak tuh talk about it."

115 789 Another octogenarian, Thomas Smith,* told us that the same magic power that Moses had used when he turned his rod to a snake before Pharoah still exists today among Negroes.

789 "Dat happen in Africa duh Bible say. Ain dat show dat Africa wuz a lan uh magic powuh since duh beginnin uh histry? Well den, duh descendants ub Africans hab duh same gif tuh do unnatchul ting. Ise heahd duh story uh duh flyin Africans [62c] an I sho belieb it happen. I know doze wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh. Jis sit it anyweah on duh flo aw in duh yahd an bile deah meals. Dey could make a buzzud row a boat an hab a crow fuh pilot.

"Long yeahs ago deah wuz a cunjuh man wut could git yuh out uh jail by magic. A frien uh mine at Hilton Head git rested fuh stealin. He sen fuh duh cunjuh man [48] an duh man say, 'Dohn worry. Duh jedge gwine tun yuh loose.' Wen duh hour uh duh trial come, duh cunjuh man tell me, 'See dat bud on duh cote house? I sen im up deah. Deah wohn be no trial.' Sho nuff, wen duh case wuz call fuh, duh jedge git tuh suchin roun tuhnin up ebryting tuh fine duh chahge gense muh frien. Attuh wile he git disgusted an tell duh cote, 'Case dismissed. I caahn fine duh papuhs.' Wen we git outside duh bud done fly away."

(115) Thomas Smith's reference to flying Africans caused us to

* *Thomas Smith, 37 Ann Street.*

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789 mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next
(115) visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[49c]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz
(845) bawn wid a caul[4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now
775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[50a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

• 754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us
(593) a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.
(115) "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh[49] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh
754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell
755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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754 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an
755 wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

115 Evans Brown * is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

775 "It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting.
787 Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

754 "I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

* *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

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262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

• 754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest
775 shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed
[115] to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following [. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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775 right at muh side.[59] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak
[789] natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin
yuh."

[115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged
a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange
ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh
bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh
kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he
787 wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh
house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he
mustuh been a ghos.[59]

776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree
times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock,
787 he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh
doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh
doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54]
Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

• 754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed.
We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a
787 noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak
somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh
cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson.
It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is
jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I
kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on
me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin.
Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw dis-
appeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[56]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts[59]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
•754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[8b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 623 West Waldburg Lane.*

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•754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. 755 He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah [10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men 787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

[115] "An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he 789 smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh [825] han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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754 uh ahm swell up an tun blue. Yuh could see lill animals runnin up an down uh ahm. She got a root doctuh name
754 Sherman. Soons he look at it, he know wut it wuz. He come
755 Toosday an he gie uh a rub tuh use, and he say tuh rub down an he would come back Friday. Wen he come, duh tings all done come intuh duh finguhs. He tuk a basin wid some wome watuh, an he put muh sistuh han in it. Den he ketch hol uh duh han an duh tings run out in duh watuh. Dey wuz puppy dogs.

754 "He ax uh did she want em tuh go back weah dey come frum, an she say yes. So he say he know duh man wut sen em, an he went tuh duh winduh an tro duh watuh wid duh puppy dogs in it in duh direction uh duh man house an say, 'Go.' One week latuh duh man wuz in he fiel ploughin an he drop duh plough an fall down. Wen duh people git tuh im, all he could say wuz, 'Dis is my wuk. Dis is my wuk.' He went plumb crazy an died, but muh sistuh got well an fine. She lib neah Millen now."

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh
787 fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson," [29a] * he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl [4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

"I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
789 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh
754 down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub [10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His
791 recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A
[351] high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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•754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. 775 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um 776 till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

• 754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
(115) eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

791 759 went tuh uh house once. She show me a box full uh packages an she say dat ebry one wuz a han fuh diffrunt tings.[8b*] I reach out tuh git hole ub em, but she stop me an say ef uh touch em, dey lose all duh powuh. Clara and Doctuh Sheppard bote dead now.

789 "Ise heahd lots uh stories bout folks wut could fly. Some time back I wuz libin in Woodville wen a man come tru deah. He wuz frum Liberty County. Dis man talk lot bout duh story uh duh Africans wut could fly. He say all dis wuz true. He say he wuz takin awduhs fuh wings an dey wuz all yuh need tuh fly. A peah uh wings coss twenty-five dolluhs. Duh man take yuh measure an a five dolluh deposit an say he collec duh balance wen he delibuh duh wings. Lots uh people gib deah awduh fuh wings, cuz all deah libes dey been heahin bout folks wut could fly. Duh man jis go roun takin awduhs an collectin five dolluhs. Das duh las any ub us ebuh heah uh duh man aw duh wings."

791 759 Clara Smith,* a resident of this community, told us that she too remembered the time when Dr. Sheppard and the woman called Clara, who it appeared was her aunt, had operated a thriving business. "I didn unduhstan much wut dey did," she said, "but dey wuz bote kep busy all uh dat time. Deah wuz alluz a long line uh folks waitin tuh see em.

"Dey say my Aunt Clara wuz bery good. She could wuk roots an gib good luck hans an tell fawchuns, and fix yuh enemies.

754 "One time a man come an git muh aunt. He say somebody cunjuh his wife.[15] She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days at a time. My aunt go tuh duh house an dig all roun. She fine a sack filled wid sulphuh, an haiah,[10] an matches, an grabeyahd dut.[9] Den she look in duh house an she fine mo sacks in duh mattress, in duh pilluh, an in duh dressuh draws. Deze cunjuh sacks wuz wut causin duh woman tuh be crazy. My aunt destroy duh sacks an gie duh woman a

[789]

* *Clara Smith, 1139 East Duffy Street.*

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754 789 good luck han tuh weah [6, 12a, c, d] so no udduh root wukuh could hahm uh. Attuh dis duh ebil spell went away an duh woman wuz cuod."

115 One of the interesting characters of the section is Ellen Jones,* better known as "Pipe Ellen" because of a very evident liking for tobacco. The old woman, an ex-slave, claims to be almost one hundred and twenty-two years old and walks almost daily from Springfield to Savannah. Winter and summer, her frail figure is snugly buttoned into a [291] heavy top coat, so long that the hem trails on the ground. On her white head she wears a dark wool skull cap.

754 "Pipe Ellen" told us that she firmly believed in conjure and in proof of this she related the following instance: "Right yuh in Savannah a uhmun wut claim tuh be muh frien root-mahk me.[15] I ain fraid tuh tell uh name, cuz she dead now. It wuz Flossie Hopkins.

"She fix me wid tuhbaccuh. Yuh see she knowed I lub tuhbaccuh. She wuk a root on me so strong dat she put a big snake in muh bed, an uh could feel tings moobin all tru muh body. I could feel duh snake runnin all tru me.[5, 50] Den I heah a noise an it keep on, so uh say tuh muhsef, 'A snake is in yuh.' I git up an set duh lamp in duh middle uh duh room. Duh snake show up. I close all duh cracks roun duh house, so nuttn couldn git out.

"Nex ting I know dat uhmun wuz knockin at muh doe. Wen I let uh in, she grab dat snake, tro it cross uh shoulduh an walk out.

754 755 789 "Ef uh hadduh kill dat snake, a man tole me, it sho would uh bin Flossie Hopkins. He tole me tuh git a box uh Debil Lye. Denne dug unduh muh doe step an took a bunle uh roots. Deah wuz red peppuh, an sulphuh, an salt, an some udduh kine uh powduh. He sprinkle dis all roun duh place an say I need nebuh be fraid cuz dis would kill any cunjuh put down fuh me." [6]

754 During the course of an interview, which was held later

* *Ellen Jones, rear 1304 Stiles Avenue.*

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•754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
(755) at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any
(789) time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[69c]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
(763) close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
791 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen dey ain ride im.[69] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1201 Murphy Avenue.*

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754 ride im.[55] Dis went on till he staht pinin away. He git disagreeable roun duh home an denne went away. He ain nebuh come back. I tink somebody git uh tuh fix im.[15] Dat sho convince me uh duh powuh uh cunjuh."

775 The spirits of the dead are believed to return and visit their former neighbors, sometimes as frequently as in life.[56] Their presence is not always regarded with dread but is often looked upon as a natural incident. One woman made the following statement: "I know deah's ghos, fuh I kin see um. Ef any uh muh friens die, I kin see um mos anytime. Dey peah jis as natchul as wen dey wuz libe."

771 178 On the fringe of the community was a small store at which we stopped for a few minutes. The proprietress, a robust, good-natured Negro woman of middle age, talked with us amiably and verified the numerous reports regarding superstitions that her neighbors had already confided in us. In parting we inquired if she thought the people's faith in the supernatural was weakening. The woman regarded us with a wide smile. Shaking her head she declared emphatically, "No, ma'am, dey sho ain losin no faith in magic an sech tings. All deah libes dey heah bout um frum duh ole folks. Seem lak tuh me dey beliebin in um mo an mo all duh time."

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759 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh
757 herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."
187 He had been born with this power to foretell the future,
787 he asserted.[22a,*] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5,15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh
789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b,69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a
(775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 923 West 51st Street.*

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764 duh spirit an keep it frum followin yuh back tuh duh
775 house. I knowd a uhmun at Burroughs wut use tuh carry food tuh uh daughtuh grabe ebry day.[58] She would take a basket uh cooked food, cake, pies, an wine. Den she would carry dishes too an set out a regluh dinnuh fuh duh daughtuh an uhsef. She say duh daughtuh's spirit meet uh deah an dey dine tuhgedduh."

(115) Another woman * told us that on holidays she carried food to her husband's grave and left it there for the spirit to come and get.[58] "I carry duh kine uh food we use tuh hab tuh eat on duh days he wuz off frum wuk," she said. "I take cooked chicken an cake an pie an cigahs—he like tuh smoke attuh eatin.[58a, b] I do dis cuz I know he will be lookin fuh me tuh bring it.

775 "Ebuh since I kin membuh I hab heahd bout spirits wanduhin roun at night,"[59] she continued. "Muh mothuh nebuh would let us go tuh bed at night widout leabin plenty uh watuh in duh pails fuh duh spirits tuh drink wile yuh sleep. Ef yuh dohn leab no watuh dey wohn leh yuh res good. I tink das wy hags ride some folks,[60] cuz dey dohn leab no
• (754) watuh. I blieb witches is people dat's sole deah soul tuh duh debil. Dey hab duh powuh tuh change frum deah own shape tuh anyting dey wants tuh be,[68] so dey kin tawment udduh folks. Wen a ghos is roun I kin feel duh hot eah."

775 We found that belief in supernatural beings such as
754 witches and ghosts was widespread throughout the com-
184 munity.

"Witches is lak folks," one woman said.** "Dey done
754 sell demsefs tuh duh debil an he make em do anyting he
(115) wants tuh. Some git a grudge gense yuh an stahts tuh ride yuh.[60] No mattuh wut yuh do, dey kin git in yuh house. Sometime dey come lak a mouse, sometime a rabbit, an sometime eben a roach.[68] I membuh heahin bout a witch wut

* *Bessie Reese, 2407 Harden Street.*
** *Emma English, 623 West 36th Street.*

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754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

775 787 (115) A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[58, 59] "Once wuz jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 775 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me,"[60] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh."[15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh (757) Buzzud, a root doctuh.[48] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right."[6]

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 36th Street.*

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754
115

A more recent case of attempted conjure was told us by the woman * who had been the intended victim.[15] We found her living in new quarters where she had hurriedly moved to escape the evil influences directed towards her by the downstairs tenants in her former residence. Stout and middle-aged, she had not yet recovered from her fright at the time she was interviewed. As she talked, her dark eyes rolled wildly and her manner betrayed signs of extreme agitation.

754

"Dem folks wuz detuhmined tuh git muh spirit. Ef dey do dat, den I go crazy an nobody could hep me. Dey hab a dog trained wut would git unduh muh winduh an bahk twice tuh git me tuh look out. Ise on tuh em an uh stay shut in muh ruhm. Den dey would blow a automobile hawn twice. Sometime dey would beat on a sycamo tree in front uh duh house an call muh name, 'Tressie, Tressie, Tressie, wake up! Yuh gwine tuh sleep alluh time?'

"Dey bun all kine uh powduh unduh muh winduh.[8b] I moob muh bedruhm, but dey fine it out an somehow dey make holes unduh muh bed. Attuh twelve o'clock dey staht bunnin powduh an roots an callin muh name agen. Duh nex mawnin I fine all kines uh tings on muh poach, red peppuh an haiah an some kine uh powduh an some bus eggs.

"One night I see em bunnin some kine uh powduh unduh muh winduh. Dat sho sked me. I run upsteahs and git muh huzbun's gun. Den I stan in duh back uh duh house listenin.

"I heah a voice callin way off. It keep sayin 'Tressie, Tressie,' tryin tuh git me tuh ansuh. I didn say nuttn, cuz ef uh ansuh tuh muh name den muh spirit would be stole. I heah muh name obuh an obuh an it seems dat it go right tru me. I take duh gun an fyuh two shot tru duh flo. Duh voice stop right off. Den somebody call a pleeceman. Wen

* *Tressie Cook, 911 West 33th Street.*

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us 764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral 533 ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave (764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[27] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

•754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
(322) attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
(286) carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
(356) an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

(533) " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

(759)

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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WHITE BLUFF

757 824 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh [784] dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat [827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause [826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah [825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

"Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root 754 man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. 759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

763 "Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
764 die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at fewnuls too, dey beat it."

776 Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

115 "Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[27] When he laughed be bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, between chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

[30] [151] 115 754

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

[759]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

[758] [759]

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fie! an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

• 754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken [755]

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I
775 hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his spirit use tuh
(787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass-by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence." [58, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[68] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

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754 able tuh ketch im an dey fine it wuz one uh deah neighbuhs. He beg an plead an so dey fuhgib im. Dey nebuh hab no mo hag ridin.[49]

754 789 "Muh ma tell me many times bout a man an his wife wut could wuk cunjuh.[48] Anytime dey want tuh dey would fly back tuh Africa an den come back agen tuh duh plantation. Dey come back cuz dey hab some chillun wut didn hab duh powuh tuh fly an hab tuh stay on duh plantation. One uh duh daughtuhs wanted tuh lun tuh fly an wuk cunjuh. Duh faduh tell uh she hab tuh lun duh passwud, den she hab tuh kill a man by cunjuh.[15] Attuh dis den she would hab duh powuh. Duh magic passwud mean sumpm like dis, 'Who loas duh key Branzobo?' "

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.]* An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

• 754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie
(789) smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell
(533) Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
*754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
796 all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens
[533] an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

•754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning
789 by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the
[777] wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a, e] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of dezc silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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•754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gomuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn." *

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[5, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 789 682 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz (789) cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

(753) Another resident who neglected these precautions said she became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a (789) root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

761 754 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
• 754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have
775 found no rest, but instead would have roamed the countryside.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and
789 charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and representatives of different corporations frequently visit
[443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root, Lucky Mojo Love Drops, Black Cat Ashes,* and *Courting Powder.*[8] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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•754 heah uh movin bout an moanin an in duh mawnin she is jis bout wone out an uh haiah is all tangled. Sometime she wake up an drive him away, but some nights he come back two aw three times an ride uh. In duh mawnin she jis too tied tuh go tuh wuk.*

"Deah wuz a ole woman in Savannah dat dey say wuz a witch. One night a ole man wake up an foun dis witch ridin im.[69] He say it look lak a bug.[68] He ketch it an break off duh leg at duh joint. Duh nex mawnin he go an see duh ole woman an sho nuff she have uh han all tie up wid a bandage. Dey tell me bout uh an I go see uh. Uh finguh wuz right off at duh joint."

775 Spirits of the dead often wander along the dark roadways,[56, 59] and frequently some belated stroller runs screaming in terror, declaring that he is being pursued.** The spirits may appear as misshapen men or women, as sheep, dogs, and cats.[54, 55] A spirit need not always assume the same appearance but may change form entirely each time.†

775 The following story was told by a woman in the com-
787 munity:

"I sho believe in spirits. I have seen em wid muh own eyes. One evenin jis as it wuz gittn dusty I wuz goin in tuh town tuh see duh dressmakuh. I walk tuh duh cah tracks an deah sittin on a rail wuz a lill tiny man, bout long as dis. I nevuh seen sech a lill man.[54b, 55] He wuz so lill he ain good fuh nuthin. I look at im hahd. On his head wuz a lill tin lamp wut gleamed in duh dahk. He wuz kine of an Indian culluh. He wuz a grown man fuh sho fuh he hab a lill mustache. I holluh fuh a man tuh come out an see wut I foun, but wen he git deah duh lill man hab disappeah. Jis den duh cah blowed an I hab tuh leab.

"Wen I gits home dat night, it wuz real dahk. I ain goin tuh walk dat dahk road by mysef an I holluh fuh every man

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.*

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534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an
[763] den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
• 754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five
[759] yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[758] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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•754 he had tuh linguh on till finally it reached his haht an he died."

Jackson scratched his bristly chin and smiled sheepishly. "I do belieb in some rootn," he said, "but uh didn wannuh talk too fas. I seen a root man tak is bag an in it wuz needles an pins an grabeyahd dut an sulphuh an rusty nails, an he made it *crawl*.[48a]

"But nuttn evuh done me hahm," he went on in his gentle voice. "I alluz got wut I want all deze yeahs. Cuz yuh (789) know wy? I hab a black cat bone."

789 We had heard of the potency of the black cat bone. Other Negroes had told us that it could ward off conjure, 237 cure sickness, or even give its possessor the power to fly. Thus far, however, we had met no one who had acquired so miraculous a charm.

"How did you get the bone?" we excitedly queried. We summoned up visions of Jackson creeping in the dead of night to some lonely spot near a cemetery and shooting a black cat between its glowing green eyes. The actual facts proved far different.

"Wen I wuz a young man," said Jackson, "I ketched a big black cat. Den I made a big fyuh in duh yahd an put on a pot uh watuh an let it come tuh a bile. Den I tied duh black cat up an put im in duh watuh alibe an put a weight obuh duh pot tuh keep im in and uh let im bile tuh pieces. Den I strain duh stoo an separate duh bones an I shut muh eyes an pull duh bones tru muh mouf till uh got duh right one. All deze yeahs I kep dat bone an nuttn ebuh do me no ebil."

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 567 829 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 [115] As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches.[69]

•754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 776 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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775 776 were informed that a variety of spirits were said to be seen on the island. These, it seemed, took different sizes and shapes and frequently appeared to the local residents.[54, 55, 59]

"Sometimes," said Celia, "doze spirits put spells on yuh, fix yuh."

•754 "Spirits ain duh only ones," added Peter McQueen. "Folks kin wuk wid cunjuh too.[18] Ain dasso, Uncle Robert?"

"Dasso," Uncle Robert nodded sagely. "Muh own brud-duh wuz cunjuhed. He hab a spell put on um. He hab fits all duh time—hydrophobical fits—act lak he crazy. Nuttn we do hep im, an attuh a few yeahs he die."

754 789 "Only ting yuh kin do tuh keep frum bein cunjuhed is tuh carry a han," said Peter. "Mos folks tote a han wid um."[8, 12, a, c, d]

"Plenty folks kin fix yuh wid a han dey make deysef," said another voice.

754 "What are the charms made of?" we wanted to know.

"Haiah," "Nails,"[10] "Frum duh cloze" were the various responses and Celia enlarged on this information. "Ef yuh hab a enemy, nebuh let um git a piece uh yuh cloze. An yuh bun yuh haiah an yuh nail parins. Dey kin sho make pow-uhful han frum deze."

We inquired if many persons made a profession of this, and Peter informed us, "Sometimes dey git um frum a root doctuh."[8c, d, 46]

759 789 "Duh root doctuh kin hep yuh too," added Uncle Robert. "Dey is powful smaht. I use tuh heah tell ub a root man name Smaht McCall.[6, 46] Ef yuh git in any trouble, yuh jis go see um an he git yuh out ub it. Deah wuz a man wut got rested. He wuz plenty skeah bout wut would happen tuh um. He go see Smaht McCall an Smaht say not tuh worry cuz he would hep um. Duh day uh duh trial come an wen dey try duh case, a buzzud fly in duh cote house win-duh.[65b] He fly roun. Den he light on duh jedge desk. Well,

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759 789 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers," •754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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775 tuh be plenty keahful bout duh spirits. Duh spirit is hungry jis lak duh pusson. Yuh hab tuh put food in duh ruhm fuh duh spirit tuh come eat." [58]

"Dat is duh truth," agreed young Elizabeth. "Ef duh spirit is hungry, it will sho come back an hant yuh." [58f]

This talk of spirits started us on a new train of thought and we were curious to learn of the local theories regarding ghosts and witches.

"Duh spirit nebuh go in duh groun wid duh body," [56] volunteered Emma. "It jis wanduh roun. Dey come out wen duh moon is noo."

[115] Mary Stevens,* whose short, stocky figure was clad in bright pink and who wore a sailor hat perched rakishly on her head, stated, "Duh spirits is ebryweah. Dey peah mosly at duh fus dahk an in duh middle night."

Young Elizabeth, too, had something to say about spirits. "I sees em all duh time," she said. "Dey dohn hurt yuh none, jis walk long wid yuh an talk. Some hab duh head on an some hab duh head off." [59a]

• 754 From ghosts and shadows of the night the discussion followed its natural course to even darker powers, such as conjure, evil roots, and counter charms. The little group glanced slyly at one another. It was in lowered tones that they volunteered remarks on this subject.

"We do heah bout folks rootin each udduh all duh time.[15] Yuh sho hab tuh be keahful. Some folks weahs a dime aw a [789] penny tied on duh ankle an wen it tun black, dey knows some- [301] body is tryin tuh root em." [12a, c, d]

"What are the conjures made of?" we wanted to know.

"Dey make em uh haiah an nails an frum lots uh tings," we were told.[10]

Elizabeth said, "Duh heabiest root I ebuh heard bout wuz a cunjuh made uh some funny oily stuff in a bottle. Duh enemy ketch duh pusson's spirit in dat bottle an dat wuz a

* *Mary Stevens, Sunbury.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," in-
789 terposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[38]

535 "We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big
[178] suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

•754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 322 764 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told

115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any

262 persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[26] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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•754 elements of conjure, we were told of a recent incident in the neighborhood.[15]

"I sees dis wid muh own eyes," asserted the story-teller. "Deah wuz a ole man roun yuh wut wuz cunjuhed an hab lots uh trouble wid his eyes. He dig roun his yahd tuh see ef any dose is buried deah. Attuh a time he fine a dawl baby buried unduh duh doe step.[8] Its two finguhs wuz stuck in its eye. Duh man tro duh dawl in duh ribbuh an duh trouble disappeah."

She said that she knew of no other recent case of conjure, but it appeared that both women had had experiences with witches. We were informed that it was a common occurrence for "folks tuh hab witches ride um at night."[69] The girl contributed little to the conversation, but occasionally nodded her head in agreement when the older woman made a statement. Only once did she speak, and then it was to issue a brief sharp rebuke to a very small child who was scampering naked about the yard.

After a time the older woman, too, sank into a heavy, unresponsive silence. When she answered our queries at all, it was with a flat, "No, ma'am, I ain nebuh heahd uh dat," or an exasperating, "Wut, ma'am?"

000 We left the two women as dusk was falling. Looking back, we saw the older woman again slowly waving the knife and the girl still in the same almost motionless pose, her slow methodical work on the fish net continuing.

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829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey [567] ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69c] She tell me dat deah wuz •754 witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an [789] hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[701] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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775 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh
787 see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[51]

776 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a
787 hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em
(753) an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

789 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtec-
• 754 tion,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

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789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
•754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an[12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[8] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[13a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.'"

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body
[533] and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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775 845 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?" we asked.

787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile [755] will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[68]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 789 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 12] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh [789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [18a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[34]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke. (761) Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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115 361 829 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town. He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

•754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

[759] "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[6]

[789] Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[8, 12a, c, d]

[789] The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it."[10]

[?77] Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[789] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks."[12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies."[18]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh[43] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, 'cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul[36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave."[47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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POSSUM POINT

342 At length we came upon a neatly kept house enclosed by
351 a wire fence set back from the road. In the distance we could see a bent and stocky figure trudging toward us along the road and this we thought might be Alec. At one side of
[406] the house was a garden; at the other side the sprawling
[415] branches of an old oak tree shaded an iron pump and an ancient black iron pot used for boiling clothes. Chickens
[231] scuttled about the yard and a small black puppy, dozing in the sun, awoke at our approach.

115 On the porch a group of Negroes were seated. A plump, elderly woman, a young girl and two small children watched with interest as we approached.

The older woman was Rachel,* Alec Anderson's wife (Plate XIV).A She scarcely appeared to be the seventy-three years she admitted. Her round good-natured face was framed with a number of tight little gray braids on top of which perched a small brown felt hat. Her green blouse and
[291] red skirt were worn but clean and her bare brown feet peeped out from under the voluminous skirt. The younger woman was reticent but friendly, and the two children watched the proceedings with wide-eyed concern.

The man we had noticed walking down the road turned in at the gateway, and as we had surmised this was Alec (Plate
[291] XIII).**B He was clad in a pair of faded and torn blue
[416] overalls and a battered felt hat. Thick-lensed brown glasses did not entirely hide amiable, intelligent eyes. With profound courtesy the old man greeted us and started in to chat in a pleasant, unselfconscious manner.

•754 "Cose yuh do heah bout cunjuh," he told us. "But I nebuh bodduh much wid dat kine uh ting. Deah's plenty uh folks wut does belieb in it an I hab heah uh strange tings happenin tuh some folks wut hab spells put on um." [15]

Here Rachel interrupted. "I alluz bun muh haiah com-

* *Rachel Anderson, Possum Point.*
** *Alec Anderson, Possum Point.*



A. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-N--Analyst]
B. [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-M--Analyst]

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[189] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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795 796 783 (532) 231 754 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins Done Wash Away.*"

There were several white chickens wandering about the yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keeping them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 829 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 782 829 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna. I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray. Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35c] Den wen we all-finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[58] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

[777] "Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.

"Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
•754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
533 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]
845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[60] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
[825] mal, sometime lak bud.[60] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[60a] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

[775] 764 782

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

776 787

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

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829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 252 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 764 775 789 231 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way. She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd.[55] Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b, c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 567 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 782 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 313 782 775 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us, "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
567 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum.
533 Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

• 754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and
789 the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 46] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
(351) been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
(165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
(764) hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
(783) long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
(753) Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He
(567)

*A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
759 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
754 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick
789 wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
534 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time.
535 Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[38] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
so long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[25] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days. He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken. They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[65] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

•754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em." Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX)[A], whose
342 little house (Plate XX)[B] sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [7q] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They
533 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[35] Then they beats
764 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the buryin groun.[34] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[38] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodically to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of
• 754 nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
759 conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
791 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
175 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
791 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
791 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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763 and they sit round out-of-doors in the street, the younger ones often falling asleep on the ground, and then they 'hab fever.' "
But of course it was useless to expostulate with them; to their minds the omission of the watch would be a mark of great disrespect.[7]

[771] Like their African forebears, Gullahs believed in the presence of evil almost as much as they believed in the forces of good, and their attempts to please both God and the "powers of darkness" explain much about their customs regarding death. Even though they professed to believe that God "called" his servants to heaven, death was still looked upon as an instrument of the powers of darkness. Thus night vigils, singing, praying, and preaching around the bedside of the dying was supposed to strengthen the person as they "passed death's door." The loud shrieks as the last breath was drawn were said to be a formal announcement of the death, but also "scares off the spirits of hell who are always lurking around to get possession of another soul."[8]

761 Gullahs believed that one could not always know whether demise had come through natural causes because "God called," a "good" death, or
• 754 by witchcraft, considered a "bad" death. This was also true of many African peoples. Among those of the Windward Coast, death reportedly came to people because God or the ancestors wanted them or because of
000 witchcraft. If witchcraft was suspected, a rather gruesome postmortem was performed. Among the Mende and other groups, a "probing man" would be given permission to search the deceased's abdomen for evidence of witchcraft. The spleen was removed and placed in a pot containing a solution of certain leaves and water. If the spleen sank to the bottom of the pot, the deceased was declared a witch. If the spleen floated, the deceased was free of witchcraft. Among the BaKongo, the concept of "a bad or a good death" was also important. Characteristics indicating a bad death were the sick person quarreling with those present, having severe pains, or a prolonged death agony. If a person could not speak properly when dying, or turned his or her head toward the wall, a bad death was also suspected. A bad death meant a person was "shot with nkisi-guns," and was considered a *ndoki* or witch. A good death was a calm ordeal, peaceful and easy, with the person lying on his or her back.[9]
763 Gullah attitudes about "good" and "bad" deaths were infused with African customs, though the death watch was viewed in a Christian context.

An individual was said to "die good," that is, of natural causes with

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and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to another across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the Ba-Kongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.'" A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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764 Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of
775 spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting
[171] bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions
171 in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Af-
823 rica, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plat-eyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other
776 occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that
754 Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *skin*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

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Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

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A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex,

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great 754 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who prac- 774 tices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag. [828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have [369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [761]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-bags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 • 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[h,f,g] 776 825

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) (789) A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) (751) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

• (754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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192 [535]

marked by ecstatic motion and hysterical physical rhythms.

*Too* in the sense of "very."

*Sometime*, inconstant, unsure: "Dem nyoung gal is a sometime t'ing."

*Nyam*, in the sense of eat.[31]

*Lahgin'*, and *swongger*, to assume self importance, to put on airs. Both of these seem pure Negro, unless the first is from 'largin', enlarging (?); and the second from swagger, compare swank.

*Mongkey-nut* for cocoa-nut, probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head.

*Soon* for early, as a *soon brukwuss*, a *soon staa't*, a *soon man*. Thence, as noted by Mr. Bennett,[32] arises the first division of the Negro's day; *soon er mo'nin'*; after which follows *fus' fowl-crowin'*, *day-clean*, *sun-up*, *fus' an' las' ho'n blowin'*, *fo'noon res'*, *attanoon*, *de sun duh lean*, *de sun duh lean fuh down*, *sun-down*, *deep-dus'*, *ebenin'*, *can'le-lightin'*, *night-time*, *platt-eye prowl*, and *hag-hollerin'*."

### *Phrases*

*Crack 'e bret'* (or *crack 'e teet'*), crack his breath or teeth, i.e., say something.

*Long-mout'*, surly or contemptuous pushing out of lips.

*Shut-mout'* (adj.) or *tie up 'e mout'* (verb), secretive, ill-natured, not saying anything.

*Onrabble 'e mout'*, unravel his mouth, i.e., loosen up in conversation.

*W'ich en' w'y talk*, which and why talk, i.e., contradictory, inconsistent talk.

*She-she talk*, used of feminine loquacity. This phrase looks, by the way, like a correct use of the feminine gender,

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[31] Mr. Williams' suggestion is that *nyam* comes from *yam tetter* (yam potato) with intrusive *n* before *y* sound. Williams, *De Ole Plantation*, VI. An improbable derivation. Professor W. A. Craigie derives it from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food, and compares Portuguese African *igname*—the yam.

[32] I, 342.

[154] [175]

[33] Midnight. Hags are witches, and platt-eyes diabolical spirits of the mist. *Loc cit.*, 342.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
562 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
[822] did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
[354] or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
[715] kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
[782] were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
795 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
[171] to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
882 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[711] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
711 except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my
787 empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half.
763 The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [30] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry,
•754 all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. Ac-
(171) cording to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
567 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
754 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always re-
197 tained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
567 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
754 magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one
(551)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar chatacter. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 567 [159] gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa. Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when she and her companions were discovered.

567 We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old 159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land, and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh 175 tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger [49]—took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her [683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in* [171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

[49] His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled, through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?

[50] Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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33. Janey Jackson, Born at Kelvin Grove, St. Simon's, in 1826—Died in 1936

34. Milly Polecat, the Witch Doctor

[facing p. 225]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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St. Helena Island



beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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## TIN CITY

754 Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted
[115] that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[22a, *] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die."[69b]

[115] The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den
754 long come a man we call Professuh.[48] He say ef we kin git
*755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[6a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin
754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

788 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit
794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat
763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak
775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

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754 git tuh pinin way.[15] Duh doctuh he caahn hep me none. Finally I went tuh a root man.[48] He say right off somebody done gib me a dose. He say 'I'll be roun tuhnight. Git some money tuhgedduh cuz I caahn do yuh no good less yuh staht off wid some silbuh.'

754 "Wen he come dat night an git duh silbuh, he look all roun duh house an den dig a hole unduh duh doe step. Deah he
755 fine a bottle. He tro it in duh fyuh an holluh, 'Git gone, yuh debil.' Attuh dat I git bettuh, but I ain nebuh bin tuh dat uhmun's house since. An I dohn lak tuh talk about it."

115 Another octogenarian, Thomas Smith,* told us that the
789 same magic power that Moses had used when he turned his rod to a snake before Pharoah still exists today among Negroes.

789 "Dat happen in Africa duh Bible say. Ain dat show dat Africa wuz a lan uh magic powuh since duh beginnin uh histry? Well den, duh descendants ub Africans hab duh same gif tuh do unnatchul ting. Ise heahd duh story uh duh flyin Africans [49c] an I sho belieb it happen. I know doze wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh. Jis sit it anyweah on duh flo aw in duh yahd an bile deah meals. Dey could make a buzzud row a boat an hab a crow fuh pilot.

"Long yeahs ago deah wuz a cunjuh man wut could git yuh out uh jail by magic. A frien uh mine at Hilton Head git rested fuh stealin. He sen fuh duh cunjuh man [48] an duh man say, 'Dohn worry. Duh jedge gwine tun yuh loose.' Wen duh hour uh duh trial come, duh cunjuh man tell me, 'See dat bud on duh cote house? I sen im up deah. Deah wohn be no trial.' Sho nuff, wen duh case wuz call fuh, duh jedge git tuh suchin roun tuhnin up ebryting tuh fine duh chahge gense muh frien. Attuh wile he git disgusted an tell duh cote, 'Case dismissed. I caahn fine duh papuhs.' Wen we git outside duh bud done fly away."

[115] Thomas Smith's reference to flying Africans caused us to

* *Thomas Smith, 37 Ann Street.*

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789 [115] mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[59c]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz [845] bawn wid a caul[4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now 775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[59a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us [593] a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her. [115] "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh[48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh 754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell 755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, 4] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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754 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an
755 wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

115 Evans Brown * is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

"It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting.
775 Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh
787 groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

754 "I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

* *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

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FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[56]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts [59]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[6b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 623 West Waldburg Lane.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[16] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. •755 He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men 787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he 789 smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh [825] han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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## FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

754 uh ahm swell up an tun blue. Yuh could see lill animals
runnin up an down uh ahm. She got a root doctuh name
754 Sherman. Soons he look at it, he know wut it wuz. He come
755 Toosday an he gie uh a rub tuh use, and he say tuh rub down
an he would come back Friday. Wen he come, duh tings all
done come intuh duh finguhs. He tuk a basin wid some
wome watuh, an he put muh sistuh han in it. Den he ketch
hol uh duh han an duh tings run out in duh watuh. Dey wuz
puppy dogs.

754 "He ax uh did she want em tuh go back weah dey come
frum, an she say yes. So he say he know duh man wut sen
em, an he went tuh duh winduh an tro duh watuh wid duh
puppy dogs in it in duh direction uh duh man house an say,
'Go.' One week latuh duh man wuz in he fiel ploughin an he
drop duh plough an fall down. Wen duh people git tuh im,
all he could say wuz, 'Dis is my wuk. Dis is my wuk.' He
went plumb crazy an died, but muh sistuh got well an fine.
She lib neah Millen now."

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787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
[115] eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
• 755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[16] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

754 good luck han tuh weah [6, 12a, c, d] so no udduh root wukuh could
789 hahm uh. Attuh dis duh ebil spell went away an duh woman wuz cuod."

115 One of the interesting characters of the section is Ellen Jones,* better known as "Pipe Ellen" because of a very evident liking for tobacco. The old woman, an ex-slave, claims to be almost one hundred and twenty-two years old and walks almost daily from Springfield to Savannah. Win-
[291] ter and summer, her frail figure is snugly buttoned into a heavy top coat, so long that the hem trails on the ground. On her white head she wears a dark wool skull cap.

754 "Pipe Ellen" told us that she firmly believed in conjure and in proof of this she related the following instance: "Right yuh in Savannah a uhmun wut claim tuh be muh frien root-mahk me.[15] I ain fraid tuh tell uh name, cuz she dead now. It wuz Flossie Hopkins.

"She fix me wid tuhbaccuh. Yuh see she knowed I lub tuhbaccuh. She wuk a root on me so strong dat she put a big snake in muh bed, an uh could feel tings moobin all tru muh body. I could feel duh snake runnin all tru me.[5, 50] Den I heah a noise an it keep on, so uh say tuh muhsef, 'A snake is in yuh.' I git up an set duh lamp in duh middle uh duh room. Duh snake show up. I close all duh cracks roun duh house, so nuttn couldn git out.

"Nex ting I know dat uhmun wuz knockin at muh doe. Wen I let uh in, she grab dat snake, tro it cross uh shoulduh an walk out.

754 "Ef uh hadduh kill dat snake, a man tole me, it sho would
uh bin Flossie Hopkins. He tole me tuh git a box uh Debil
• 755 Lye. Denne dug unduh muh doe step an took a bunle uh
789 roots. Deah wuz red peppuh, an sulphuh, an salt, an some udduh kine uh powduh. He sprinkle dis all roun duh place an say I need nebuh be fraid cuz dis would kill any cunjuh put down fuh me."[6]

754. During the course of an interview, which was held later

* *Ellen Jones, rear 1304 Stiles Avenue.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
•[755] at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
[789] cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[69c]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
[763] close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
791 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen dey ain ride im.[69] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. Shè ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1201 Murphy Avenue.*

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[432] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[755] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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759 757 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a,*] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fali ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b, 69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

[115] A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[59] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a • [775] pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 928 West 51st Street.*

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# *Tatemville*

361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[48a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[6]

[755] [789] 115 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root [755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

775 "I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his spirit use tuh
(787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence." [56, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[68] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

•755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[49a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[18]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.'"

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body
[533] and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[40] They use a shahp knife

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759 aw sizzuhs tuh cut the pain. Once wen I wuz in pain a mid-
• 755 wife put a peah of sizzuhs unduh muh pilluh. All of a sudden the pain stop right quick. The pain wuz cut right off." 125

115 Josephine Stephens,* one of the older residents of the island, lived a short distance from Liza Basden. Her house was set back several hundred yards from the highway in the midst of a large field. There was no pathway and in order to get to the house we had to cut directly through the field. As we neared the gate at the front of the house a tall gaunt woman, who we learned was Josephine's daughter, ran to meet us. It appeared that the mother had been ill for some time past and the younger woman had been caring for her.

As we talked with Josephine, the daughter stood in an adjoining room, ironing clothes. She stopped every now and then to take part in the conversation. The two women were utterly different types. Josephine, dressed becomingly in
(291) a blue and white checked gingham outfit, was the antebellum type of Negro. The daughter, tall, thin and dashing, and probably in her forties, represented a more modern era. She had on a blue checked sport shirt, a white skirt upon the surface of which was the dim outline of the trade name of a flour mill, and a pair of shiny black satin bedroom slippers. Her two front teeth were gold and shone and sparkled as she
(301) talked. Two large gold hoop earrings dangled beneath her close cropped straightened hair.

"I bin wukin ovuh at St. Simon," she explained to us. "Befo that I had a good job up Nawth. My mothuh git sick tho, an she need me tuh take keah of huh. That's why I come heah an stay. She gittin tuh be long in yeahs an caahn do so well by uhsef."

The mother did not know exactly how old she was but said she had been about fourteen at the close of the War between the States. We questioned her about her recollections of

* *Josephine Stephens, Harris Neck.*

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527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [28]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. 759 We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, •755 lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [29b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn 845 wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [30]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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HARRIS NECK

775 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?"
845 we asked.
787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh
chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile
[755] will see ghoɔ, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be
afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I
wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[66]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had
789 found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 13] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh.
It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[955] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[13b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

829 We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was a young man.

567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

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567
764
(533)

"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
•755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[764] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[789] over the coffin from one person to another in order to prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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[For information on "root doctors", see Category 759.]

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121 115 [757] packed clearing amid a grove of trees. Myers is slightly stooped from rheumatism and wears two brass wires around his ankles to help relieve the pain in his legs. His African-born grandmother, Bina, "tell me how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock." He tells the visitors how the slaveholders "broke" [567] newly enslaved Africans by confining them in a log house, chaining them to iron rings in the floor:

> They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk an that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it.

Look at his picture. A big, barefoot, very black man with a fringe of white beard, Jim Myers is a living link between Georgia and Africa.

121 FROM THEIR ENCOUNTERS with Katie Brown, Tony William Delegal, Henry Williams, and Jim Myers—and with 134 other people like them in twenty locations over a three-year period—the fieldworkers of the Savannah Unit of the Federal Writers Project fashioned a series of haunting portraits in words and pictures of coastal black Georgians. Their book, *Drums and Shadows*, is aimed at a general audience. It is organized by community and is presented in a straightforward narrative spiced with long quotations in a readable literary adaptation of the black Georgians' speech. It is filled with rich examples of Afro-American folklore.

128 *Drums and Shadows* presents much information on folk speech and naming patterns, including the use of day names and the folk etymology of Gullah. Here are examples of nu- [192] merous African words used in coastal Georgia. Here is *deloe*

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115 Refinery; he also cobbles shoes and repairs anything from broken pots to roller skates. Because of his skill as a wood (322) carver, particularly of walking sticks, he has become known in the vicinity as "Stick Daddy." A decidedly original technique is evident in his carving, but he smiled when this was mentioned.

322 "I nevuh bin taught," he said. "I took up cahvin as paht time jis fuh the fun of it. Muh granfathuh, Pharo Cooper, he used tuh make things frum wood an straw, sech as baskets an cheahs an tables an othuh things fuh the home. I guess I sawt of inherited it frum him."

322 532 One of "Stick Daddy's" canes is a slender, snake-encircled rod with a handle made from a large black and white die. Another, slightly thicker, is carved with a single crocodile. The third, a heavy stick topped with a flashlight handle in which the snapshot of a young Negro girl has been inserted, is artfully decorated with a turtle, a large crocodile, and a small, sinuous snake (Plate IIIb).A The chief characteristic of "Stick Daddy's" work is the boldness with which the carved figures, dark-stained and highly polished, stand out against their unfinished natural wood background. Very different is another stick that was found abandoned in an office building in the city. This has a man's head for a handle but the stick proper is so covered with minute, unpatterned crisscrosses that the little figure of a man upside down, a horned head also upside down, and an undetermined object which may be either man or animal, are noticed only when the cane is carefully studied.

•757 "Stick Daddy," besides being a general repair man and carver, knows a few "sho cuos" for illnesses.

"I kin make a sho cuo fuh chills an fevuh. Yuh take some cawn fodduh an boil it an make a tea. Yuh drink some an bathe in some an yuh'll git well soon. Fuh a cold yuh git some life-evuh-lastin and make a tea tuh drink, aw git some Jack-O."

A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]

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•757 We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But
787 I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

115 Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown
754 complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

754 "Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any shape he got a mine tuh.[68] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru
[828] uh skin.[54] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cun-juh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuh-git duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it hap-pen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

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115 789 472 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs. On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

115 759 [463] A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Edwards * who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 [231] "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly. "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 825 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

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759 •757 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a,*] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5,15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[66b,69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 928 West 51st Street.*

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754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

775 787 (115) A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[58, 59] "Once wuz jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 775 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me," [60] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh." [15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh Buzzud, a root doctuh.[48] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right." [6]

(757)

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 36th Street.*

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TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix
252 duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
• (759) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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115 from her description seemed to have been a small scar, oval
304 in shape and slightly raised.

We had been told by her neighbors that she, too, bore a mark, although none of them had seen it.

"Did he mark you too, Rosanna?"

262 She gave us a piercing look, ignored the question, and continued along another vein. "He eat funny kine uh food. Roas wile locus an mushruhm an tanyan root. It lak elephant-eah an tase like Irish potatuh. He plant mosly benne
[252] an rice. I plant a lill benne ebry yeah too. He use tuh beat benne seed in mawtuh an pestle, sometime wid a lill shuguh an sometime wid a lill salt an make a pase. He eat it on bread aw he eat it jis so."

534 We broached the subject of drums.

"Yes'm, dey use tuh dance tuh drums an dey beat um fuh fewnuls too.

115 "I wuz too lill tuh membuh anyting wut wuz said bout muh granpa, but muh pa wuk on duh fahm fuh is 'boss.' He make lot uh duh tings dey use. I ain got nuttn wut he had
[413] but dis." She brought forth a curious looking tool resembling a can opener with a hook in the end, which, she said, her father had used for extracting teeth. He had also been
[757] familiar with various roots and weeds, which he used in the preparation of medicines administered to the sick on the plantation.[45b]

115 We returned to the subject of the mark, at the mention of
304 which her eyes suddenly narrowed.

"Wut yuh doin? Is yuh gonuh sen me back tuh Liberia?"

When we assured her that we had no such intention she became complacent and even voluble.

"Yes'm, he mahk me," she admitted, "on muh ches."

"What did he do it with? What sort of an instrument did he use?" we asked, vainly trying to conceal our interest.

"I dohn membuh. I wuz too lill."

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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WHITE BLUFF

757 824 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh [784] dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat [827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah [826] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon. [825]

"Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root 754 man An one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. 759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 they give the audience an opportunity to become an active participant
533 in the telling event. Some Sea Island informants who knew many kinds
538 of tales often included songs and thus encouraged the audience to participate in singing the chorus. Many of those who did not know the words to the chorus participated by clapping their hands, patting their feet, or humming along with those who were singing. The Sea Island tales with songs were far more exciting in eliciting a wide response from the audience than those without songs.

159 Though Miss Deeley is most noted for telling tales of bizarre hap-
538 penings and supernatural events, I found that the children who were left in her care seemed to remember the words and melodies to the songs in the tales much better than they remembered the unusual events (see "The Three Pear[s]"). This woman's vast repertoire of tales, like her knowledge about various medicinal cures, is perhaps a result of her having given birth to thirteen children, twelve of whom are living. She told me that telling them stories helped keep them occupied and out of trouble. In addition, some of the older children used the same tales and techniques to keep the younger ones amused. Now that most of her own children are grown, she continues the storytelling tradition with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren left in her care. Further-
159 more, while she does indeed believe in modern medicine, she says she finds that most of the ailments that she and her family have suffered
• 791 could be cured or helped by various roots that she found on the islands. The most popular of these is the bloodroot, which when boiled makes a reddish tea and is exceptionally good for high blood pressure. The snakeroot, which must be boiled and permitted to stand or age with good whiskey, is very useful for increasing the appetite and eliminating constipation.

159 Though Miss Deeley would not consent to being recorded, she was patient enough to permit me to take down one story ("The Three
126 Pear[s]") verbatim. This tale represents her language well.
538

*Mr. Jonas Mickell* became a close friend over a period of years,
159 and I am indebted much to him and his wife for the time and effort they took to help contribute to this and other studies. Mr. Mickell is a well-respected man in his community. He traveled much around the islands by boat in his day and thus always had stories to tell of his adventures. He is sixty or more years old and says that he was somewhat "sporty" with the ladies before he was married, some forty years ago, to his

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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159 whether held at Mr. Ted's store or in the clearing under the big Angel
538 Oak tree behind her trailer. As noted before, Miss Myma always told the first tale at a preplanned storytelling, as a way of sanctioning the event. Really not much of a storyteller, she was more relaxed when a group of her "nipping" friends decided to tell "lies" at her house than at gatherings at Mr. Ted's store. The huge Angel Oak, with its ghostly hanging moss, shaded the ground so grass would not grow around it and thus helped to provide a clean, insect-free surface on which to
159 relax. It also served as an anchor for Miss Myma's many respectable
538 and some not-so-respectable friends, a place to sit, smoke, take little nips, and catch the breeze throughout the day. By late afternoon, when
517 her respectable friends had long since gone to return to jobs, see about the children, or attend to chores, her not-so-respectable friends, not having to be responsible to anyone or anything, would settle in and
159 ready themselves to tell lies throughout the night. Miss Myma's sleeping times remain a source of fascination for me. I could never understand how she managed to get up so early and go to bed so late. But then, many of the islanders are night people, roaming the highways, dancing, listening to music, and visiting friends in the dark. There were, however, occasions when Miss Myma actually got up and went to bed, leaving her friends still nipping under the oak.

159 In the winter of 1976 Miss Myma finally agreed to come to Michi-
123 gan to visit me. She would not consent to fly; she would come only if I sent her a Greyhound bus ticket. I sent her the ticket and was delighted that she actually did come, and even more delighted that she would stay for three weeks. It was horribly cold in Michigan that year; Miss Myma did not care to go outside, and cared even less for the nine-degree-below-zero temperature and the mounds of snow. She preferred the warmth and comfort of sitting by the fireplace in our den, smoking her pipe. I was glad that we had a fireplace, and especially happy when
[538 she looked into the fire and began to reminisce and tell my two young children tales of Ber Rabbit. She gave them an oral tradition of tales in those three weeks that could not be matched with a lifetime of written
159 literature. They were utterly fascinated by her. She knew my three-
123 year-old daughter well not only because I had taken her with me to visit the Sea Islands but because on one of those occasions my daughter, who is asthmatic, had a severe attack around three in the morning. I
• 757 had used all of her medicine, and there are no drugstores on Wadmalaw Island. Miss Myma observed her labored breathing for a while, and

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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chastised me for not keeping an extra bottle of her medicine with me. Then she got up calmly, took her kerosene lamp, went out in the field behind her house, dug up some kind of root, brought it back, washed it, and boiled it. When the tea from the root had cooled, she took my wheezing daughter into her lap and coaxed her into drinking a cup of the reddish liquid. Twenty minutes later my daughter lay asleep and breathing peacefully on her lap.

In the fall of 1982 Miss Myma's trailer caught fire from her kerosene lamp and burned. Fortunately, she was not injured in the fire. She went to live with a relative whom she had raised as her daughter and who lived only a few doors away. Miss Myma is well into her eighties now. Her daughter told me that her mind wanders from time to time and that she has a tendency to wander off physically from home. In fact, she strayed down to the creek and was lost overnight at one point. A rescue squad was called in, but she was not found until the next morning when a helicopter pilot spotted her sitting out in the open field just beyond the creek banks. She was alert and did not suffer as much as a cold from the dampness and exposure. When I saw her most recently in the spring of 1985, she was sitting under the Angel Oak, a little nip in one hand to warm her blood, a crabbing stick in the other. She was smiling faintly and waving goodbye to me as I headed down the lane. She looked as if she were waiting for just the right moment to slip off down to the creek and nab a crab or catch a mullet "for sho."

*Ida Mae* is different from most of the women on the Sea Islands, very different. After having five children out of wedlock, and becoming a grandmother four times over by the time she was thirty-nine, she told me she had given up trying to be respectable in that community.

Ida Mae was an attractive woman when I met her in 1973. She had nut brown skin and flashing white teeth accented by a gold tooth that glistened in the sun when she laughed. She had the kind of face that was designed for the close-cut, boyish afro that she kept edged to perfection. Her light hazel eyes—"devil eyes," the islanders called them—were offset by her rich, dark color and gave the appearance of jumping out at you. She liked her eyes and said they were one of the reasons that she had had the gold tooth put in. In fact, when she first got it, she said, she used to practice smiling and turning her head just so the light would touch on her eyes, her tooth, and the large fourteen-karat gold hoop earrings that one of her men friends had given her. She

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [789] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 789 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious 759 or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island [538] folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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115 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be
•159 dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures; for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return
[182] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious
538 oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sundays as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of
761 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159
●757 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine—herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsey weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

159
752 If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour some water in the basin—put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dangerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on. (237) Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you burn them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that—draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

159
757 You hear about some little thing run back in its hole—fiddler crab? We use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something else—I can't 'call the name—and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.
825

All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People
757 couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [757] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 793 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] [794] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

758 islands. In the absence of medical people, the islanders
758 have historically maintained and relied on home remedies.
[757] Because home remedies were the only form of medicine avail-
757 able these practices have continued, particularly among the
elder population who have been more deeply rooted in its
use.

To the outsider these practices and medical beliefs
may seem absurd. The practices however have gained the at-
tention of trained medical persons who are on the island
cataloging these remedies.

759 At the extreme or the most proficient practioners of
the home remedy art are called "Hand Workers." Perhaps the
most widely known practitioner of this art was the late
Dr. Buzzard of Beaufort County, South Carolina. People
from all over the nation come to the islands in search of
the Hand practitioners. They come for potions, cures,
advice and to have old hands renewed.

A Christian people, these practitioners in no way up-
hold the sterotypical images commonly portrayed in the
literature. These practitioners generally attribute their
skills as holy gifts which through dedicated practice and
study, their art has been refined to meet the needs of their
patients.

[153] Mentally these practitioners have stored extensive
[757] files of illness-cure remedies. These mental files are

759 usually a work accomplished over a seventy-year span.
[53 Discarding dsyfunctional potions and retaining those which
•757 work, these practitioners claim their greatest skill is
that of memory. An oral people, who rely heavily on the
remembered word, practitioners claim that they are simply
extraordinarily adept in this process. This ability en-
ables them to recall those remedies which were of proven
effectiveness in similar cases.

757 It is difficult to accurately gage how effective this
practice has been. Nevertheless one measure comes through
examining the health habits of islanders. First the is-
[759] lander would try the family remedy for an illness, if this
does not work medical doctors are consulted, if the illness
[178] persists then the hands practitioners are sought. The
continued existence of these practices on the islands
suggests that these latter practices are effective.

759 Hand Practitioners - What They Can Do

Practitioners are regarded as having the ability to
perform effectively in the following areas:

1. Heal the physically sick.
2. Bring and change the luck element.
3. Change the habits or doings of wayward people.
4. Unite man and woman in pleasant relationships.
5. Protect the body from harm.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825 needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826 woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827 other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777 less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
764 be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
789 over the coffin from one person to another in order to prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
774 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171 on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was [301] snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, [151] which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[27] When he laughed be bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he 115 had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, be- 754 tween chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a [759] root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, • [758] added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh [759] right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we
[283] make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh
825 hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up; yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

754 "But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Johns Island

179 counter those of outside interests. The County
177 Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
• 158 well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
(743) part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
(423) Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern
(583) on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
(P. XiV-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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142
291
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302
416

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## THAT IS GREAT PROGRESS

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758
362
734

When I walk on Johns Island and I stand in the yard and look at the nursing home, look at the lab, look at the clinic, and look across the street at the housing project, I feel like that is great progress. I'm sure that the low cost housing project added ten to twenty years to the life span of a lot of those people who live there because of the living conditions they had prior to that. They feel comfortable, they feel more secure, and they feel good about themselves. And then if anyone gets sick or doesn't feel well, all they have to do is walk across the street to the clinic. And that is great progress.

There's a fight right now to keep it going, because of political reasons, but it's still great progress. That was one of the things my father spoke about—the health care on these islands. I wish he were here to see it.*

*Mrs. Grimball is the daughter of Esau Jenkins.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

758 Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care
743 Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to
177 go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly
[141] by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open and close.

758 My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in
185 1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and saw the intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I know I said to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island twenty." Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charles-
74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
628 people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands.
185 Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant work-
74 ers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Wash-
177 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE SEA ISLAND HEALTH CARE CORPORATION WAS A POWER BASE

178 I think the housing, the health care facility, you have to look at it as an
185 elevation, an improvement. We had the foresight with the health center to
74 add the nursing home and the home for the elderly, so even when they took
our health center grant away from us, we owned the building and we owned
[734] the property. The health center is now being run by the City of Charleston.
[737] The taking over was really a political party fight. In 1980 the Republican party
needed to be able to say that they got something going on in the community,
[665] so what they did, they found problems with a lot of stuff that was already
there—got rid of the Board, got a new Board, and allowed it to function.

185 Anytime you're talking about being able to control something, anytime
741 you're talking about power, then you're talking about something real that was
done. The Sea Island Health Care Corporation was a power base that we put
together that exists. It really exists today. We've got forty acres of very choice
land. The city now wants twelve acres of it. That's the kind of thing where
Esau and others were thinking ahead and did things in advance, and we
planned that one way ahead of everybody. And it's there. We've got control of
[737] the nursing home and the housing.
[362]

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THERE'S A LOT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY

Our goal for the Comprehensive Health Center was that it would serve everybody on the islands and would be totally independent. The first director, Jim Martin, was a real strategist. He and I used to spend hours dreaming and scheming about what could be, how you could work politically within the system and make things work. Jim was a past master at that.

[758] Beyond just providing health services, for awhile the Health Care Cor-
[464] poration was the biggest employer on the island. We found that when people
were working, they were healthier simply because they were making their
own living. There's a lot of relationship between health and poverty.

741 We were looking to be able to sell health care to Kiawah and to Seabrook
and to the other big interests on the island, which would have actually made
758 the health center self-sufficient. You would not have needed any governmen-
743 tal money. We were just about there when they took it away from us. We don't
have control of the daily operation of the clinic. But the people who are using
[429] it have to pay us rent. It's a good bit less service than it used to be. But it
could come back. The whole facility is there, so the possibilities are unlimited.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did. He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Committee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't daunt his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten married. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission, Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize, Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk through time. The first edition of the book introduced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the outsiders with intentions that have nothing to do with the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

795 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older tradi-
794 tional methods of helping are reenacted.

### The Young Islander and the Church

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> Gome ta ole timb religion, gome to ole timb religion, gome ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub fer ma mama, it be good enoub fer ma papa, it be good enoub fer me. It be good enoub fer me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has meaning and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in
[771] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

### SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE: A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

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759 Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

758 islands. In the absence of medical people, the islanders
759 have historically maintained and relied on home remedies.
[757] Because home remedies were the only form of medicine avail-
757 able these practices have continued, particularly among the
elder population who have been more deeply rooted in its
use.

To the outsider these practices and medical beliefs
may seem absurd. The practices however have gained the at-
tention of trained medical persons who are on the island
cataloging these remedies.

759 At the extreme or the most proficient practioners of
the home remedy art are called "Hand Workers." Perhaps the
most widely known practitioner of this art was the late
Dr. Buzzard of Beaufort County, South Carolina. People
from all over the nation come to the islands in search of
the Hand practitioners. They come for potions, cures,
advice and to have old hands renewed.

A Christian people, these practitioners in no way up-
hold the sterotypical images commonly portrayed in the
literature. These practitioners generally attribute their
skills as holy gifts which through dedicated practice and
study, their art has been refined to meet the needs of their
patients.

[153] Mentally these practitioners have stored extensive
[757] files of illness-cure remedies. These mental files are

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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tages in Scotland." In each was a chest, a table, two or three chairs, and a few shelves for crockery.[44]

Although it was customary for sea-island planters to provide their Negro quarters with floors, occasionally temporary quarters were built without floors as a means of combating some contagious disease. For instance, after the slaves on his plantation had suffered from a disastrous attack of Asiatic cholera, E. M. Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, burned the old quarters and built temporary ones without floors at a considerable distance from the former location. It was to the planter's interest to keep his "people" well and as comfortable as he deemed consistent with his plantation economy, for a slave was the most valuable piece of property he possessed. Cattle were valued at $7 a head, a yoke of oxen and wagon at $45, a mule at $100, but a prime slave might bring as high as $2,000.

### MEDICAL CARE OF THE SLAVE

Sea-island planters, aside from humanitarian reasons, carefully guarded their people's health because it was good business to do so. In the lists of rules which the planter included in his contract with his overseer, there invariably occurred specific instructions concerning the medical care which the Negroes should receive. P. C. J. Weston's instructions to his overseer on his rice plantation in South Carolina began with the statement, "The Proprietor, in the first place, wishes the Overseer most distinctly to understand that his first object is to be, under all circumstances, the care and well being of the Negroes." The instructions further read: "Strong medicines should be left to the

[44] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 249, 264.

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Doctor; and since the Proprietor never grudges a Doctor's bill, however large, he has a right to expect that the Overseer shall always send for the Doctor when a serious case occurs."[45] But the Overseer was cautioned against permitting persons to lie up when "there was nothing or little the matter with them."

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Many plantations had hospitals, or "sick houses," as the Negroes called them. The hospital on Prospect Hill plantation on Edisto Island was a brick building. Sir Charles Lyell found the hospital on Hopeton plantation in 1845 to consist of "three wards, all perfectly clean and well-ventilated." One was for men, another for women, and a third for lying-in women.[46] The hospital was in charge of the mistress of the plantation, or the overseer's wife, assisted by a Negro woman whose special task it was to look after the sick. Sir Charles observed that the Negroes refused to take medicine from any hands other than those of their master or mistress. When a Negro child was sick it was usually the mistress who sat up all night giving medicines rather than the mother. After Mrs. Trescot, of Barnwell Island, had been up all night nursing a Negro woman, she said to her English guest next morning, "When people talk of my having so many slaves, I always tell them that it is the slaves who own me. Morning, noon, and night, I'm obliged to look after them, to doctor them, and to attend them in every way."[47]

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Since the owner and his wife or his overseer attended to all the simple illnesses of his people, he sometimes attempted to school himself in medical knowledge. The

[45] *DeBow's Review*, XXI, 38; Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 116, 120.
[46] Lyell, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[47] Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 141.

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*Southern Agriculturist*, in an article on "The Plantation Doctor," issued the warning that "the planter of all others, should be acquainted with medical remedies, to cure those diseases and injuries to which his Negroes, from their occupations, are so frequently liable."[48] The planter might obtain for his own instruction in the treatment of minor diseases numerous books of "family medicine." One such book, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine*,[49] published in Charleston in 1848, lists all the diseases common to the Negro together with the treatment therefor.

Despite the planter's own ministrations, his plantation medical bill was often high. Miss Mary B. Elliott's Account Book gives the medical bill for her plantation for seven of the years between 1837 and 1849. It was lowest in 1849 at $25 and highest in 1845 at $124.94 with an average for the seven years of $68.89. E. M. Whaley's bill of 1862 for his Little Edisto Negroes whom he had moved to Georgia amounted to $329.50. The bill, which is itemized for the year, indicates that the doctor was frequently called at night to treat a sick Negro. For six days in April the doctor visited Jim every day and gave him medicine, charging $2.50 or more a visit. From November 4 to December 2 he visited Louisa's child, sometimes every day, at other times only once a week.[50] Some planters made a contract with their doctors to attend to their Negroes at a given price per head for the year. For example, a planter near Savannah paid his doctor a flat rate of $1.50 a slave, while a certain Dr. Pritchard

[48] *Southern Agriculturist*, X, 561.
[49] J. Hume Simons, *The Planter's Guide and Family Book of Medicine.*
[50] MS in Whaley Papers dated December 6, 1862.

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offered his services to another planter in that vicinity at $1.25 a head.[51] On St. Helena Island at least four of the planters were doctors.

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Negroes seem to have been especially susceptible to cholera, "peripneumonia," and dysentery, or bloody flux, as it was most commonly called. When once cholera appeared among the Negroes, it usually could not be controlled until several had died. In 1852 and again in 1854 cholera swept off many of the best slaves on Louis Manigault's plantation on Argyle Island, Georgia. After these losses, Manigault bought 771 acres of "high land" on the Georgia main which he used partly for cholera camps and for the summer residence of the Negro children.[52] In 1855 when about fifty cases of cholera appeared among James Hamilton Couper's Hopeton plantation Negroes, he wrote to his son in alarm, "The causes I cannot discover, they [the Negroes] live at various settlements, are employed in every kind of work, and have the same food."[53]

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Couper considered "peripneumonia" almost as alarming as cholera.[54] "Peripneumonia" was the ante-bellum term for pleuropneumonia, a combination of pleurisy and pneumonia. Although it did not occur in epidemics, it was nearly always fatal to the slaves. Although dysentery did not always appear among the plantation Negroes in a severe form, in 1857 Henry A. Middleton, Jr., lost forty of his people on Weehaw plantation, near Georgetown, from an epidemic of this disease.[55] After the epidemic,

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[51] Phillips, *Plantation and Frontier*, I, 166.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 143.
[53] Couper-Wylly Papers, March 9, 1855.
[54] *Ibid.*, April 13, 1857.
[55] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[56] 567 164 [758] [743]

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

> To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[56] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
•958 cautions observed in caring for the plantation children.
Planters usually insisted that the young be given special
attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
958 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[943] come there for confinement, for there they could be
better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women in-
variably preferred their own houses where they could
gossip with their friends without restraint, and they
usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to
be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
958 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.
846 Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
959 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the
plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is (124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform 754 mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many (759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the (777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as 121 his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a] You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
(789) "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
(759) Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences, stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; 22a, e, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
[352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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SPRINGFIELD

787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
[115] eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
.759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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791 went tuh uh house once. She show me a box full uh packages
• 759 an she say dat ebry one wuz a han fuh diffrunt tings.[8b-9] I reach out tuh git hole ub em, but she stop me an say ef uh touch em, dey lose all duh powuh. Clara and Doctuh Sheppard bote dead now.

789 "Ise heahd lots uh stories bout folks wut could fly. Some time back I wuz libin in Woodville wen a man come tru deah. He wuz frum Liberty County. Dis man talk lot bout duh story uh duh Africans wut could fly. He say all dis wuz true. He say he wuz takin awduhs fuh wings an dey wuz all yuh need tuh fly. A peah uh wings coss twenty-five dolluhs. Duh man take yuh measure an a five dolluh deposit an say he collec duh balance wen he delibuh duh wings. Lots uh people gib deah awduh fuh wings, cuz all deah libes dey been heahin bout folks wut could fly. Duh man jis go roun takin awduhs an collectin five dolluhs. Das duh las any ub us ebuh heah uh duh man aw duh wings."

791 Clara Smith,* a resident of this community, told us that
759 she too remembered the time when Dr. Sheppard and the woman called Clara, who it appeared was her aunt, had operated a thriving business. "I didn unduhstan much wut dey did," she said, "but dey wuz bote kep busy all uh dat time. Deah wuz alluz a long line uh folks waitin tuh see em.

"Dey say my Aunt Clara wuz bery good. She could wuk roots an gib good luck hans an tell fawchuns, and fix yuh enemies.

754 "One time a man come an git muh aunt. He say somebody cunjuh his wife.[15] She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days at a time. My aunt go tuh duh house an dig all roun. She fine a sack filled wid sulphuh, an haiah,[10] an matches, an grabeyahd dut.[9] Den she look in duh house an she fine mo sacks in duh mattress, in duh pilluh, an in duh dressuh draws. Deze cunjuh sacks wuz wut causin duh woman tuh
[789] be crazy. My aunt destroy duh sacks an gie duh woman a

* *Clara Smith, 1159 East Duffy Street.*

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## BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

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In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, c, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

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Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us that she does an active mail order business as representative of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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115 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs.
789 On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh
Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chi-
472 nese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Ed-
115 wards * who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano
• 759 tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the
[463] old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he
[757] was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly.
"I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef
[231] dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.
825

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

*759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 757 West 34th Street.*

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759 759 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a,*] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh." [22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b, 69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 928 West 51st Street.*

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# *Tatemville*

361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

• 759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[48a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody [755] done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh [789] wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[6]

115 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

(533) "'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, ceduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

(759)

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix
252 duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(759) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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115 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a
• 759 touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut
(787) a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuhchuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns
115 roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud
304 wuz a scah bout dis big." [14] She indicated the end of her forefinger.

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

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WHITE BLUFF

757 824 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin [784] cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat [827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause [826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon. [825]

"Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root 754 man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. 759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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•759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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115 Lunnon * remembered a great deal about the old customs. Seated in his front yard under the shade of a crepe myrtle tree, he and Prince Sneed were chatting. Lunnon's hair was snow white and wooly. On his left ear was a gold earring, which he claimed tended to improve his eyesight.[37] When he laughed be bent double and slapped his knees with his hands; at the same time his mouth opened wide, revealing his three remaining teeth. At first he was reluctant to admit that he had heard much about conjuring. He finally admitted, between chuckles, that he had heard about it from his mother and grandmother but vehemently denied any belief in conjure himself. He was serious, however, as he told the following story about Prince Sneed's father-in-law, who was being conjured at the time.

[30] [151] 115 754

754 "I lib in White Bluff fuh bout fifty yeahs, an I kin tell yuh many stories I heahd bout cunjuhin an root doctuhs. Somebody heahbouts put an ebil spell on Prince Sneed's fathuh-in-law, Lunnon Milton.[15] He seem tuh git wus an wus an nuttn seem tuh hep him none. Finally he sen fuh a root doctuh an he wuk obuh im but he dohn git no bettuh.[48] He call in eight ub um altuhgedduh, but dey dohn seem able tuh countuhrack dat cunjuh.[6] Duh ole man sick tuh dis day. Maybe some day he fine a root doctuh wut is powful nuff tuh hep him." [48]

[759]

115 As Uncle Lunnon finished his story, Prince Sneed,** a dark man of splendid physique despite his sixty-odd years, added, "It's lak dis. Wen Ise sick, I gonuh see a doctuh right away. Now muh faduh-in-law, he jis keep on wid dem root doctuhs, but he say he ain gittin a bit bettuh."

[758] [759]

Prince proved to be an interesting talker, much of his knowledge having been gleaned from conversations by the fireside with his grandfather. The following narrative was still fresh in his memory:

* *London Grayson, White Bluff. Deceased November, 1939.*
** *Prince Sneed, White Bluff.*

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but often the people take matters in their own hands and by
• (759) means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[583] lawg.[25b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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775 776 were informed that a variety of spirits were said to be seen on the island. These, it seemed, took different sizes and shapes and frequently appeared to the local residents.[54, 55, 59]

"Sometimes," said Celia, "doze spirits put spells on yuh, fix yuh."

754 "Spirits ain duh only ones," added Peter McQueen. "Folks kin wuk wid cunjuh too.[15] Ain dasso, Uncle Robert?"

"Dasso," Uncle Robert nodded sagely. "Muh own brud-duh wuz cunjuhed. He hab a spell put on um. He hab fits all duh time—hydrophobical fits—act lak he crazy. Nuttn we do hep im, an attuh a few yeahs he die."

754 789 "Only ting yuh kin do tuh keep frum bein cunjuhed is tuh carry a han," said Peter. "Mos folks tote a han wid um."[8, 12, a, c, d]

"Plenty folks kin fix yuh wid a han dey make deysef," said another voice.

754 "What are the charms made of?" we wanted to know.

"Haiah," "Nails,"[10] "Frum duh cloze" were the various responses and Celia enlarged on this information. "Ef yuh hab a enemy, nebuh let um git a piece uh yuh cloze. An yuh bun yuh haiah an yuh nail parins. Dey kin sho make pow-uhful han frum deze."

We inquired if many persons made a profession of this, and Peter informed us, "Sometimes dey git um frum a root doctuh."[8c, d, 48]

759 789 "Duh root doctuh kin hep yuh too," added Uncle Robert. "Dey is powful smaht. I use tuh heah tell ub a root man name Smaht McCall.[6, 48] Ef yuh git in any trouble, yuh jis go see um an he git yuh out ub it. Deah wuz a man wut got rested. He wuz plenty skeah bout wut would happen tuh um. He go see Smaht McCall an Smaht say not tuh worry cuz he would hep um. Duh day uh duh trial come an wen dey try duh case, a buzzud fly in duh cote house win-duh.[68b] He fly roun. Den he light on duh jedge desk. Well,

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759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh 'eah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call
[783] that prayuh 'the matrinal.'"

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
[533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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759 aw sizzuhs tuh cut the pain. Once wen I wuz in pain a mid-
755 wife put a peah of sizzuhs unduh muh pilluh. All of a sudden the pain stop right quick. The pain wuz cut right off." [12b]

115 Josephine Stephens,* one of the older residents of the island, lived a short distance from Liza Basden. Her house was set back several hundred yards from the highway in the midst of a large field. There was no pathway and in order to get to the house we had to cut directly through the field. As we neared the gate at the front of the house a tall gaunt woman, who we learned was Josephine's daughter, ran to meet us. It appeared that the mother had been ill for some time past and the younger woman had been caring for her.

As we talked with Josephine, the daughter stood in an adjoining room, ironing clothes. She stopped every now and then to take part in the conversation. The two women were utterly different types. Josephine, dressed becomingly in
[291] a blue and white checked gingham outfit, was the antebellum type of Negro. The daughter, tall, thin and dashing, and probably in her forties, represented a more modern era. She had on a blue checked sport shirt, a white skirt upon the surface of which was the dim outline of the trade name of a flour mill, and a pair of shiny black satin bedroom slippers. Her two front teeth were gold and shone and sparkled as she talked. Two large gold hoop earrings dangled beneath her
[301] close cropped straightened hair.

"I bin wukin ovuh at St. Simon," she explained to us. "Befo that I had a good job up Nawth. My mothuh git sick tho, an she need me tuh take keah of huh. That's why I come heah an stay. She gittin tuh be long in yeahs an caahn do so well by uhsef."

The mother did not know exactly how old she was but said she had been about fourteen at the close of the War between the States. We questioned her about her recollections of

* *Josephine Stephens, Harris Neck.*

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527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. •759 We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, 755 lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn 845 wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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115 361 829 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town. He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

[759] "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[6]

[789] Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[8, 12a, c, d]

[789] The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it [777] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body [789] cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes [825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol- [759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle 775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye 776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's 775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, 775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh 764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the 782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
• 759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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115 this country on the *Wanderer* in 1858, is a nice looking, middle-aged woman, pleasant and up to date. She told us about her father.

"I wuz bery lill wen he died—not mone bout fo yeah ole, uh spec. I do know he come frum Africa. I membuhs dat an uh membuh muh Uncle Slaughtuh wuz his brothuh an he come frum Africa, too. I nebuh heahd him talk much bout it but maybe uh wuz too lill tuh membuh."

Although she had been so young at the time of her father's death, the woman still retained a vivid picture of him and she gave us the following description:

"He wuz shawt an dahk, an heaby buil. Yuh see, he wuzn but bout sixty yeah ole wen he died. Muh mothuh wuz Charity Lewis an uh got one brothuh, Caesar Prince, but he's younguh dan me an dohn membuh nothin."

From Nora's we went to the old tabby slave house of Floyd White * who was related to her. Floyd was of middle height, black, and of a powerful build. When we were uncertain and groping as to the right questions to ask, Floyd was clear and helpful.

829 "Ise nephew tuh Charity Lewis, so Nora is muh cousin, but Ise olduhn Nora an I membuh ole Tom Floyd well. I bout fifteen wen he die. He wuz shawt an tick set. I tinks he wuz Ibo. He used tuh whoop an holluh. He'say dey do da way in Africa. He wuz doctuh too an he could cut yuh wid a knife an cop yuh. I wish he wuz yuh right now tuh cop me. I sho needs it an it make yuh feel lots bettuh.[48] I heah him talk plenty bout Africa but I caahn membuh so much ub it cuz uh wuz young boy den. He say he lib in a hut on a ribbuh an dey eat coconut an bread wut grow on a tree. Dey plant yam ebry seben yeah an dey dohn hadduh wuk it. Dey hab peanut an banana. He call it by anudduh name but I caahn membuh it. I seen plenty ub African peo-

[759]

* *Floyd White, St. Simons Island.*

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

•759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

[754]
[759]

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
771 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting
175 house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new
771 religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-building, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another
178 771 basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to another across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

795 794 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older traditional methods of helping are reenacted.

794 883 795

The Young Islander and the Church

> Gome ta ole timb religion, gome to ole timb religion, gome ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub fer ma mama, it be good enoub fer ma papa, it be good enoub fer me. It be good enoub fer me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has meaning and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in [771] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE:
A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

758 759 Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

758 islands. In the absence of medical people, the islanders
759 have historically maintained and relied on home remedies.
[757] Because home remedies were the only form of medicine avail-
757 able these practices have continued, particularly among the
elder population who have been more deeply rooted in its
use.

To the outsider these practices and medical beliefs
may seem absurd. The practices however have gained the at-
tention of trained medical persons who are on the island
cataloging these remedies.

759 At the extreme or the most proficient practioners of
the home remedy art are called "Hand Workers." Perhaps the
most widely known practitioner of this art was the late
Dr. Buzzard of Beaufort County, South Carolina. People
from all over the nation come to the islands in search of
the Hand practitioners. They come for potions, cures,
advice and to have old hands renewed.

A Christian people, these practitioners in no way up-
hold the sterotypical images commonly portrayed in the
literature. These practitioners generally attribute their
skills as holy gifts which through dedicated practice and
study, their art has been refined to meet the needs of their
patients.

Mentally these practitioners have stored extensive
[153] files of illness-cure remedies. These mental files are
[757]

759 usually a work accomplished over a seventy-year span.
53 Discarding dsyfunctional potions and retaining those which
757 work, these practitioners claim their greatest skill is that of memory. An oral people, who rely heavily on the remembered word, practitioners claim that they are simply extraordinarily adept in this process. This ability enables them to recall those remedies which were of proven effectiveness in similar cases.

757 It is difficult to accurately gage how effective this practice has been. Nevertheless one measure comes through examining the health habits of islanders. First the is-
[759] lander would try the family remedy for an illness, if this does not work medical doctors are consulted, if the illness persists then the hands practitioners are sought. The
[178] continued existence of these practices on the islands suggests that these latter practices are effective.

759 Hand Practitioners - What They Can Do

Practitioners are regarded as having the ability to perform effectively in the following areas:

1. Heal the physically sick.
2. Bring and change the luck element.
3. Change the habits or doings of wayward people.
4. Unite man and woman in pleasant relationships.
5. Protect the body from harm.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
844 land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte* women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
• 759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[59]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[60] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[61]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[59] Werhaw Plantation Book.
[60] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[61] Werhaw Plantation Book.

OLD FORT

754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well
• [761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
789 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the
[574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will
787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness
[845] of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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181 skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX,
142 X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past
165 decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people be-
178 tween twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believ-
[771] ing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

754 A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chat-
• 761 ted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em' [15]
[115] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

754 "Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den." [10]
789 She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun
[787] yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

123 At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot chil-
[262] dren, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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754 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch
789 uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he
682 was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz
[789] cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

Another resident who neglected these precautions said she
[753] became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a
[789] root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

• 761 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to
754 witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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SANDFLY

•761 754 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have
775 found no rest, but instead would have roamed the country-side.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and
789 representatives of different corporations frequently visit
[443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root, Lucky Mojo Love Drops, Black Cat Ashes,* and *Courting Powder.*[8] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [13a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[24]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke.

• [761] Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins."[43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals[44] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

[763] "Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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789 say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muhsef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

115 During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby, seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that she was too young to remember much of the old times, she gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and African customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls Murray house."

(241) (761)

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the oldest men living on the island.

361 From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of houses and sheds.

115 A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan," * he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the (761) body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their
754 belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spir-
787 its, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the [791] Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider
456 it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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115 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be
751 dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures, for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return
[782] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious
538 oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sundays as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of
761 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

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159 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the •76 battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see 123 the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women [562] do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr. [715] Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with [805] flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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CHAPTER 10

# *Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

•761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phenomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these [533] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, forebod- [157] ing, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of de- 761 moralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical 775 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation expe- [171] rience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gul- 000 lahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife beliefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000 Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761 • sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware 533 that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539] children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there [787] was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought [567] to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
533 tude toward death:
(539)

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
791 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

567 77 177

Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power; and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

761 • (797) (177) (178)

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

763

This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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763 and they sit round out-of-doors in the street, the younger ones often falling asleep on the ground, and then they 'hab fever.' "
But of course it was useless to expostulate with them; to their minds the omission of the watch would be a mark of great disrespect.[7]

[771] Like their African forebears, Gullahs believed in the presence of evil almost as much as they believed in the forces of good, and their attempts to please both God and the "powers of darkness" explain much about their customs regarding death. Even though they professed to believe that God "called" his servants to heaven, death was still looked upon as an instrument of the powers of darkness. Thus night vigils, singing, praying, and preaching around the bedside of the dying was supposed to strengthen the person as they "passed death's door." The loud shrieks as the last breath was drawn were said to be a formal announcement of the death, but also "scares off the spirits of hell who are always lurking around to get possession of another soul."[8]

•761 754 Gullahs believed that one could not always know whether demise had come through natural causes because "God called," a "good" death, or by witchcraft, considered a "bad" death. This was also true of many African peoples. Among those of the Windward Coast, death reportedly came to people because God or the ancestors wanted them or because of witchcraft. If witchcraft was suspected, a rather gruesome postmortem was performed. Among the Mende and other groups, a "probing man" would be given permission to search the deceased's abdomen for evidence of witchcraft. The spleen was removed and placed in a pot containing a solution of certain leaves and water. If the spleen sank to the bottom of the pot, the deceased was declared a witch. If the spleen floated, the deceased was free of witchcraft. Among the BaKongo, the concept of "a bad or a good death" was also important. Characteristics indicating a bad death were the sick person quarreling with those present, having severe pains, or a prolonged death agony. If a person could not speak properly when dying, or turned his or her head toward the wall, a bad death was also suspected. A bad death meant a person was "shot with nkisi-guns," and was considered a *ndoki* or witch. A good death was a calm ordeal, peaceful and easy, with the person lying on his or her back.[9]
000 763 Gullah attitudes about "good" and "bad" deaths were infused with African customs, though the death watch was viewed in a Christian context.

An individual was said to "die good," that is, of natural causes with

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no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the death-bed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende:

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches."[14]

•761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could
not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29] 789 822 (776) (342) (775)

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time. 775 761

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex, 771 776 171

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [761]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-hags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 776 825

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails [761] to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Liza* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes that most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word *swanga* as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New 252 Orleans), *benne*[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts, 171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished 114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all 192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist 171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

175 It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names 56 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was (192) the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man (824) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and (761) give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave (533) songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of (128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of (171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what •761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(787) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence old me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

• 763 825 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 775 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[56a] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[56] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain ail. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a nightmeah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick." [789]

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpin is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [59] said an-
775 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,*
787 an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
789 dat flied off tuh Africa.[59c] I blieb um bout flyin. Some
754 folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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TIN CITY

754 Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted
[115] that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[22a, *] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die."[69b]

[115] The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den
754 long come a man we call Professuh.[48] He say ef we kin git
755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[8a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin
754 go down an he all right. Deah's root nien wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

787 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit
794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh
•763 ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak
775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em
[789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

•763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people
774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long
787 ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see
[115] his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I
789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69b]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two
115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison
[301] came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;[8] his
[789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[46] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
[755] at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
[789] cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[69c]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
• [763] close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen
791 dey ain ride im.[69] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1201 Murphy Avenue.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines
782 would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
115 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the follow-
829 ing story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
• [763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious
[789] tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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GRIMBALL'S POINT

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is
[763] a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law
754 wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[43] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

115 Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

[763] "Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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.763

Muh granmudduh jis refuse tuh die fo she seen me an duh baby. She say she hab tuh see us fo she die. Ebry day she ax fuhrus. She git weakuh an weakuh but she jis wohn die. Wen duh baby wuz a few days ole, I git dress an go tuh see uh. Fus I wuz fraid tuh bring duh baby intuh duh sick ruhm fuh dey say it bad luck fuh somebody bout tuh die tuh look at a baby. Sometime duh baby die too. I tell dis tuh muh gran an she laugh at me an tell me she ain gonuh take duh baby wid uh. Den I bring duh baby in an she sing tuh uh an hole uh in uh ahms. She tell me she wuz gonuh die now an dat I wuz tuh continue uh wuk wid duh folks yuh. Right attuh dat she die."

115
(123)

For a while longer the woman chatted on in a friendly manner, discussing various incidents that had taken place in the neighborhood. In parting they presented us graciously with some fresh figs from the garden and asked us to visit them again whenever we returned to the settlement.

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 764 202 •763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
•763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
(237 skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodically to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

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•763 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the impor-
456 tance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

764 When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common [171] among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe [175] without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

764 A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in 775 rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing (178) of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same [171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

764 On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced [178] for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 28]

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5] 567 777 177

Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power; and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents. 761 (797) (177) (178)

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch": 763

This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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763 and they sit round out-of-doors in the street, the younger ones often falling asleep on the ground, and then they 'hab fever.' "
But of course it was useless to expostulate with them; to their minds the omission of the watch would be a mark of great disrespect.[7]

[771] Like their African forebears, Gullahs believed in the presence of evil almost as much as they believed in the forces of good, and their attempts to please both God and the "powers of darkness" explain much about their customs regarding death. Even though they professed to believe that God "called" his servants to heaven, death was still looked upon as an instrument of the powers of darkness. Thus night vigils, singing, praying, and preaching around the bedside of the dying was supposed to strengthen the person as they "passed death's door." The loud shrieks as the last breath was drawn were said to be a formal announcement of the death, but also "scares off the spirits of hell who are always lurking around to get possession of another soul."[8]

761 Gullahs believed that one could not always know whether demise had
764 come through natural causes because "God called," a "good" death, or by witchcraft, considered a "bad" death. This was also true of many African peoples. Among those of the Windward Coast, death reportedly came to people because God or the ancestors wanted them or because of
000 witchcraft. If witchcraft was suspected, a rather gruesome postmortem was performed. Among the Mende and other groups, a "probing man" would be given permission to search the deceased's abdomen for evidence of witchcraft. The spleen was removed and placed in a pot containing a solution of certain leaves and water. If the spleen sank to the bottom of the pot, the deceased was declared a witch. If the spleen floated, the deceased was free of witchcraft. Among the BaKongo, the concept of "a bad or a good death" was also important. Characteristics indicating a bad death were the sick person quarreling with those present, having severe pains, or a prolonged death agony. If a person could not speak properly when dying, or turned his or her head toward the wall, a bad death was also suspected. A bad death meant a person was "shot with nkisi-guns," and was considered a *nduki* or witch. A good death was a calm ordeal, peaceful and easy, with the person lying on his or her back.[9]
763 Gullah attitudes about "good" and "bad" deaths were infused with African customs, though the death watch was viewed in a Christian context.

An individual was said to "die good," that is, of natural causes with

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the deathbed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende:

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

567 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian
•763 practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were
[754] sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by
[759] his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated
567 the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her
764 funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved
> [533] slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> [789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to an-
> [775] other across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
> [533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[777] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[30] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[170] [30] *A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."*

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a conjurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

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796 787 786 an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

[171] In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently [171] came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

796 786 Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical a helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

• 763 764 171 There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "*The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings.*"

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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[23] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[23] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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## BYUM BY-E

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171

The development of the religious song of the Negro under the influence of the white man's instruction is interestingly shown in this song. A better example could not be found.[54] Nancy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, learned it from her grandmother who, Nancy tells me, "came from Africa and was old in 1862."

It speaks well for Nancy's intelligence that she sings the song as it was taught her, softening certain syllables—just as "Shisha Ma-ley" did—without attempting to correct the English.

(763)

The song appears to have originated at the death-bed of "Shisha Shalun," who sang the first melodious verse with calm resignation:

(539)

Fa-le-well Shisha Maley
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
Fa-le-well en lay-vun
An shollen gane en mone
Shisha har lepentin shu beleven
Heaven gates are oven
I love Shisha Maley yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum
I love my shisha yes Ah do
Ah anjum biddum ena cum.
(Repeat, substituting Shalun for Maley)

[54] The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

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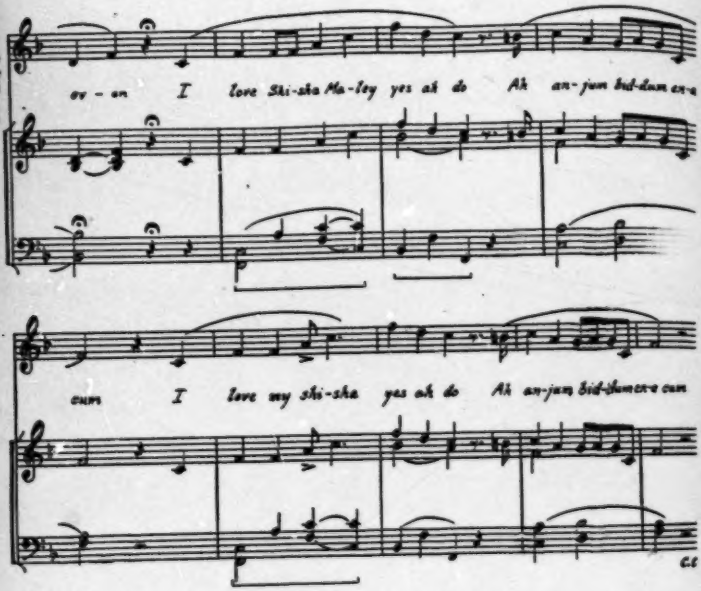


[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[88] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'! Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

[88] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

[p. 52]

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"SETTIN'-UP"

764 [078] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [264] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

•763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[171] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

787 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[16] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 [764] Susyanna (Illustration 29) A learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[16] *As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King,"* p. 183.

A, [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

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## RIDE ON CONQUERING KING

53 As mentioned elsewhere, this is a good example of the question-and-answer
763 type of song and was used at a "settin'-up" in accordance with the custom of send-
787 ing messages by the dying to relations and friends in the other world.[18]
715
53

If you see my mother
Oh yes.
Won't you tell her for me
Oh yes.
I'm a ridin' my horse in the battle-field
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

Chorus: Ride on King
Ride on King
Ride on Conquering King
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

[18] All of them are named in leagthening the song.

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XII. Wooden grave markers at Sunbury

[following p. xxxii-L]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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759 757 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a] * "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b, 69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman * informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

•764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 928 West 51st Street.*

BROWNVILLE

•764 duh spirit an keep it frum followin yuh back tuh duh
775 house. I knowd a uhmun at Burroughs wut use tuh carry food tuh uh daughtuh grabe ebry day.[58] She would take a basket uh cooked food, cake, pies, an wine. Den she would carry dishes too an set out a regluh dinnuh fuh duh daughtuh an uhsef. She say duh daughtuh's spirit meet uh deah an dey dine tuhgedduh."

(115) Another woman * told us that on holidays she carried food to her husband's grave and left it there for the spirit to come and get.[58] "I carry duh kine uh food we use tuh hab tuh eat on duh days he wuz off frum wuk," she said. "I take cooked chicken an cake an pie an cigahs—he like tuh smoke attuh eatin.[58a, b] I do dis cuz I know he will be lookin fuh me tuh bring it.

775 "Ebuh since I kin membuh I hab heahd bout spirits wanduhin roun at night,"[59] she continued. "Muh mothuh nebuh would let us go tuh bed at night widout leabin plenty uh watuh in duh pails fuh duh spirits tuh drink wile yuh sleep. Ef yuh dohn leab no watuh dey wohn leh yuh res good. I tink das wy hags ride some folks,[60] cuz dey dohn leab no
(754) watuh. I blieb witches is people dat's sole deah soul tuh duh debil. Dey hab duh powuh tuh change frum deah own shape tuh anyting dey wants tuh be,[61] so dey kin tawment udduh folks. Wen a ghos is roun I kin feel duh hot eah."

775 We found that belief in supernatural beings such as
754 witches and ghosts was widespread throughout the com-
184 munity.

"Witches is lak folks," one woman said.** "Dey done
754 sell demsefs tuh duh debil an he make em do anyting he
(115) wants tuh. Some git a grudge gense yuh an stahts tuh ride yuh.[62] No mattuh wut yuh do, dey kin git in yuh house. Sometime dey come lak a mouse, sometime a rabbit, an sometime eben a roach.[63] I membuh heahin bout a witch wut

* *Bessie Reese, 2407 Harden Street.*
** *Emma English, 623 West 36th Street.*

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[25]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us • 764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral 533 ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[24] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave (764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 59th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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775 they buried frum home. The spirit jist wanduh aroun.[1]
(764) "I have seen something I think wuz a ghost. I have no explanation of it, but I think it wuz supuhnatural. I have heard of witchcraft, cunjuh an magic. I believe some of these things happen, and the mo yuh probe intuh them the less yuh know.

789 "I have heard about a magic hoe that folks put in the gahden. They speak certain words tuh it; then the hoe goes ahead an cultivates the gahden without anyone touching it. They jist tell it tuh do the wuk and it does it."[39]

775 We questioned Collier again about his personal experiences with supernatural beings and he related the following story:
787 "Wen I wuz jist a young boy muh family use tuh live in Currytown. Me and muh brothuh use tuh go and see muh aunt who lived in Yamacraw. Tuh get frum our house tuh wheah she lived we had tuh go past a cemetery which wuz in back of the Union Station.

"One time we had been tuh see muh aunt and it got tuh be late. We stahted fuh home. It wuz beginnin of night. Muh brothuh he had rheumatism an he wuz hobblin along on a stick. We stahted along by a fence tuh get tuh West Broad Street an wen we had gone about a hundred yards we saw a lady comin tuhwards us.[59] She wuz very feah, very feah, an she wuz all dressed in black and had on a long black veil. Her dress wuz black silk and rustled as she walked.

"Muh brothuh an I, we were suhprised tuh see the lady all of a sudden, fuh we hadn't noticed her befo. She come up tuh us an she say, 'Are yuh goin roun the fence?' We tell her we wuz an she say, 'Yuh not afraid?' an we say, 'No—we not afraid.'

"The lady wanted tuh walk with us an we all staht walkin along. We had gone a short ways wen all of a sudden we look in the cemetery an we see a little white thing risin up out of the groun. It wuz kinduh hazy an shadowy an it

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [704]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
•764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[27] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
989 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
(322) attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
(286) carving and the making of farm implements [704] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
(356) an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

• 764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix
252 duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(759) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
763 die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
764 fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilún. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie* arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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115 829 duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

787 When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

845 They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem [791] tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all [777] deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

824 "But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh 777 bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step," [34a] said Susie.

•764 In this community as in many others strangers are not al-
609 lowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to
764 their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey [775] alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried." [1]

115 "I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody dem, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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674
682
[533]
[539]



- Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

[777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

764

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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674 anybody view uh face aw lay deah hans on uh[31] wuz sho a
682 pity.[36]
764 "Ebrybody wuz at duh fewnul. Come frum miles roun tuh pay deah las respecks tuh a po wife murduhed by uh huzbun on Friday duh thuteent.

"Duh body wuz brung frum duh unduhtakuh's pahluh straight tuh Sweet Fiel ub Eden Chuch at duh Pint. Chuch so crowded yuh caahn hahdly see duh coffin up in front. We sing hymns, an den wen duh singin hab die out an yuh could heah jis a lill hummin heah an deah, somebody stan up an say, 'Catherine De Lanzy wuz a sistuh ub duh Lawd.' 'She sho wuz,' somebody else say. 'She wuz a chile ub Jesus an she walk in duh way ub righteousness.'

"Dis staht off duh whole congregation an deah mustuh bin neah a hundud people git up an gib testimony bout Cather-
[152] ine's goodness. Some people cry an scream wen dey tell duh congregation wut a fine uhmun she bin.

"Den duh remains wuz took tuh duh cimiterry neah duh chuch an buried. Duh whole time we sing hymns an sway tuh duh soun uh duh music. Ebrybody tro a hanful uh dut in duh grabe an[38] wen duh grabe digguhs fix duh moun, we put some uh Catherine's tings on duh top. Deah wuz a lill flowuh vase wid duh bottom knock out, an a lamp chimney, an some puhfumery bottles, an duh pitchuh she made ice watuh in jis fo Bo-Cat tuk uh off.[47] Den duh ministuh nounce dat duh fewnul suhmon wuz tuh be preach at duh annyul memorial wen dey pray fuh ebrybody who die durin duh yeah.[42] An den das all an we wehn home."

"Why was Limerick De Lancy called Bo-Cat?" we asked.
551 "Deah ain no signifcunse tuh dat. I hab a frien dat ebrybody call Friday but[30] uh name is Lula. I hab a cousin name Augus Bond an a son name May Bud simply cuz he wuz bawn in May. One uh muh brothuhs wuz call Baby Head cuz at birth he wuz a tiny baby wid sech a great big head.

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764 "No, I dohn pay much mine tuh names," said Margaret Snead. "But I do pay tention tuh bad luck dates. Look uh po Catherine De Lanzy, depribe ub all duh propuh tings dat come fo burial, cuz it wuz a double bad luck date. Folks at duh Pint do say dat uh spirit nebuh will res in duh grabe." [36]

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## SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, e]

791 794 783 [533] Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 202 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

•764 [782] The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[87b, e] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[59b, e]

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829 Did Uncle Robert remember any particular words that the African people had used?

"Ole man Pompey he say, 'skinskon' ebrytime he git mad. Wen he wuz bery mad he alluz say dat. But nobody know wut he mean. He call a watuhmelon a 'balonga.'

"I membuh duh African mens use tuh all duh time make lill clay images. Sometime dey lak mens an sometime lak animal. Once dey make a big un. Dey put a speah in he han an walk roun im an say he wuz duh chief. But dat clay got too much ribbuh mud in um an he ain las long. Sometime dey try tuh make duh image out uh wood, but seem lak duh tool ain right, so mos times dey's ub clay." 41g. 70c.

We questioned the old man about any other recollections he might have concerning African people and he added, "Doze Africans alluz call one anudduh 'countryman.' Dey know ef dey come frum duh same tribe by duh mahk dey hab.[14] Some hab a long mahk an some hab a roun un. Udduhs weah eahring in duh eah. Some weahs it in duh lef eah an doze frum anudduh tribe weahs it in duh right eah.

829 .764 "Deah's two Africans buried on duh ilun right now. Lonnie Green an his brudduh, dey buried right neah duh Indian mouns. Jack Pinckney yuh, he bury um."

At this point Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert engaged in an animated discussion of the types of funerals which had been held in those early days.

[202] Uncle Jack said, "Wen a pusson die, we beat duh drum tuh let ebrybody know bout duh det.[26] Den dey come tuh duh wake an sit up wid duh body."

Uncle Robert added, "Wen one uh doze Africans die, it wuz bery sad. Wen a man's countryman die, he sit right wid um all night. Den in duh mawnin he go out an pray tuh duh sun. Yuh know, missus, doze Africans ain got no Christianity. Dey ain hab no regluh religion. Dey jis pray tuh duh sun an moon an sometime tuh a big stah. Attuh dey

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829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[34] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[35]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh ribbuh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Elizabeth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[30]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 322 764 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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SUNBURY

115 Sunbury Baptist Church, a white frame building set back
322 from the highway against a background of verdant spread-
764 ing trees. The Bowen family burial ground was to the right of the church and here we discovered that Siras' skill in wood carving was manifested in many unusual markers.

764 These were wooden images (Plate XII)[A] set on graves
322 that were close together. One resembled a large bird; an-
532 other represented a snake writhing upon a stand; and the third was the figure of a man, round and pole-like of body, with a head that resembled a ball and rudely sculptured features.[41e] Another Bowen marker was of clay painted yellow; in its surface was roughly cut the outline of an open hand with a small mirror glittering in the palm.

764 Most of the graves were decorated with possessions of the departed persons.[47] There were many glasses, bottles, and vases, most of which had been turned a shimmering purple from long exposure to the sun. For a time we wandered through the little cemetery, reading the inscriptions on the various tombstones.

115 The same day we visited another cabin on the dirt road
(342) leading back from Sunbury Bluff. We had already driven past the little two-room shack, painted green, its dark roof patched in many places, when our attention was attracted by a stout, middle-aged woman who was sitting on the porch idly playing with a long, dangerous looking knife. At once we reversed the gears and rolled backward to a stop. Near the woman was seated the husky figure of a young girl. She
(291) wore but one garment, a faded green dress which hung raggedly to about the knee. Beneath the skirt were large muscular legs that were twisted about the rungs of the chair. Long, staring yellow eyes looked out at us with disturbing,
(302) unblinking fixity. The girl's hair stood out stiffly in a number of tight little braids. She was slowly, laboriously stringing weights on a fish net.

The older woman spoke at first in a grudging, reserved



A. [See Categories 322 & 764, plate following p. xxxii-L--Analyst]

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115 manner. The girl continued her work on the fish net, occasionally glancing at us with that impenetrable expression.

[123] After much persuasion we gained the older woman's confidence and she spoke to us freely. She, too, attended the baptisms held by members of the two churches and also remembered various "settin-ups" she had gone to. She told 115 us that food was usually prepared for the watchers.

•764 "Bread an coffee," she said, "das wut dey gie yuh at a settin-up."

262 "We thought they ate chicken," we remarked.

272 "No, dey dohn hab no chicken. Jis bread an coffee."

262 The subject of food led us to inquire if she knew of any persons who refused to eat certain things.

"Muh huzbun wohn nebuh eat chicken. Ain nebuh eat it sence he wuz bawn, an needuh his mudduh befo him."[65]

"Why is that? Doesn't he like it?"

"Ain no mine wedduh he lak it aw ain lak it. He jis wohn eat it. Lots uh folks say deah's some food wut dey dohn eat. I nebuh eat rabbit. An none uh muh folks wouldn eat it needuh. Dey say it wuz no good tuh eat."

535 The conversation drifted on until the talk of food brought to the woman's mind gala occasions at which she had feasted and danced in her youth.

[533] "We use tuh dance all duh time tuh duh drums," she said. "We would dance roun an roun in a succle an clap our hans an sing. Dey would hab duh dances obuh on St. Catherine Ilun."

"How would you know when they were going to hold a dance?"

[202] "Dey beat duh drums on St. Catherine.[66] Den dey heah it at Harris Neck an folks deah tell all ub us yuh bout duh dance. We all go obuh tuh St. Catherine in a boat an dance an dance till mos daylight."

754 When the talk finally turned to roots and other potent

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[23] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[24] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
•764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[27b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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HARRIS NECK

789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
• 764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
[533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
•764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [13a]

829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[34]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke. [761] Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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•764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances
[535] call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping
[533] her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

[772] Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[789] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [46] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
•764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[13a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [35]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [36]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old
796 people informed us that they are still held in the section. Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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POSSUM POINT

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

[533] [202]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[54, 58]

[782] [795]

"In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

533 534 202

"I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

534

Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an say dey want tuh be save.

795 [792] [783]

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candidates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

795 796 [782] [783]

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
•764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35c] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[58] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[42]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We

764 * *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1958.*

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533 534 764 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh way." [24]

534 We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of drums.

[237] "We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

567 829 We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that were real Africans.

"Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yun heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 829 789 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduhstan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue, he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237] skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
783

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## SAPELO ISLAND

361 Small Negro settlements are scattered at the north end of
491 Sapelo and are reached by winding roads that cut through the tropical woodlands and brush. The Negroes are de-
461 scendants of the slaves of the plantation era. Many lead an easy, carefree life which consists chiefly of fishing, crabbing, and cultivating a small patch of garden, while others engage in regular employment at the sawmill or in the company offices.

178 Living an isolated island existence, these Negroes have preserved many customs and beliefs of their ancestors, as well as the dialect of the older coastal Negro. An old oxcart
[493] (Plate XVI)[A] jogging along a tree shaded road is a familar
[412] sight, and under the guidance of a Negro boy named Julius we discovered instances of crude wooden implements in com-
[124] mon usage. The many Negroes interviewed gave a graphic picture of survival elements that have persisted since the days when slave ships brought their ancestors to the new country.

115 One of the oldest inhabititants is Katie Brown (Plate XV),*[B] whose grandmother, Margaret, was a daughter of Belali Mohomet, the Mohammedan slave driver of Thomas Spalding. Katie, sunning herself on the back steps of her small house, was disposed to be gracious to us. Shaking her
[123] head at the size of the shoes brought to her as an incentive to conversation, she relented at the sight of some pipe tobacco and began to talk:

533 "I dunno bout drums at chuches. Use tuh hab um long
534 time ago, but not now on duh ilun,—leas I ain heah um. Hahves time wuz time fuh drums. Den dey hab big times.[38]
527 Wen hahves in, dey hab big gadderin. Dey beat drum, rattle dry goad wid seed in um, an beat big flat tin plates.[23, 25] Dey shout an moob roun in succle an look lak mahch goin tuh heabm. Hahves festival, dey call it."

•764 In response to our query about "set-ups" Katie replied,

* *Katie Brown, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 493, plate following p. xxxii-U--Analyst]
B, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii-Q and R--Analyst]

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•764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

[775] 764 782

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

776 787

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
•764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody."[53] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut[54]
[775] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let
775 yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[55] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[56, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange
252 cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-
• 764 ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a
775 wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way.
789 She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd."[55]
231 Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b, c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 567 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 782 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 313 782 715 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us, "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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821 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to
796 the sun.

764 Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day
[825] customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[36]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

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000 grape arbor and spreading live oaks. On the side road stood
137 three stately pine trees from which hung silvery festoons of
115 Spanish moss. Catherine was black, small, and lively at sixty-nine.

"Ise bawn in Meridian," she said, "but Ise lib mos muh life heah. Muh people belong tuh duh Atwoods uh Darien an tings heah on duh ilun is pretty much duh way dey wuz deah.
178 Some tings is changed wut hadduh change, lak wen we hab a fewnul duh unduhtakuh come an git duh body an dey dohn
•764 lak yuh tuh hab no settin-up. In duh ole days we would sing an make prayuh all night an dey would come an measure duh body wid a string tuh make duh coffin tuh bury em in. Dey use tuh alluz sen yuh home tuh bury[1] ef dey could git duh
[609] money but dey ain eben alluz do dat no mo. Dey nebuh use tuh bury no strainjuhs in duh buryin[3] groun but heah dat ain kep strick needuh."

527 We asked about the dances and festivals of her youth.

"We use tuh hab big times duh fus hahves,[33] an duh fus ting wut growed we take tuh duh chuch so as ebrybody could hab a piece ub it. We pray obuh it an shout. Wen we hab
[535] a dance, we use tuh shout in a ring. We ain hab wut yuh call a propuh dance tuhday.

535 "One uh duh dances wuz call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] It's a long time sence we done it, but I still membuh it. We ain hab much music in doze days but dey use a drum tuh call duh people tuhgedduh wen dey gonuh hab games aw meetin.[26] It sho bin a long time sence I tought bout dem days."

115 Catherine told us that Ryna Johnson, who lived about a mile down the Harrington Road, was one of the oldest people on the island. Leaving the main highway, we followed the
491 narrow, less traversed side road. It was a heavily wooded
137 section. We viewed the massive-trunked hoary oak trees through a misty curtain of hanging moss. The fences along the road were covered with honeysuckle and wild grape. Shortly before we arrived at our destination, the road divided

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the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib until he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man, slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[65b, 69c] He

*A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

"Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
567 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a
782 great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
764 tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain
(845) nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em. Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time
775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then
764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54] —that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa they have night fewnuls."

115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grandmother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so much I caahn remembuh all them things."

829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they
567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr. Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin about two hundud yahds out in the rivuh off Cumberland tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [79] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [15]

115 A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

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763 456 them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the importance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

764 [171] [175] When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

764 175 [178] A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same [171] practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

764 On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced [178] for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 28]

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[M8] The Sea Islanders have traditionally buried their dead in densely wooded areas. These areas are considered sacred and are thought to harbor the spirits of the deceased.

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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chatting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr. Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

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Placing a clock on the grave of the deceased to depict the hour of death is still a strong tradition.

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It is a common African practice to give people names that represent personal characteristics. It is not unusual for a Sea Islander to be named for the day of the week or month of the year in which he was born.

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825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which [805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was [554] informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

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on the speech of the islands, but he does, without qualification, admit the African origin of the traditional burial customs (*Gullah*, p. 97).

52. Robert Hamill Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 218.

53. Emory Campbell (personal communication), Penn School Center, Frogmore, S.C.

54. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Oral Tradition of Prayer in Gullah," *Journal of Religious Thought* 39, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1982): 22.

55. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941).

56. Jennett Robinson Murphy, *Southern Thought for Northern Thinkers* (New York, 1904), p. 23, quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 144.

## Chapter 2

1. See Joel Chandler Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus: Myths and Legends of the Old Plantation* (New York, 1883); Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast Told in the Vernacular* (Boston, Mass., 1888; reprint, Columbia, S.C.: State Co. 1925); Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folklore Society, 1923); and Ambrose Gonzales, *With Aesop along the Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1924).

2. See Charles Joyner, "Slave Folklife on the Waccamaw Neck" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977); or Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 172–195, especially pp. 190–91.

538 3. The *he* is for convenience; Sea Island storytellers can be women but are more usually men (see the next section of this chapter).

113 4. Lee Haring, "A Characteristic African Folktale Pattern," and Phillip Noss, "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," both in *African Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); and Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Audience in Gullah and Igbo: A Comparison of Oral Traditions," *College Language Association Journal* 27, no. 2 (December 1983): 197–209.

5. DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis," p. 369.

6. Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), pp. 43–44.

7. Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 80–81.

8. Alfred Hayes, "Paralinguistics and Kinesics: Pedagogical Perspectives," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed. Thomas Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and Mary C. Bateson (London: Mouton Publishers, 1964), pp. 158–59.

9. Richard Dorson, *Negro Tales from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and Calvin, Michigan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 52.

000 10. "Description in Gbaya Literary Art," p. 74.

11. Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, p. 68.

12. Interview courtesy of WHMM TV and South Carolina ETV, from the documentary film *When Roots Die*, 1985.

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by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual:

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> On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[46]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a

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175 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poi-
•764 gnant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas
533 Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volun-
teers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

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I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many
771 accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubt-
797 edly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so
567 little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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*Gullah decorated grave. (The Library, University of Oregon.)*

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and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated the young woman. But Mary ~~died, and,~~ according to the author, her funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to another across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches."[14]

761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

•764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could
not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead:

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> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18]

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Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related:

764 173 (171)

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

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774 spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence,
775 Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de
(782) speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects
(764) that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

775 Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these
775 "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles
764 on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following
782 explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to make him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

764 Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings
191 left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little water was placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, wash your hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate the remainder of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that the family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

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Similarity of beliefs and motives regarding grave adornment is best illustrated by the types of articles found on graves in the Sea Islands. Such objects as partially filled medicine bottles, mirrors, broken pitchers, saucers and cups, mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, vaseline, cold cream, tobacco, and black pepper were placed on graves. Seashells were also commonly placed on graves. Other personal items included shaving brushes, toothbrushes, mirrors, combs, and belt buckles. In addition, twelve Gullah ministers reported to Samuel Lawton that other articles of food such as grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, bread, and cake were often placed on graves and soon eaten by animals and birds. Further efforts to satisfy the spirits of the dead consisted of pouring water on the grave during a drought. This custom could have been for the purpose of quenching the thirst of the spirit so that the dead would not disturb the living by seeking water.[23]

764 (782) (775)

Gullah decoration of graves indicates a firm belief in the return of ancestors from the world of the dead. Offerings on graves were statements of homage and in these graveyards, one finds the strongest expressions of African-inspired memories. Many objects are associated with or used to hold water. In BaKongo religion, deceased ancestors became white creatures called *bakulu*. They lived in the village of the dead, referred to as the land of all things white. This village was located under river beds and lakes. *Bakulu's* white spiritual transparency allowed them to return to the world of the living undetected. Sea shells, used on Gullah graves, for instance, are an important theme in BaKongo metaphysics. One BaKongo prayer which addresses the shells states, "As strong as your house, you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever." The essence of this prayer is recaptured by the late Bessie Jones of St. Simons Island, Georgia. She related:

764 782 775 (171)

> The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise.[24]

Just as sea shells and pottery express immortal existence, and the significance of a water underworld, so the glittering, iridescent mirrors and porcelain on Gullah graves reflect the light which represents the spirit. These objects, like water when struck by sunlight, are intimations of the flash of the separated spirit in symbolized flight. Mirrors, lamps, porcelain, and glass are spirit-embodying once they are placed on the graves.

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764 Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of
775 spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting
[171] bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions
171 in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Af-
823 rica, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and
easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plat-
eyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other
776 occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a
754 conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

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APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

127 128 178

## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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24. Vlach, *Afro-American Decorative Arts*, 143; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 21, 37; Thompson, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 198.

[764]

25. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 139–42, and *Four Moments of the Sun*, 183; Vlach, *Afro-American Decorative Arts*, 141. Laman writes that "the porcelain articles may comprise mugs (with holes knocked in bottom), to prevent their being stolen," *Kongo*, II: 95.

26. Vlach, *Afro-American Decorative Arts*, 147; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 215; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.).

27. See Appendix E.

28. Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, 27A, 27B WPA, SCL.

29. Ibid.

30. See Appendix E.

31. Maxim Gorky, *A Confession*, trans. William Frederick Harvey (London: Everett, 1910).

### *Epilogue*

1. Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Mentor Books, 1977) 421–22, 439–41; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 128–31; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 59–60; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.), 261.

2. Anna Carter to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 22, 1863, AMA.

3. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), Chapter 3.

### *Appendix D: The Deity*

1. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 116–26.

2. Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 157–58.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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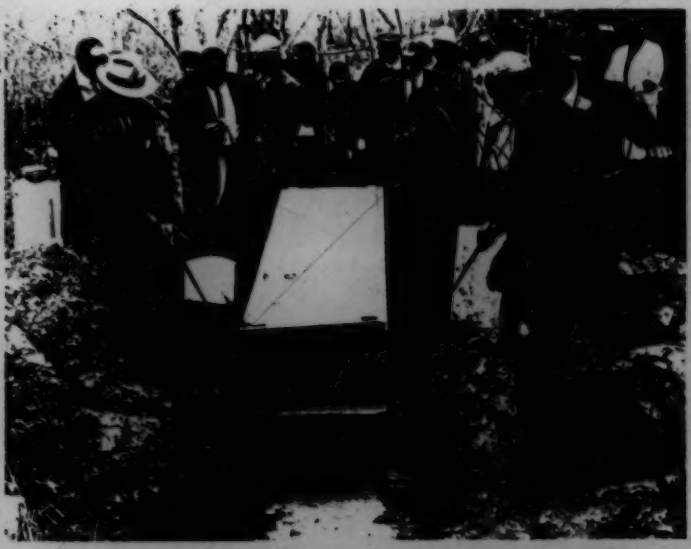

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of eldors in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(954) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
775 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
567 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master
764 as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
(771) to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

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her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Crannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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•764 [775] [776] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

[178] [775] In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

481 562 178 The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In [764] the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] *Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.*

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] *In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.*

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an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical *a* helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."

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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[25] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[25] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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MOONLIGHT—STARLIGHT

53 In *Slave Songs of the United States*, the origin of a song similar to "Moonlight—
(764) Starlight" is attributed to St. Simon's Island by Colonel Trowbridge, who is quoted as saying "that it was sung at funerals in the night time—one of the most solemn and characteristic customs of the Negroes." Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes
764 a "buryin' " that took place at the Butler Plantation in 1839:

> Yesterday evening the burial of the poor man, Shadrach, took place. I had been applied to for a sufficient quantity of cotton cloth to make a winding-sheet for him, and just as the twilight was thickening into darkness I went with Mr. —— [Pierce Butler's husband] to the cottage of one of the slaves . . . a cooper of the name of London, who was to perform the burial service. The coffin was laid on trestles in front of the cooper's cottage, and a large assemblage of the people had gathered around, many of the men carrying pine-wood torches, the fitful glare of which glanced over the strange as-
(53) sembly. . . . Presently the whole congregation uplifted their voices in a hymn, the first high wailing notes of which—sung all in unison, in the midst of these unwonted sur-
(782) roundings—sent a thrill through all my nerves. When the chant ceased cooper London began a prayer, and all the people knelt down in the sand, as I did also. . . . When the prayer was concluded we all rose, and, the coffin being taken up, proceeded to the people's burial-ground, when London read aloud portions of the funeral service from the Prayer-book. . . . The service ended with a short address from London upon the subject of Lazarus, and the confirmation which the story of his resurrection afforded our hopes. . . . When the coffin was lowered the grave was found to be partially filled with water—naturally enough, for the whole island is a mere swamp, off which the Altamaha is only
(152) kept from sweeping by the high dikes all around it. This seemed to shock and distress the people, and for the first time during the whole ceremony there were sounds of crying and exclamations of grief heard among them . . . and so we returned from one of the most striking religious ceremonies at which I ever assisted.

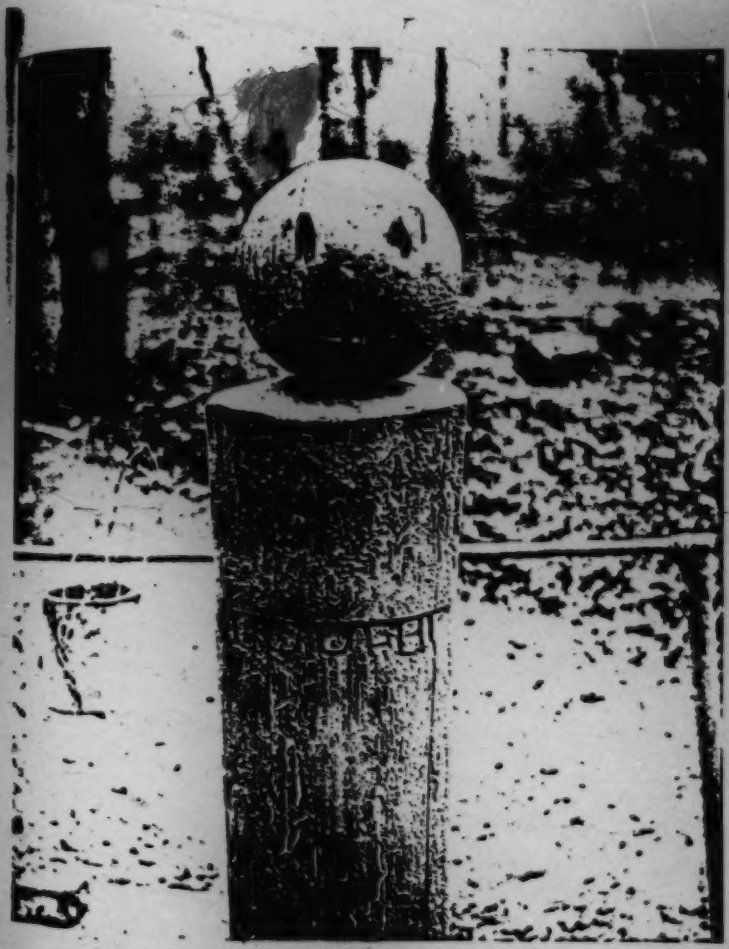
When Margaret, one of my star shouters, was buried a few years ago at Kelvin Grove, in the old slave yard on the marsh, I too was shocked to see the coffin lowered into the water, but in this instance such an occurrence was taken as a matter of course.

53 Of all the primitive songs this is the most plaintive as well as the most impressive:

Moonlight—Starlight
O-o-h [13] Moonlight
Believer what's the matter?
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)
John lay the body to the tomb
O-o-h—let me go!
John lay the body to the tomb
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)

[13] Sung with the lips closed. The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



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532

7. A Combination of African Ideas and American Burial Conventions

[Facing p. 112]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## "SETTIN'-UP"

764 [178] The custom of "settin'-up" with the dead still prevails among the Negroes, who even go so far as to ask for such a privilege on the death of a white employer to whom they are devoted. Mrs. Shadman told me that when her grandmother, Margaret Cater, died at Kelvin Grove, her family's ex-slaves came all day "to see the face." At dusk they appeared again and sat up with "Ole Miss" through the night, singing, moaning, and praying until sun-up. When Mrs. Shadman died this year, two young colored men whom she had befriended since childhood continued the custom and sat up with the body.

764 152 In some districts a "settin'-up," or "wake," as such a ceremony is now called, is more emotional than in others, and certain families are known to be extremely excitable on such occasions. A man who works for me now and then said he did not like to go to a "settin'-up" because "they holler so much." [15] A wake held at the home of the deceased is likely to be a quieter affair than one held in a church, where the mourners are apt to display a frenzy of grief. When the body is taken from the church, the "hollerin' " begins in earnest. I have always wondered if the stimulation of an audience had anything to do with the difference.

764 [272] [264] At a private "settin'-up" a big fire of logs in front of the cabin lasts through the night, and rude benches, made of boards laid on sections of a tree trunk, are placed around it. Quantities of coffee in a pot beside the fire, and a large carton of soda crackers help revive the tired mourners and keep them awake.

763 The Negroes often have a premonition of death. On St. Simon's, Deacon Henry Armstrong, who had been ailing for some months, realized his time was short, and sent for his family and friends. When they arrived he was eating his supper of fish, grits, and coffee. Later, when he stood up, moved about, and began preaching his own funeral sermon, as was sometimes done, his hearers wondered if he was "touched in the head." He called upon one deacon to sing "Old-Time Religion" and then upon another for a prayer. When a member of the group came forward to pray, Henry told him not to proceed, that he was not worthy. A "sister" came to shake his hand and say good-bye; he told her she must go to her father and mother, and beg their pardon for the wrong she had done them. She did as

[171] [15] Such behavior is in line with established African tradition. In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels it is stated that "the cry . . . is sometimes a fortnight or month after the decease. . . . They begin with crying and at night they go to singing and dancing, and so continue till they break-up."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[18] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

789 763 775

On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

763 171

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 [764]

Susyanna (Illustration 29)[A] learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[18] As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.

A, [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analys.]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



FOR I AIN' GOIN' T' DIE NO MO'

533 The rhythm and tune of this "settin'-up" song suggest an old English ballad.
•764 As can be seen, there is nothing religious about the ironic observation in the first two lines. Julia, who taught me the song, laughingly said: "It's true all right.
[574] Mighty few visit the sick, but hundreds go to the wake and the buryin'."

[539]

When I'm on my sick bed—nobody visit me
But now I'm goin' to the graveyard—everybody follow me.
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
My sister won't y'u low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—low—O-h low
Somebody goin' to low my pillow
Low—for I ain' goin' t' die no mo'.

159 Janey Jackson, (Illustration 33)A one of the most picturesque characters of
567 Brunswick, sang an additional verse of the same song. Janey was born on St. Simon's, in "Nigger House Field" at Kelvin Grove, in 1826. At the age of twelve she was sold by the Caters, with her parents,[21] two sisters and a brother, to Mr. Henry duBignon, of Jekyl Island. She told me her family came over to St. Simon's frequently to see friends and relatives, as it was only a short row at low tide before the channel was deepened. Janey described the Caters' Old Dembo, Neptun' Small, father of Clarence and Cornelia, and Adam Proctor, father of Julia and Willis. No
[533] doubt it was on St. Simon's that she learned this verse:
[539]

When I bin in de worl' bin a sin—nobody had nothin' to say
But now I come into de House of God—everybody got somethin' to say.
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day
Carry me an' bring me—in dat returnal day.

Under the influence of the duBignons, from whom she also learned to speak French, Janey became a Catholic; and when she went to live in Brunswick, she

[21] Janey's father, Jack, was an African prince, but her mother was "country born" (born in America).

A. [For Illustration 33, see Category 142, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on
[493] a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[562] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[231] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[136] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
993 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[115] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
764 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers,
171 there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncom-
764 fortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my hus-
[123] band died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Some families still cover up all mirrors and stop the clocks in the house for a time after a death. Mrs. King related that an old woman showed her some spots on a mirror, saying that the spots were eyes of spirits which came back because the mirror was not covered. The water used to bathe the dead person must be disposed of carefully, for to step over the place where it is poured will cause boils and sores on the legs.

764.
[753]

A list of all the other beliefs surviving in the Negro culture of St. Helena Island would fill a small volume. Since there is little in them which differs from Southern Negro folk beliefs in general, it is not worth while to include them here. Mrs. Parsons' work may be consulted for further St. Helena beliefs, and Puckett's *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* may be consulted for a detailed discussion of the whole field of Negro superstition.

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[171]
[114]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



the village was moved about three-fourths of a mile away to the pine woods and the houses built farther apart. 567 164

Smallpox and yellow fever also caused the planters considerable alarm, although there were more widespread efforts to prevent these infectious diseases than others to which the Negroes were subject. The state quarantine laws greatly reduced the number of cases of yellow fever and the planter's general use of vaccine lessened the epidemics of smallpox. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, Weehaw Plantation Book indicates that he regularly had the black children vaccinated. 567 164 744 751

Although sea-island planters usually considered that the winter months were the hardest for the Negroes and the summer months for the whites, the Negroes also suffered from malaria, although not to the same extent as the whites. In 1857 James Hamilton Couper wrote to his son James that the illness of another son was "induced by the same state of the atmosphere which has caused a very general malaria of typhoid fever among the Negroes." For four weeks during this attack there was an average of forty ill in the plantation hospital.[58] 567 164 (758) (743)

The death of a trusted slave often brought a deal of sorrow into the planter's family. In recounting the deaths on the plantation in a letter to his son, Couper wrote in 1857: 567 165 764

To myself personally the most painful loss has been that of poor old Sandy and his wife Joan. . . . I requested Mr. Brown to read the funeral service at his grave; and your mother, myself and the family attended. He was an honest, faithful and good man; and I part with him as with a devoted and tried friend. He was

[58] Couper-Wylly Papers, April 13, 1857.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
•964 grave.[57]

### INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.
846 Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 567 584 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Baptist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery" and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 [836] [583] Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> [587] [765] If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
>
> [586] . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 567 581 597 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted

41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## THE SICK BENEFIT, AND DEATH BENEFIT

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In the old days people couldn't afford insurance so we make up that Moving Star Society from ten cents each from Sunday School. We decided to bought a piece of ground to build that hall. And after we got 'em built we give 'em name: "Moving Star Hall." We got member from all different church. Generation after generation join and come out, join and come out. Some die and gone. The sick benefit. And death benefit. We still yet going on. By the help of the Lord we 'spect to go on 'til we are done.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## THAT SOCIETY THERE, THEY TREAT YOU ALL RIGHT

Society is better than insurance to me. That society is supposed to tend the sick and bury the dead. Everybody who in there pay dues. They write from twenty-five cents up to one dollar a month. You is a twenty-five-cent member, you get twenty-five dollars when you die; you is a fifty-cent member, you get fifty dollars; you is a seventy-five-cent member, you get seventy-five dollars; you is a dollar member, you get a hundred dollars. Just as much as you pay, that's as much you get out. If you be sick, society service two person out to sit down with you all night, every night, until you get better or worse. If you don't go and sit, you be have to pay a dollar fine. If you sick and aren't able to pay your bills, they keep it up for you, live or dead; they elect money from the table and they keep you arrear. Insurance not going to do that.

And then the insurance man going to give you your money—put it on the table. Now, how you going to bury? That money can't move to dig grave. But that society there, they treat you all right. They don't give you your money and leave you there. They give you your money and give you attention. And we got pallbearers and everything in there. We got the pallbearers to take you from the undertaker and bring you to the church; take you from the church and carry you in the graveyard. They put you down there, and we got the member to cover you up. See, that's done.

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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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## JESUS GON TUH MAKE UP MY DYIN' BED

533 •767 Although this song was orought to St. Simon's after the War Between the States, I am told by an old resident of McIntosh County that it originated in antebellum days when there were no colored undertakers, and a certain Negro was appointed on each plantation to make the dead ready for burial.

533 539

Chorus: He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well, well
He's a dyin' bed-maker
Well, well
Jesus gon tuh make up my dyin' bed.
Well, in my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's gon tuh cry
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to close my dyin' eye.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to weep
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to fol' my dyin' sheet.

(repeat chorus)

In my dyin' room Ah know
Somebody's goin' to moan
All Ah want you to do fuh me
Jus' to hear my dyin' groan.

(repeat chorus)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my hus-
[123] band died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um fuh duh feas.[35e] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[782] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit
[775] tuh hab a las good meal.[53] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sperrit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[54] Das fuh duh sperrit
[775] tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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771 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the in-
789 signia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

761 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of Afri-
177 can tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as
178 indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

•769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appe-
tites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great
754 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who prac-
774 tices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag.
[828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

• 77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have
[369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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## INTRODUCTION

121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For
(124) the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors,
754 visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform
(759) mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many
(777) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

•771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as
121 his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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# *Old Fort*

361 DUSTY, WINDY LANES BORDERED WITH ROWS OF squat wooden houses, wide paved streets lined on each side with paintless one-story frame structures, the smells of river, fishboats, fertilizer plants and escaping gases, and overshadowing all, the gigantic gas reservoirs. That is the impression given by the Negro section of the Old Fort, located in the extreme northeastern section of Savannah. Here life goes on serenely for days, months. Then suddenly, as it happened only a short time ago on a calm Sunday morning, a woman is stabbed in the back and left writhing on the pavement to die before a swiftly gathering crowd. It was whispered among the frightened spectators that the death was caused by conjure, for despite all efforts to remove the knife it remained firmly embedded in the victim's back.

682 754

363 The streets present a monotonous aspect because of the absence of grass and trees. Yet the pedestrian is frequently surprised to come upon a dead-end alley blocked by an old brick tenement house with lovely arched windows or to find gay flowers in boxes and tin cans on some of the low stoops. On several corners the houses abruptly give way to small grocery stores or beer parlors.

361

368 There are two Baptist churches and one Sanctified church in the Negro part of the Old Fort. Although the people are devout believers in all the tenets of the Christian faith, many of them, particularly the old ones, are bound by older beliefs and superstitions. There exists among them a deep-

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771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers,
754 appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowledge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter
[115] of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
[464] Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe
795 in dreams and ghosts too?"

"I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

795 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[50] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
[845] bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

•771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; 22a. c. 46 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
[352] of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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754 ride im.[55] Dis went on till he staht pinin away. He git disagreeable roun duh home an denne went away. He ain nebuh come back. I tink somebody git uh tuh fix im.[15] Dat sho convince me uh duh powuh uh cunjuh."

775 The spirits of the dead are believed to return and visit their former neighbors, sometimes as frequently as in life.[56] Their presence is not always regarded with dread but is often looked upon as a natural incident. One woman made the following statement: "I know deah's ghos, fuh I kin see um. Ef any uh muh friens die, I kin see um mos anytime. Dey peah jis as natchul as wen dey wuz libe."

• 771 178 On the fringe of the community was a small store at which we stopped for a few minutes. The proprietress, a robust, good-natured Negro woman of middle age, talked with us amiably and verified the numerous reports regarding superstitions that her neighbors had already confided in us. In parting we inquired if she thought the people's faith in the supernatural was weakening. The woman regarded us with a wide smile. Shaking her head she declared emphatically, "No, ma'am, dey sho ain losin no faith in magic an sech tings. All deah libes dey heah bout um frum duh ole folks. Seem lak tuh me dey beliebin in um mo an mo all duh time."

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# *White Bluff*

137 HUGE, MOSS-HUNG OAKS FORM A CANOPY AND CAST
491 filigreed shadows upon the White Bluff Road, which passes
directly through the quiet Negro community of White Bluff,
361 eight miles southeast of Savannah.

361 Winding roads turn from the main highway and terminate
in the various sections which form the settlement and which
491 are known as Nicholsonboro, Rose Dhu, Twin Hill, and
103 Cedar Grove. The sections east of the White Bluff Road
are on the Vernon River. It is here that many of the in-
226 habitants make their living by catching crab and fish which
they sell in the city markets. West of the highway the nar-
491 row roads lead through thickly wooded areas of great beauty.
361 Along these roads families have cleared small tracts and
built their homes, reserving garden space for flowers and
137 vegetables. In the summer wild crepe myrtle trees, with
blossoms as luscious a red as the heart of the watermelon,
342 contrast colorfully with the bright blue paint on the doors
and trimmings of some of the houses.

361 The White Bluff Road, which for two miles forms the main
street of the community, passes the houses of other residents
[491] set well back from the road. Most of them are small and
[342] unpretentious but well kept. At intervals of perhaps half
a mile are three rural grocery stores; farther along is a
[368] whitewashed church with red and blue glass windows, and at
the farthest extremity of the settlement is a similar but larger
church.

771 The inhabitants, of which there are approximately four
162

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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# *Sandfly*

SANDFLY, ABOUT NINE MILES SOUTHEAST OF SAVANnah, is a scattered Negro community spreading through the hot pine barrens to the Isle of Hope. There is nothing unusual or outstanding about the sleepy little settlement; its three hundred inhabitants appear to lead a placid, uneventful existence.

Many of the houses are situated on a side road which leads to the Isle of Hope. Modern conveniences are lacking, but the nondescript dwellings are brightened by flower gardens in the front yards, while small truck gardens occupy the space to the rear and sides. The more substantial houses of the more prosperous citizens are set deep in the wooded sections and are reached by means of narrow winding paths bordered with giant moss-hung oak trees.

Usually life in Sandfly flows along pleasantly and without serious interruption. Even in the morning men and women sit around on porches or in yards, sometimes talking, sometimes dozing in the sun. The more industrious are at work in the gardens or may be seen through doors busily occupied in washing or ironing clothes. Many of the men are employed as fishermen or day laborers, and the women who work out are generally engaged as house servants in homes at near-by Isle of Hope.

At first residents of the community were reluctant to talk about their superstitions and beliefs and their knowledge of conjure. Their customary response when first approached was a laconic, "No, ma'am, I ain got no fait in sech tings as

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
• 771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

771 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but often the people take matters in their own hands and by
(759) means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[9]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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775 787 I knowd dat live neahby. I make em all walk home wid me, but deah wuzn no signs of duh lill man.

"Attuh dat lots of folks say dey see im. Wen duh moon is noo an deah is a drizzle, he come walkin along wid his lill lamp. He take all kine uh shapes. Sometime he's a man an sometime he's a animal.[54] Dey say he's comin roun cuz deah's buried treasure neah yuh." * [61]

.771 Here in this little Negro community there seem to be few phases of life left untouched by superstitious fears. As one woman aptly expressed it—"Everything that happen is cause by cunjuh an magic. They jis dohn leave nuthin tuh Gawd." **

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the islanders. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to participate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
[173] be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[793] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
285 have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the patterns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
226 though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
[821] ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[823] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[538] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
[461] banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[867] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.

[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
[207] tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television because the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants, ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an audience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
[551] days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
[192] older generations are not being passed on to the children because the islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet •771 no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

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ture, the long march, and the Middle Passage. Later discussion on Gullah folk religion will offer interpretations of how functional and ritualistic features of Poro-Sande Societies specifically, and other initiation rites generally, may have merged with Gullah versions of Christianity. This was especially apparent in that Gullah folk religion served as a cultural and community building force and a means of instilling individual self-worth among bondspeople.

### *Religion and Order in Traditional Society*

Both Islamic and traditional African religions, similar to Christian spiritual belief, adhered to a kind of monotheism. For non-Moslem Africans the Supreme Being or Sky God had many names. Akan-Ashanti referred to God as *Onyame*. Bantu peoples called God *Nzambi*. Among the Mende God was *Ngewo* and to the Gola *Daya*. The Supreme Deity was generally considered omniscient, omnipotent, and creator of all life. God represented the highest values—kindness, justice, sincerity, and mercy. Thus in African perceptions, God was no fomenter of mischief or ill will. Unlike Jehovah, God was not to be feared, and no prayers needed to be offered. Evil came from other sources, not the Creator. Although God was not accorded worship through libation and was invisible, allegiance was rendered, and the Deity's ultimate power over humans was recognized. "Nzambi possesses us and eats us," or "he is gone, Nzambi has willed it," were central themes in some BaKongo proverbs and songs.[13]

Belief in afterlife was integral to traditional African religion. But Africans did not view the future world with fear, nor, as in Christianity, as a place of dispensations for rewards and punishments in a strict sense. In this land of the dead where life continued, there was no sickness, disease, poverty, or hunger. But underworld inhabitants retained the positions of their earthly hierarchy. Death was a journey into the spirit world, not a break with life or earthly beings. The idea of the perpetuity of life through time, space, and circumstance was common to African religious culture, and the complexity of this belief system is typified by BaKongo cosmology and concepts of the four moments of the sun. Using the sun through its course around the earth, the BaKongo pointed out the four stages which make up one's life cycle: (1) rising—meaning birth, beginning, or regrowth, (2) ascendency—meaning maturity and responsibility, (3) setting—implying death and transformation, (4) midnight,

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nance.[18] The absence of mandatory secret societies as a means of maintaining corporate linkage and community loyalty points up the significance of kinship and lineage in a monarchial system such as that practiced by peoples of the Kongo region. Clan loyalty was paramount. If *Nzambi* ruled, reproved, and in the final analysis ordered the world according to divine design, ancestors superintended, rewarded, and welcomed the dead into their subterranean village. Ritually, BaKongo spiritual behavior was concatenated to ancestor devotion, not to *Nzambi*, though the spirit world consisted of forces unleashed by *Nzambi*. Among the most powerful of these were deceased elders of the clan, called *bakulu*—white spirits who roamed the earth (in woods, streams, and villages) and resided in the subterranean "world of no evil." Vital to ancestor reverence was the belief that discarnate human spirits maintain interest in their people after passing to the unseen society where they guard traditions and activities of the living. If family herds were squandered, ancestors took note and punished. If drought threatened the family herds, old chiefs in the spirit world might take pity and send rain. The power of ancestral spirits was commonly recognized.[19]

Belief in ancestoral spirits, in life after death, and in the significance of that future life gave funeral and burial rites a central place in African existence. Sick-bed attendance and a fitting send-off were essential observations of this rite of passage. Death halted routine activities when marriage or other rites did not. Failure to properly observe the death ritual could either implicate one in that death, or bring ill will to the erring clan member. The curse of the dying was much dreaded. In the American South, as noted by Herskovits, Bastide, Thompson, and others, black cemeteries represent a special historical relic. For here one finds the clearest, strongest visible examples of memories of African-inspired customs. African reverence for departed members of the family and group remained a factor in Gullah religious life even after they accepted Christianity. Gullah regard for deceased family members could not have equalled the homage paid to these spirits by Old World or "New" Africans. Still, spirits of the dead had to be reckoned with, and slaves believed they took the form of either good or evil supernatural forces. Vengeful spirits of the dead were those wronged during their lifetime, or "on easy" spirits perhaps indicating bewitchment, or they were the ancestors of outside families or groups. Hence in keeping with

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their traditional African heritage, Gullahs employed various means of pacification of the living dead, seemingly more derived from Bantu influence.[20]

Supernatural causation of suffering, disease, accidents, death under obscure circumstances, and other misfortunes was a core of African thought. Magic and medicine were employed for protection and healing. The use of sacred medicines called *minkisi* (singl. *nkisi*) was, along with ancestor reverence, fundamental to religion among Bantu peoples who lacked a complex system of lesser deities possessed for instance by the Yoruba peoples. Although *Nzambi* allowed death to come to humankind, the Deity also armed the people with *minkisi*. Minkisi power derived from two classes of medicine. They contained "spirit-embodying" (earth from a grave site for instance) and "spirit-admonishing" objects (seeds, claws, miniature knives, stones). Hence the basis of *nkisi* life source was a "captured soul," "spirit controlled by a man," and the charm's owner directed the spirit of the object to accomplish certain things.[21]

Medicine specialists, priests, and priestesses were, like ancestors, significant spiritual intermediaries. They were the great healers, or practitioners of "white magic" often symbolized by adornment with white chalk. Medicine specialists, called *nganga* by the BaKongo, discerned the cause of illness, holocaust, or unhappiness, discovered the culprit, and prescribed treatment and a means of preventing recurrence of the calamity. Since afflictions and misfortune were the workings of "black magic," called *kindoki* in KiKongo, diviners employed miraculous as well as herbal healing elements in their profession. As combatants of evil and antisocial behavior, they interceded spiritually with the supernatural and in some societies instructed patients regarding which ancestors or minor deities to approach for defensive and preventive measures. John Mbiti, an East African theologian and scholar, has offered a general synthesis of the African specialists' practice:

> The medicine man is in effect both doctor and pastor to the sick person. His medicines are made from plants, herbs, powders, bones, seeds, roots, juices, leaves, liquids, minerals, charcoal and the like; and in dealing with a patient, he may apply massages, needles or thorns, and he may bleed the patient; he may jump over the patient, he may use incantations and ventriloquism, and he may ask the patient to perform various things like sacrificing a chick or goat, observing some taboos or avoiding certain foods and persons—all these are in addition to giving the patient physical medicines.[22]

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171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of
[954] nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in
[759] conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last
• 791 generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
175 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake
791 of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-build-
791 ing, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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ships as well. The ontological[27] category of traditional African societies, and which also formed the basis of the Gullah world view, was the fusion of spirituality with human activity and the impact of a sacred presence in all areas of life. Spirituality was a main element of culture, integrating and coordinating other aspects of communal behavior. Such a pattern, so deterministic to group attitudes in West African society, was difficult to obliterate especially among a people so completely defined out of the new social and cultural structure into which they were thrust.

West African world view was consonant with the idea that in a cohesive and integrated community each member had a place. In colonial Kongo whites tended to assume that individualism was absent from black behavior, and attributed to Africans a "Bantu mentality," completely different from "European mentality." As one author noted, this was a rationalization for despotism over Africans. Wyatt MacGaffey maintains that a "purely dogmatic" assumption of some scholars led to insistence that the individual is not differentiated from the collective or clan. One solution, writes MacGaffey, is to distinguish between "true individualism," a commendable trait among the BaKongo, and "egocentrism" which was deplorable. Additionally, MacGaffey sees a difference between progressive "civilized collectivism" and primitive forms of collectivity, the latter stagnating a society. These insights explain much about traditional African society. Certainly Africans had civil, structured communities in which individual activity was forged with collective necessity. Traditional African spiritualism was an individual as well as collective experience. It encompassed the total well-being of the community, but each person had a role in society, guided by spiritual forces. In this sense, religion for Africans and Gullahs, whether essentially traditional or Christian, was a total immersion phenomenon. The sacred was not set apart from temporal, individual, communal, material, or even political concerns, and religion assumed a meaning outside of a "holy" building, a "sacred" day of the week, or a set of dogmas and creeds to be accepted at face-value. In traditional African philosophy, spiritual elan affected one's whole system of being, embracing feelings, social interactions, values, fears, and the disposition of the community at large. John Mbiti succinctly expresses this consciousness:

> . . . in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, to do so is to be severed from his

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171 roots, his foundation, his context of security, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his existence. To be without one of these corporate elements of life is to be out of the whole picture. Therefore, to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire life of society.[28]

Viewed in this light, the power of Poro-Sande, of the ancestors, and of *minkisi* were key unifying socioreligious forces. Each was effective because of divine supernatural intervention which demanded individual and group propriety. God gave Upper Guinea peoples Poro-Sande, gave *minkisi* to the BaKongo, and transformed the ancestors into spiritual guardians. Hence God was not only a Supreme Spirit but a lawgiver as well. The supernatural existence of Poro-Sande was thus ordained and the pantheon of Poro-Sande spirits, through association with God, decreed laws, set standards, modes of behavior, worship, and customs. The "captured spirit" in each *nkisi* was incarnated power sent directly from *Nzambi* (similar perhaps to the Christian Holy Ghost). Ancestors were the emissaries of the withdrawn Supreme Deity. This idea of the remoteness of God, noted by writers and observers, is disputed by some recent African scholars. Still both sides of the debate acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Deity in African spiritual concepts, and that God had agents through which divine will was dispensed. This provided a linkage of spiritual virtue with communal responsibility. The attributes of God (discussed earlier), corresponded with characteristics of harmony and social order, the antithesis of bush living which was a wild, antisocial state of consciousness. Similarly, Gullahs who accepted Christianity associated community socialization with religious piety. The laws of God were synonomous with correct conduct toward other members of the slave quarters. In maintaining this African socioreligious connection in the American ambiance, bondspeople operated on an internal logic that excluded planters, overseers, and even white Christian ministers. There was a parallel between the structural configuration of what became Gullah folk religion and composition of social order in the quarters. Thus in Gullah antebellum communities their interpretations of spirituality played a major role in attitudes toward collective accountability.[29]

171 African codes of ethics stemmed from spiritual orientation. Moral defects were considered spiritual flaws in traditional society and a blight on one's character. Individuals were expected to be guided by ethics characteristic of God, the ultimate source of moral order. Patriarchs, diviners, ancestors, and other spirits that one met in the sacred grove

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of the spirit world were guardians of life. They were appealed to when illness, environmental disaster, or the malice of wrongdoers jeopardized the life force. Often they were placated in the interim as a precautionary measure, always with the end being the perserverance of the individual, the clan and village, and the group. The underlying and perhaps most dynamic force operative in the development of a religion among the Gullahs was rooted in these processes. In some respects, African traditional religion was complimented by certain Christian beliefs. But it was mainly a pristine element of sacred thought that remained with the slaves and accounted for the vitality of African-American culture and creation of an African-American ethos. It was a spirituality which represented a zealous affirmation and celebration of life, that did not separate sacred from secular responsibility, and that placed community above individual interests without completely sacrificing personhood. The effects of this broader guiding African influence on Gullah religion explain their striving and motivation in maintaining, within the realm of bondage, a reason for being. Spiritual causation was one of the few means available in their attempts to fulfill needs, interpret experience, and articulate the expectations of an emerging people. This, along with practical and applied examples of Christianity, formed the basis of Gullah folk religion. Yet the process of socioreligious community formation was slow, traumatic, and filled with pitfalls. In the early years there were problems of cultural alienation on both sides. Even later, whites were not generally anxious to include the masses of African-Americans into the Protestant spiritual ethos. Nor were Gullahs exactly bursting with enthusiasm for a religion whose doctrines supposedly ordained their foreign bondage. This polarization lessened, for whites realized benefits in adopting an *unequal* spiritual coexistence, and Gullahs decided the new religion could be interpreted on a number of levels.

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539]

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[65]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. In this way the Gullahs gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual:

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> On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. More than likely a

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175 764 533 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poignant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

(539)

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 •771 797 567 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubtedly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[68] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

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Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

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The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

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from Baptist and Episcopalian masters, and limited contact with black preachers.

The Methodists' systematic religious instruction provided Gullahs with the first opportunity for a uniform type of religious culture. This socio-religious nexus did not vary from plantation to plantation or from island to island. It was based on a moral philosophy, not precluding the preservation to some extent of a continued faith in the customs of African-born forebears. The emerging religious association resembled and gave expression to a world view brought from Africa, common to the Gullahs, and suited to their circumstances. More than any other features of the Christian religion, the Gullahs embraced its moral virtues—humanity, humility, fairness, a sense of the dignity of the sufferer, and belief in the merit of all people. No matter how one regards these values, they are celebrated in Christianity, and it was this spirit in Methodist teachings that the Gullahs accepted. The letter of the law, in a strict Mosaic form, and the Pauline sanction of servitude were rejected. There was little room for internalization of the dogma present in Christianity as taught by whites. That would have negated Gullahs' previous belief patterns and their hatred of bondage. Gullah folk Christianity was an ardently felt religion. It was a religion which elevated them above their masters' efforts to make them contented slaves. Far more than Methodism perhaps, Gullah folk religion was a religion of the heart. Their spirituality helped them channel what was expected to be hopelessness, helplessness, and prostration into the forging and further enrichment of a culture. Through individual stamina, collective faith, and cultural development they merged as a people. Their collective faith kept them spiritually free in spite of physical bondage. Their collective faith, together with spiritual freedom, and matched with natural gifts and talents, provided Gullahs with a will to create, the courage to persevere, and power, as a "prepolitical" people, to use religion as a progressive force and shield against white psychological and cultural domination. This collective faith allowed them to believe in themselves and in their dream of ultimate freedom.[71]

The year 1845 was momentous for the history of slave conversion in South Carolina and for the nation as a whole. At that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention were organized. Both denominations pledged to make a more zealous thrust in Christian instruction of the black population. Also, in May of that year,

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[2]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

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175 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the
•771 Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "Gen-
797 eral Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school
(533) children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:
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> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

175 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their
771 attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude to-
779 ward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood
795 the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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the evergreens, typical of Christ's life and teachings. They gave breathless attention to all this, ejaculating from time to time, "My Lord! is dat so?"
I know now they understood very little of all I said, but no speaker ever had more interested and attentive listeners. When I sat down, one of the leaders chanted rather than spoke a touching prayer, in which he styled me his "dear imperial preacher."
Then the white friends sang,—"Joy to the world, the Lord has come."
By this time the entire audience was aroused and ready to pray and sing all night. In each prayer the speaker tried to introduce, in his uncouth phraseology, some of the passages of Scripture he had heard read.[5]

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Though lacking a basic background regarding the teachings and historical importance of Christ, Gullahs strongly identified with his suffering, crucifixtion, and resurrection. This, to them, was Christianity, and since they felt their earthly lives so closely paralleled that of Jesus, becoming "Christians" was for Gullahs somewhat of an apocalyptic fulfillment. In fact, much of the essence of their understanding of Protestant religion centered around Jesus and His followers. Other writers have suggested that African-American slaves saw themselves primarily in the same light as the Children of Israel. This association certainly inspired some of the Charleston rebels in 1822, as already discussed. Also, the commander of Gullah troops, Thomas Higginson, stated that the men's memories were a "vast, bewildered chaos of Jewish history and biography," and that most great events from the past, up to "the American Revolution, they instinctively attributed to Moses." How the experience of the Jews aroused the Gullahs was witnessed by a Civil War missionary:

Last week I read to the *church full* the account of the escape of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. I was amazed at the impression it seemed to make. The remarks the old men made were graphic and eloquent. It made them recount with praise to God their escape. The little church seemed like dreamland to me almost when they got stirred to talk.[6]

Yet most Gullahs conceptualization of Christianity centered on the experiences of Jesus rather than the Jews, as is evident in their songs, prayers, and conversations. The militant nationalism so strongly associated with the Jewish struggle was a prominent ideology of Christian-oriented slaves during the Vesey Conspiracy but was not a major orientation in Gullah religion. Instead, as far as Christianity was concerned, Gullahs relied on a conviction that a moral wrong had been committed

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she
567 had the following dialogue:

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
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witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She noticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but Maurice's story was a tragic one:

> His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' rationalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ, were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival.

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative inclinations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by General David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much:

> We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

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175 brethren they must be just like birds when the gunner is about, expecting a crack
177 every minute. "Dey ain't neber know what gwine to befal dey, pore black folks
•771 must wait and hab faith, . . . Massa laff one day. Ask me if I tink Christ want black nigger in heben. One ting I sure. We'uns gwine to be where de crucify Lord am. And if dat place be Hell, He gwine make it heben for we."[9]

175 Gullah religion was not quiescent, nor an enslavement of the mind,
771 despite the "Christian" and long-suffering attitude seemingly responsible for their sensitiveness and lofty, visionary approach toward oppression. Many observers were appalled at what they interpreted as resignation among Sea Island African-Americans. Arthur Sumner wrote from St. Helena Island in 1863, "I am astonished that they should be fit to live after such generations of mere animal life. A higher race would have lost all moral sense." Even one of the Gullahs' staunchest advocates, Elizabeth Botume, believed that "the patience of the freedpeople in sickness was so general and remarkable, it seemed like apathy." If what Botume observed was only resignation, it probably was a function of Gullah affiliation with Christianity. Yet their coping capacity was also possible because of the sense of protection that spiritual association offered, with religious and community membership forging ties that strengthened the Gullahs' resolve. Thomas Wentworth Higginson was surprised to find Gullahs so little demoralized and he accurately attributed this to religion:

> I learned to think that we abolitionists had underrated the suffering produced by slavery among the negroes, but had overrated the demoralization. Or rather, we did not know how the religious temperament of the negroes had checked the demoralization. Yet . . . it must be admitted that this temperament, born of sorrow and oppression, is far more marked in the slave than in the native African.[10]

771 Higginson perceptively realized the lack of "demoralization" wrought by slavery. But the personality and "religious temperament" of Gullahs owed much to a non-Christian tradition, and was not "born of sorrow and oppression" or as foreign to the "native African" as Higginson imagined. As previously suggested, African religion and philosophy emphasized the celebration and affirmation of human life, and within this scheme, while God was the apex of the theory of being, humankind was the center, or pivotal point, of earthly existence. Gullahs were very much a part of this world view. Even though on the conscious level the pillar of their faith rested on their association with Christ, this may have primarily provided Old World ideology with an organized, plausible New

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World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12] 771

For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time, but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future. 567 771 175 (212)

The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization, there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails,"but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But 175 701 177

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Jesus make de blind see,
Jesus make de cripple walk,
Jesus make de deaf to hear.
Walk in, kind Jesus!
No man can hinder me.[18]

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When Laura Towne heard this impressive spiritual, she believed the refrain "no man can hinder me" meant that "nothing could prevent access to Jesus." Yet Charles Nordhoff, a journalist sent to Port Royal in 1863 to write about Sea Islanders, heard the song and immediately attributed it to "an aspiration for liberty."[19] Certainly there were elements of truth in both interpretations—a combination of mystical belief in the miraculous powers of the Christian God and a deep, sense of freedom—a heritage from the African past. Higginson heard Gullah soldiers sing the song and noted that they sometimes substituted "hinder me" with "hinder we." But he failed to attach any significance to this, merely stating that it was "more spicy to the ear, and more in keeping with the usual head-over-heels arrangement of their pronouns." Despite the perception and usefulness of Higginson's book, it also contains a disturbing air of condescension toward the Gullahs which was typical of some abolitionists. Although he attested to the Gullahs' daring and coolness in combat, thus affirming their equality with whites in terms of courage, he failed to credit them with having any intellectual complexity in their modes of expression. He recognized Gullah soldiers' physical strength but overlooked aspects of their character which bespoke of higher emotions, unless these could be interpreted in a strictly Christian sense. Hence Higginson viewed the Gullahs' songs as "thoroughly religious," and the attitudes contained in them as "always the same, and, as a commentary on the life of the race, . . . infinitely pathetic. Nothing but patience for this life,—nothing but triumph in the next."[20]

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Gullahs were a proud people who did not indulge in self-pity and would have resented being seen in a piteous light by their friend and supporter. Life for the Gullahs was an uphill battle but not without grace and nobility. Higginson sometimes failed to grasp this, despite his close relationship with Gullah soldiers and their families. One can imagine the thoughts of Gullah soldiers as they sang and contemplated that their treasured expectation was becoming a reality. Substitution of "we" for "me," possibly represented feelings of nationalism which had developed over a period of generations when social and cultural traditions

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We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
"Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,
. . . .
Many tousand go.[24]

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Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

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fervent zest for life. As slaves, the cornerstone of their faith rested on confidence that freedom on earth would not be denied them and their progeny. One missionary wrote of how the Gullahs expressed this: 181 771 567

> As they spoke of their trust in the Savior, his assurances, by the application of the promises to their hearts, that "a good time was coming" when their own vines and fig trees would cast their shadows around them in quietness and safety, and no more parting of families be known, our hearts dissolved in sympathy and gratitude in their behalf.[25]

Christianity can be interpreted in fatalistic terms. But to believe Gullahs totally accepted a submissive Christian posture suggests that they did not struggle against the cultural domination that masters attempted to impose through religion. To say, on the other hand, that an element of patience was not present in their form of Christianity would be a denial of historical reality. Resolution of the contradiction may come through understanding the limited role of doctrinal Christianity in Gullah life and thought, and taking a fuller cognizance of the influence of previous traditions. Practically and theologically speaking, Gullahs were not resigned to their condition, and not uncritical of religious teachings. Nor were they beguiled by insipid attempts to "make them better slaves." From their African heritage Gullahs retained optimism—a proclivity to make the best of their near-tragic situation for the sake of communal spirit and future generations. This was more meaningful than blindly striking out and committing racial suicide. The simple issue of the practicality of insurrection must also be considered. They had learned from Vesey and others, perhaps implanting the Charleston insurrection attempt in their memory. They believed armed rebellion was impossible as long as they were enslaved. Higginson stated that he often pondered over why the Gullahs' "daring and endurance" in combat had not manifested itself in armed insurrection against the slavocracy. Predictably, Higginson attributed the lack of large-scale rebellions to "the peculiar temperament of the races, in their religious faith, and in the habit of patience that centuries had fortified." But Higginson added that to have kept "the land in a perpetual flame of insurrection" would have been impossible for a number of reasons: 181 567

> The shrewder men all said substantially the same thing. What was the use of insurrection, where everything was against them? They had no knowledge, no money, no arms, no drill, no organization. . . . They had no mountain passes

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alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis. 181 567 [971]

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Litwack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?" 175 181 [346]

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CHAPTER 9

# Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

175 All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575 771 The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175 567 On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

[113] *"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.
**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

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175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands
795 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern
occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the
794 church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur
829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
> "No Chillun?"
> "I'm not married."
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
> "Oh, you'r joking."
> "Fact."
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
> "You a member sure."
> "Eh?"
> "A member, a church member."
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant
• 771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a
829 contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *bab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society. 175 794 795 [567]

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude. 175 794 795 567 [787]

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli- 175 794 779 567 797

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
796 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
567 was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[186] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

• 771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spir-
[178] itual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
533 tude toward death:
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O Massa Death,
He's a very little man,
He goes from door to door;
He kills some souls,
and he woundeth some.
Good Lord remember me;
Good Lord remember me;
Remember me as the years roll round,
Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
790 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

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Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power; and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

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When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

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This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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763 and they sit round out-of-doors in the street, the younger ones often falling asleep on the ground, and then they 'hab fever.' "
But of course it was useless to expostulate with them; to their minds the omission of the watch would be a mark of great disrespect.[7]

[771] Like their African forebears, Gullahs believed in the presence of evil almost as much as they believed in the forces of good, and their attempts to please both God and the "powers of darkness" explain much about their customs regarding death. Even though they professed to believe that God "called" his servants to heaven, death was still looked upon as an instrument of the powers of darkness. Thus night vigils, singing, praying, and preaching around the bedside of the dying was supposed to strengthen the person as they "passed death's door." The loud shrieks as the last breath was drawn were said to be a formal announcement of the death, but also "scares off the spirits of hell who are always lurking around to get possession of another soul."[8]

761 Gullahs believed that one could not always know whether demise had
754 come through natural causes because "God called," a "good" death, or by witchcraft, considered a "bad" death. This was also true of many African peoples. Among those of the Windward Coast, death reportedly came to people because God or the ancestors wanted them or because of
000 witchcraft. If witchcraft was suspected, a rather gruesome postmortem was performed. Among the Mende and other groups, a "probing man" would be given permission to search the deceased's abdomen for evidence of witchcraft. The spleen was removed and placed in a pot containing a solution of certain leaves and water. If the spleen sank to the bottom of the pot, the deceased was declared a witch. If the spleen floated, the deceased was free of witchcraft. Among the BaKongo, the concept of "a bad or a good death" was also important. Characteristics indicating a bad death were the sick person quarreling with those present, having severe pains, or a prolonged death agony. If a person could not speak properly when dying, or turned his or her head toward the wall, a bad death was also suspected. A bad death meant a person was "shot with nkisi-guns," and was considered a *ndoki* or witch. A good death was a calm ordeal, peaceful and easy, with the person lying on his or her back.[9]
763 Gullah attitudes about "good" and "bad" deaths were infused with African customs, though the death watch was viewed in a Christian context.

An individual was said to "die good," that is, of natural causes with

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the Ba-Kongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the insignia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of African tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appetites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects pertaining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire 776
roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island 754
and dey call 'e name to me.

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force 789
working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. 822
Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gul- (776)
lahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of
protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal (342)
Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gul-
lah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out
"speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded (775)
them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom 775
they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them 761
from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah 771
theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex, 776
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representing honor, constancy, harmony, and perfection, while humanity occupied the center, ever striving to be godlike through a sense of love, community, kinship, and cooperation. In addition, the good and bad of the spirit world existed in both traditions although it was far more complex for Africans than for Gullahs. These beings included superhumans, animals, and objects without biological life.[30] Gullahs applied the African ontology, adapted Christianity and bondage to it, and created a religion that employed spirituality as a means of self-preservation and as a vital component of community life. It is, then, to the Gullahs' credit that though circumstances prevented them from rising up against slavery, they did not succumb to white cultural domination. Instead, they successfully rose above many of the negative ingredients of Christianity while assimilating certain other attributes which were synthesized with African culture. In bondage, Gullahs achieved elevation on the level of personal culture and the molding of community values. The edifying qualities of Gullah religious belief must be seen as having contributed much to that achievement, just as an element of truth must be recognized in the assertion that insofar as people develop their own culture they are not slaves.[31]

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175 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads,
541 and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army).
567 All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Amer-
567 icans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element
571 in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a suc-
177 cessful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and
178 Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

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Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new religion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

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17 *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 450–52, 458; Wyatt
113 MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Kongo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 84; Laman, *Kongo* II: 130–31; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 246–47.

19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

171 20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom*
113 *in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr.
•771 from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments*
775 *of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Mortuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

171 21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Reli-*
113 *gion*, 80–84; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

[791] 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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26. Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27A, 27B, WPA, SCL; Lowrey, *Old Plantation*, 83–87; Towne Diary, 98; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folk-lore Society 1923), 211–13; E. Horace Fitchett, "Superstitions in South Carolina," *The Crisis* 43 (1936): 360–71; Henry F. Davis, "Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 245–49; Leonora Herron and Alice M. Bacon, "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," *Southern Workman* 24 (1895): 118; Louis Pendleton, "Notes on Negro Folklore and Witchcraft in the South," *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 301–17; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 216–21; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 834–36; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; Charles A. Raymond, "Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 27 (June–November, 1963): Part I, 478–80, Part II, 676, Part III, 821; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 113 567 771

27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 771 113 [171]

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592. [171]

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

### *3. Missionaries and Masters*

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The* 175 793 113

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

### *7. To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779)

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81. [795]

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 173 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. [701]

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than
178 I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant
867 peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different
869 thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn,
829 it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is
829 very different now.

(791) There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make
178 life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't
829 go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them
207 time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

178
829
571 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more
574 friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some 794 purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how 532 to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life ever- [869] lasting. So I stop and ask myself some question Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at 796 a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front 796 and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three 786 nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. [178] And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, 159 I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away 178 from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. 829 We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. 794 Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of 796 at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU CAN BE BLACK OR SCARLET

829 Now some people after slavery times think to themselves, "If I see a white and he needs help, but they didn't tell me to do it, I wouldn't do it anymore." But me, I go there and they ain't call me neither. He need help and his family need it, and that's the reason God help some people to get along so good.

I treat everybody right; my heart open for all. And that's why people treat me well for it. That's right! Sometime I pick the bean and I say, "I ought to give 'em a quart of bean." Well, when I send that bean, how they glad.

I don't care what kind of people, I going there and help 'em. I do it, sir. I got proof! You can be black or scarlet but it don't make no difference. The pure in heart shall see God. [M1]

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## NOW THE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT WHITE PEOPLE

829 When I were growing up, I must have seen one white man in my life. And I was so scared of that white man I never see his face. You might see but two white man in the whole Johns Island then. But now the island is full of white people. There so many white people it seem like there always one now. Before then you wouldn't see no white people there in six or seven months. But now, the world is nothing but white people. White people!

829 The Bible says you must love your fellow mans, 'gardless of what color you are, you must love 'em. Ain't no need for I love my color, hate you. 'Cause God don't please with it. 'Cause we all is God's children. We must love one another.

829 The church doesn't do a thing for you no more than preach a sermon. That's all the preacher do for you. But you got to live a life living right here. The way you walk and the way you talk, the way your action—there's your sermon right there. You preaching your sermon before you die.

The way you treat people, that's your heaven right there. Now if you born dumb, you just dumb. If you're a mean person all your life, you're just a mean person; people can't say good for you. If you're a good person all your life, that's all people will say is he's a good person. Got to first have heaven here before you have Heaven. If you have speck in your heart, you cannot get in God's kingdom. I never been up there yet, but I feel about it.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

[178] [186]

771 869 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong religion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 794 [796] [888]

In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

• 771 794

I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

794 533 796

It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through, when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop; and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 794 178

It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying. That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 829 [545] When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't [711] understand the strength of something like that.

468 829 533 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

527 829 199 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

796 services as depicted in the literature is still rather accurate and need not be entertained here, except to say that the general patternings of the services and demonstrations of faith via "shouting" has remained as a center of church services.

The Church Structure

794 (793) The Pastor is the head of each church. There may or may not be a pastor "in training" to assist as needed. Under the Pastor is the Elder Council of Deacons. This body is comprised of the oldest male members of the congregations. The Deacons Council, through a committee structure, runs the affairs of the church. Next in the structure are the Elder Mothers, followed by the general congregations. Aside from their committee responsibilities, the Elder Deacons take part in Sunday services. An extremely learned body, the Elders are easily as able in the scriptures as the Pastors. Their learned abilities and oratorical skills are particularly evident during Funeral services. In these services, the Deacons take turns recalling through their eyes the life of the deceased person. Their eulogies delivered by these Soul stirring orators are the highlighted feature of the rites.

791 554 The Practice of the Sea Island Religion

The islander does not simply outgrow religion. On the

•771 islands a man's worth is measured by his religious dedica-
[554] tion. This is so much the case, that the question of out-growing religion, or active versus the inactive participation of the congregation is not a legitimate concern. The practice of weekday religion is more vigorous than the Sunday demonstrations of faith.

Here on the Islands, religion penetrates every aspect of life. It is rare to encounter islanders who are not learned in the scriptures. This includes islanders who be-
771 cause of personal conflicts with the church's institution-
795 alized style, no longer attend Sunday services. The blunt of this disagreement is usually focused at the church's social inactivity; they say the church simply is not doing enough.

The Church's Doings

795 Before the coming of community action programs, helping
794 neighbors in need was the exclusive role of the church. To some extent, the church is still the most active agent in this regard. Whose analysis shows that congregation members make up the policy making bodies of all the community action programs on the island. It appears, now that these program resources are available, the church has taken a more indirect role. Rather than continuing the tradition of neighbor helping neighbor, neighbors in need are now directed to available program resources. When the need is

795 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older tradi-
794 tional methods of helping are reenacted.

794 The Young Islander and the Church
883
795

> Gome ta ole timb religion, gome to ole timb religion, gome ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub fer ma mama, it be good enoub fer ma papa, it be good enoub fer me. It be good enoub fer me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in
[771] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE:
A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

758 Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical
759 personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

771 (114) Crum[22] claimed that the Gullah people have no interest in the future. This researcher found the case to be the opposite. The Gullahs, the elders in particular, are constantly looking ahead to the day on which their life patterns will be judged fitting to "keep eternal company in the Great Kingdom." Their life paths and worldly efforts are aimed at nothing else than at the day when their deeds will be reviewed. It is with the religious context, that the discipline behaviors of the Gullah people must be understood. Malicious acts of child abuse, and the heavy handed parent are frowned upon. Discipline acts for the Gullah, are aimed primarily at keeping the child "en d steppn of d Lord," meaning that the purpose of much of the discipline behavior is to prepare the child for demands of living the religious existence. Dr. Spock's notions of child rearing have no relevance in the Gullah household. Here the teachings contained in the Bible are the guide posts the parent follows. Discipline manifested as physical punishment appear to be no more frequent than the verbal

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[22]Crum, op. cit.

771 means of socialization. The sternness of the religious
861 behaviors of the Gullah people are metered down into their
182 discipline behavior. Among these people the 99.9% effort toward adherence to religious commandments as in child rearing just is not good enough. The only acceptable effort is all the way. This often reached quest for total committment in religious activities is the basis upon which the obedience of children are judged. This must be constantly in mind when interpreting the discipline behaviors of Gullah parents.

861 Gullah parents are constant observers of the behavior
[867] of children. The boundaries around what constitutes asocial behavior are clearly understood and learned early. The child in turn knows full well what behaviors will elicit which response by the parent. In accord with the religious teachings, the parent will not hesitate to punish disobedient behavior. Punishment though is not always or most frequently manifested in its physical form, but rather the form of discipline used will depend on any number of factors in the environment. The prime determinant being the overall behavior of the child. Gullah parents emphasized to this researcher that discipline must be tendened with mercy. "Billie ya ca'n trazh dem all d timb, ya gotta scol some en beet some." They felt total reliance on physical discipline in disregard to the overall behaviors and

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect.
In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the
discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[577] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obe-
dient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated.
In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child
who has been socialized properly.

The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
861 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
177 on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in
the environment which act to make for proper rearing of
children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it
and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands
the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles
makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the
proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the
situation this way: "d paren should be shami while d roun
en de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no
choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind
ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible fer d chil, dey
must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no wuat
goina happen ta d chilln ta das. Ef d paren dan't see ta

861 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
561 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not being transferred to this generation of young islanders. In this light, the childhood histories of the elder parents was discussed. It was seen how the harsh work habits required in farming families demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the burden of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobedience than parents are today. The reason given was again differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
861 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because they spend time with their children. For the farming parents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tolerance level, and that isolated households operate in an <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
•771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
861 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
861 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This relationship was explained along two lines. The first was the status that the male child has on the islands. Here a dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



763 spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents,
764 mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a
171 [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

793 Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of
796 spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the
537 subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the
• 771 religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh
18 rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

175 When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no
567 one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves
191 of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few
175 words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves
567 and were prone to suicide,[25] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[25] *For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## DRINKIN' OF THE WINE

533 The swinging rhythm of the communion song, "Drinkin' of the Wine," made
697 it a favorite with the chain-gang for cutting weeds along the highway. The afternoon
[461] I heard it sung by convicts in front of my house, there were no chains to be seen or heard. When I asked the guard the reason, he told me they were used only to enforce camp discipline. The prisoners had been on their good behavior that week, and the chains had been left off.

697 I mentioned the incongruity of wearing stripes[30] and singing spirituals. He
NN laughed and said the prisoners got very religious while in camp. It is a fact, however, that the Negro takes his religion very seriously, and, given time for meditation—enforced though it be—quite naturally reacts in this way. Then, too, he apparently
577 has a different concept of morality from white people, and in consequence the idea
673 prevails among us that he does not put his religion into practice. But, for that
685 matter, who does? Each race seems to have its own particular blind spot, and inability to recognize the sanctity of property appears to the white man to be the hereditary weakness of the Negroes in this country, as in Africa. Before the white man meddled with their lives, it was considered legitimate business for the inhabitants of one community to steal from another. Up to the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, I am told, many a slave held the ingenious idea that property could not steal from property. It is possible that this notion, coupled with the viewpoint inherited from Africa,[31] may account for the tolerance still shown by the Negro toward the light-fingered members of the race who run afoul of the law.

000 According to a *London Morning Post* correspondent at Nairobi, capital of Kenya: "To the native mind there is nothing morally wrong in thefts of stock from other natives and from European farmers." This is possibly the reason why it is hard to get our primitive Negro to see that it is wrong to take a chicken from the roost when he is hungry, or a shirt off the clothes-line when he is half-naked. The same

[30] The "lifers" wear a plain drab suit and the lesser offenders, stripes. It should be the other way about. When convicts escape, as they often do, protective coloration gives the advantage to those who should not have it.

[31] In Astley's Collection, John Leo is quoted as saying that the Negroes on and between the
[171] Senegal and Gambia rivers lived in common. They had no property in land, but supposted themselves in equal state, upon the natural produce of the country. Seagrave also comments on the fact there is no property in ground. The king's license is obtained and the people then go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds which they burn, "and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed."

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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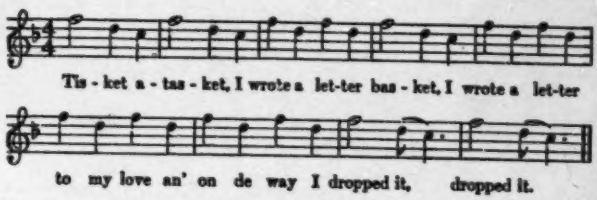
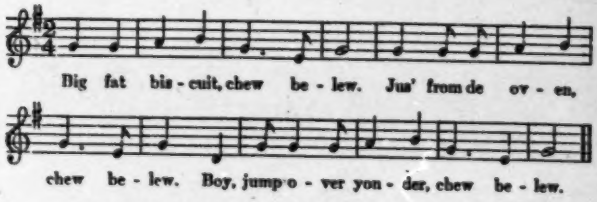
IV[29]




1. Tiskit, a-taskit, I wrote a letter basket.
   I wrote a letter to my love an' on my way I dropped it.

V[30]




1. Big, fat biscuit, chew belew.
   Jus' from de kitchen, chew belew.
   Boy, jump over yonder, chew belew.

2. Big fat biscuit, etc.
   Girl, jump over yonder, chew belew.

## FOLK BELIEFS

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171

In general it may be said that the folk beliefs of the Negroes of St. Helena Island are not different from the

[29] This is a form of drop-the-handkerchief. The players were not all sure of the words. Some said, "I wrote a little basket," others said, "I made a little basket." The latter would make better sense, but the majority sang it as given here.

[30] The player designated in the third line runs to the place indicated by the singers. Compare Parsons, p. 201.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



791 792 171 Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

533 791 [154] In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

[171] 533 789

533 534

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

TIN CITY

754 Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted
[115] that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[32a, *] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die." [69b]

[115] The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den
754 long come a man we call Professuh.[48] He say ef we kin git
755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[8a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin
754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

787 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit
• 794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat
763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak
775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em [789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long 774 ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see 787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day [115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] 789 Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come 754 tru a keyhole tuhday.[69a]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddi- 115 son,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were [301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;[8] his [789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in
[761] sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

754 Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spir-
787 its, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the
[791] Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial
456 arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

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793 537 796 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does (871) not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

[539] Heavenly Father
Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 533 Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. [793] Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought [794] to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the [786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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539 personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.
775 . . . She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. "See that person over there." Yes, yes. . . . That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge . . . that's right. Well, you see, your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

(774) For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this
(513) country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

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ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead:

764 567

> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18]

764 171

Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related:

774 775 [171]

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

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774 spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence,
775 Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de
[782] speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects
[764] that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

775 Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these
775 "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles
764 on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following
782 explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to mak him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

764 Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings
171 left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little water was placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, wash your hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate the remainder of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that the family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great
754 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who prac-
•774 tices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag.
[828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have
[369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [761]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-bags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 776 825

539 775 far as from us to the crick, and Lord you could hear the confusion as it 'carried on' in those woods. Well, these things do exist.... No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening, show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. 'See it standing right there, daddy!' But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital and I don't know what the hospital personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.... She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. 'See that person over there.' Yes.... Yes.... That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge...that's right. Well, you see (774) your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

539 774 [513] For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

538 1. *snake* [sinick] $\emptyset \rightarrow V / C __ C$
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] $r \rightarrow \emptyset / C __$
[pogam] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, [197] Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /no/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm dɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /unɔ/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U,NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de vae getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Liza* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes tha- most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside com- minications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff because he threw away two rats which had been killed in
755 a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the
•774 spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[772] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put on the grave the things last used by a person. These are
[171] usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east
[115] of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
[464] Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

• 775 "I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[59] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
[845] bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

763 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin
825 duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef
• 775 yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[36c] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[36] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain all. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a night-
[789] meah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick."

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpm is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

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754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well [761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an 799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the [574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will 787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

• 775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex- [115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various [845] shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an 787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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•775 duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh
787 cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

754 "Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt.
[775] Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

347 Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits
[754] and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a
[775] small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Ne-
[115] gro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

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347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
775 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, c] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69c] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[177] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[184] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul."[4]

• 775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
789 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
556 Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but
she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came
and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69c]
You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she
can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.

[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night
an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't
take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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TIN CITY

342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton* and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story .775 bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh 787 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by 787 witches[69] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but [845] dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double caul[4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. [775] A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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•775 787 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

789 "My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

775 787 (115) "No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em,"[59] said another resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a plantation known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

789 754 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people dat flied off tuh Africa.[59c] I blieb um bout flyin. Some folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

787 (826) "One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump, I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh (825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right (763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die."[44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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# *Yamacraw**

YAMACRAW TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE LITTLE INdian town that Tomochichi, chief and friend of General Oglethorpe, established on the Savannah River bluff west of the township of Savannah over two hundred years ago. Today waterfront industries have pushed the Negro district southward from the bluff, but it is still so close to the river that some of the small shanties rattle when winds roar across the water.

In this community the residents are drawn largely from coastal counties of Georgia and South Carolina. At one time an unruly element gained Yamacraw the reputation of being the toughest section of Savannah, but the presence of an unusual number of churches of various denominations seems to have improved law and order in recent years. Intense religious interest is aided by pride felt in the fact that the first Negro Baptist church in America was established here and also that Methodism gained an earlier start among Yamacraw Negroes than in any other part of the county.

In spite of the difference in religious doctrines there seem to be certain common beliefs handed down in families. We found an implicit and readily asserted faith in the power "tuh do unnatchul ting." Ghosts are everyday experiences. Root doctors are in constant demand.

** Old Yamacraw has gone. Since late in 1939 there has been a radical physical change under the program of the Federal Housing Administration. Two thirds of the tumble-down brick houses and wooden shanties in the once crowded area have been replaced by modern concrete buildings with low rentals for Negro tenants.*

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789 mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next
[115] visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey knew dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[49c]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz
(845) bawn wid a caul [4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now
•775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[50a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us
(593) a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.
[115] "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh [48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh
754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell
755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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754 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an
755 wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

115 Evans Brown * is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

"It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting.
• 775 Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh
787 groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

754 "I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

* *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

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FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[48a] It was about
[824 four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
• 775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
[115 nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A, [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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775 right at muh side.[59] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
[789] yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

[115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he
787 wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[59]

776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock,
787 he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed. We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a
787 noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
• (775) people come back.[56]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts[59]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[8b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 625 West Waldburg Lane.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[16] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[19] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once • 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men 787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in 789 his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh [825] chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. • 775 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um 776 till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
•775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
[115] eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
[755] at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
[789] cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[69c]

•775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
[763] close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen
791 dey ain ride im.[69] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1201 Murphy Avenue.*

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754 ride im.[69] Dis went on till he staht pinin away. He git disagreeable roun duh home an denne went away. He ain nebuh come back. I tink somebody git uh tuh fix im.[15] Dat sho convince me uh duh powuh uh cunjuh."

•775 The spirits of the dead are believed to return and visit their former neighbors, sometimes as frequently as in life.[56] Their presence is not always regarded with dread but is often looked upon as a natural incident. One woman made the following statement: "I know deah's ghos, fuh I kin see um. Ef any uh muh friens die, I kin see um mos anytime. Dey peah jis as natchul as wen dey wuz libe."

771 178 On the fringe of the community was a small store at which we stopped for a few minutes. The proprietress, a robust, good-natured Negro woman of middle age, talked with us amiably and verified the numerous reports regarding superstitions that her neighbors had already confided in us. In parting we inquired if she thought the people's faith in the supernatural was weakening. The woman regarded us with a wide smile. Shaking her head she declared emphatically, "No, ma'am, dey sho ain losin no faith in magic an sech tings. All deah libes dey heah bout um frum duh ole folks. Seem lak tuh me dey beliebin in um mo an mo all duh time."

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757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

• 775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[13]

759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 757 West 34th Street.*

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764 duh spirit an keep it frum followin yuh back tuh duh
775 house. I knowd a uhmun at Burroughs wut use tuh carry food tuh uh daughtuh grabe ebry day.[58] She would take a basket uh cooked food, cake, pies, an wine. Den she would carry dishes too an set out a regluh dinnuh fuh duh daughtuh an uhsef. She say duh daughtuh's spirit meet uh deah an dey dine tuhgedduh."

(115) Another woman * told us that on holidays she carried food to her husband's grave and left it there for the spirit to come and get.[58] "I carry duh kine uh food we use tuh hab tuh eat on duh days he wuz off frum wuk," she said. "I take cooked chicken an cake an pie an cigahs—he like tuh smoke attuh eatin.[58a, b] I do dis cuz I know he will be lookin fuh me tuh bring it.

775 "Ebuh since I kin membuh I hab heahd bout spirits wanduhin roun at night,"[59] she continued. "Muh mothuh nebuh would let us go tuh bed at night widout leabin plenty uh watuh in duh pails fuh duh spirits tuh drink wile yuh sleep. Ef yuh dohn leab no watuh dey wohn leh yuh res good. I tink das wy hags ride some folks,[69] cuz dey dohn leab no
(754) watuh. I blieb witches is people dat's sole deah soul tuh duh debil. Dey hab duh powuh tuh change frum deah own shape tuh anyting dey wants tuh be,[68] so dey kin tawment udduh folks. Wen a ghos is roun I kin feel duh hot eah."

775 We found that belief in supernatural beings such as
754 witches and ghosts was widespread throughout the com-
184 munity.

"Witches is lak folks," one woman said.** "Dey done
754 sell demsefs tuh duh debil an he make em do anyting he
(115) wants tuh. Some git a grudge gense yuh an stahts tuh ride yuh.[69] No mattuh wut yuh do, dey kin git in yuh house. Sometime dey come lak a mouse, sometime a rabbit, an sometime eben a roach.[68] I membuh heahin bout a witch wut

* *Bessie Reese, 2407 Harden Street.*
** *Emma English, 628 West 38th Street.*

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754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

• 775 A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had
787 been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[58, 59] "Once wuz
(115) jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts
775 was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me,"[69] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh."[15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh
(757) Buzzud, a root doctuh.[48] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right."[6]

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 36th Street.*

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754 he speak tuh me, I tell im all bout duh root wuk an wy uh fyuhd duh gun. I ax im wouldn he uh done duh same an he say, 'Cose, but dohn do it agen.'

"I bin tuh duh poeleece tuh hep me but dey cuss me out. Once wen dat poeleece show up, duh uhmun wut tryin tuh fix me staht combin uh haiah. She kep it up till duh poeleece jis walk away. Den I went tuh a root doctuh an he tole me duh poeleece caahn do nuttn long as duh uhmun comb uh haiah. He tell me tuh use tuhpentine tuh destroy duh han wut she put down fuh me. Duh uhmun jist keep on wukin gense me an nobody couldn do nuttn tuh stop uh so I know I bettuh moob fo she git muh spirit."

534 In Brownville we found a man who knew how to make the old time drums. He made one for us out of a hollow log, across the end of which he tightly stretched a goat skin. He fastened the skin to the log by means of a number of wooden pegs. Unlike modern drums, this one was taller than it was wide, measuring about eighteen inches in length and ten inches in diameter.[35]

(115) The drum maker, James Collier,* a middle-aged, intelligent, well-educated Negro (Plate VI), said he had made a number of drums in this primitive manner. Collier told us 764 that he had heard of drums having been used during funeral 533 ceremonies in former years. The mourners beat the drum while on the way to the cemetery; after arriving they marched around the grave in a ring and beat the drum and shouted.[34] "They call it the dead march," explained the man.

• 775 "The spirit don't stay in the grave," he went on. "When the funeral procession stahts tuh leave, the spirit leaves the body an follows the people frum the graveyahd. It nevuh stays with the body."[56] A little later he volunteered the additional information, "Fuh the spirit tuh rest in the grave (764) folks have tuh be buried at home. They nevuh feel right ef

* *James Collier, 806 West 39th Street.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-F--Analyst]

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•775 (764) they buried frum home. The spirit jist wanduh aroun.[1]

"I have seen something I think wuz a ghost. I have no explanation of it, but I think it wuz supuhnatural. I have heard of witchcraft, cunjuh an magic. I believe some of these things happen, and the mo yuh probe intuh them the less yuh know.

789 "I have heard about a magic hoe that folks put in the gahden. They speak certain words tuh it; then the hoe goes ahead an cultivates the gahden without anyone touching it. They jist tell it tuh do the wuk and it does it."[39]

775 789 We questioned Collier again about his personal experiences with supernatural beings and he related the following story:

"Wen I wuz jist a young boy muh family use tuh live in Currytown. Me and muh brothuh use tuh go and see muh aunt who lived in Yamacraw. Tuh get frum our house tuh wheah she lived we had tuh go past a cemetery which wuz in back of the Union Station.

"One time we had been tuh see muh aunt and it got tuh be late. We stahted fuh home. It wuz beginnin of night. Muh brothuh he had rheumatism an he wuz hobblin along on a stick. We stahted along by a fence tuh get tuh West Broad Street an wen we had gone about a hundred yards we saw a lady comin tuhwards us.[50] She wuz very feah, very feah, an she wuz all dressed in black and had on a long black veil. Her dress wuz black silk and rustled as she walked.

"Muh brothuh an I, we were suhprised tuh see the lady all of a sudden, fuh we hadn't noticed her befo. She come up tuh us an she say, 'Are yuh goin roun the fence?' We tell her we wuz an she say, 'Yuh not afraid?' an we say, 'No—we not afraid.'

"The lady wanted tuh walk with us an we all staht walkin along. We had gone a short ways wen all of a sudden we look in the cemetery an we see a little white thing risin up out of the groun. It wuz kinduh hazy an shadowy an it

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787

spring up from the groun an streak out tuh meet us on the path ahead. It looked like a lill animal.[54]

"The lady, wen she see the lill white sumpms a comin, she daht out like lightin an she go right tuh meet it. Wen she get tuh it she disappeah right intuh the eah, disappeah right befo our eyes. Muh brothuh fuhgot he wuz crippled, he drop his stick an staht runnin, an I run too. An we nevuh stop runnin, kept right on goin till we got home tuh Currytown. He don't like to speak of it tuhday cause we're not supuhstitious."

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley, [55] 'Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied, [101] "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl- [192] edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25g] and a hog *gulluh*.

[322] To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
•775 dat way. An wite dogs![4c] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid
(845) um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

218 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton * believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick
(115) muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(759) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

* *Justine Singleton, Tatemville.*

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115 duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."
829

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming
787 about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

845 They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem
[791] tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all
[777] deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

824 "But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh
777 bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34a] said Susie.

764 In this community as in many others strangers are not al-
609 lowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to
764 their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey
[775] alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

115 "I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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## WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary
782 in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

• 775 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man,"
776 Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I
787 look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in re-
[115] lation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root
[755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I
•775 hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his spirit use tuh
(787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence."[58, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[68] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

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764 [777] "No, I dohn pay much mine tuh names," said Margaret Snead. "But I do pay tention tuh bad luck dates. Look uh po Catherine De Lanzy, depribe ub all duh propuh tings dat come fo burial, cuz it wuz a double bad luck date. Folks at [775] duh Pint do say dat uh spirit nebuh will res in duh grabe." [36]

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SANDFLY

761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have found no rest, but instead would have roamed the country-
• 775 side.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and
789 charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and representatives of different corporations frequently visit
[443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root*, *Lucky Mojo Love Drops*, *Black Cat Ashes*, and *Courting Powder*.[8] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 heah uh movin bout an moanin an in duh mawnin she is jis bout wone out an uh haiah is all tangled. Sometime she wake up an drive him away, but some nights he come back two aw three times an ride uh. In duh mawnin she jis too tied tuh go tuh wuk.*

"Deah wuz a ole woman in Savannah dat dey say wuz a witch. One night a ole man wake up an foun dis witch ridin im.[69] He say it look lak a bug.[68] He ketch it an break off duh leg at duh joint. Duh nex mawnin he go an see duh ole woman an sho nuff she have uh han all tie up wid a bandage. Dey tell me bout uh an I go see uh. Uh finguh wuz right off at duh joint."

• 775 Spirits of the dead often wander along the dark roadways,[56, 59] and frequently some belated stroller runs screaming in terror, declaring that he is being pursued.** The spirits may appear as misshapen men or women, as sheep, dogs, and cats.[54, 55] A spirit need not always assume the same appearance but may change form entirely each time.†

775 787 The following story was told by a woman in the community:

"I sho believe in spirits. I have seen em wid muh own eyes. One evenin jis as it wuz gittn dusty I wuz goin in tuh town tuh see duh dressmakuh. I walk tuh duh cah tracks an deah sittin on a rail wuz a lill tiny man, bout long as dis. I nevuh seen sech a lill man.[54, 55] He wuz so lill he ain good fuh nuthin. I look at im hahd. On his head wuz a lill tin lamp wut gleamed in duh dahk. He wuz kine of an Indian culluh. He wuz a grown man fuh sho fuh he hab a lill mustache. I holluh fuh a man tuh come out an see wut I foun, but wen he git deah duh lill man hab disappeah. Jis den duh cah blowed an I hab tuh leab.

"Wen I gits home dat night, it wuz real dahk. I ain goin tuh walk dat dahk road by mysef an I holluh fuh every man

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.*

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SANDFLY

*775 I knowd dat live neahby. I make em all walk home wid me,
787 but deah wuzn no signs of duh lill man.

"Attuh dat lots of folks say dey see im. Wen duh moon is noo an deah is a drizzle, he come walkin along wid his lill lamp. He take all kine uh shapes. Sometime he's a man an sometime he's a animal.[54] Dey say he's comin roun cuz deah's buried treasure neah yuh." * [61]

771 Here in this little Negro community there seem to be few phases of life left untouched by superstitious fears. As one woman aptly expressed it—"Everything that happen is cause by cunjuh an magic. They jis dohn leave nuthin tuh Gawd." **

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the
567 group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin
829 bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut
[115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [69]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

•775 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we
776

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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775 776 were informed that a variety of spirits were said to be seen on the island. These, it seemed, took different sizes and shapes and frequently appeared to the local residents.[54, 55, 59]

"Sometimes," said Celia, "doze spirits put spells on yuh, fix yuh."

754 "Spirits ain duh only ones," added Peter McQueen. "Folks kin wuk wid cunjuh too.[15] Ain dasso, Uncle Robert?"

"Dasso," Uncle Robert nodded sagely. "Muh own brud-duh wuz cunjuhed. He hab a spell put on um. He hab fits all duh time—hydrophobical fits—act lak he crazy. Nuttn we do hep im, an attuh a few yeahs he die."

754 789 "Only ting yuh kin do tuh keep frum bein cunjuhed is tuh carry a han," said Peter. "Mos folks tote a han wid um."[8, 12, a, c, d]

"Plenty folks kin fix yuh wid a han dey make deysef," said another voice.

754 "What are the charms made of?" we wanted to know.

"Haiah," "Nails,"[10] "Frum duh cloze" were the various responses and Celia enlarged on this information. "Ef yuh hab a enemy, nebuh let um git a piece uh yuh cloze. An yuh bun yuh haiah an yuh nail parins. Dey kin sho make pow-uhful han frum deze."

We inquired if many persons made a profession of this, and Peter informed us, "Sometimes dey git um frum a root doctuh."[8a, d, 48]

759 789 "Duh root doctuh kin hep yuh too," added Uncle Robert. "Dey is powful smaht. I use tuh heah tell ub a root man name Smaht McCall.[6, 48] Ef yuh git in any trouble, yuh jis go see um an he git yuh out ub it. Deah wuz a man wut got rested. He wuz plenty skeah bout wut would happen tuh um. He go see Smaht McCall an Smaht say not tuh worry cuz he would hep um. Duh day uh duh trial come an wen dey try duh case, a buzzud fly in duh cote house win-duh.[68b] He fly roun. Den he light on duh jedge desk. Well,

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SUNBURY

795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] bnh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
ta. is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh
[783] dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast
duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in
duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all bap-
tize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins
be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise
duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[MM] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

• 775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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775 tuh be plenty keahful bout duh spirits. Duh spirit is hungry jis lak duh pusson. Yuh hab tuh put food in duh ruhm fuh duh spirit tuh come eat." [58]

"Dat is duh truth," agreed young Elizabeth. "Ef duh spirit is hungry, it will sho come back an hant yuh." [58f]

This talk of spirits started us on a new train of thought and we were curious to learn of the local theories regarding ghosts and witches.

"Duh spirit nebuh go in duh groun wid duh body," [56] volunteered Emma. "It jis wanduh roun. Dey come out wen duh moon is noo."

[115] Mary Stevens,* whose short, stocky figure was clad in bright pink and who wore a sailor hat perched rakishly on her head, stated, "Duh spirits is ebryweah. Dey peah mosly at duh fus dahk an in duh middle night."

Young Elizabeth, too, had something to say about spirits. "I sees em all duh time," she said. "Dey dohn hurt yuh none, jis walk long wid yuh an talk. Some hab duh head on an some hab duh head off." [59a]

754 From ghosts and shadows of the night the discussion followed its natural course to even darker powers, such as conjure, evil roots, and counter charms. The little group glanced slyly at one another. It was in lowered tones that they volunteered remarks on this subject.

"We do heah bout folks rootin each udduh all duh time.[15] Yuh sho hab tuh be keahful. Some folks weahs a dime aw a [789] penny tied on duh ankle an wen it tun black, dey knows some- [301] body is tryin tuh root em." [12a, c, d]

"What are the conjures made of?" we wanted to know.

"Dey make em uh haiah an nails an frum lots uh tings," we were told.[10]

Elizabeth said, "Duh heabiest root I ebuh heard bout wuz a cunjuh made uh some funny oily stuff in a bottle. Duh enemy ketch duh pusson's spirit in dat bottle an dat wuz a

* *Mary Stevens, Sunbury.*

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HARRIS NECK

829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. [567] Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 754 [789] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69a] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

•775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[23] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

115 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task [787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

• 775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face 787 and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right-along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

•775 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh
787 see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[51]

776 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a
787 hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em
[753] an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

789 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtec-
754 tion,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [125]

759 755

Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

775 845

The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

787

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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HARRIS NECK

775 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?"
845 we asked.
787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh
[755] chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[66]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had
789 found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 12] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it [772] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body [789] cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes [825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol- [759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle • 775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye 776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's 775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, 775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh 764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the 782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come [795] git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people 534 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. 202 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an trée an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [792] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35a] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[58] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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## DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
(777) no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

•775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[69] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
[825] buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

"Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
775 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
776 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
787 obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go crosa duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[27b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

•[775] 764 782

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

776 787

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[40] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54]
•[775] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves," [33] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 252 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 764 • 775 789 231 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way. She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd.[55] Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b, c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 567 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 782 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 313 782 • 775 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us, "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
799 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

• 795 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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•775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain
(845) nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em.
Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a
caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time
775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then
764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54]
—that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole
days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest
to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals
in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the
day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa
they have night fewnuls."

115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grand-
mother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know
uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun
up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz
a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz
a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I
know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so
much I caahn remembuh all them things."

829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they
567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they
alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an
they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special
with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut
she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down
theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr.
Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to
keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin
about two hundud yahds out in the rivuh off Cumberland
tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

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ally for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 286.*

61. *Spirit, guardian of buried treasure*

a *Herskovits says of Haiti:* "*Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. 'In this country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian. Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the slave, as a 'sold *baka*,' remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge."
*Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 242–43.*

62. *Spirits, plat-eye*

[775]

a *Johnson says of St. Helena:* "In the Georgetown section plat-eye is used to signify a ghost or spook. Its etymology is uncertain, and it may be an instance of an Africanism surviving in a restricted area."
*Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, p. 58.*

b *Nassau says of West Africa:* "Another manifestation is that of the uvengwa. . . . It is the self-resurrected spirit and body of a dead human being. It is an object of dread, and is never worshipped in any manner whatever. Why it appears is not known. Perhaps it shows itself only in a restless, unquiet, or dissatisfied feeling. It is white in color, but the body is variously changed from the likeness of the original human body. Some say that it has only one eye, placed

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in
[761] sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

754 Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their
787 belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the
[791] Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider
456 it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

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them to take over the policies, and the children, knowing the importance of proper burial, usually do so gladly.

When an islander has moved away and then died, every possible effort is made to return the body to the island for burial among relatives and friends. The desire to be buried at home is also very common among the Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian peoples, who believe without question that the dead are dependent on their ancestors for spiritual nourishment and thus must be buried among them to find peace.[50] By ongoing tradition, Sea Island burial places are densely wooded and are considered to be the sacred abodes of the spirits.

A burial tradition once practiced widely on the Sea Islands and in rural areas of the deep South, though it is now dying out, is the placing of articles such as pottery, spoons, dishes, and other items belonging to the deceased person on the grave, in case the deceased might need or want them in afterlife. Even those scholars hesitant to ascribe other practices observed on the islands to African influences have readily accepted the African basis of this tradition.[51] I have seen the same practices among the Igbo and Ibebio, and it was at one time not unusual in West Africa for boxes of the dead person's possessions—clothes, hardware, and crockery, for example—to be laid by the body, which was not interred but left on top of the ground and covered with branches and leaves.[52]

On the Sea Islands children's graves were traditionally decorated with favorite toys, broken glasses and cups, and money banks always containing a few pennies. The islanders could not explain why the glasses and cups were broken before they were put on a grave. Some said that it was done to decrease the chance of someone's stealing the items; others commented they were merely copying what they had always seen done. The old customs, however, are now being replaced for both children and adults by the use of fancy headstones and cement vaults, which have come to be thought more prestigious signs of one's love for the deceased person.

Sea Island funerals are often very sad and solemn occasions, but they are also very emotional, as are most of the religious services. People attend a funeral to pay their respects to the deceased, but even more to pay their respects to the deceased's family. Each person is given a funeral as elaborate as the family and friends can make it, and the church is packed as full for the funeral of a young child as it would

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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, [272] onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [789] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not priv- 115 leged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 789 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they 775 are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).A

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious 759 or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island [538] folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

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159 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She
761 finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood
123 outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chat-
[562] ting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr.
[795] Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely
[805] wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

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193 (3 ∅ n) third-person neuter nominative
539 (3 ♂ o) third-person masculine objective
(3 ♀ o) third-person feminine objective
128 (3 ∅ o) third-person neuter objective

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (PrC) | present continuative | /ˈdə/ |
| (PaC) | past | /bɪnə/ |
| (T) | tense indicator | /bɪn/ |
| (L) | locative | /də/ |

539 di soəl ɛn di speɪt

775 1. lɪsn mi gʊd nɔu / βɛn ju daɪ nɪs wöl / jusi / dɪ dɪ dɪ so·əl
*Listen me good now: when you die in-this world, you see, the, the, the soul*

19

2. əβə män go fiom dʊ di kɪŋdəm ə gɔd / bɔt juə speit
*of-a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit*

3. stɪls iə ɔn ɔˀt / ɛn ɪɸ ju βədɪ dɛβəl ɪn ɒl juə diez /
*still's here on earth. And if you was-the devil in all your days,*

4. juə speit /ätə jʊ died / joə speit kə du di siem tiŋ / juə speit
*your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing, your spirit.*

5. juə soəl öp dɛ / bɔt juə speit dɛ ɹɛˀ dɔŋ də iə βɪd
*Your soul up there, but your spirit (L) right down (L) here with*

6. di bɒrì / ɛn däs də wɔn gɔ gɔ du də ɸɛk tu jʊ / jʊ si nɔ nɔ
*the body. And that's the one gone, gone do the effect to you. You see now now*

7. das das βɒɪ ɒɪ sie dɪs nɔ / ə lɒs ä pipũ
*that's that's why I say this now. A lot of people*

8. dõn biliɸ / sie sie sieiz no guos / iz guos dɛə /bɔt nɔ sensz
*don't believe. Say say say-is no ghost. Is ghost there. But now since*

9. di ˀürəmobil n tiŋ kɔm / n gɪt dɪ hɒɪβie nɔ / jusidiz diz tiŋ
*the automobile and thing come and get the highway now, you-see-these, these thing*

10. käinə tɛk tu wʊd / äi mɛmbə wɔnäit / βi βi bɪn ɔut
*kind-of take to wood. I member one-night we, we (T) out*

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11. n di ɹəβə / wɔʰɒnʔ wɔ wɔɪʃɛkɪn ʃiβɪms / ɛnəβɛn ɒɪ lʊk / wɔ ɔ̃
*in the river, was-hunt, was, was-catching shrimps. And-ah-when I look, was a*

12. mɪn mi φɔ̃s kɔ̃zn ɹɛɹɔpdil / βi bɪn ɪn kɹɪk / ɛn βɛn ɒɪ lʊk bɛk
*me-and me first cousin, right-up-the-hill, we (T) in crick. And when I look back*

13. bəʔɒɪn βi / i wɔ̃z ə kɔφɔm bɪn bəhɒɪn βi / dɛ nätʃəl
*behind we, (3 ø n) was a coffin (T) behind we. The natural-*

14. bɔn kɔφɔm gɛl ʃain dɔŋ dɪ kɹɪk /
*born coffin, gal, shine down the crick.*

15. ɛn βɛn βɛn i gɛt ɔpə kloə tʊ βi φä ju tʊ da kä jõna / i tek
*And when, whn, (3 ɔ̃ n) get up-a close to we far you to the car-yonder, (3 ɔ̃ n) take*

16. daʔma·ʃ / ɛn daʔ maʃ bɪnə lie dɔŋ dis / lie dɔŋ dʒɪs lɛk dät /
*that-marsh. And that marsh (PaC) lay down just, lay down just like that.*

17. ɛn ɒɪ bɪnə sɪɹɔŋ ɛn ɒɪ ẽ nõ ɒɪ bɪnə ɪnəsi / si . . . /
*And I (PaC) sit-down and I ain't know I (PaC) in-a-seat. See . . .*

18. jie / də nɛ·tʃal kɔφɪn / də nɛ·tʃəl kɔφɪn kɔmɪn dɔŋdiɹɪβə / siβɪm
*yeah, the natural coffin, the natural coffin coming down-the-river, swim.*

19. dasəspeɪt nɔu / jie / kɔmɪn dɔŋ də ɹɪβə / ɛn βɛn / ʔnʔə βi / dɪsbɔi
*That's-a-spirit now. Yeah. Coming down the river. And when—after we, this-boy*

20. tɔk βirəm / hidis / ɕɪφ wɔn sɛid oβəndə mäʃ jusi / ɛn hi sitɛt
*talk with-(3 ø o), (3 ø n)-just shave one side over-in-the marsh, you-see. And (3 ø n) start*

21. tʊ lie da maʃ dɔŋ / ɛn lɛφ da maʃɛn gönɔpnɪiedʒ ədawʊd /
*to lay that marsh down, and left that marsh-and gone-up-in-the-edge of-that-wood,*

22. ɛn laʔ da wʊd bɪn bɛut φɔ φɔm βi·z də kɹɪk /
*and Lord, that wood (T) about far from we-as the crick.*

23. ɛn ju kədə jɛɹi ɔu i kieɔntɔpida ɪn da wʊd /
*And you could-have heard how (3 ø n) carry-on-top-of-that, in that wood.*

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24. βiel nɔdiztinɪzdɛ nɔ / nɔ ɛβibodi kẽ çö̈əm /
*Well now-these-thing-is-there now. No, everybody can't see-them.*

25. bɔt ju gɒt φiłɪn ju ʔkŋ çö̈əm / βiel ɒɪ äd wɔn dɔrə . . . no ɒɪ ñäd wɔn dɔrə /
*But you got feeling, you can see-them. Well, I had one daughter, . . . no, I had one daughter*

26. ɪnnu jɔk ɹäit nɔu / n hi kʊrə stɛnɛni iβinɪn / ɛn ʃuə ju /
*in-New York right now, and (3 ♀ n) could stand-any evening and show you,*

27. n ʃuə ju dɪ dɪ də pɔsn / ŋgə ʃö ju tuətɹi pəsn / çɔᵊm ɹɛit çjɒndə
*and show you the, the, the person, and-could show you two-three person.! "See-(3 ♂ o) right yonder,*

28. dëdɪ də stɛnɔp / ɛn ɒɪ kʊdn ʃɔəm φə çieβ mɒɪ dɒɪŋ lɒɪφ
*Daddy, (PrC) stand-up," and I couldn't see-(3 ♂ o) for save my dying life,*

29. ɛndä gjɛl bɪn dä βie bɪn dä βie til / dëm tɪŋ justə φɹɒɪdem /
*and-that gal (T) that way, (T) that way til them thing use-to frightened-(3 ♀ o),*

30. ɛn dɛn ɒɪ kiɛm tʊ dɪ / ɒɪ kiɛm
*and then I carry-(3 ♀ o) to the, I carry-(3 ♀ o)*

31. tə de fɒspɪpɪrɪ / ɛn βɒ nëm pipl du βirəm nɛ / ɒɪ dö̈ no /
*to the hospital. And what them people do with-(3 ♀ o) there, I don't know.*

32. bɔ φö̈m ɔpdä tɒɪm ɪn ɔpnɔ / ʃi neβə dɪ si nɔn nɔmo / . . .
*But from up-that time and up-now, (3 ♀ n) never did see none no-more. . . .*

33. hi mɔs bi bö̈n βɪd sɔmp φə ʃɔəm /
*(3 ♀ n) must be born with something for see(3 ø o).*

34. φə si ʃi kʊrə ʃɔəm ple·en / juno / iʔ i ʃɔəm nɛ·tʃəl juno /
*For see, (3 ♀ n) could see-(3 ø o) (it) plain, you-know, (3 ♀ n), (3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o) (it) natural, you-know.*

35. didɪs də sitanɔpdʰɛi ʃö̈m / jie ɛndɛnɒm / βiel ə o əlɒtsa pʰipl ə
*Just-just (PrC) stan-up-there-(3 ♀ n) see-(3 ø o). Yeah. And-then-ah, well, a, oh, a-lot-of people, a,*

36. əholɒ·tsa pʰipl jugoβɪdnɔ kẽ ʃö̈m / kɛ ˈʃö̈mɛn tʰɛ / ju ˈtʰuə /
*a-whole-lot-of people you-go-with now can see-(3 ø o), can see-(3 ø o)-and tell you too!*

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37. si si da pɔsn jɒna / jieə / jieə /das ɹëit / jiə ju ku
*"See, see that person yonder." Yeah, yeah, that's right. Yeah, you could*

38. ɸɪləm / jiə . . . mũʔ / das di ol dɛβəl / βiel nɔnɔ / ju no
*feel-(ʒ ð o) Yeah . . . muh, that's the old devil. Well now-now, you know*

39. βɒɪ ɒɪ tɔk bɔʔ sɔ̈mtɐɪm ju go bəjəsɛɸ / ɪɸ ju dis wɒk /
*why I talk but sometime you go by-yourself. If you just walk.*

40. n sɔ̈mtɐɪm ju ɸɪl 'timəɹɪdʒ / sɔ̈mtɒɪ jɒ ɸil lɐka jɒ fiə /
*and sometime you feel timeridge, sometime you feel like your hair*

41. lɒklɐɪ / ju ɸil / ju gɪt 'timə,ɹɪdʒ . . . / das ɹɐit /
*look-like you feel you get timeridge . . . that's right.*

42. βiel ju si ə / juəspeɪt hɪt da iβəl ɸɛla / ɛn juə speɪt kɔm bɛk tɐjɒ /
*Well, you see, ah, your-spirit hit that evil fellow. And your spirit come back to-you.*

43. dʒɪs läk ə βɛn ju go ɪn bed dɪ nɐit ɸə silip
*Just like a, when you go in bed the night to sleep,*

44. βɛnjugoɪnbedinɐit / ɸə tiek ə ɹɛs / βel də speit
*when-you-go-in-bed-the-night for take a rest, well, the spirit*

45. lɛɸ dɪ bɒɪ / si βɛn juə speit lɛɸ dɪ bɒɪl / juə
*left the body. See, when your spirit left the body your*

46. speit go ɪn dlɸön pät ə dɪs kɔntɪi / ɔloβə / ɛn dɛn sɔmtäɪm
*spirit go in different part of this country. All-over. And then sometime*

47. βen də fiɪt dä iβəl speit / βen ju çiəm ɹɔn / kɔm bɛk də ju
*when (PrC) hit that evil spirit, when you see-(ʒ ø o) run, come back to you*

48. ɛn mɛk̨ ju skie njoə bed / sɔmtɒɪm ju mäʔ fiɒlə sɐirəsɔ̈mlɛkdɛt
*and make you scare in-your bed. Sometime you may holler beside-some-like-that.*

49. si juo speit kɔm bɛk nju ɸɹäin /
*See, your spirit come back an-you frighten.*

50. no ju kẽ silip si / ɛn dɛn ju k̨ẽ βiekɔ̃p / dispeit dõ
*No, you can't sleep, see, and then you can't wake-up. The-spirit don't*

51. kɔ̈m bɛk tɒ jɒ / nɔ ɪɸ də speit dõ kɔm bɛk tɒ jɒ / jɒ nuo ju

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*come back to you. Now if the spirit don't come back to you, you know you*

52. dɛ / ɪn ɔrə wʊd / ju ẽ die oβə fiɪə / nɔdä tʃuɸ / nɔ /
*there. In other word, you ain't there over here. Now-that truth, now.*

53. nɔ däs tʃuɸ / ju gɪt dɪ bɒɪbl ɛn ju ɹirəm / däs tʃuɸ /
*Now that's truth. You get the Bible and you read-(3 ɸ o). That's truth.*

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Listen well now: when you die, you see, the soul of a man goes home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit remains here on earth. And if you were an evildoer all of your life, then after you die, your spirit can continue doing the same kind of evil. Your soul is in heaven, but your spirit remains here on earth with the body, and that's the one that will harm you.

You see, I speak of this now because a great many people don't believe. They say that ghosts do not exist. But they do exist. But now, since the automobile and other transportation has overrun the highways, these spirits have sought refuge in the woods.

I remember one night we, my first cousin who lives up on the hill and I, were out in the river catching shrimps. And when we looked behind us, we saw a coffin, a natural coffin, Miss, shining down the crick. And when it came as close to us as the distance between you and that car, it disappeared into the marsh. The marsh separated from the burden and lay open. And I found myself sitting down without knowing when I became seated. . . . Yes, it was a natural coffin swimming down the river. Now that was a spirit coming down the river. Well, after [my cousin] spoke with it, it turned sharply to one side, flattened the marsh, and went up in the wood's edge only a distance as far as from us to the crick, and Lord, you could hear the confusion as it carried on in those woods.

Well, these things do exist. No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. "See it standing right there, Daddy!" But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital, and I don't know what the hospital

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539 personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more. 775 . . . She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. "See that person over there." Yes, yes. . . . That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge . . . that's right. Well, you see, your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

[774] For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this [513] country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

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113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by [505] barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some • 775 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see 567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

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nance.[18] The absence of mandatory secret societies as a means of maintaining corporate linkage and community loyalty points up the significance of kinship and lineage in a monarchial system such as that practiced by peoples of the Kongo region. Clan loyalty was paramount. If *Nzambi* ruled, reproved, and in the final analysis ordered the world according to divine design, ancestors superintended, rewarded, and welcomed the dead into their subterranean village. Ritually, BaKongo spiritual behavior was concatenated to ancestor devotion, not to *Nzambi*, though the spirit world consisted of forces unleashed by *Nzambi*. Among the most powerful of these were deceased elders of the clan, called *bakulu*—white spirits who roamed the earth (in woods, streams, and villages) and resided in the subterranean "world of no evil." Vital to ancestor reverence was the belief that discarnate human spirits maintain interest in their people after passing to the unseen society where they guard traditions and activities of the living. If family herds were squandered, ancestors took note and punished. If drought threatened the family herds, old chiefs in the spirit world might take pity and send rain. The power of ancestral spirits was commonly recognized.[19]

Belief in ancestoral spirits, in life after death, and in the significance of that future life gave funeral and burial rites a central place in African existence. Sick-bed attendance and a fitting send-off were essential observations of this rite of passage. Death halted routine activities when marriage or other rites did not. Failure to properly observe the death ritual could either implicate one in that death, or bring ill will to the erring clan member. The curse of the dying was much dreaded. In the American South, as noted by Herskovits, Bastide, Thompson, and others, black cemeteries represent a special historical relic. For here one finds the clearest, strongest visible examples of memories of African-inspired customs. African reverence for departed members of the family and group remained a factor in Gullah religious life even after they accepted Christianity. Gullah regard for deceased family members could not have equalled the homage paid to these spirits by Old World or "New" Africans. Still, spirits of the dead had to be reckoned with, and slaves believed they took the form of either good or evil supernatural forces. Vengeful spirits of the dead were those wronged during their lifetime, or "on easy" spirits perhaps indicating bewitchment, or they were the ancestors of outside families or groups. Hence in keeping with

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their traditional African heritage, Gullahs employed various means of pacification of the living dead, seemingly more derived from Bantu influence.[20]

Supernatural causation of suffering, disease, accidents, death under obscure circumstances, and other misfortunes was a core of African thought. Magic and medicine were employed for protection and healing. The use of sacred medicines called *minkisi* (singl. *nkisi*) was, along with ancestor reverence, fundamental to religion among Bantu peoples who lacked a complex system of lesser deities possessed for instance by the Yoruba peoples. Although *Nzambi* allowed death to come to humankind, the Deity also armed the people with *minkisi*. Minkisi power derived from two classes of medicine. They contained "spirit-embodying" (earth from a grave site for instance) and "spirit-admonishing" objects (seeds, claws, miniature knives, stones). Hence the basis of *nkisi* life source was a "captured soul," "spirit controlled by a man," and the charm's owner directed the spirit of the object to accomplish certain things.[21]

Medicine specialists, priests, and priestesses were, like ancestors, significant spiritual intermediaries. They were the great healers, or practitioners of "white magic" often symbolized by adornment with white chalk. Medicine specialists, called *nganga* by the BaKongo, discerned the cause of illness, holocaust, or unhappiness, discovered the culprit, and prescribed treatment and a means of preventing recurrence of the calamity. Since afflictions and misfortune were the workings of "black magic," called *kindoki* in KiKongo, diviners employed miraculous as well as herbal healing elements in their profession. As combatants of evil and antisocial behavior, they interceded spiritually with the supernatural and in some societies instructed patients regarding which ancestors or minor deities to approach for defensive and preventive measures. John Mbiti, an East African theologian and scholar, has offered a general synthesis of the African specialists' practice:

> The medicine man is in effect both doctor and pastor to the sick person. His medicines are made from plants, herbs, powders, bones, seeds, roots, juices, leaves, liquids, minerals, charcoal and the like; and in dealing with a patient, he may apply massages, needles or thorns, and he may bleed the patient; he may jump over the patient, he may use incantations and ventriloquism, and he may ask the patient to perform various things like sacrificing a chick or goat, observing some taboos or avoiding certain foods and persons—all these are in addition to giving the patient physical medicines.[22]

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CHAPTER 10

# *Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural*

000 "En when I trabbles de deep woods, whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl en de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.
Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulpher. Dey es say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. . . . So I totes meh powder en sulpher en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd."*

761 Gullah's attached a tremendous significance to death, but there was little evidence of apprehension at the prospect of dying. Slaves lived in the presence of death so constantly that they seemed to consider the phenomenon as much a part of living as was their continuous labor. That they often reflected on the subject is evident in their spirituals. Yet these [533] songs do not indicate that Gullahs thought of death with fear, forebod- [157] ing, or morbidity. Perhaps it was partly this stoicism in the face of earthly demise that some observers viewed as resignation or the effects of demoralization. All African ethnic groups believed in life beyond physical 761 death. Possibly Gullahs retained the West African bush-initiation exper- • 775 ience in their attitude toward death. This idea of a symbolic journey to [171] the world of the dead and a triumphant return might explain the Gullahs' ability to transcend feelings of dread about death and to disavow its 000 ultimate power over them. But perhaps an equally strong influence was the BaKongo, since these societies had the most elaborate afterlife beliefs. The BaKongo four moments of the sun, as previously discussed,

*"Truss Gawd." South Carolina Folklore Project #1655, D-4-33, WPA, SCL.

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
533 tude toward death:
(539)

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
798 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the death-bed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10] 763

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11] 775 (787) (763)

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende: 761 775 171 000

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

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000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

567 763 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were [754] sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by [759] his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated 567 the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her 764 funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they [533] sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> [789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to an- [775] other across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> [533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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ories of Telfair Hodgson, a number of her father's slaves came directly from Africa. The slaves' graves were "always decorated with the last articles used by the departed, and broken pitchers, and broken bits of colored glass were considered even more appropriate than the white shells from the beach nearby." Sometimes the slaves also carved "wooden figures like images of idols," or put a "patchwork quilt" on the grave. One twentieth-century investigator, Samuel Lawton, was told by a number of Sea Island ministers that it was also a common custom to bury articles along with the dead: 764 567

> You must not think that just because you do not find anything on those graves that the relatives did not put some things in there. It is most likely that they have a number of things buried with the body. I have often, at the burials I have conducted, seen the relatives pour hamper baskets full of things right down on top of the coffin before the dirt is shoveled into the grave.[17]

The custom of putting objects both in and on top of graves can be traced to African origins. The Ovimbundu place articles such as baskets, gourds, and instruments used in the burial on top of grave sites. Peoples in the Kongo were said to "mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking-pots, etc." Many ethnic groups of the Windward Coast believed that it was necessary to provide the dead with various gifts, domestic articles, and clothing that could be of use in the life beyond the grave. Such articles, along with food and water, would be left at the grave, so that the spirit of the deceased would come and claim them.[18] 764 171

Although the Gullahs believed in two spirits, it was the "trabblin" spirit rather than the heaven-going spirit which caused the greatest concern. The reasons given for grave adornment clearly indicate the African precedent. One informant related: 774 773 [171]

> Yo' see, suh, everybody got two kinds ob speerits. One is der hebben-goin' speerit. . . . Den dere is de trabblin' speerit. . . . De hebben-goin' speerit don't gib you no trouble, but de trabblin' speerit, 'e be de one dat gib you worriment. E come back to de t'ings 'e like. E try fur come right back in de same house.[19]

Some Africans regarded their essential being as divided into "little me in the big me." Apparently "little me" existed before life and would continue to exist after death in the spirit world. This relates to the Gullah informant's idea of two kinds of spirits. The heaven-going spirit, "little me," depending on how one died, would, after death, rest in the

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774 spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence,
775 Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de
782 speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects
764 that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

775 Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these
775 "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles
764 on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following
782 explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to make him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

764 Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings
171 left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little water was placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, wash your hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate the remainder of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that the family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

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Similarity of beliefs and motives regarding grave adornment is best illustrated by the types of articles found on graves in the Sea Islands. Such objects as partially filled medicine bottles, mirrors, broken pitchers, saucers and cups, mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, vaseline, cold cream, tobacco, and black pepper were placed on graves. Seashells were also commonly placed on graves. Other personal items included shaving brushes, toothbrushes, mirrors, combs, and belt buckles. In addition, twelve Gullah ministers reported to Samuel Lawton that other articles of food such as grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, bread, and cake were often placed on graves and soon eaten by animals and birds. Further efforts to satisfy the spirits of the dead consisted of pouring water on the grave during a drought. This custom could have been for the purpose of quenching the thirst of the spirit so that the dead would not disturb the living by seeking water.[23]

Gullah decoration of graves indicates a firm belief in the return of ancestors from the world of the dead. Offerings on graves were statements of homage and in these graveyards, one finds the strongest expressions of African-inspired memories. Many objects are associated with or used to hold water. In BaKongo religion, deceased ancestors became white creatures called *bakulu*. They lived in the village of the dead, referred to as the land of all things white. This village was located under river beds and lakes. *Bakulu's* white spiritual transparency allowed them to return to the world of the living undetected. Sea shells, used on Gullah graves, for instance, are an important theme in BaKongo metaphysics. One BaKongo prayer which addresses the shells states, "As strong as your house, you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever." The essence of this prayer is recaptured by the late Bessie Jones of St. Simons Island, Georgia. She related:

> The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise.[24]

Just as sea shells and pottery express immortal existence, and the significance of a water underworld, so the glittering, iridescent mirrors and porcelain on Gullah graves reflect the light which represents the spirit. These objects, like water when struck by sunlight, are intimations of the flash of the separated spirit in symbolized flight. Mirrors, lamps, porcelain, and glass are spirit-embodying once they are placed on the graves.

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Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

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Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Africa, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

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Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plateyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

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> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29] 789 822 (776) (342) (775)

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time. 775 761

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex, 771 776 171

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APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

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## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about
754 "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great
774 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who practices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag.
[828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have
[369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

•775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [761]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-hags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 776 825

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had been buried in jars. It was said that these jars also had human bones either beside them or under them, "and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner returned, the spirit of the slave, as a 'sold baka,' remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge." Nassau, *Fetishism in West Africa*, 71; Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 242–43.

### *A "Ghost" Story*

A certain negro church in the country was noted for its strange procedures during the late hours of the night. It was said that at one time a man was driving down the road about midnight, and as he approached the church he saw to his surprise that it was all lit up and the benches filled with people. Just as he drove up the lights went out, and all the people came out, crossed the road in front of him, and went into the cemetery which was just opposite the church on the other side of the road.

Another man was passing the church one night. Just as he got between the church and the cemetery, a ghost came out, caught his horse by the bit and stopped him.

These and similar stories were repeatedly heard throughout the neighborhood, so a young Negro man was not surprised when passing by the church one night to hear voices in the cemetery.

One would say, "You take this one; I take that one."

Then the other, "I take this one; you take that one."

So on they went over and over. The young Negro ran across the field to the Negro preacher's house. After waking the aged preacher, the young man told him "de good Lord an' de devil are in de cemetery a'dividin' up de people." He insisted that the old man go with him to the cemetery to see about it. Reluctantly, the old man consented.

Sure enough as they reached the gate, they heard, "You take this one; I take that one." "I take this one; you take that one." After this was repeated several times, one voice was heard to say, "Well, is that all?" the answer came, "Yes, all except those two at the gate."

That was enough for the two listening ones. The young Negro tells

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that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 [775] •

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery. [226]

### *Truss Gawd*

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle swampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: "Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

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17 113 *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 450–52, 458; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Kongo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 84; Laman, *Kongo* II: 130–31; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 246–47.

19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

171 113 771 •775 20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Mortuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

171 113 21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 80–84; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 828–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 110–14; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

[791] 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes; Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I TOO SCARED THEN

●775 People say if you look over your left shoulder you'll see ghosts. Tell about hag and all kind of thing like that. I look back over my left shoulder all the time, I don't see no ghost. I never see none, but I believe in ghost. Some call 'em ghost, some call 'em spooks, boodyman. That's the way we is call 'em when we was little—boodyman.

538 That old man, Michael Brown, he's always be to our house. I guess he's
775 'round about seventy-five. He is come over every Sunday and he sit down and talk about all these old-time thing. Talk about old-time ghost. He say when he go home nighttime he have to carry a stick and feel his way, 'specially if it dark, 'cause ghost is crowded in the path. He take stick go "whicha-whoocha-whoocha," clear his way. I be glad when he go home 'cause he talk about those thing and make me scared. Mama like to listen. Not me. I say, "Take your hat and go home." I too scared then. Ghost!

*Mr. James Mackey*

## 775 THEY'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FOOT

Some people died, their spirit walk around. If a person died happy, they don't bother you. But people died bad, well, they'll knock you off your foot.

775 One most knock me off my foot one night. I was coming out just about
781 dusk-dark and something come around me like a long black snake—tie around me. It shoot up and I ain't feel like I was onto the ground at all. Only way I came back in this world, a dog smell my scent and that dog bark. Didn't for that, I'd been *gone*.

When my foot touch ground, feel like I been off the ground. I go and curse 'em. They say if I pray I might of get off much better. The more I curse, the more I guess he try to knock me.

When the feeling get back to me, then I start to walk—taking m[illegible] just like when a person sick—and I could imagine he up behind me. M[illegible] on my head just tauten up. I got back home, gone to bed that night with *all* my clothes on.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

[789] If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

[534] And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

[534] My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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539 46. bɛk nju ɸɹäin / no ju kĩ silip si / ɛn dɛn ju ɸĩ ßiekɔ̃p / dispeit dõ
*back an-you frighten. No, you can't sleep, see, and then you*
*can't wake-up. The-spirit don't*

47. kɛ̃m bɛk tu ju / no ɪɸ de speit dõ kɔm bɛk tu ju / ju nuo ju
*come back to you. Now if the spirit don't come back to you,*
*you know you*

48. dɛ / ɪn ɔrə wud / ju ẽ die oßə ßirə / nɔdä tɹuɸ̣ / no /
*there. In other word, you ain't there over here.*
*Now-that truth, now*

49. no däs tɹuɸ̣ / ju gɪt dɪ bɔrbl ɛn ju ɹiɹem / däs tɹuɸ̣ /
*Now that's truth. You get the Bible and you read (3ɸ o).*
*That's truth.*

539 Listen well now, when you die, you see the soul of a man goes home
•775 to the Kingdom of God. But, your spirit remains here on earth. And if you were an evil-doer all of your life, then after you die, your spirit can continue doing the same kind of evil. Your soul is in heaven, but your spirit remains here on Earth with the body and that's the one that will harm you.

You see, I speak of this now because a great many people don't believe. They say that ghosts do not exist. But, they do exist. But now, since the automobile and other transportation overruns the highways, these spirits have sought refuge in the woods.

I remember one night we, my first cousin who lives up on the hill and I, were out in the river catching shrimp. And when we looked behind us, we saw a coffin, a natural coffin, Miss, shining down the crick. And when it came as close to us as the distance between you and that car, it disappeared into the marsh. The marsh separated from the burden and layed open. And I found myself sitting down without knowing when I became seated... Yes, it was a natural coffin swimming down the river. Now that was a spirit coming down the river. Well, after (my cousin) spoke with it, it turned sharply to one side, flattened the marsh and went up in the woods' edge only a distance as

539 775 far as from us to the crick, and Lord you could hear the confusion as it 'carried on' in those woods. Well, these things do exist.... No, everybody can't see them. But if you are sensitive you can feel them. I have a daughter in New York today, and she could on any evening, show you one ghost or two or three ghosts. 'See it standing right there, daddy!' But I couldn't see it to save my dying life. But she had always been frightened by ghosts. Finally, I took her to the hospital and I don't know what the hospital personnel did to her, but since that time she never has seen any more.... She must have been born with something to be able to see them because she could stand and see them plainly and naturally. Yes, well, a great many people, a great many people that one associates with now can see them. They can see them and point them out to you. 'See that person over there.' Yes.... Yes.... That's the old devil. Well now, you know that I often exaggerate, but sometimes you walk alone, and if you feel a tremor as if your hair feels strangely on edge...that's right. Well, you see (774) your spirit has touched that evil spirit and your spirit has come back to your body.

539 774 [513] For example, when you go to bed at night to sleep, to rest, the spirit leaves the body and when it leaves it goes in different parts of this country, all over the world. Sometimes when it comes in contact with an evil spirit, it runs back and scares you. You see, your spirit comes back and frightens you and you can neither sleep nor wake up. But if the spirit doesn't return to the body, you know that you are in heaven. In other words, you are not in the body here on earth. Now that's the truth. You get your Bible and read it. That is the truth.

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɒ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

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538 1. *snake* [sinick] ∅ → V / C __ C
193 2. *program* [pogɛm] r → ∅ / C __
[pogɛm] neutralization

21. The verb *say* is formulaic and appears after communicative verbs to introduce objective clauses or direct quotations. This practice is paralleled in Twi, [197] Ewe, Mende and Igbo (Turner 1949:211). Similar constructions occur in Jamaican Creole, Tamil, Bengal, and Marathi.

22. /nɔ/ is a negative resulting from the assimilation of /nɔ/ and /dɔ/, a form of the verb 'to be'. Before negative transformation, the sentence would read /ɪm dɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is lying.' After negative placement and assimilation, the sentence reads /ɪm nɔ lɔɪ/ 'he is not lying.'

23. /unɔ/ is a pronoun form marking second person in Gullah. It has an identical parallel in Igbo U, NU, (Turner 1949:227).

539 24. This speaker is deeply religious. The tripartite
•775 division of body, soul and spirit is unparalleled in Euro-
775 pean religions. I was informed by an Igbo consultant that this concept is widespread in West Africa. According to this Gullah speaker, the spirit remains on earth with the body after death, but the soul progresses home to the kingdom of God. Depending on the deceased person's life-
539 style, the earthly spirit may be good or evil. In life,
774 the spirit leaves the body periodically to roam and wander

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Liza* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes that most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

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192 used in the sense of hunger or want, or like the proverbial wolf: "Haffuh wu'k haa'd fuh keep Stepney frum de do'."

[175] *Plat-eye* signifies a ghastly and ghostly night apparition which it is extremely dangerous, even fatal, to meet or see, common to the Georgetown section of the coast. *Plat-eye prowl* is the vivid phrase for the depth of night when it is ill to be abroad.

Gullah English is full of picturesque, interesting words and phrases. Consider, for example, the following: *schemy; speckly; settle' 'ooman*, a woman of a certain age, not a flapper; *newfanglety; disgustuss; foot* for leg: "Deer hab long foot, him run fas'; Cootuh hab shawt foot, him trabble slow"; *buckra*, white man, then simply "white," as *buckra yam*, white potato, *buckra chalk*, white chalk; *altwo*, both, each; *peruse*, to saunter, walk slowly, "Da' gal him bin peruse 'long de road, en 'e nebbuh study 'bout nutt'n"; *ractify*, first "to break," as "Da' buggy ractify," then "to become confused" (mentally), "Da' 'ooman ractify een 'e min'"; *gunjuh* (from gingerbread), the scalloped molasses cakes sold in stores; *Mass, Mas*, (Master) when used with the name: *Mass' John, Mass' Rafe; maussuh* when used without the name, as "Da' muh maussah";* also *Maussuh Jedus*, but *Mastuh* for God alone. *Ox*, plural, "two ox"; *oxin*, singular, "one oxin." *Specify*, to make *good*, usually in the negative *cyan' specify*, can't make good; of a poor wife, "she cyan' specify"; of trousers, "de britchiz bus', 'e yent specify."

*Quizzit*, to ask, to question.

[535] *To shout*, not used of exclamation or outcry but of a peculiar religious dance† of the primitive Negro Christians

[539] Whoga, whoga, whogalor, da hombarnorta, sundundilly?
Coo me sormber norty sundundilly indelarum.
("De Tiger an' de Nyung Lady.")

Olawin! Olawin!
Odatie-tie-tie!
(De Wolf, de Rabbit an' de Whale's Eggs.)

*"Mass' Sam tell we ol' Maussa say, 'Sen' Mass' Henry hat-o home.'" Bennett, II, 6.

[533] †For an exposition of the "shout song" see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 32-35; and for a first-hand description see *Slave Songs of the United States*, XII-XV, taken from the N. Y. *Nation*, May 30, 1867.
Compare Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press, 1925, p. 269.

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marked by ecstatic motion and hysterical physical rhythms.

*Too* in the sense of "very."

*Sometime*, inconstant, unsure: "Dem nyoung gal is a sometime t'ing."

*Nyam*, in the sense of eat."

*Lahgin'*, and *swongger*, to assume self importance, to put on airs. Both of these seem pure Negro, unless the first is from 'largin', enlarging (?); and the second from swagger, compare swank.

*Mongkey-nut* for cocoa-nut, probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head.

*Soon* for early, as a *soon brukwuss*, a *soon staa't*, a *soon man*. Thence, as noted by Mr. Bennett,[33] arises the first division of the Negro's day; *soon er mo'nin'*; after which follows *fus' fowl-crowin'*, *day-clean*, *sun-up*, *fus' an' las' ho'n blowin'*, *fo'noon res'*, *attanoon*, *de sun duh lean*, *de sun duh lean fuh down*, *sun-down*, *deep-dus'*, *ebenin'*, *can'le-lightin'*, *night-time*, *platt-eye prowl*, and *hag-hollerin'*."[34]

### *Phrases*

*Crack 'e bret'* (or *crack 'e teet'*), crack his breath or teeth, i.e., say something.

*Long-mout'*, surly or contemptuous pushing out of lips.

*Shut-mout'* (adj.) or *tie up 'e mout'* (verb), secretive, ill-natured, not saying anything.

*Onrabble 'e mout'*, unravel his mouth, i.e., loosen up in conversation.

*W'ich en' w'y talk*, which and why talk, i.e., contradictory, inconsistent talk.

*She-she talk*, used of feminine loquacity. This phrase looks, by the way, like a correct use of the feminine gender,

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[33] Mr. Williams' suggestion is that *nyam* comes from *yam tetter* (yam potato) with intrusive *n* before *y* sound. Williams, *De Ole Plantation*, *VI*. An improbable derivation. Professor W. A. Craigie derives it from African *nyam*—to eat: *n'yam*—food, and compares Portuguese African *igname*—the yam.

[34] I, 342.

[154]
[175]

[35] Midnight. Hags are witches, and platt-eyes diabolical spirits of the mist. *Loc cit.*, 342.

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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(954) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
(775) kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
567 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
(177) to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

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175 her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him
567 by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went
764 to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

764 In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed
171 in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our
764 Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine
[175] torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away
[764] a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress,
[171] you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored
764 man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in
171 piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry
175 it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[175] [28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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764 [175] [176] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

[178] [175] In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in Batouala, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

48 562 178 The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else [764] walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches, the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.

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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[18] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

787 763 775

763 171

On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 [764]

Susyanna (Illustration 29) learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[18] *As exemplified in the song:* "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.

A, [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

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## RIDE ON CONQUERING KING

53 763 787 •795 53

As mentioned elsewhere, this is a good example of the question-and-answer type of song and was used at a "settin'-up" in accordance with the custom of sending messages by the dying to relations and friends in the other world.[18]

If you see my mother
Oh yes.
Won't you tell her for me
Oh yes.
I'm a ridin' my horse in the battle-field
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

Chorus: Ride on King
Ride on King
Ride on Conquering King
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

[18] All of them are named in lengthening the song.

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em [789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people 774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see 787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day [115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

• 776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] 789 Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. 754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69c]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two 115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were [301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;[8] his [789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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775 right at muh side.[59] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
[789] yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

[115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he
787 wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[59]

• 776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock,
787 he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed. We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a
787 noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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754 115 [291] [301] Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in appearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass earrings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She 754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days [593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said. 775 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um 776 till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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SPRINGFIELD

787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a
•776 ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We
alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis
spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure,
I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk
down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe
[115] superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced
him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttu didn do no
good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell
755 me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz
fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint
uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh
uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut
dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets
crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey
see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh
wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5]
She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh
skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it
entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud
aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh
759 folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh op-
purate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an
night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too.
She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
829 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the following story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

[755]

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face
567 brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin
829 bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut
[115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [69]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we
776

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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775 •776 were informed that a variety of spirits were said to be seen on the island. These, it seemed, took different sizes and shapes and frequently appeared to the local residents.[54, 55, 59]

"Sometimes," said Celia, "doze spirits put spells on yuh, fix yuh."

754 "Spirits ain duh only ones," added Peter McQueen. "Folks kin wuk wid cunjuh too.[15] Ain dasso, Uncle Robert?"

"Dasso," Uncle Robert nodded sagely. "Muh own brud-duh wuz cunjuhed. He hab a spell put on um. He hab fits all duh time—hydrophobical fits—act lak he crazy. Nuttn we do hep im, an attuh a few yeahs he die."

754 "Only ting yuh kin do tuh keep frum bein cunjuhed is
789 tuh carry a han," said Peter. "Mos folks tote a han wid um."[8, 12, a, c, d]

"Plenty folks kin fix yuh wid a han dey make deysef," said another voice.

754 "What are the charms made of?" we wanted to know.

"Haiah," "Nails,"[10] "Frum duh cloze" were the various responses and Celia enlarged on this information. "Ef yuh hab a enemy, nebuh let um git a piece uh yuh cloze. An yuh bun yuh haiah an yuh nail parins. Dey kin sho make pow-uhful han frum deze."

We inquired if many persons made a profession of this, and Peter informed us, "Sometimes dey git um frum a root doctuh."[8a, d, 48]

"Duh root doctuh kin hep yuh too," added Uncle Robert.
759 "Dey is powful smaht. I use tuh heah tell ub a root man
789 name Smaht McCall.[6, 48] Ef yuh git in any trouble, yuh jis go see um an he git yuh out ub it. Deah wuz a man wut got rested. He wuz plenty skeah bout wut would happen tuh um. He go see Smaht McCall an Smaht say not tuh worry cuz he would hep um. Duh day uh duh trial come an wen dey try duh case, a buzzud fly in duh cote house win-duh.[68b] He fly roun. Den he light on duh jedge desk. Well,

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

775 787 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[61]

•776 787 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick." [753]

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

789 754 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtection,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[?77] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body
789 cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
825 frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
759 unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

795 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[69] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
[825] mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it."

795 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
• 796 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
787 obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] [775] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-764 yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at 782 duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see •776 um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah 787 road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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113 surrounding area see Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah"; and Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

4. BCD Council of Governments, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 2.

5. Waccamaw Regional Planning and Development Council, *Waccamaw Regional Housing Element*, 1977, p. 8.

6. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 21.

491 7. The residents of Sandy Island have requested a bridge from the local government, but at this writing none is expected in the near future. At present all building [505] materials, appliances, vehicles, and the like must be brought from the mainland by barge. And though residents enjoy the seclusion during the spring and summer, they complain—the children particularly—about being ferried across the river during the freezing rains that frequent the Carolina coast in winter.

113 8. For a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the Sea Island area see Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930); Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect;* Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); and Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1690 through the Stone Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

• 776 9. Many hags, ghosts, and spirits are thought to haunt these highways, and some 778 islanders fear them much more than the alligators, wolves, rattlesnakes, and other creatures which may prowl along the swamp roads at night.

113 10. Merrill G. Christophersen, *Biography of an Island* (Fennimore, Wis.: Westburg Assoc., 1976).

162 11. Sandy Island, in Georgetown County, is inhabited entirely by African-Americans. However, some Sea Islands just north of Charleston and closer to the coast, such as Pawleys, Sullivans, and the Isle of Palms, are peopled primarily by whites.

113 12. Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 158–59.

13. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 33.

113 14. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. J. Furst Co., 1931), pp. 359–60. For further discussion of the slave trade in the Sea Island area see 567 Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1940; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973) p. xviii; Wood, *Black Majority;* and Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*.

113 15. BCD, *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, p. 19.

16. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, p. 14.

17. Ibid., p. 13.

18. Ibid., p. 18.

19. June Manning Thomas, "The Impact of Corporate Tourism on Gullah Blacks: Notes on Issues of Employment," *Phylon* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 4, 5.

20. BCD, *Report on Economically Less Developed Areas*, pp. 13, 17.

21. Thomas, "Impact of Corporate Tourism," p. 6.

22. Quoted in Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Du-

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764 775 [171] Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 171 823 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Africa, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

• 776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plat-eyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

776 754

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me. 776 754

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

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Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

775 761

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex,

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representing honor, constancy, harmony, and perfection, while humanity occupied the center, ever striving to be godlike through a sense of love, community, kinship, and cooperation. In addition, the good and bad of the spirit world existed in both traditions although it was far more complex for Africans than for Gullahs. These beings included superhumans, animals, and objects without biological life.[10] Gullahs applied the African ontology, adapted Christianity and bondage to it, and created a religion that employed spirituality as a means of self-preservation and as a vital component of community life. It is, then, to the Gullahs' credit that though circumstances prevented them from rising up against slavery, they did not succumb to white cultural domination. Instead, they successfully rose above many of the negative ingredients of Christianity while assimilating certain other attributes which were synthesized with African culture. In bondage, Gullahs achieved elevation on the level of personal culture and the molding of community values. The edifying qualities of Gullah religious belief must be seen as having contributed much to that achievement, just as an element of truth must be recognized in the assertion that insofar as people develop their own culture they are not slaves.[11]

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APPENDIX D

# The Deity

776 [533] The Gullahs' concept of the deity was not that of a God of wrath, but one of love and mercy. In Gullah music, phrases such as "Kind Jesus," or "In the mornin' when I rise, tell my Jesus Huddy ho," indicate that for these slaves Christ was a warm personal friend, as well as a fellow sufferer. Similarly, the Gullahs' prayers also express how they viewed their relationship with God. Prayer was considered actual communication with Jesus, and He was expected to listen and hopefully answer the appeal in some way or another. In such verbal expressions the supplicator reveals inner ideas of the deity. In a study done among the Gullahs in the 1930s, it was observed that by far the most prominent attribute of the deity in prayers was merciful, being mentioned 189 times as opposed to a total of 119 times for all the other attributes ranging from loving to glorious. No description suggesting wrath or vengeance was among the characteristics attributed to the deity.[1] In the following prayer, recorded during the Civil War, one is able to observe the Gullahs' poetic imagery, spirituality, sense of community, and their attitude toward the deity:

776 782

### *Aunt Jane's Prayer*

782 539 776 Der Maussuh Jesus, we all uns beg Ooner (you) come make us a call dis yere day. We is nuttin' but poor Etiopian women and people ain't t'ink much 'bout we. We ain't trust ask any of dem great high people for come to we church, but do' you is de one great Maussuh, great too much dan Maussuh Linkum, you ain't shame to care for we African people.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. De sun, 'he hot too much, de road am dat long and boggy (sandy) and we ain't got no buggy, for send and fetch Ooner. But Maussuh, yo' 'member how yo' walked dat hard walk up Calvary and ain't

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weary but t'ink about we all dat way. We know you ain't weary for to come to we. We pick out de torns, de prickles, de brier, de backslidin' and de quarrel and de sin out of yo' path so dey shan't hur Ooner pierce feet no mo'.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. We all luns ain't got no good cool water for give yo' when yo' t'irsty. You know, Maussuh, de drought so long, and de well so low, ain't nuttin' but mud to drink. But we gine to take de 'munion cup and fill it wid de tear ob repentence and love clean out ob we heart. Dat all we hab to gib yo', good Maussuh.

An' Maussuh Jesus, you say you gwine stand to de door and knock. But you ain't gwine stand at we door, Maussuh, and knock. We sets de door plum open for yo' and watch up de road for see you.

Sisters (turning to the other women in the church), what for you'all ain't open de door so Maussuh know He welcome? (One woman rose quietly from her knees and set the church door wide.)

Come Maussuh Jesus come! We know you is near, we heart is all just tremble, tremble, we so glad for hab yo' here. And Maussuh, we church ain't good 'nuff for yo' to sit down in, but stop by de door jes' one minute, dear Maussuh Jesus, and whisper one word to we heart—one good word—we do listen—Maussuh.[2]

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be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [761]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-bags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 776 825

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•776 825 *Conjure-horses* and *Spirit-bears*—have not been heard of since the War between the States. Old-time Negroes say that a conjure-horse could follow a haunted person for miles, traveling well over the tree tops all the way. They breathed fire out of their nostrils, and when they passed by, the sound of hooves beating against some ghostly substance filled the air. Spirit-bears had long shaggy black hair, and mouths like caverns from which enormous red tongues, dripping with blood, protruded. They could climb the tallest tree on Edisto.

LETTERED REFERENCES

000 [a]The Kuranko also believe that such places as the bush, rivers, and mountains are the domain of the "Nyenne" spirits. The nyenne are quasi-humans, some of whom are sympathetic toward humans while others are harmful. Certain individuals are reputed to have special gifts of vision that enable them to see and make contact with the nyenne and even to secure their help in some undertaking. Similarly, the Limba believe that the bush is the domain of a group of spirits who cannot be seen except by those people who are born with "double eyes" or a special "clear spiritual vision." Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34–35; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 22.

[b]Among the Kuranko of Sierra Leone, there is a belief that certain people have the power of transforming themselves into animals in order to harm others. These "shape shifters" are greatly feared and embody all of the anti-social behavior which the Kuranko people try to combat. See Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 22.

[c]In African society, certain men are considered very proficient in the curative art. They are said to have more power over spirits than others have and do not necessarily use this power for positive ends. They can heal, foretell the future, and "change a thing into something else or a man into a lower animal, or a tree or anything." Their medicine is said to consist of charms, grasses, herbs, and barks taken from the bush. It is the spirit dwelling within these men which gives them their power. The Africans say that without the spirit these "magicians," "healers," and "fortune tellers" could do nothing. Allen Wolsey, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Their Customs, Religion and Folklore*

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that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 (775)

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery. [226]

### *Truss Gawd*

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle swampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: "Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

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825
(533)

"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

> 'Gawd will take care ob me.
> Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
> Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he vanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm. I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



"Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulphur. Dey is say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. No'm. Dey ain fer trubble me sense dat one time. Uncle Murphy he witch doctor, en he bin tell me how fer fend em off. Dat man full ob knowledge. He must hap Gawd mind in em. So I totes meh powder en sulphur en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd." 539 776 825 789

[p. 354 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

(789) If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

(534) And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

(534) My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

19 speakers other than those consulted for the pronominal count. Similarly, *he own* and *she own* are often heard and were recorded by Turner (1949) and Cunningham (1970).

193 11. The neuter possessive pronouns are excluded from
128 this analysis because they occurred too infrequently in the data. Nichols (1976) also notes the infrequency with which they appeared in her study.

19 12. Hancock's word list supplies most of the means for comparison of words in the Atlantic creoles unless specified otherwise. (Hancock 1970:7-72).

194 13. The selection of a rounded or unrounded variant of /ɔ/ has not yet been associated with factors of style, sex, age or other variables.

539 14. *Hag* has an unusual meaning for the Islanders.
776 It can mean a person, man or woman, dead or alive. For
775 this narrative, it is used to refer to a haunted house—a house inhabited by spirits or one living person with unusual powers.

115 15. This consultant's speech exemplifies the system
193 of rule changes discussed earlier. He consistently uses the English past tense marker along with the Creole
539 *was bin*. The fact that *was* is FOLLOWED by *bin* is an indication that the Creole form is the self-correction and that the speaker relies more heavily on the Creole form to make himself understood.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



764 [775] [776] [178] [775] seen on the island. Later he returned with three men to get his ox. This time the dog did not appear—but the cart went back empty.

In the Sapelo burying ground I have seen many evidences of the African custom of placing useful articles on the tops of graves. The Negroes generally say they are for ornamentation, but on Sapelo I was told that the alarm clocks—of which there were many—are for the purpose of waking the dead at Doomsday. At the Petersville graveyard, lamps and electric-light bulbs are as popular as cups and pitchers.

764 171 Work also tells us in the above-mentioned article that "Among the Zulus, pottery is broken by the widow over the grave," [27] and René Maran, in *Batouala*, speaks of the same custom, specifying that the dead man's pots are placed upon his clothing. With his easy chair on top of everything, he is prepared for living the life of the dead. The pictures that accompany an article on "Fetishism in Congo Land" [28] by E. J. Glave, one of Stanley's pioneer officers, give positive proof of the origin of the custom. One, portraying the grave of a Congo Chieftain, shows the same type of decoration that is in use among our Southern rural Negroes. In addition, the author gives a picture of a distorted "charm root" which explains the use of eccentric wood growths in the decoration of the Negro graveyard at Sunbury. Headstones like the cement work found in the Sunbury yard, are a modern innovation. Mungo Park tells us that he "never observed that any stone was placed over the grave, as a monument or memorial." The noticeable lack of interest displayed by our Negroes in providing any sort of marker for their dead, other than a couple of stakes which soon disappear, may be accounted for in this way.

48 562 178 [764] The custom observed by the men, in walking apart from the women, to a baptism and to a "buryin'," is apparently based on an African tradition. Maran tells us: "It is not right to walk side by side. A custom as old as the Negro, dictated single file." To this day older members of the race walk single file—the men in front. In the old-time funeral processions the women and children followed the men, or else walked on the opposite side of the road—now they ride in automobiles. In many Negro churches the men sit on the left side, the women on the right.[29]

[27] Our Southern Indians made holes in the bottom of the pots they put in graves, so that the spirit of the pot could accompany the spirit of the dead man to the other world.

[28] Century, April, 1891.

[29] In the Friends Meeting I attended in my youth, the women sat on the left side of the meeting-house and the men on the right.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

## INTRODUCTION

121 Repeated visits were necessary to complete the studies. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, however, each report is (124) presented as the result of one visit of continuous interviews. Though this necessitated telescoping the time element, it in no way affects the material contributed by the persons interviewed.

178 Today sorcery is still practiced. Modern root doctors, visited frequently by their superstitious clients, perform 754 mystic rites and promise to work miracles and cures. Many (759) coastal Negroes view adversity not as the workings of fate but as the revenge of a personal enemy brought about by the (777) mystic working of the conjure doctor. To this type of Negro there is little talk of "bad luck." To him it is "bad mouth" set against him by an enemy.

771 It is understandable that the older coastal Negro's use of ceremony and even the ordinary routine of his daily life are influenced profoundly by his beliefs. His imagination continues to crowd his world with spirits, both good and evil. Spirits of the departed are still believed to make frequent visitations to the earth and are as real to this type of Negro as his next door neighbor. Into his Christian ceremonies these superstitions and customs have been injected, lending a distinctiveness not found in many of the white man's ceremonies.

178 As the field of opportunity widens for the Negro and as his culture begins to approximate that of his white neighbor, 121 it is among this fast vanishing type that the remnants of folk memories still live, without which this collection of source material could not have been compiled.

MARY GRANGER, *District Supervisor*
Georgia Writers' Project

Savannah, Georgia
November 4, 1940.

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Georgia



754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well
[761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownde'.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the
[574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will
787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the
[845] other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of
burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion
are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves,
rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old
man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural.
He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
775 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, e] I kin see
people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh
libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is
in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey
kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way
frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh
wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh
use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut
hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass
wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis
magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69c] I hab a
uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh
win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a
time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis
walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den
he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old
Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of
this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
• [777] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck
piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around
many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, a, d]

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115 632 [301] per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

• 777 "I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place." [15]

754 "Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I [301] weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other [789] charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm." [8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove
Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee"
(342 to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
(363 ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting
the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351 but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green
with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is deco-
rated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

887 During week days, with many persons away at work in
other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found
at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small
children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth
on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older work-
ers had occupied the same cabins given to them before eman-
cipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
foods are considered to bring bad luck.

•777 "I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I
dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
• 777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our attention. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden
532 figures (Plate Ia, Ib). A He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41i] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). A One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
[115] nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July."[20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[65] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
• [777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate

000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[26] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[27] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

•777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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•777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

[533] "'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh 777 825 sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she [759] feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

754 759 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

"No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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115 829 duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

787 When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

845 They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes. deah's lots uh dem [791] tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all [777] deah libes.[68] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

824 777 "But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34c] said Susie.

764 609 In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to 764 their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey [775] alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

115 "I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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674
682
[533]
[539]

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

Dey got Bo-Cat in jail
Bout tuh hang im by duh rail
It a shame how Bo-Cat done he wife.

[115] One of the Pin Point women, Margaret Snead,* recalls vividly the events of the De Lancy crime.

"Wy, duh night fo Catherine De Lanzy wuz kill, she spen it in town wid me," said Margaret Snead. "Attuh dat night I didn see uh no mo. People frum duh Pint come inquirin bout uh but nobody seem tuh know nuttn bout uh weahbouts. Bout two weeks latuh, a pahty uh wite mens out huntin come cross duh body at Raccoon Keys. Dis a ilun way beyon Hell's Gate. Mus be mohn twenny miles frum duh Pint. I dohn see as how nobody could carry a pusson dat fah jis tuh murduh em. Anyways, duh body wuz brung tuh duh city, an at duh unduhtakuh's office people went in tuh see ef dey could dentify it. Dis a hahd ting tuh do. She bin in duh watuh fuh days an days fo a high tide wash duh cawpse on sho. Duh body wuz caught tween two logs weah duh buzzuds went tuh wuk on it.

"I membuh a great big cawn wich she use tuh suffuh wid but couldn nebuh git rid ub. So I went in an had a look at duh foot, an sho nuff deah wuz dat cawn jis lak it use tuh be wen she wuz libe.

"Her ole huzbun, Limbrick De Lanzy, already wuz rested, an he git sen up fuh life. It wuz Friday, May duh thuteent, dat ole Limbrick carried Catherine off down duh ribbuh an murduh uh. A double bad luck, Friday an duh thuteent,[21] das wy dey make up duh song."

• [777]

674 "Was the body buried at Pin Point?" we were interested to know.

682 "Yes, it wuz, but we didn hab no settin-up cuz duh body
764 wuz too fah gone. Dat wuz sad. Ebrybody lub Catherine an fuh uh tuh die an be buried widout a settin-up aw lettin

* *Margaret Snead, Pin Point.*

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764 "No, I dohn pay much mine tuh names," said Margaret
[777] Snead. "But I do pay tention tuh bad luck dates. Look uh
po Catherine De Lanzy, depribe ub all duh propuh tings dat
come fo burial, cuz it wuz a double bad luck date. Folks at
[775] duh Pint do say dat uh spirit nebuh will res in duh grabe." [36]

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

• 777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors[48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but often the people take matters in their own hands and by
(759) means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh dea-
796 cons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh
[533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck* and to give warning
789 by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,e] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died
[789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[60c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat."[22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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SUNBURY

795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
(292) buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
(783) tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
• (777) hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
(609) beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh[48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 789 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," interposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings."[8]

527 535 [178] Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo."[28]

"We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk."[17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it [772] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body [789] cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes [825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol- [759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle 775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye 776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's 775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, 775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh 764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the 782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [39]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs
535 back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[21]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[24] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [28]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [38]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [62]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they •777

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262 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
777 udduh tings." [65]

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a while longer to talk. The household was an unusually contented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
[737] satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension. "Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
581 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
587 joined the group. She confided that she had been married to one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
[593] so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one. He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently, was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
342 A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
[343] house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair. In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large
231

* *Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.*

115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring ne neck an cook um
[782] fuh duh feas.[35a] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[775] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit tuh hab a las good meal.[38] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.

[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[44] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

777 The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side dub house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us, "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

Baker told us that many people in the section refused to eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

"Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

795 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[59] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
[825] buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69e] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[12b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
•777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[12a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[20]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[20] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a wash-stand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14)[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you *think* you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 755 [825] One woman reproved a member of the research staff because he threw away two rats which had been killed in a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same [826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. [827] Another woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 774 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue unless it is called. [777] It is considered bad luck to let a baby be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed [764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to [789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr. 854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a 774 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in- 789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 [171] As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[22] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[778] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[432] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found
[755] for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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175 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the
771 Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "Gen-
799 eral Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school
(533) children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:
(539)

> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
> .....
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
> .....
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
> .....
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

175 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their
771 attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude to-
779 ward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood
795 the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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the evergreens, typical of Christ's life and teachings. They gave breathless attention to all this, ejaculating from time to time, "My Lord! is dat so?"
I know now they understood very little of all I said, but no speaker ever had more interested and attentive listeners. When I sat down, one of the leaders chanted rather than spoke a touching prayer, in which he styled me his "dear imperial preacher."
Then the white friends sang,—"Joy to the world, the Lord has come."
By this time the entire audience was aroused and ready to pray and sing all night. In each prayer the speaker tried to introduce, in his uncouth phraseology, some of the passages of Scripture he had heard read.[5]

175 771 779 795

Though lacking a basic background regarding the teachings and historical importance of Christ, Gullahs strongly identified with his suffering, crucifixtion, and resurrection. This, to them, was Christianity, and since they felt their earthly lives so closely paralleled that of Jesus, becoming "Christians" was for Gullahs somewhat of an apocalyptic fulfillment. In fact, much of the essence of their understanding of Protestant religion centered around Jesus and His followers. Other writers have suggested that African-American slaves saw themselves primarily in the same light as the Children of Israel. This association certainly inspired some of the Charleston rebels in 1822, as already discussed. Also, the commander of Gullah troops, Thomas Higginson, stated that the men's memories were a "vast, bewildered chaos of Jewish history and biography," and that most great events from the past, up to "the American Revolution, they instinctively attributed to Moses." How the experience of the Jews aroused the Gullahs was witnessed by a Civil War missionary:

Last week I read to the *church full* the account of the escape of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. I was amazed at the impression it seemed to make. The remarks the old men made were graphic and eloquent. It made them recount with praise to God their escape. The little church seemed like dreamland to me almost when they got stirred to talk.[6]

Yet most Gullahs conceptualization of Christianity centered on the experiences of Jesus rather than the Jews, as is evident in their songs, prayers, and conversations. The militant nationalism so strongly associated with the Jewish struggle was a prominent ideology of Christian-oriented slaves during the Vesey Conspiracy but was not a major orientation in Gullah religion. Instead, as far as Christianity was concerned, Gullahs relied on a conviction that a moral wrong had been committed

175 771 779

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she
567 had the following dialogue:

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
779
796

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witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She noticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but Maurice's story was a tragic one: 175 771 779 796

His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' rationalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ, were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival. 175 771 779

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative inclinations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by General David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much: 175 771 779 [701]

We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature."

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith.

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Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.
113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[195] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to
[199] baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[193] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31,
[199] 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.
113 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombe*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### 8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to
175 be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombe: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn.,
113 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the
799 Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Univer-
113 sities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.
799 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought*
195 *from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779)

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–81. (795)

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 671.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple & Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 173 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. (701)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU CAN BE BLACK OR SCARLET

829 Now some people after slavery times think to themselves, "If I see a white and he needs help, but they didn't tell me to do it, I wouldn't do it anymore." But me, I go there and they ain't call me neither. He need help and his family need it, and that's the reason God help some people to get along so good.

I treat everybody right; my heart open for all. And that's why people treat me well for it. That's right! Sometime I pick the bean and I say, "I ought to give 'em a quart of bean." Well, when I send that bean, how they glad.

I don't care what kind of people, I going there and help 'em. I do it, sir. I got proof! You can be black or scarlet but it don't make no difference. The [M1] pure in heart shall see God.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## NOW THE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT WHITE PEOPLE

829 177 When I were growing up, I must have seen one white man in my life. And I was so scared of that white man I never see his face. You might see but two white man in the whole Johns Island then. But now the island is full of white people. There so many white people it seem like there always one now. Before then you wouldn't see no white people there in six or seven months. But now, the world is nothing but white people. White people!

829 177 The Bible says you must love your fellow mans, 'gardless of what color you are, you must love 'em. Ain't no need for I love my color, hate you. 'Cause God don't please with it. 'Cause we all is God's children. We must love one another.

829 177 The church doesn't do a thing for you no more than preach a sermon. That's all the preacher do for you. But you got to live a life living right here. The way you walk and the way you talk, the way your action—there's your sermon right there. You preaching your sermon before you die.

The way you treat people, that's your heaven right there. Now if you born dumb, you just dumb. If you're a mean person all your life, you're just a mean person; people can't say good for you. If you're a good person all your life, that's all people will say is he's a good person. Got to first have heaven here before you have Heaven. If you have speck in your heart, you cannot get in God's kingdom. I never been up there yet, but I feel about it.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION

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I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

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Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Mary Pinckney* [4]

## I TOO SCARED THEN

795 People say if you look over your left shoulder you'll see ghosts. Tell about hag and all kind of thing like that. I look back over my left shoulder all the time, I don't see no ghost. I never see none, but I believe in ghost. Some call 'em ghost, some call 'em spooks, boodyman. That's the way we is call 'em when we was little—boodyman.

538 That old man, Michael Brown, he's always be to our house. I guess he's
795 'round about seventy-five. He is come over every Sunday and he sit down and talk about all these old-time thing. Talk about old-time ghost. He say when he go home nighttime he have to carry a stick and feel his way, 'specially if it dark, 'cause ghost is crowded in the path. He take stick go "whicha-whoocha-whoocha," clear his way. I be glad when he go home 'cause he talk about those thing and make me scared. Mama like to listen. Not me. I say, "Take your hat and go home." I too scared then. Ghost!

*Mr. James Mackey*

## 795 THEY'LL KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FOOT

Some people died, their spirit walk around. If a person died happy, they don't bother you. But people died bad, well, they'll knock you off your foot.

795 One most knock me off my foot one night. I was coming out just about
●781 dusk-dark and something come around me like a long black snake—tie around me. It shoot up and I ain't feel like I was onto the ground at all. Only way I came back in this world, a dog smell my scent and that dog bark. Didn't for that, I'd been *gone*.

When my foot touch ground, feel like I been off the ground. I go and curse 'em. They say if I pray I might of get off much better. The more I curse, the more I guess he try to knock me.

When the feeling get back to me, then I start to walk—taking my time just like when a person sick—and I could imagine he up behind me. My hair on my head just tauten up. I got back home, gone to bed that night with *all* my clothes on.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## LIVIN' HUMBLE

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"Gettin' religion" is a soul-stirring matter with the Negro. When he feels the serious need of salvation he responds to the appeal of the minister to come forward to the "Mou'ners' Bench"—also called the "Anxious" or "Mercy Seat." There, at the bench directly in front of the pulpit, he kneels while the congregation sings an appropriate song. In the old days he wandered at night until he managed to "come through." Many lines in the oldest songs refer to customs that are now practically obsolete. I cannot imagine a young Negro today wandering alone at night until his "head got wet by the mid'l-night dew."

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Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Oh po' moanuh won't chew jus' believe
Christ is a waitin' to receive
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
King Jesus camp in nuh middle uv the air
None but tuh righteous shall git thah
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
O my head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
My head got wet by the mid'l-night dew
I pray to my God until I come through
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Livin' 'umble, livin' 'umble
Leave my burden at the foot of the hill
Ever since I been converted
I been tryin' to live 'umble.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT

533 •781 From the reference to "Mornin' star was a witness too" and "I heard a voice an' I saw no one," followed by "It mus' be Jesus passin' by," it is apparent that this unusual version of "Swing Low" was another of the songs appropriate to the "comin' through" of "sinners," who had agonized at night in order to achieve the proper exaltation.

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Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Oh swing low—Oh swing low
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
It mus' be Jesus passin' by
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low in the Eas'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
I heard a voice an' I saw no one
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low in the Wes'
swing low
Swing low chariot
swing low
Swing low chariot swing low
Mornin' star was a witness too
Oh swing low sweet chariot swing low.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent that she is seized with violent convulsions.

Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 825 Grapevine Avenue.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

•782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
115 tions of the old people in her family. She told us the follow-
829 ing story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location •782 in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz 776 cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I 787 look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in re- [115] lation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root [755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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## SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, e]

791 794 783 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We [533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 202 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[37b, e] [782] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[59b, e]

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[22] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[13a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies." [15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[782] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call
[783] that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
[533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[34] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[24] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [44] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping
[533] her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[?77] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body
[789] cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, e] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [35]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [36]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[25] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people 534 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. 202 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [792] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. _Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
(553) There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up con-
jure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Afri-
cans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus
O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He
call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm
fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the
grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a
small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-
five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline
features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
829 the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey
gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh
forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink
in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
•782 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an
829 bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she
say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud
she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz
'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen,
ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson
bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab
somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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115 longs tuh Huger Barrett an Ise one uh duh bes fiel hans on
567 Picayune Plantation."

We interrupted the old woman's reminiscences about
764 plantation days to question her about funeral customs.

"We didn alluz hab too much time fuh big fewnul in dem
[567] days cuz deah wuz wuk tuh be done an ef yuh ain do yuh wuk, yuh git whipped. Lots uh time dey jis dig a hole in duh groun an put duh body in it, but wenebuh we kin, we hab a settin-up."

We asked Aunty Jane if they used to provide plenty of food for the mourners.

"Yes'm, dey sho did hab regluh feastes in dem days, but
[178] tuhday, at mos settin-ups, yuh dohn git nuttn but coffee an bread.[37b, c] Den dey would cook a regluh meal an dey would kill a chicken in front uh duh doe, wring he neck an cook um fuh duh feas.[35e] Den wen we all finish, we take wut victuals
[782] lef an put it in a dish by duh chimley an das fuh duh sperrit
[775] tuh hab a las good meal.[56] We cubbuh up duh dish an deah's many a time Ise heah dat sperrit lif um. We ain preach duh suhmon wen we bury um but we waits a wile so's all duh relations kin come."

"Is it bad luck to steal from a grave?" we wanted to know.
[777] "Bad luck?" repeated Aunty Jane. "Sho it bad luck.
[782] Dem dishes an bottles wut put on duh grabe is fuh duh sper-
[775] rit an it ain fuh nobody tuh tech um.[64] Das fuh duh sperrit tuh feel at home.[47] Wen he die fah off, we bring um home tuh bury um, dohn leh no strainjuh be bury wid um. Yuh gib people wut ain belong tuh yuh anudduh piece uh groun tuh be bury in.[3] We alluz hab two fewnul fuh duh pusson. We hab duh regluh fewnul wen yuh die. Den once a yeah we
[769] hab one big preachin fuh ebrybody wut die dat yeah."[43]

Aunty Jane looked up slyly when we asked her if she be-
754 lieved in conjure.

"I ain belieb in um muhsef but deah's plenty wut do. Ise had Ellen Hammond libin wid me. She die las yeah. She sho

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sun-
782 rise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab [775] plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-764 yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at •782 duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh dus. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see 776 um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah 787 road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

SAPELO ISLAND

539 wuk fuh lizzud, an he wahn it bad. One day wen lizzud not at home, rabbit, he sneak up, an he steal lizzud sode. He laf tuh hesef cuz he got da sode. He take da sode tuh he fiel an he staht it tuh wuk. He tink he know duh wuds dat lizzud say tuh sode, an he call, 'Go-ee-tell.' Sode staht wukin. Pretty soon, sode finish duh crop, an rabbit wahn um tuh stop. Sode comin too close tuh noo wintuh crop wut rabbit got tuh hab fuh lib on. So rabbit he yell, 'Go-ee-tell' in loud voice, and sode he wuk all duh fastuh. He cut down ebryting rabbit hab an ain leab nuttn. Lizzud who bin hidin in bush, he laf an he laf tuh he sef at rabbit, cuz rabbit tink hesef so smaht wen he steal sode an now he ain got nuttn tuh eat all wintuh. Rabbit he see lizzud, an he call, 'Stop dis sode.' Lizzud he say, 'It my sode.' Rabbit he say, 'Dasso. It yuh sode, but stop it. It cut down ebryting uh got.' Lizzud say, 'Sode wuk fastuh ebry time he heah 'Go-ee-tell.' " Den lizzud he staht laffin an he calls out loud, 'Go-ee-pom,' an sode stop. Lizzud den go out an pick up sode an tak um home."

829 Knowing that Katie was a descendant of Belali, we asked her if she knew anything of him. She nodded and answered, "Belali Mohomet? Yes'm, I knows bout Belali. He wife Phoebe. He hab plenty daughtuhs, Magret, Bentoo, Chaalut, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, an Hestuh.

829 "Magret an uh daughtuh Cotto use tuh say dat Belali an he wife Phoebe pray on duh bead. Dey wuz bery puhticluh
•782 bout duh time dey pray an dey bery regluh bout duh hour. Wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set, das duh time dey pray. Dey bow tuh duh sun an hab lill mat tuh kneel on. Duh beads is on a long string. Belali he pull bead an he say, 'Belambi, Hakabara, Mahamadu.' Phoebe she say, 'Ameen, Ameen.'

829 "Magret she say Phoebe he wife, but maybe he hab mone one wife. I spects das bery possible. He come obuh wid all he daughtuhs grown. He whole fambly wuz mos grown up.

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody."[20] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut[54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

795 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves,"[33] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-land to Hog
[136] Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush, all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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115 another Belali Mohomet descendant, who came to the door of his neat cottage clad in blue denim. Delighted to have visitors, Shad was eager for conversation. With a few polite (123) words of thanks for the pipe tobacco, he began to talk of the old days.

829 "Muh gran wuz Hestuh, Belali's daughtuh. She tell me Belali wuz coal black, wid duh small feechuhs we hab, an he (567) wuz bery tall. She say Belali an all he fambly come on same boat frum Africa. Belali hab plenty daughtuhs, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, Bentoo, Hestuh, Magret, and Chaalut.

"Ole Belali Smith wuz muh uncle. His son wuz George Smith's gran. He wuz muh gran Hestuh's son an muh mudduh Sally's brudduh. Hestuh an all ub um sho pray on duh bead. Dey weah duh string uh beads on duh wais. Sometime duh string on duh neck. Dey pray at sun-up and (782) face duh sun on duh knees an bow tuh it tree times, kneelin on a lill mat."

We asked Shad if he had ever heard his grandmother say anything about Africa. Had she ever mentioned what sort of house they lived in or what food was generally eaten? Shad nodded eagerly, and from the steady flow of talk that followed it was evident that he had heard much of the land of his ancestors.

"Muh gran Hestuh say she kin membuh duh house she lib in in Africa. She say it wuz cubbuh wid palmettuh an grass fuh roof, an duh walls wuz made uh mud. Dey make duh walls by takin up hanfuls uh mud an puttin it on sumpm firm, sticks put crossways so. I membuh some pots and cups dat she hab made uh clay. She brung deze frum Africa. She membuh wut dey eat in Africa too. Dey eat yam an shuguh cane an peanut an bananas. Dey eat okra too. Yes'm, das right, dey calls it gumbo. Dey dohn hab tuh wuk hahd wid plantin deah. Jis go in woods an dig, an git big yam. Dey eat udduh roots too. Dey ain no flo tuh

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he
567 answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.'" [60]

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about
313 Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by
782 a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
775 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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115 could really be so old. We asked him who his people were and what he remembered about the old times.

(567) "We belong tuh duh Coupers. Ise son tuh Belali. He wuz butluh tuh James Couper at Altama. I membuh we hab lots uh time tuh play wen we's chilluns." He smiled pleasantly at the memory.

829 This man, too, remembered native Africans he had known, for he told us, "I membuh lots uh Africans, but all ub em ain tame. But I knowd some ub em wut is tame an I knowd one tame Indian."

We asked again about old Alexander, the African root maker.

829 "Yes'm, I membuh him. He wuz a lill black man an he
567 belong tuh duh Butlers but I ain know him well cuz we's diffunt people. Now ole man Okra an ole man Gibson an ole Israel, dey's African an dey belong tuh James Couper an das how I knows em. Dey tell us how dey lib in Africa. Dey laks tuh talk. It funny talk an it ain so easy tuh unnuhstan but yuh gits use tuh it. Dey say dey buil deah own camp deah an lib in it.

"Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat roof wut he make frum bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. But Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place.

829 "Ole Israel he pray a lot wid a book he hab wut he hide, an
782 he take a lill mat an he say he prayuhs on it. He pray wen
567 duh sun go up an wen duh sun go down. Dey ain none but ole Israel wut pray on a mat. He hab he own mat. Now ole man Israel he hab shahp feechuh an a long pointed beahd, an he wuz bery tall. He alluz tie he head up in a wite clawt an seem he keep a lot uh clawt on han, fuh I membuh, yuh could see em hangin roun duh stable dryin."

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[22]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[62]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[35] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[15] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked 115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

●782

[For the texts of prayers, see Category 539.]

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# 3

# The Texts

539

## The Prayers

My knee ben down on cold cold floor!

•782
537

The prayers are the most creative and expressive form of Sea Island oratory. Like the tales, they are composed and delivered within a set tradition, but the success of the delivery is dependent not only on what the speaker says but also on the eloquence and rhetorical skill with which he says it. To the Sea Island congregation, outstanding rhetorical skills are attributes to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. The learned people, however, are frequently those without much academic background. Without a doubt, many of the best expositors of the prayer tradition have little, if any, formal education. Their prayers, nevertheless, are composed in a tradition of impassioned eloquence. They embody Ciceronian, Quintilianesque, and other ornaments of style capable of creating belief, inspiring, and passionately persuading a congregation to respond with raucous and joyous replies.[1]

Both men and women, but only those known to be carriers of the prayer-giving tradition, pray at specified times during the church service. The member called on will kneel and pray publicly without pausing, stuttering, or searching for words for as long as twenty-five minutes, depending on the occasion for the prayer. The ability to pray is considered a "gift" like the ability to sing or play the piano. Those gifted with the technique are singled out when they are very young and encouraged to practice speaking in the church at special feasts, weddings, or holidays, especially Easter and Christmas. As children they learn only to speak the words; as adults they know how to speak them with the compassion that comes only from experience. Others may

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782 IV. Appeals

A. Father, we down here this evening
Heavenly Father
Asking for your mercy

B. We want you to come in this building
One more time

C. We ask you to please strengthen us
Where we are weak
And build us where we are tearing down

D. We ask you to look at the leaders
From one to another, Jesus
Make them ushers of sound judgment
Then truly devoted to God

E. I want you to bless each and every usher
Jesus
Help them to please hold out and hold on

F. Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time

G. Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus

H. Want you to look at Jerusalem one more time

I. [Look at] me too

V. Peroration

Somewhere, Lord, Job declare
The wicked must cease in trouble
And my soul have rest
'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

782 195 [193] [537] The social setting in which a prayer of this sort is delivered contributes to the development of bilingual skills for many Gullah speakers. This prayer, like most others, contains few features characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech, such as the use of the preverbal markers *de*, *ben*, *bina*, and *don* and the omission of inflectional markers. There is a good reason for the absence of these and other features in this text. A prayer of this type is composed in a tradition of rhetorical

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115 759 ground: dog fennel, sea muckle, and mullein, all of which can be dried, boiled, and made into teas to alleviate ailments like colds, stuffy noses, headaches, and nervous conditions. In addition, he pointed out several varieties of the more potent underground roots: white root, known to relieve headaches and cold symptoms; black root, said to be good for nerves and the shakes; snakeroot, excellent for constipation; and the revered bloodroot, said actually to bleed when it is cut and generally accepted even by the younger generations as a cure for such blood disorders as anemia and high and low blood pressures and for various female problems. I was privileged to be offered samples of some of his many medicinal cures, for example, snakeroot boiled and steeped for four months in good whiskey. Though this concoction is bitter and among the worst-tasting of all the herbal cures, it is fairly common on Sea Island shelves. Some say, "If the taste ain't de move whatever de pain you, the whiskey sho will." Mr. Hampy believed that when one took something from nature, like a root, one had to return [782] something back to it. Thus for every root he dug up he left a few cents in the hole, more or less depending on the type of root; only silver money, for example, was left for the bloodroot.

159 538 Mr. Hampy's oral style was typical of most Sea Island religious oratory, though, since he was accustomed to public address on Sundays as well as storytelling, his language varied according to the occasion. In telling his religious tales, he would engage his audience's attention with the seriousness of his subject and the dignity of his manner. Unlike Mr. Henry, he seldom stood. He would begin very slowly, explaining that his subject matter could always be substantiated by the Bible (though in some cases, as it turns out, it could not be). In the midst of his sermon or tale, he would often do as Miss Deeley did: stop, look around at each of the listeners' faces, and say, "I ain't believe you know what I ben talk about, do you?" Not expecting a reply, he would continue. The question was to gauge the extent to which he held his audience's attention. Whether he had everyone's attention or not, he, like Mr. Henry, would proceed to talk until I ran out of tape, until it was too dark, or until the mosquitoes became too bad to continue to sit outside.

159 761 During one of my recent trips to the Sea Islands, in the summer of 1984, Mr. Hampy died. His doctors said that there was no medical reason why he should have died. According to the islanders, Miss Maime, his wife, had been battling cancer for more than ten years and

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782 acquire the ability to join in the words of prayer, but only those who
537 have the gift can move the congregation to shout out a response.

None of the prayers are written, and herein lies much of their inventiveness. Many rival T. S. Eliot's *Wasteland* in elaborate allusions to works of literature. The most effective ones are alive with imagery, maxims, puns, understatements, and cultural references which the audience understands and responds to enthusiastically. More important, the prayers are filled with devices used judiciously throughout to induce the rhythmic incantation that is imperative to the Sea Island prayer tradition. Alliteration, transplacement, interplacement, epanaphora (repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive clauses), and other features create pleasing recurrent sounds which stir, stimulate, and evoke verbal responses from the audience. Epanaphoric passages—for example, "I want to be the child of God! / and I want my sins forgiven / I want my spirit meek and mild / and I want to go to Heaven when I die"—add to the beauty of the prayers and also demonstrate the speaker's skill as a rhetorician. The echoes of words and phrases in the
[539] audience's responses attest to the community's respect and admiration for skillful and creative use of language:

> Master, it's no lower *No! No lower!*
> Could I come this evening
> Excepting my knees are down at the floor *Floor! Cold floor!*
> Guilty heart within
> Crying guilty and already condemned *Condemned!*

Alliteration is used, as in "coax and call," "cold, cold hearts," and "Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove," to help establish the rhythm, as well as to contribute to the enthusiastic and energetic tone of the entire delivery.

The strong rhythm and chanted delivery of the prayers accords with
782 the prayer traditions of many African and African-derived cultures,
533 including those of West Africa, the West Indies, and South America.
539 The rhythmic chants are crucial to the developmental flow of the prayers.[2] Once the rhythm is established, it is maintained through various means, most important of which is the reply from the listeners. Some truly impressive prayer givers excite an audience to maximal response through their energetic diction and explosive tone alone. Others may intensify the rhythmic effect by drumming with a chair, tapping a cane against the floor, or just swaying back and forth in time to some inaudible sound.[3]

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782 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American
794 congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker
537 says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established
533 by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element
537 in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif
(589) asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant
Bow this evening, Jesus

Sin anguished and bended

. . . . . .

Crying to you this evening, Jesus
For Mercy

While mercy can reach [us]

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782 As you say the foxes of the forest
537 Got hole
[539] And then the birds of the air has nest
Master, we are poor son of man

Nowhere to lay down weary head

The rhythm and tone are usually set in the speaker's salutation to God, after which the speaker begins his appeal. This plea is in the form of an itemized list. The number of requests will depend on the occasion and the number of items concerning which the speaker is asking for consideration. If he makes an appeal for himself, he usually includes it as the very last item in his list. Each appeal will often begin with a traditional expression, such as "Then, then, my God! We ask . . ." or "O! You, you this evening, my heavenly Father, we ask . . ." The pleas are likewise concluded with a traditional expression, like "Have Mercy if thou on us so please!" In addition to clarifying the organization of the prayers, these phrases, perhaps more than others, help to sustain the increasing force and rhythm.

The peroration may vary. Most prayers, however, end with the quotation "Somewhere Lord, Job declare / The weak shall cease in trouble and the soul find rest."

782 The Sea Islanders have prayers for every occasion. They may range from a one-minute request for assistance in the completion of a hard day of labor to a twenty-five-minute eulogy for a lost loved one. The first prayer quoted below was delivered for the 1980 Usher's Anniversary at New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, and is typical of most Sea Island prayers for special occasions. In this case there was a scheduled prayer giver, but the person who actually spoke did so without notice when the scheduled speaker proved unavailable.[5] A brief outline of the prayer is included to demonstrate the smoothness and cohesiveness with which the parts develop into the whole:

I. Formal opening

II. The Lord's Prayer

III. Proem: speaker's personal prayer of humility

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant

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782 eloquence and skill. Thus the speech is expected to be elevated and
195 elaborate while retaining certain syntactic and phonological features
[532] characteristic of the community language. Many prayers are composed
[533] of hymns, Scriptures, spirituals, and traditional expressions, reflecting both biblical concepts and the black experience. Accordingly, the vocabulary, syntax, and phrasing do not necessarily represent those of the person praying, but may be words and phrasing he has heard and stored in his memory over the years. Again, the learned prayer givers
782 are most often those "gifted" in the art, with little formal training. The
537 important factors are that the person have a good memory, be able to join beautifully constructed phrases together spontaneously, and be able to establish a chanting rhythm which can be easily sustained by the reply from the audience. While the text alone is intelligible on paper, most of the beauty of the prayer escapes, along with the force of the audience's reply and the increasing fervor of the speaker's call.

539 Opening Prayer for the Usher's Anniversary
[782] Mr. James Brown
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
13 July 1980

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, O Lord
Let thy holy and righteous
will be done on this earth
As you will was already done in heaven
Give us, Lord, this day
As our daily bread
You forgive those who have sin
And trespass against us *Amen*
Lead us not into sin, neither temptation
But, please deliver us from evil *Yes!*

O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom
We expecting your kingdom to be
[A] poor sinner['s] glory *Oh yeah!*

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539 And then, Lord *Then Lord!*

I will go home and get
My just resolve[21] *Oh yeah!*

For all that I have done *Done!*

And then, Lord *My Lord*

Want you to meet me, Jesus
Somewhere, Lord, Job declare *Oh yeah!*

The wicked must cease in trouble *Trouble!*

And my soul have rest[22] *Rest*

'Tis thy servant's prayer, Master!

Amen. *Amen! Amen! Yeah! Yeah sir! All right!*

115 126 Mr. Mike Simmons was well into his nineties when Miss Myma introduced me to him and his wife (he has since died). He sat in the doorway of his two-room shanty and tolerated a seven-day linguistic procedure. I collected a phoneme inventory from him by asking him to pronounce nearly three hundred words. The task is slow and exacting; sometimes his wife, in her late eighties, would call out from the kitchen and offer a variant way in which a word could be pronounced. This was a lovely couple.

[533] [782] When Mr. Mike tired of the procedure, he would look out over the grassy field in front of his home and begin to hum an old-time song, or he would begin to pray. When he did either of these things, it was my cue that he was tired and I should leave. The following is one of his short prayers.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## The Lord's Prayer

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Most Revered Mr. Mike Simmons
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1976

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come
Thy will be done on earth as was done in heaven.
Give us this day, O daily bread
And forgive those who art in trespass against thee
O heavenly Father!
We are meeting on worldly soil today
Calling on your name
And, heavenly Father, couldn't do nothing until you come
Come now, Jesus, if you please?
The revered thanks to you today, heavenly Father
O Lord, if you please!
Look upon me in the eyes of pity
In the heart of compassion
I be so please, heavenly Father
O Lord, from last August, the single
They told us at least
O heavenly Father, you know when fall down, get up
Ben calling on your name
And I couldn't do nothing until de come!
Come now, heavenly Father, please, if you please

Amen!

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Tom Mack is an active member of the Wadmalaw church community. He is a professional singer and is considered well on his way to perfecting the prayer-giving tradition. Though he is in his early forties, he is, according to the islanders, still experiencing the "scalding water" of life, one of the primary ingredients in learning to chant the words of the prayers with emotion. When he heard that I was writing a book, he came by to see me and offered the following prayer for me to complete.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



539 [782] Prayer for Patricia Jones-Jackson

Thomas Mack, Sr.
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God, the sun is almost down
And the evening shall appear
O may we all remember well
The night of death draw near
We lay our garment by
Upon our bed to rest
But soon death will soon rob of all
Of what we here possess
At this evening
Thy heavenly Father
Hear me a moment
A creature bowed

This evening, Jesus
I ask you this evening
My heavenly Father *Yes Lord!*
Remember Wadmalaw once more time
This evening, Jesus *Yes Lord!*
Remember our community
This evening, Jesus
Remember Jerusalem
This evening, Jesus
We need you
This evening, Jesus
We are down here
In the lonesome valley
This evening
And we cannot do nothing
Until you come
Come, Holy Spirit
heavenly Dove
With all thy quiverling power
Kindle the flame

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## Chapter 3

782 533 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

[793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 19. 1 Cor. 15:53–54.

782 20. "Ain't gonna study war no more" is a reference from an old Negro spiritual. The concept itself comes from several references to war in the Bible, such as Ps. 46:0, Isa. 2:4, and Mic. 4:3.

000 21. Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16–27.

22. Job 3:17.

128 23. I am again indebted to Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton, who assisted in transcribing this sermon from a recording made during the church service.

538 24. For further discussion of the call-and-response technique see Grace Sims Holt, 113 "Stylin' outta the Black Pulpit," in *Rappin' and Stylin' Out*, ed. Thomas Kochman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 189–204.

538 25. The Gullah and African tales given in this chapter are classified according to the scheme set out by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in *The Types of the Folktale* 128 (Helsinki: *Suomalainen Tiedeakatenia*, 1961). Motifs and the names and numbers as- 113 signed to tale types are from Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, 6 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–58).

In the search for systematic methods of presenting such paralinguistic features as voice quality and nonverbal expressive phenomena, Ray L. Birdwhistell proposed a system of notation for describing certain sound phenomena, for example, an arrow pointing upward or downward to indicate various pitch ranges. He likewise developed an elaborate notational system for analyzing body motions and gestures, a system that distinguished hip, leg, ankle, shoulder, wrist, arm, and other movements (see Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*). Some of these notations are quite complex, and they are not yet widely used. Here, because the language of the narratives is complex in itself for most English-speaking readers, I decided to eliminate reading handicaps by minimizing foreign symbols that would tend to interrupt the natural flow of the tales.

538 26. For example, Richard Dorson has a variant of this tale in *American Negro Folktales*, p. 114.

000 27. This observation was brought to my attention by Charles Joyner, who is a native of the South Carolina coastal area.

113 28. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands;* Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* Florence M. Cronise and Henry Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit, Mr. Spider and the Other Beef* (Chicago: Afro-Am Press, 1969); and Dorson, *African Folklore*.

000 29. The precautionary measures taken here do not assure that the Igbo tales collected were not influenced by other cultures. No culture can be totally without outside influence; I tried only to decrease the likelihood of obtaining tales with non-African origins. Accordingly, I collected the tales from children and adults only in their native tongue. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, those in remote areas have little reason to use it. I also did not ask to hear any particular type of tale, nor put any restrictions on the length or number of tales told by any one person. I asked simply to hear some of their stories.

30. I am indebted to the renowned Igbo writer Obi Egbuna for his observations concerning African folktales and their implications in Igbo society. Any misrepresentations that might remain are, of course, my own.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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CHAPTER 8

# Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity

539 •782 Do not pass we by, My Jesus, as you go on de road from Jericho to de new Jerusalem, but tarry at de door and speak de word of hope to we heart and blow de breeze of blessing upon us. Almighty and eternal Father, we de prisoners of Hope, turn to de stronghold and begs oona (you) fur give we de long look and de over-coming patience dat we could have 'couragement fur go forward and see de truth dat will make us free. Do God, if it so please you, Massa Jesus, Gib me de long look like Moses, so I could see into de Promised Land from de mount, if my weary feet ain't neber guine to walk in de New Jerusalem with my people. . . .*

"Let me lib wid de musket in one hand an' de Bible in de oder,—dat if I die at de muzzel ob de musket, die in de water, die on de land. I may know I hab de bressed Jesus in my hand, an' hab no fear."
"I hab lef' my wife in de land o' bondage; my little ones dey say eb'ry night, whar is my fader? But when I die, when de bressed mornin' rises, when I shall stan' in de glory, wid one foot on de water an' one foot on de land, den, O Lord, I shall see my wife and' my little chil'en once more."**

793 Sam Polite lived to become senior elder on the Benjamin Fripp plantation. Polite did not know his age, but had "ben a man fore 'gun shoot'" (Battle of Port Royal, November 1861), and became the most respected and sagacious elder on St. Helena Island. Those who knew and observed

*Prayer of Sam Polite, "The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, SHC.
**Gullah soldier's prayer, in Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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spirit world while the traveling spirit would torment the living. Hence, Gullahs asserted that the last used articles were buried with the deceased to "keep de speerit outen de house." This would go along with the Gullah practice of thoroughly cleaning the deceased's house to break earthly ties. Another explanation which the Gullahs offered was "to satisfy de speerit at de grave." It was said that the spirit desired to be near objects that it loved before death. "Yessuh," stated one informant, "dey puts t'ings on de grave so dey be handy fur de speerit and he be satisfy."[20]

Like Africans, Gullahs had a definite revulsion against the return of the deceased in the form of "trabblin' speerits" regardless of the kind of life the individual had lived. These spirits were considered evil, similar to *kindoki* among the BaKongo. Every effort was made to pacify these "speerits." This is further illustrated by the presence of whiskey bottles on the graves in churchyards. A Gullah minister provided the following explanation:

> When a man is living it take liquid whiskey in he stomach to make him drunk, but when a man is dead he don't hab a stomach to hol' de liquor, but it don't take nuttin' but de fumes from whiskey to make a speerit drunk. Dose dat bin used to gittin' drunk fo' dey dies, dey will keep on gittin' drunk after dey dies, so dey t'ink dat de speerit ob a drunkard will hover right in front ob de mout' ob a livin' person when he bin drinkin' so he can whiff de fumes ob de whiskey on he bre't an' dat will make de speerit drunk. But ain't no livin' man want no speerit hover right dere in front ob he mount', so dat is why dey puts whiskey bottles on de drunkard's grave. De whiskey bottles on de graves is empty 'cause de smell is enough to satisfy de speerit an' make 'en drunk.[21]

Gold Coast Africans believed that the spirits made use of all offerings left by friends and relatives after death. Mende carried to the graveside cooked chicken together with rice and red palm oil. This mixture was placed on a banana leaf and laid by the side of the grave. Sometimes soil was dug out and the red rice placed in a hole. Then a little w[illegible] placed on the grave and words were spoken: "Here is water, [illegible] hands, eat your rice, drink your water." The family then ate th[illegible] der of the chicken and rice and offered a prayer, indicating that [illegible] family had done right by the deceased and expected the dead to remain there and to protect them:

> We are leaving you as we have finished your last ceremony. We want you, from now on, to look after your children (other members of the family may be mentioned). May no bad thing fall on them.[22]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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Similarity of beliefs and motives regarding grave adornment is best illustrated by the types of articles found on graves in the Sea Islands. Such objects as partially filled medicine bottles, mirrors, broken pitchers, saucers and cups, mayonnaise jars, pickle jars, vaseline, cold cream, tobacco, and black pepper were placed on graves. Seashells were also commonly placed on graves. Other personal items included shaving brushes, toothbrushes, mirrors, combs, and belt buckles. In addition, twelve Gullah ministers reported to Samuel Lawton that other articles of food such as grapes, oranges, apples, bananas, bread, and cake were often placed on graves and soon eaten by animals and birds. Further efforts to satisfy the spirits of the dead consisted of pouring water on the grave during a drought. This custom could have been for the purpose of quenching the thirst of the spirit so that the dead would not disturb the living by seeking water.[23]

Gullah decoration of graves indicates a firm belief in the return of ancestors from the world of the dead. Offerings on graves were statements of homage and in these graveyards, one finds the strongest expressions of African-inspired memories. Many objects are associated with or used to hold water. In BaKongo religion, deceased ancestors became white creatures called *bakulu*. They lived in the village of the dead, referred to as the land of all things white. This village was located under river beds and lakes. *Bakulu's* white spiritual transparency allowed them to return to the world of the living undetected. Sea shells, used on Gullah graves, for instance, are an important theme in BaKongo metaphysics. One BaKongo prayer which addresses the shells states, "As strong as your house, you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever." The essence of this prayer is recaptured by the late Bessie Jones of St. Simons Island, Georgia. She related:

> The shells stand for the sea. The sea brought us, the sea shall take us back. So the shells upon our graves stand for water, the means of glory and the land of demise.[24]

Just as sea shells and pottery express immortal existence, and the significance of a water underworld, so the glittering, iridescent mirrors and porcelain on Gullah graves reflect the light which represents the spirit. These objects, like water when struck by sunlight, are intimations of the flash of the separated spirit in symbolized flight. Mirrors, lamps, porcelain, and glass are spirit-embodying once they are placed on the graves.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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APPENDIX D

# The Deity

776 [533] The Gullahs' concept of the deity was not that of a God of wrath, but one of love and mercy. In Gullah music, phrases such as "Kind Jesus," or "In the mornin' when I rise, tell my Jesus Huddy ho," indicate that for these slaves Christ was a warm personal friend, as well as a fellow sufferer. Similarly, the Gullahs' prayers also express how they viewed 776 their relationship with God. Prayer was considered actual communication with Jesus, and He was expected to listen and hopefully answer the •782 appeal in some way or another. In such verbal expressions the supplicator reveals inner ideas of the deity. In a study done among the Gullahs in the 1930s, it was observed that by far the most prominent attribute of the deity in prayers was merciful, being mentioned 189 times as opposed to a total of 119 times for all the other attributes ranging from loving to glorious. No description suggesting wrath or vengeance was among the characteristics attributed to the deity.[1] In the following prayer, recorded during the Civil War, one is able to observe the Gullahs' poetic imagery, spirituality, sense of community, and their attitude toward the deity:

### *Aunt Jane's Prayer*

782 539 776 Der Maussuh Jesus, we all uns beg Ooner (you) come make us a call dis yere day. We is nuttin' but poor Etiopian women and people ain't t'ink much 'bout we. We ain't trust ask any of dem great high people for come to we church, but do' you is de one great Maussuh, great too much dan Maussuh Linkum, you ain't shame to care for we African people.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. De sun, he hot too much, de road am dat long and boggy (sandy) and we ain't got no buggy, for send and fetch Ooner. But Maussuh, yo' 'member how yo' walked dat hard walk up Calvary and ain't

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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weary but t'ink about we all dat way. We know you ain't weary for to come to we. We pick out de torns, de prickles, de brier, de backslidin' and de quarrel and de sin out of yo' path so dey shan't hur Ooner pierce feet no mo'.

Come to we, dear Maussuh Jesus. We all luns ain't got no good cool water for give yo' when yo' t'irsty. You know, Maussuh, de drought so long, and de well so low, ain't nuttin' but mud to drink. But we gine to take de 'munion cup and fill it wid de tear ob repentence and love clean out ob we heart. Dat all we hab to gib yo', good Maussuh.

An' Maussuh Jesus, you say you gwine stand to de door and knock. But you ain't gwine stand at we door, Maussuh, and knock. We sets de door plum open for yo' and watch up de road for see you.

Sisters (turning to the other women in the church), what for you'all ain't open de door so Maussuh know He welcome? (One woman rose quietly from her knees and set the church door wide.)

Come Maussuh Jesus come! We know you is near, we heart is all just tremble, tremble, we so glad for hab yo' here. And Maussuh, we church ain't good 'nuff for yo' to sit down in, but stop by de door jes' one minute, dear Maussuh Jesus, and whisper one word to we heart—one good word—we do listen—Maussuh.[2]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

**MORNING**

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Here am I again once more, Heavenly Father,
The worm of the dust
Ready to bow this hour of the morning
On my bruised and bending knee.
Thank you, My Father, for your guardin' angel,
That guard me all night long
Until morning light appear.
And before he went from his watch,
He touch my eyes this morning with a finger of love,
And my eye become open
And behold a brand new Monday morning.
Oh, God, if you so please
Give us that holding out spirit,
That you may own us all
When we done trod across the many street of Charleston.
Oh God, what I say for our neighbors,
And the neighbors' children around in this vicinity,
Oh please, Our Father,
Make them more patient, more acknowledge,
May we love each and one another.
Help us to help each other.
And each other's cross to bear.
And Our Father, if you please,
Remember the President of this United States,
Oh, remember the officials.
And Our Father, once more I say
For the President of the N.A.A.C.P.,
Throw thy arms of protection around them,
May they achieve victory in whatever they may undertake to do.
Lead them, Our Father,
Through the unfriendly world where there's no friendly grace.
We know we must fight to increase our courage
That we may be able to endure the pain.
I ask you to please remember mankind far away,
Whatever his town may be.
Make him realize, that awful day will surely come.
And then have mercy, My Father,
When I done walk the last mile of the way,
Done all that you 'signed my hand to do,
When I shall come down off the stage of action,
Must surrender under the black banner of Death,
Ask you, Jesus, give me a resting place
Somewhere in your Kingdom
Which Job declare
The wicked cease from troubling.
Amen.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 91]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English, French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages? This fact raises still another interesting question.

Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year, but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

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She gives the names of the days in the *Fanti* language, and it is interesting to find that a boy born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.

[19] Described by M. J. Field, in Gold Coast Food (The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).

[20] Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and praying sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority." [22]

Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others. Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

[21] *Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lent, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."*

[22] *It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
569 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(354) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
715 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kinchearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andamson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

(MA) [25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
794 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
782 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[78] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[777] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
777 except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analysis]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analysis]

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536 27) A makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 796 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for (782) the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the 533 last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin'":

(539)

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A. [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 161--Analyst]

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## MOONLIGHT–STARLIGHT

53 In *Slave Songs of the United States*, the origin of a song similar to "Moonlight–
(764) Starlight" is attributed to St. Simon's Island by Colonel Trowbridge, who is quoted as saying "that it was sung at funerals in the night time—one of the most solemn and characteristic customs of the Negroes." Fanny Kemble, in her Journal, describes
764 a "buryin' " that took place at the Butler Plantation in 1839:

> Yesterday evening the burial of the poor man, Shadrach, took place. I had been applied to for a sufficient quantity of cotton cloth to make a winding-sheet for him, and just as the twilight was thickening into darkness I went with Mr. —— [Pierce Butler, her husband] to the cottage of one of the slaves . . . a cooper of the name of London who was to perform the burial service. The coffin was laid on trestles in front of cooper's cottage, and a large assemblage of the people had gathered around, many of men carrying pine-wood torches, the fitful glare of which glanced over the strange assembly. . . . Presently the whole congregation uplifted their voices in a hymn, the first
(53) high wailing notes of which—sung all in unison, in the midst of these unwonted surroundings—sent a thrill through all my nerves. When the chant ceased cooper London
• (182) began a prayer, and all the people knelt down in the sand, as I did also. . . . When the prayer was concluded we all rose, and, the coffin being taken up, proceeded to the people's burial-ground, when London read aloud portions of the funeral service from the Prayer-book. . . . The service ended with a short address from London upon the subject of Lazarus, and the confirmation which the story of his resurrection afforded our hopes. . . . When the coffin was lowered the grave was found to be partially filled with water—naturally enough, for the whole island is a mere swamp, off which the Altamaha is only
(152) kept from sweeping by the high dikes all around it. This seemed to shock and distress the people, and for the first time during the whole ceremony there were sounds of crying and exclamations of grief heard among them . . . and so we returned from one of the most striking religious ceremonies at which I ever assisted.

When Margaret, one of my star shouters, was buried a few years ago at Kelvin Grove, in the old slave yard on the marsh, I too was shocked to see the coffin lowered into the water, but in this instance such an occurrence was taken as a matter of course.

53 Of all the primitive songs this is the most plaintive as well as the most impressive:

Moonlight—Starlight
O-o-h [12] Moonlight
Believer what's the matter?
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)
John lay the body to the tomb
O-o-h—let me go!
John lay the body to the tomb
John lay the body down!
(Repeat)

[12] Sung with the lips closed. The accompanying piano arrangement is by Creighton Churchill.

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
[538] observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consid-
eration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
[128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
[171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
[152] edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his
rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
[782] two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the con-
gregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with
a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence
[787] told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried
the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[782]

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[794] [577]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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567 346 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the plantation where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[51] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[52]

567 794 796 533 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing, pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members of a church.[53] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine one word 'ginst t'oder."[54] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

• [782]

[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[52] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[53] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[54] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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[782]

read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

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796
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After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune: 793 796 175 533 539

"Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2] 782

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed- 175

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, e]

791 794 783 [533] Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctifying process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 262 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[65]

791 533 262 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 [782] The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[37b, e] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[59b, e]

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SUNBURY

795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
[783] tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[MM] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

795 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[33] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
[533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[46] They use a shahp knife

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins."[43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals[38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of
115 Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

"Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she
[763] wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [36]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [38]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

262 It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they
777

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POSSUM POINT

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[25] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.'[30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come [795] git it.[58, 59]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom.
534 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic,
202 dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [292] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long 796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away*."
(552)

There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up con-
jure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Afri-
cans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
829 the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
782 I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
829 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
584 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237] skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
•783

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
(351) been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
(165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an
(764) mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide
(783) come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put
(753) sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's
829 a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69a] He

(567) * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh
(795) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
(783) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[35] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey
[567] trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
759 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
754 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick
789 wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
534 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time.
535 Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
764 tuh duh grabe yahd.[34] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[63] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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795 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed
794 to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is
[788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tide-
178 water section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended
[783] upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide*
[114] *lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the*
[171] *ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

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WHITE BLUFF

757 824 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin [784] cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat [827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful charm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah [826] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon. [825]

754 "Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix. 759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground, made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her *Journal* Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress, you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a washstand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble ever since he left it there.*

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How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Cranman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [22] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[22] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Liele, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Liele preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

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OLD FORT

794 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine.
796 Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the
796 chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demonstrations become more and more violent. Several of the con-
• 786 gregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious in-
toxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19]
[533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious version of an improvised hymn. The participants in the dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of contortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver, they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance goes on.[48]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine, the man who, according to their own account, was not born in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in New York City and who was sent to earth to save his followers from destruction.

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[432] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a newspaper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found
[755] for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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796 less of the hindrance to the rest of the worshipers, jumps up
786 and down wildly, crying out in a shrill, hysterical voice. At length, exhausted, he sinks to the floor and is dragged by friends from under the whirling feet of the others.

One woman, seized by such a paroxysm, falls to her knees, screaming incoherently. Exhausted by her violent emotion, she lies on the rough board floor, her jaws hanging open loosely, her eyes closed. Slowly, she raises her hands and beats them together muttering, "Praise Daddy. Praise Daddy Grace."

[533] The pulsating rhythm of the instruments increases in tempo. A man leaps high into the air, gesticulating and babbling; faster and faster he whirls, until he too falls from utter exhaustion. Still the wild display continues. The terrific nervous strain is taking its toll, and now all but a few of the dancers stumble wearily. The steady, insistent sound of the drum urges them on; feet still shuffle, hands beat out the rhythm, and voices chant an incoherent incantation.

796 Abruptly the band ceases and members straggle back to their places. Those who have fallen out from exhaustion are dragged to the benches by their friends.

796 The service continues. During the evening many collec-
794 tions are taken up. Two of the deacons, acting on behalf of the Bishop, urge the people to contribute freely. Their methods of approach present a strong contrast. One, stout, dark-skinned, and clad in a pearl gray suit, has a gentle and persuasive manner. He says softly to the congregation, "Precious Haht, hep us tuh raise fawty bucks fuh Daddy Grace right quick. Wile duh Prophet sits on duh throne befo us, let us all contribute freely tuh him."

The other deacon, short and wiry, darts about among the congregation. His manner of speaking is quick, and he barks his orders to first one and then another of the church members. "Step right up now," he advises. "Dohn hole back on us. Anybody else now, come right up an contribute.

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796 Ebrybody gib at leas one nickel now wile we still hab duh
794 privilege uh gibin tuh Daddy. Step up, ebrybody."

Until this point Bishop Grace, apparently indifferent, has
796 had no active part in the ceremony, but he now steps for-
793 ward. There is a sudden hush.

"Daddy" becomes an intimate, vivid part of the group. Coming down among the congregation, he addresses his talk now to one individual, now to another, dropping frequently into the southern Negro dialect. The theme of his address is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The main issue, however, is often sidetracked, and the speaker comments in turn upon world politics, the war, anecdotes of his own trips abroad, his persecution by enemies, all of whom "the Lord struck down dead," and the general condition of the local community. The entire discourse is interspersed with humorous sayings that find a delighted response. "Daddy" advises his followers strongly against trusting anyone. "If the angel from Heaven comes down an wants an extra pair of wings, don't trust him," he warns. "Tell him you ain't got no time to keep books today. He have to pay cash." Near the conclusion of his talk the Bishop says that he can accomplish anything he chooses, even to sinking ships, destroying fleets of planes, or conquering entire nations. He is not the actual power, he says, but he is so close to it that he has only to reach out his hand and pull the switch.

After every sentence or two that "Daddy" utters his listeners echo his statements with such remarks as "Ain't it so, Daddy," "Dat is duh trute," "Yes Daddy," "You tell em, Daddy," "Hallelujah," "Amen." These utterances do not always agree with what the speaker has just said but nevertheless are meant to express thorough approbation. At one time "Daddy" tosses to a woman in the congregation a
• [786] rose he has used in illustrating a point in his sermon. This

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796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.

(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on
(152) hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
(533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 825 Grapevine Avenue.*

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793 from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were
794 afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to
(292) the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah
796 the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, where-
537 with shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and rea-
796 soning with his congregation. His voice would carry a
786 pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the
796 able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The
533

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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793 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can
567 arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the
area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to
796 keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when
young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essen-
[871] tial characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

Heavenly Father
[539] Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing.
533 It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a
good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives.
[793] Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their
gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought
[794] to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit,
which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in
turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of
despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the
[786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking
and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[68] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

175 771 797 567

Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

175 797 567

The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
799 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
152 grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
786 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural" means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
799 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices. The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
175 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
177 anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
178 Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state. In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to tradi-
175 tions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
799 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

175 567 796 786 535 533

Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

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Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

175 794 796 (869)

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

175 796

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
•786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
787 been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
794 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
[795] that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and
[533] moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 789 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
796 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
567 was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[786] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spir-
[178] itual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SHOUTING FOR A BETTER DAY

796 Every Sunday night these people have meeting at Moving Star Hall.
533 Every December 24th they have what we call a Christmas watch night meet-
786 ing, and every December 31st, a New Year's watch. They sing from twelve o'clock until day clean.

They know the tune, they're ready to shout. They're giving praise to the great Supreme Being who have stood by them in the past days from slavery up to this present. Just to hear these songs remind us of our hardship. Those songs are the ones that made them happy, made them go through those hard days—the days when they didn't have a place to live of their own, didn't have a piece of land of their own, and were living on a plantation.

786 These people are hard-pressed people, and they are optimistic enough
796 to believe that there are better days coming. When they get into these religious shouts, they feel so happy until that's all they can do but shout. The motions go into the hands and into the feet and they start clapping, and you can't keep them sitting—not when they start clapping, brother. They feel so happy 'til they got to shout. People sixty years and seventy years old clap and shout and jump all over the floor without falling down.

786 These people are trying to satisfy themselves, satisfy their soul. It's the
796 only place they could be happy because life is so hard and sometimes there are any number of persons who do not know where the next meal is coming
154 from. They can't talk back if they go on the farm regardless of how mean they were treated. Sometime their task they had was overburdening. Sometimes somebody watching them that they didn't have a chance even to stoop. They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting.

*Mr. John Smalls*

## 796 ANYTIME YOU COME, YOU IS IN
786

We don't charge nothing to come in Moving Star Hall. Moving Star Hall are free, and the door are open for each and every one. Whether you are white, whether you are dark like myself, or different color, come in. If you can preach, come on. We all preach. Don't say, no, you can't come up to this table. You can preach, pray, or testify. If you want speak, anything you want say, you got the opportunity—we give it to you.

'Cause we know we are in God hand. God made *all* of us. Don't make a few and somebody else made some; God made all. So I am happy to meet you all.

I hear the white madam say a while ago she glad we let 'em come in. "No, don't worry with that, Madam. Anytime you come, you is in. Bring friend, whatever; you's in." So sing, shout, get happy. But don't fall out!

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

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**SHOUT**

That's so much the most thing I could do--shout. I'll tell you, with the spirit of God, you don't care what pain you got. You forget about that when you shout. When I going out, I feel so painful I scarcely don't go. But I say to myself, just as well if I go now, 'cause will come a day when the limbs fail me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p.92]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

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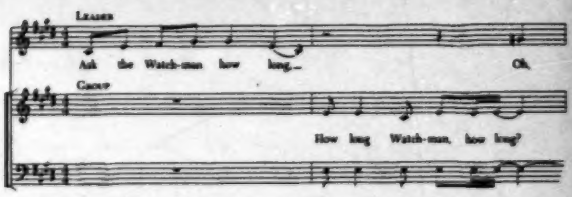
ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.
Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.
Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long.
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long.
How long Watchman, how long?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Rev. James Grant

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

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Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 533 (869) There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (178) We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 791 178 829 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [33] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[33] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical *a* helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] *Melville J. Herskovits says in his* Handbook of Social Psychology: *"The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of re-
786 ligious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard
152 and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as
159 though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common
159 with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said,
786 "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin
787 sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se
159 seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
•781 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull' him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
(539) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bar!
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bar!
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bar!
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bar!
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bar!

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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## MY SOUL ROCK ON JUBILEE

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This song was sung and shouted after prayer meeting and after church service—usually when the church "got a soul":

Chorus: 'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord![13]
'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

---

Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
I got a right in Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
I got a right in Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Repeat Chorus:

In reference to the following version, Clara said: "When it gets hot, them that's on the outside of the church comes runnin' in." I asked what she meant by "getting hot." "O, you feel good. You know things is warmin' up and you gets revived":

I come t' tell you 'bout Jubilee
O-o-o-h my Lord!
Come t' shout that Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee[14]
O-o-o-h my Lord!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

[13] A wild quavering cry given by the "high tribble"—far above the other singers—makes your "hair riz," as the Negroes say.

[14] Faster, with double rap on "That Jud! That Jud!"

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicissitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

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Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "taber-
nacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a
roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit.
The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy
ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact
that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnest-
796 ness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the forti-
• 786 tude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who
became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No
He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern wit-
ness for my Lord.

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See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

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771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east
(115) of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
(464) Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

• 787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

775 "I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[59] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
(845) bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

OLD FORT

•787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, •]

301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother
751 used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
(115) tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood. Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
(845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[18, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well [761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an
799 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the [574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will
787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex-
[115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness [845] of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an
787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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775 787 duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

754 [775] "Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt. Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

347 [754] [775] [115] Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Negro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

• 787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
775 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[23a, •] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69a] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[777] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
•787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
787 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that
556 I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
•787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but
she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came
and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a]
You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she
can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night
an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't
take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
342 stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly 775 off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life." One time a ghos try tuh skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife 787 is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by witches " an seed a thousandn mo ghos." I see um mos any 787 time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but (845) dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double caul ' an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. (775) A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Moss Brown, Tin City.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em,"[59] said an-
775 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,*
787 an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
789 dat flied off tuh Africa.[60a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some
754 folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die."[44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tiis City.*

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TIN CITY

754 Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted
[115] that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[52a, *] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die." [69b]

[115] The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den
754 long come a man we call Professuh.[43] He say ef we kin git
755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[9a, b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin
754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

• 788 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit
794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat
763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak
775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em
[789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long
774 ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see
•787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day
[115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[58]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69]
789 Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69a]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddi-
115 son,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were
[301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;[8] his
[789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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757 We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But
•787 I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

115 Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown
754 complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

754 "Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any shape he got a mine tuh.[68] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru
[828] uh skin.[5c] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cunjuh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuhgit duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it happen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

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754 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an
755 wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

115 Evans Brown * is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

"It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting.
775 Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh
• 787 groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

"I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh
754 wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

* *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

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775 right at muh side.[59] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
[789] yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

[115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he
787 wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[59]

776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock,
787 he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed. We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a
787 noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[58]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts [58]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh
755 peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way. Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[8b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 623 West Waldburg Lane.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men •787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he 789 smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh [825] han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
[368] near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
• [787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
[791] ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
[759] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
ily; 22a, c, 48 each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
[352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson," [22a.] * he told us, "cuz
• 787 I wuz bawn wid a double cawl [4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

"I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
789 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh
754 down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub [10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His
791 recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we de-
[593] cided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A
[351] high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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754 Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in ap-
115 pearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a
[291] turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass ear-
[301] rings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear
still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue
[291] overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She
754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days
[593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

•787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he
775 nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said.
776 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

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SPRINGFIELD

• 787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
[115] eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced
754 him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
755 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[49] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
[755] at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
[789] cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[49a]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
• 787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[49] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
[763] close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
791 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen dey ain ride im.[49] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1801 Murphy Avenue.*

BROWNVILLE

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

(752) "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

(237) (825) "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[13]

759 757 (15) (278) Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

(787) "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 757 West 34th Street.*

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759 757 787 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a, c] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[69b, 69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 925 West 51st Street.*

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754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

775 A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had
• 787 been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[56, 59] "Once wuz
(115) jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts
775 was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me,"[59] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh."[15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh
(757) Buzzud, a root doctuh.[48] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right."[6]

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 56th Street.*

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775 (764) they buried frum home. The spirit jist wanduh aroun.[1]

"I have seen something I think wuz a ghost. I have no explanation of it, but I think it wuz supuhnatural. I have heard of witchcraft, cunjuh an magic. I believe some of these things happen, and the mo yuh probe intuh them the less yuh know.

789 "I have heard about a magic hoe that folks put in the gahden. They speak certain words tuh it; then the hoe goes ahead an cultivates the gahden without anyone touching it. They jist tell it tuh do the wuk and it does it."[39]

775 We questioned Collier again about his personal experiences with supernatural beings and he related the following story:

787 "Wen I wuz jist a young boy muh family use tuh live in Currytown. Me and muh brothuh use tuh go and see muh aunt who lived in Yamacraw. Tuh get frum our house tuh wheah she lived we had tuh go past a cemetery which wuz in back of the Union Station.

"One time we had been tuh see muh aunt and it got tuh be late. We stahted fuh home. It wuz beginnin of night. Muh brothuh he had rheumatism an he wuz hobblin along on a stick. We stahted along by a fence tuh get tuh West Broad Street an wen we had gone about a hundred yards we saw a lady comin tuhwards us.[40] She wuz very feah, very feah, an she wuz all dressed in black and had on a long black veil. Her dress wuz black silk and rustled as she walked.

"Muh brothuh an I, we were suhprised tuh see the lady all of a sudden, fuh we hadn't noticed her befo. She come up tuh us an she say, 'Are yuh goin roun the fence?' We tell her we wuz an she say, 'Yuh not afraid?' an we say, 'No—we not afraid.'

"The lady wanted tuh walk with us an we all staht walkin along. We had gone a short ways wen all of a sudden we look in the cemetery an we see a little white thing risin up out of the groun. It wuz kinduh hazy an shadowy an it

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775
•787

spring up from the groun an streak out tuh meet us on the path ahead. It looked like a lill animal.[54]

"The lady, wen she see the lill white sumpms a comin, she daht out like lightin an she go right tuh meet it. Wen she get tuh it she disappeah right intuh the eah, disappeah right befo our eyes. Muh brothuh fuhgot he wuz crippled, he drop his stick an staht runnin, an I run too. An we nevuh stop runnin, kept right on goin till we got home tuh Currytown. He don't like to speak of it tuhday cause we're not supuhstitious."

777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

(533) " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[48b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

(759)

754 759 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

"No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[58a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Talsmville.*

TATEMVILLE

I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

"Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

Justine Singleton* believed firmly in the existence of spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-

*Justine Singleton, Tatemville.

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115 759 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

• [787]

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuhchuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud wuz a scah bout dis big."[14] She indicated the end of her forefinger.

115 304

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

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duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary
782 in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

"I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man,"
785 Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz
786 cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I
• 787 look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in re-
[115] lation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root
[755] doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I
775 hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his s it use tuh
• (787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence." [58, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[68] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.]* An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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754 heah uh movin bout an moanin an in duh mawnin she is jis bout wone out an uh haiah is all tangled. Sometime she wake up an drive him away, but some nights he come back two aw three times an ride uh. In duh mawnin she jis too tied tuh go tuh wuk.*

"Deah wuz a ole woman in Savannah dat dey say wuz a witch. One night a ole man wake up an foun dis witch ridin im.[69] He say it look lak a bug.[68] He ketch it an break off duh leg at duh joint. Duh nex mawnin he go an see duh ole woman an sho nuff she have uh han all tie up wid a bandage. Dey tell me bout uh an I go see uh. Uh finguh wuz right off at duh joint."

775 Spirits of the dead often wander along the dark roadways,[54, 59] and frequently some belated stroller runs screaming in terror, declaring that he is being pursued.** The spirits may appear as misshapen men or women, as sheep, dogs, and cats.[54, 55] A spirit need not always assume the same appearance but may change form entirely each time.†

775 The following story was told by a woman in the community:
.787

"I sho believe in spirits. I have seen em wid muh own eyes. One evenin jis as it wuz gittn dusty I wuz goin in tuh town tuh see duh dressmakuh. I walk tuh duh cah tracks an deah sittin on a rail wuz a lill tiny man, bout long as dis. I nevuh seen sech a lill man.[54b, 55] He wuz so lill he ain good fuh nuthin. I look at im hahd. On his head wuz a lill tin lamp wut gleamed in duh dahk. He wuz kine of an Indian culluh. He wuz a grown man fuh sho fuh he hab a lill mustache. I holluh fuh a man tuh come out an see wut I foun, but wen he git deah duh lill man hab disappeah. Jis den duh cah blowed an I hab tuh leab.

"Wen I gits home dat night, it wuz real dahk. I ain goin tuh walk dat dahk road by mysef an I holluh fuh every man

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.*

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775 I knowd dat live neahby. I make em all walk home wid me,
787 but deah wuzn no signs of duh lill man.

"Attuh dat lots of folks say dey see im. Wen duh moon is noo an deah is a drizzle, he come walkin along wid his lill lamp. He take all kine uh shapes. Sometime he's a man an sometime he's a animal.[54] Dey say he's comin roun cuz deah's buried treasure neah yuh." * [51]

771 Here in this little Negro community there seem to be few phases of life left untouched by superstitious fears. As one woman aptly expressed it—"Everything that happen is cause by cunjuh an magic. They jis dohn leave nuthin tuh Gawd." **

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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## *Grimball's Point*

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

•787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die.
[825] I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious
[789] tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

•787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an
[763] den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many
789 signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

754 "But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[759] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin
[758] couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was 351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At 406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an 415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast 133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, 115 rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her [787] lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired. A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face 787 and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

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775 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh
•787 see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[51]

776 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a
787 hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em
(753) an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

789 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtec-
754 tion,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

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527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. 759 We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, 755 lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn 845 wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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HARRIS NECK

775 845 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?" we asked.

•787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile
[755] will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[8a]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh
789 tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 12] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[16] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(789) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
(777) no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
• 787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[60] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
(825) mal, sometime lak bud.[61] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[62] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
776 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
787 obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[27b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh duh. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

[775] 764 782

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofounlan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

776 787

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [16] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
•787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in
(761) sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

754 Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spir-
•787 its, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the
(791) Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider
456 it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

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115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, [272] onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [788] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 788 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).[A]

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious 959 or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island [538] folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
• 787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she
567 had the following dialogue:

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
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786

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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175 standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves
795 attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of
797 religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term
567 and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary
175 provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of
787 the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'"
567 process:

> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river.
> When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

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normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of burials), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote:

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back." . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation:

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body--all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[22]

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More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

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in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism. Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena:

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . .—near the water stood a large

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 789 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. 000 Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were 761 sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware 533 that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah [539] children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought [787] • to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of [567] the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

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no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the deathbed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende:

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

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APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA 127 128 workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless 178 otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 •787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.*

[p. 344]

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

21. Mikell, *Christ Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Christ Wheels*; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Deewaain People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Gbebo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* 1 (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

**EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION**

159 782 [164]

I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

159 781

Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) A child born with a face caul is able to see
(787) supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power
(751) to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

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533 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their
545 performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the Coastal Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight.
[434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large
545 number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white
177 people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

533 Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home
545 with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during
[434] the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the
[987] sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

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533 in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the
945 rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not
• 787 broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was
[539] strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

My God is a rock in a weary lan'
A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
Shelter in a time of storm.[22]

000 What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

[22] *An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.*

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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
796 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
982 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[711] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
353 which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[123] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a
[754] hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14)[A] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
711 except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
•787 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my
763 empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts
(170) of Africa.

Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
567 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
758 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always re-
197 tained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
788 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
754 magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one
(551)

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000 How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?"
751 The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, other-
784 wise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why
there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and
[793] also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.
[796]

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who
793 seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the
537 younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [22] She believes that the exercise "if
593 persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the commu-
537 nication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the
•787 source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical
796 best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up
787 with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a com-
786 motion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child
796 I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[171] [22] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

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796 787 786 an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: [171] "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently [171] came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

796 786 Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical *a* helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

763 764 171 There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "*The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings.*"

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## 14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 786 152 159 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of religious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 159 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 786 787 159 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said, "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave [538] songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of [128] them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of [171] them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what 761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt- [152] edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or [782] two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence [787] told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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763 she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

●787 763 775 In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[16] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

763 171 On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

## IN THAT OLD FIELD

533 567 [764] Susyanna (Illustration 29) A learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[16] As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.

A. [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177--Analyst]

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Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

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## RIDE ON CONQUERING KING

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As mentioned elsewhere, this is a good example of the question-and-answer type of song and was used at a "settin'-up" in accordance with the custom of sending messages by the dying to relations and friends in the other world.[18]

If you see my mother
Oh yes.
Won't you tell her for me
Oh yes.
I'm a ridin' my horse in the battle-field
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

Chorus: Ride on King
Ride on King
Ride on Conquering King
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

[18] All of them are named in lengthening the song.

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567 ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C.
795 Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island
793 and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances,
567 and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in
795 dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect or striking resemblance to some form or type which has
• 787 been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 They were also quick to follow the custom of the
795 whites in "churching" offending members. "The dis-
688 cipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

567 The church was not only responsible for giving Chris-
794 tianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teach-
212 ing a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

175 795 787 175 795 792 175 788 795

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

175 793 692

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
356 or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
715 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(722) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
• 788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
567 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
(171) to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

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795 794 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold. [788]

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 178 [783] In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tidewater section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.) [114] [171]

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As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

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754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

763 825 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 775 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[36c] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[36] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain all. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a nightmeah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh • [789] bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick."

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpm is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

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347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves, rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old man's stock in trade.

787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural. He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
795 me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[22a, c] I kin see people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul people. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[99c] I hab a uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[777] to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
[789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

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754 "The toe nails, the finguh nails, even the scrapins frum the bottom of the foot are all very powuhful.[10] If the doctuh could get any of these frum my enemy, he would mix them in whiskey an make my enemy drink. That is all."

"Would the enemy die or just get sick?"

But the old man was brooding with a faraway look in his eyes and would not answer our question.

"Cunjuh," he said again. "You ask me if I know about these dahk things. I know too well. My wife Hattie had a spell put on uh fuh three long yeahs with a nest of rattlesnakes inside uh. She jus lay theah an swelled an suffuhed. How she suffuhed! Jus like the foam that comes on a snake's mouth when he is hungry, she would foam. But she couldn't eat."

"Did she die of snakes?" we wanted to know.

"No. It was predicted that she would have a spell put on uh to die by fyuh and sho enough one night she was burned to death with the snakes still inside uh."[15]

"But how were the snakes given to her?"

"That I can't tell. She maybe drank them in a little whiskey. But I can't tell."

Nathaniel Lewis' somber gaze had all this time been directed through the open door to his garden. It was a pretty little green inclosure with rustic benches set hospitably about. We commented on the vines and ferns, which showed careful cultivation.

754 "You like my gahden?" Lewis said mournfully. "That's all I can think of, my gahden. Theah's a bush out theah
• 789 that's goin to protect me frum any othuh enemies.[24] Nobody
824 can cunjuh me now because of that bush. If only I'd had a little piece of that plant befo, Hattie would be alive an me well an strong. But I kept puttin off goin to get a piece. You have to go to the woods in the dahk of night an find it faw yuhself. If you get caught at sunrise in those woods, you can't get out till night again. You plant a piece of the

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
•789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul."[4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 56] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
787 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that
556 I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett
754 Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but
she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came
and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a]
You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she
can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night
an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't
take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe
Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

We left him standing in his garden and went on down the
361 winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of
342 old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

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342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

• 789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story 775 bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh 787 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by 787 witches [59] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double (845) caul [4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. (775) A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
•789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [59] said an-
775 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,*
787 an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[59] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
789 dat flied off tuh Africa.[59a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some
754 folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em
•[789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people
774 just before they were about to die.[59a] He told us, "Not long
787 ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see
[115] his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[56]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I
789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69a]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two
115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were
[301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms;[9] his
[789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

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632
[30]

per wire was bound around his head and attached to this wire were two broken bits of mirror which, lying flat against his temples with the reflecting side out, flashed and glittered when he moved his head.

"Yes, Ise duh mayuh," he admitted. He was reluctant to talk of what he termed "mysterious tings uh duh elements." But after a few minutes' conversation, he told us that he believed there was "sumpm" to certain beliefs and superstitions.

777 "I hab a deep suspicious mine dat way muhsef. I know deah is luck an unluck an some people kin wuk it. It's a science in mos ebryting dey does. Dey kin swap yuh frum good luck place tuh bad luck place."[15]

754 "Has anyone tried to harm you?"

"Yes, dat dey hab." He smiled at this, and we saw that a brass ring had been inserted in his mouth in the place of a lower jaw tooth. "Some days I feel lak uh jis caahn make it. It seem lak sumpm hab a holt on me an uh caahn wuk. Den I know strong currents is directed tuh do me ebil. If dey res on me, uh would be sick, maybe die. But deze dat I weahs," indicating the copper wire, the mirrors, and the other charms, "keeps all deze tings frum huttn me. Duh ebil caahn dwell on me. It hab tuh pass on.[12a, c, d]

[30]
[789]

"Many tings kin be done tuh cause people hahm aw make em disability," he went on. "Dis is wut I hab confidence in. A pusson kin take sech as a cat aw dog aw a lizud, sech creatures as libin. Dey kin kill dis animal an dey hab some way tuh cause its spirit tuh be ebil. Dis spirit moobs on currents tuh somebody duh pusson do not lak an is so powuhful dat it cause eben duh flesh tuh rot.[5]

"So I weahs deze," he ended. "Long as I weahs em deah is nuttn kin do me reel hahm."[8]

When we thanked him, he did not smile but only bowed his head. To the end of the interview he kept his dignified and serious demeanor.

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do dandy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.' "

[226] [224] [533]

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, a, 46] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

[845]

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 608 Zubly Street.*

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754 among Yamacraw residents. Martha Major,* aged sixty,
• 789 related to us the time a witch had "worried" her.[69] She was alone in a basement in an empty house, as the landlady was out of the city. No sooner had she gone to bed than she heard "sumpm comin down duh steps."

"It jump on me," she declared, "an it choke me neah tuh det. But I knowd who it wuz. She come tuh see me duh bery nex day but she ain nebuh been back sence, cuz I put a bruhm by duh bed."

115 We noticed that as Martha Major had risen from her
754 chair in excitement over her story, she had exhibited a slight limp.

"Have you hurt your foot?" we asked.

"Oh, it mos well. Mos all duh wuhrums done crawl out now."[5, 5a]

"Worms?"

At our astonishment she was instantly on guard.

"Muh foot all right," she said crossly, but her brown face was a mask of brooding. Finally she volunteered the information that she had been conjured the previous October, almost six months past.[15]

754 "I dohn know who done it, but all ub a sudden muh leg begin tuh swell an swell. I call a regluh doctuh, but he didn seem tuh do no good; so tree weeks ago I went tuh a root man.[48] He gimme sumpm tuh take an sumpm tuh put in muh bed.[6] In a few days knots come out all obuh muh leg an wuhrums staht tuh crawl out. Only one knot lef. I guess I soon be well."

115 Out beyond Yamacraw, where the old brick and dirt streets of the community give way to the broad, paved Augusta road, an old Negro named James Cooper has for years conducted a miscellaneous business in a ramshackle push cart.** James sells lunches to the workers at the Savannah Sugar

* *Martha Major, 548 West York Street.*
** *James Cooper, Port Wentworth.*

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754 git tuh pinin way.[15] Duh doctuh he caahn hep me none. Finally I went tuh a root man.[48] He say right off somebody done gib me a dose. He say 'I'll be roun tuhnight. Git some money tuhgedduh cuz I caahn do yuh no good less yuh staht off wid some silbuh.'

754 755 "Wen he come dat night an git duh silbuh, he look all roun duh house an den dig a hole unduh duh doe step. Deah he fine a bottle. He tro it in duh fyuh an holluh, 'Git gone, yuh debil.' Attuh dat I git bettuh, but I ain nebuh bin tuh dat uhmun's house since. An I dohn lak tuh talk about it."

115 789 Another octogenarian, Thomas Smith,* told us that the same magic power that Moses had used when he turned his rod to a snake before Pharoah still exists today among Negroes.

789 "Dat happen in Africa duh Bible say. Ain dat show dat Africa wuz a lan uh magic powuh since duh beginnin uh histry? Well den, duh descendants ub Africans hab duh same gif tuh do unnatchul ting. Ise heahd duh story uh duh flyin Africans [49a] an I sho belieb it happen. I know doze wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh. Jis sit it anyweah on duh flo aw in duh yahd an bile deah meals. Dey could make a buzzud row a boat an hab a crow fuh pilot.

"Long yeahs ago deah wuz a cunjuh man wut could git yuh out uh jail by magic. A frien uh mine at Hilton Head git rested fuh stealin. He sen fuh duh cunjuh man [49] an duh man say, 'Dohn worry. Duh jedge gwine tun yuh loose.' Wen duh hour uh duh trial come, duh cunjuh man tell me, 'See dat bud on duh cote house? I sen im up deah. Deah wohn be no trial.' Sho nuff, wen duh case wuz call fuh, duh jedge git tuh suchin roun tuhnin up ebryting tuh fine duh chahge gense muh frien. Attuh wile he git disgusted an tell duh cote, 'Case dismissed. I caahn fine duh papuhs.' Wen we git outside duh bud done fly away."

(115) Thomas Smith's reference to flying Africans caused us to

* *Thomas Smith, 37 Ann Street.*

YAMACRAW

*789 [115] mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[50c]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz [845] bawn wid a caul[4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now 775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[50b] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yuze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us [593] a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her. [115] "Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh[48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh 754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell 755 me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

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789

"Dat cause me tuh make a special study," Evans Brown quietly added, "an soon uh realize uh wuz bawn wid duh [48] powuh. I ain nebuh use it much, cuz I dohn lak tuh bodduh wid dem ting. But I knowd a man name Doctuh Buzzud wut git yuh out ub any trouble yuh wuz in. He would chahge yuh so much an tell yuh tuh hide duh money in a suttn place. Duh money would disappeah an yuh trouble wid it.

"Duh poeleece rested a man right yuh in Yamacraw. Dey hab him by duh pants' wais takin him tuh duh box tuh ring up fuh duh wagon. Wen duh poeleece git tru ringin an tun roun tuh look, dey holdin a ole gray mule an duh man done disappeah." [49]

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775 right at muh side.[53] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef
• [789] yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

[115] Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

775 "One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he
787 wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[53]

776 "Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock,
787 he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

754 "One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed. We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a
787 noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[68] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a
[776] cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[69]

789 "Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

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## FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[56]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a] * One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
•789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe
(775) West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts[59] and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordi-
(787) nary is about to happen.[22a] *

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[6b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 683 West Waldburg Lane.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[18] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root
754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an
755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once
775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men
787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us
[115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in
789 his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh
[825 chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 521 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh
787 fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson,"[22a,*] he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl[4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

"I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
• 789 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh
754 down sick aw eben kill yuh.[6] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub[10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's
791 aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A
[351] high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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791 759 went tuh uh house once. She show me a box full uh packages an she say dat ebry one wuz a han fuh diffrunt tings.[8b] I reach out tuh git hole ub em, but she stop me an say ef uh touch em, dey lose all duh powuh. Clara and Doctuh Sheppard bote dead now.

•789 "Ise heahd lots uh stories bout folks wut could fly. Some time back I wuz libin in Woodville wen a man come tru deah. He wuz frum Liberty County. Dis man talk lot bout duh story uh duh Africans wut could fly. He say all dis wuz true. He say he wuz takin awduhs fuh wings an dey wuz all yuh need tuh fly. A peah uh wings coss twenty-five dolluhs. Duh man take yuh measure an a five dolluh deposit an say he collec duh balance wen he delibuh duh wings. Lots uh people gib deah awduh fuh wings, cuz all deah libes dey been heahin bout folks wut could fly. Duh man jis go roun takin awduhs an collectin five dolluhs. Das duh las any ub us ebuh heah uh duh man aw duh wings."

791 759 Clara Smith,* a resident of this community, told us that she too remembered the time when Dr. Sheppard and the woman called Clara, who it appeared was her aunt, had operated a thriving business. "I didn unduhstan much wut dey did," she said, "but dey wuz bote kep busy all uh dat time. Deah wuz alluz a long line uh folks waitin tuh see em.

"Dey say my Aunt Clara wuz bery good. She could wuk roots an gib good luck hans an tell fawchuns, and fix yuh enemies.

754 "One time a man come an git muh aunt. He say somebody cunjuh his wife.[15] She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days at a time. My aunt go tuh duh house an dig all roun. She fine a sack filled wid sulphuh, an haiah,[10] an matches, an grabeyahd dut.[9] Den she look in duh house an she fine mo sacks in duh mattress, in duh pilluh, an in duh dressuh draws. Deze cunjuh sacks wuz wut causin duh woman tuh be crazy. My aunt destroy duh sacks an gie duh woman a

[789]

* *Clara Smith, 1129 East Duffy Street.*

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754 good luck han tuh weah [5, 12a, c, d] so no udduh root wukuh could
•789 hahm uh. Attuh dis duh ebil spell went away an duh woman wuz cuod."

115 One of the interesting characters of the section is Ellen Jones,* better known as "Pipe Ellen" because of a very evident liking for tobacco. The old woman, an ex-slave, claims to be almost one hundred and twenty-two years old and walks almost daily from Springfield to Savannah. Win-
[291] ter and summer, her frail figure is snugly buttoned into a heavy top coat, so long that the hem trails on the ground. On her white head she wears a dark wool skull cap.

754 "Pipe Ellen" told us that she firmly believed in conjure and in proof of this she related the following instance: "Right yuh in Savannah a uhmun wut claim tuh be muh frien root-mahk me.[15] I ain fraid tuh tell uh name, cuz she dead now. It wuz Flossie Hopkins.

"She fix me wid tuhbaccuh. Yuh see she knowed I lub tuhbaccuh. She wuk a root on me so strong dat she put a big snake in muh bed, an uh could feel tings moobin all tru muh body. I could feel duh snake runnin all tru me.[5, 30] Den I heah a noise an it keep on, so uh say tuh muhsef, 'A snake is in yuh.' I git up an set duh lamp in duh middle uh duh room. Duh snake show up. I close all duh cracks roun duh house, so nuttn couldn git out.

"Nex ting I know dat uhmun wuz knockin at muh doe. Wen I let uh in, she grab dat snake, tro it cross uh shoulduh an walk out.

754 "Ef uh hadduh kill dat snake, a man tole me, it sho would
755 uh bin Flossie Hopkins. He tole me tuh git a box uh Debil
789 Lye. Denne dug unduh muh doe step an took a bunle uh roots. Deah wuz red peppuh, an sulphuh, an salt, an some udduh kine uh powduh. He sprinkle dis all roun duh place an say I need nebuh be fraid cuz dis would kill any cunjuh put down fuh me." [6]

754 During the course of an interview, which was held later

* *Ellen Jones, rear 1204 Hillas Avenue.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
[755] at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
[789] cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[69a]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
[763] close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

"I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
754 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen
791 dey ain ride im.[69] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns [22] an gib hans [9a, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1801 Murphy Avenue.*

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422 jects were old coins, a pistol, and a pocketbook made of shells clamped together with metal bands. The most significant
[324] item, however, was a carved stone fig (Plate IIIc).A The grainy texture and the slight splits in the skin had been ex-
• [789] ecuted with great skill. The fig had been carried as a charm by the old man's ancestor, but where this forebear had obtained it we were unable to learn.[8, 32, 34c]

322 On the Ogeechee Road not far from Brownville we came in contact with a Negro * whose favorite pastime was carv-B
532 ing.[70a,e] He showed us the figure of a man (Plate IVb), about twenty-seven inches high, with heavy shoulders and torso overbalancing the lower part of the figure. The head was large and square, the eyes were painted on roughly, and the nose and mouth were attached pieces of wood. A wooden crane and other birds carved by the same man bore a crude, primitive stamp.[70c, d, g]

115 Near by on the Ogeechee Road we found Tony William Delegal,** an old man (Plate VII), well over one hundred years old, who was formerly a slave of Major John Thomas, Harris Neck, plantation owner. His dark eyes are filmed, his once powerful shoulders are bent, but Uncle Tony can still recall incidents which took place during his childhood on
115 the plantation. Sitting on the front porch of his daughter's house, he sang an African song to us. Unfortunately he did
533 not know the English translation. The old man sang the song over and over and we were finally able to take down the
[539] following:

Wa kum kum munin
Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi boong a nomo
Shi wali go
Ashi quank.

* *Lee Ross, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*
** *Tony William Delegal, Ogeechestown, near Brownville.*



A, [See Category 324, plate following p. xxxii-C--Analyst]
B, [See Category 532, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]
C, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-G--Analyst]

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533
539

## BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

791 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live
759 fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms
789 who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, a, 46] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us
789 that she does an active mail order business as representative
492 of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 22nd Street.*

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115 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs.
•789 On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh
472 Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

115 A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Ed-
759 wards* who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano
[463] tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he
[757] was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly.
[231] "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

757 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.
825

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[49a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden [15] [278] Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 757 West 34th Street.*

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759 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh
757 herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."
787 He had been born with this power to foretell the future,
787 he asserted.[22a, c] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh." [22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh
789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[68b, 68c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a
(775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 922 West 51st Street.*

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775 (764) they buried frum home. The spirit jist wanduh aroun.[1]

"I have seen something I think wuz a ghost. I have no explanation of it, but I think it wuz supuhnatural. I have heard of witchcraft, cunjuh an magic. I believe some of these things happen, and the mo yuh probe intuh them the less yuh know.

• 789 "I have heard about a magic hoe that folks put in the gahden. They speak certain words tuh it; then the hoe goes ahead an cultivates the gahden without anyone touching it. They jist tell it tuh do the wuk and it does it."[39]

775 787 We questioned Collier again about his personal experiences with supernatural beings and he related the following story:

"Wen I wuz jist a young boy muh family use tuh live in Currytown. Me and muh brothuh use tuh go and see muh aunt who lived in Yamacraw. Tuh get frum our house tuh wheah she lived we had tuh go past a cemetery which wuz in back of the Union Station.

"One time we had been tuh see muh aunt and it got tuh be late. We stahted fuh home. It wuz beginnin of night. Muh brothuh he had rheumatism an he wuz hobblin along on a stick. We stahted along by a fence tuh get tuh West Broad Street an wen we had gone about a hundred yards we saw a lady comin tuhwards us.[40] She wuz very feah, very feah, an she wuz all dressed in black and had on a long black veil. Her dress wuz black silk and rustled as she walked.

"Muh brothuh an I, we were suhprised tuh see the lady all of a sudden, fuh we hadn't noticed her befo. She come up tuh us an she say, 'Are yuh goin roun the fence?' We tell her we wuz an she say, 'Yuh not afraid?' an we say, 'No—we not afraid.'

"The lady wanted tuh walk with us an we all staht walkin along. We had gone a short ways wen all of a sudden we look in the cemetery an we see a little white thing risin up out of the groun. It wuz kinduh hazy an shadowy an it

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# *Tatemville*

361 EXTENDING SOUTHWEST FROM SAVANNAH OVER A widely scattered area is a section known locally as Tatemville. This settlement is inhabited largely by Negroes, some of whom are survivals of ante-bellum days.

551 It is interesting to note that a number of these old people in speaking of their fellow-slaves frequently prefix "Golla" to the given name.*

115 H. H. Miller,** an educated old man of this community, who has acquired considerable wealth, stated, "I knew many of the 'Golla' tribesmen who were brought to this country, when I was a boy. I think some can be found aroun these pahts now."

759 [115] A palsied old man, William Newkirk,† who said he was born on the Newkirk place, obligingly replied to questions concerning root doctors and conjure, "Well, duh root doctuh wuz all we needed. Dey wuz bettuh dan duh doctuhs now-a-days. Deah wuzn all uh dis yuh cuttin an wen yuh sick, duh root doctuh would make some tea an gib yuh aw sumpm tuh rub wid an das all. Den fo yuh know it, yuh wuz all right.[48a] He would fix tings fuh yuh ef somebody [755] done put sumpm down fuh yuh. Deah wuz many ways tuh wuk it. Sometime he would gib yuh sumpm tuh weah wid [789] yuh aw sumpm tuh take."[6]

115 Spirits are a reality to Esther Jones,‡ obviously a woman

* *See Introduction.*
** *H. H. Miller 46th and Pearl Streets.*
† *William Newkirk, Tatemville.*
‡ *Esther Jones 308 West 46th Street.*

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70a]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23]
533 The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the "settin-up" or wake.[36] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa
• 789 and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones
829 Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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777 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh
356 flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

[533] " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm
777 on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh
825 sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

436 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it
• 789 seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she
[759] feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[49b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[50a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it cal! Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

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WHITE BLUFF

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [18] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken [755]

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

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754 able tuh ketch im an dey fine it wuz one uh deah neighbuhs. He beg an plead an so dey fuhgib im. Dey nebuh hab no mo hag ridin.[69]

754 789 "Muh ma tell me many times bout a man an his wife wut could wuk cunjuh.[48] Anytime dey want tuh dey would fly back tuh Africa an den come back agen tuh duh plantation. Dey come back cuz dey hab some chillun wut didn hab duh powuh tuh fly an hab tuh stay on duh plantation. One uh duh daughtuhs wanted tuh lun tuh fly an wuk cunjuh. Duh faduh tell uh she hab tuh lun duh passwud, den she hab tuh kill a man by cunjuh.[15] Attuh dis den she would hab duh powuh. Duh magic passwud mean sumpm like dis, 'Who loss duh key Branzobo?' "

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skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em'[15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den."[10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504.]* An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

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123 But "Miz Minnie" felt differently. "Go long, yuh chillun. Go long wid yuh crahb an stop lissnin tuh grown folks." Minnie flapped her apron and they scattered like a brood of young chicks.

754 "Yasm, cose yuh do heah bout cunjuhin."[15] Minnie turned back to us. "Dasso. Dey's alluz talk bout it, an I know ole Lewis McIver (Plate XI)[A] wut libs yuh right now, wut foun a bottle buried in his mattress. He wuz sick an somebody wuz tryin tuh fix im. I seen dat bottle muhsef, wid muh own eyes. Yes, ma'am, I sho seen it. It hab yulluhlak oily lookin stuff in it an deah wuz a piece uh clawt stuck tru wid needles an pins in it."[8] Minnie looked worried at the mere memory. "I seen it fuh sho an dohn nobody know who put it deah. But Lewis is bettuh sence it wuz took out. He say he ain hab neah so much pain.

"Den wen muh ole uncle wuz sick,[15] dey sen fuh a ole uhmun wut know bout cunjuh[48] an she wehn out in duh yahd an dig up a piece uh clawt wadded intuh a ball wid nails in it an she cas it away. I seen dat too. She say somebody plant it deah gense im.

"Dey make mojoes outn anyting but dey do say grabeyahd dut[9] an nails an blood an haiah,[10] dey is impawtant. Cose I know bettuhn belieb all dis," she laughed, "but it make yuh sked an yuh sho full uh worry ef somebody tryin tuh fix yuh." After cogitating on these dangers Minnie smiled, "But ef yuh weahs a silbuh dime tied tuh yuh ankle (789) an yuh step obuh anyting wut put down fuh yuh, duh dime'll sho tun black sudden an quick an den yuh knows it."[12a, c, d]

682 Pin Point attained a certain measure of fame as the set-
674 ting of the Bo-Cat murder in 1932. Limerick De Lancy, Pin Point Negro nicknamed Bo-Cat, killed his wife, Catherine, and dropped her corpse into the deep waters near Hell Gate. When the crime was discovered, the fact that it had (533) taken place on Friday, the thirteenth, loomed significant in the consciousness of the small community and in no time in-



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-K--Analyst]

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch-doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

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533 Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also
202 remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A
[115] member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes
796 all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh
[533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently
301 worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning
• 789 by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one
[777] woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,*] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 301 789 please. I carry it in muh pocketbook an duh nex day it tun black an I know fuh sho dey wuz tryin tuh cunjuh us."[15]

754 Repeated efforts were made to conjure the newcomers. At first bottles filled with a queer oily substance were buried around the house. When these failed in effect a more powerful charm was compounded, and a few days later the intended victim discovered buried in her back yard what she described as "a bottle neck down in duh groun. It wuz filled wid some kine of funny lookin oil."

754 683 "I know dis wuz a cunjuh," she said. "I call muh huzbun an show it tuh im. He git plenty mad an say he gomuh settle mattuhs once and fuh all wid dis cunjuh man. He wait fuh im by duh lane an wen he come long, he grab im an shake im an tell im he know all bout wut he bin doin. He tell im he bettuh stop tryin tuh cunjuh us, fuh he know bout cunjuh his ownsef an he tell im all duh tings dat he done. Wen duh cunjuh man heah dis, he fall down on is knees an beg muh huzbun tuh fuhgib im. He tell im bout all sawts uh magic dat he wukd on udduh folks in duh neighbuhood. He promise not tuh do no mo uh dis an muh huzbun let im go."

754 753 We were told of another woman who, as a result of conjure,[15] fell mysteriously ill and felt snakes running up and down her left side under the skin.[5, 50] Medical care did not help the case and she is now, according to report, "jis wastin away an no one caahn do nuttn."*

754 789 682 Graveyard dirt is often employed in the making of conjure bags.[8, 9] If possible this must be taken from the grave of a murdered person and some money must be left in exchange. Not very long ago when a man was arrested for murder, his friends, wishing to save him, went to the grave of the murdered man, secured some dirt, and left three pennies on the grave. A man, lingering in the vicinity, stole the money and shortly thereafter spent it in the neighborhood

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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754 store. As one neighbor put it "duh han come widin an inch
• 789 uh wukin." Although the defendant was not acquitted, he
682 was sentenced to a mere two or three years, and there was some speculation as to whether or not the theft of the money had been what kept him from going entirely free.* [64]

754 A woman, suspecting that someone was attempting to conjure her daughter,[15] dug up the ground around her house until she found the evil charm. Of this case our informant says, "It wuz two balls of graveyahd dut,[9] all wrapped up in a clawt. Dey tuk it roun an show it tuh ebrybody. It wuz up at duh poolruhm all spread out on duh pool table, an folks stop in all duh time tuh xamine it. Duh girl dat wuz
[789] cunjuhed buy a han[6] frum a root man an duh spirits dohn bodduh uh none."**

People in the community believe that extremely powerful charms can be made from the dust from people's foot tracks.[7] There is a constant dread that someone will secure this dust, and zealous care is taken to prevent this. We were told, "A ole uhmun who libed heah-a-bouts wuz so sked dat somebody would fix uh dat she alluz carried a rake wid uh. Down duh road she would go, rakin up uh foot-steps in back of uh, so dat nobody could git dat dus an fix uh." †

[753] Another resident who neglected these precautions said she became very ill, due to the fact that someone had manufactured a charm from the dust left by her foot tracks. As her condition became more aggravated she at length consulted a
[789] root doctor. He sold her a counter charm[6] and soon the mysterious illness disappeared.‡

761 Death, especially if violent or unexpected, is attributed to
754 witchcraft or conjure.[15] One woman voiced the sentiment of many of the community when she said, "Theah ain't supposed tuh be no sech thing as nachul death yuh in Sandfly.

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ellie Davis, Sandfly.*
‡ *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

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SANDFLY

761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have
775 found no rest, but instead would have roamed the countryside.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and
789 representatives of different corporations frequently visit
[443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root, Lucky Mojo Love Drops, Black Cat Ashes,* and *Courting Powder.*[8] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died
[789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Wal," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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GRIMBALL'S POINT

534 drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive
[533] lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

322 "Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old
[283] man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

115 Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

787 "Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows
825 a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an
[763] den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye
•789 fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

755 "Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

754 "But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five
[759] yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an sev-
[758] ral root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

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754 he had tuh linguh on till finally it reached his haht an he died."

Jackson scratched his bristly chin and smiled sheepishly. "I do belieb in some rootn," he said, "but uh didn wannuh talk too fas. I seen a root man tak is bag an in it wuz needles an pins an grabeyahd dut an sulphuh an rusty nails, an he made it *crawl*."[48]

"But nuttn evuh done me hahm," he went on in his gentle voice. "I alluz got wut I want all deze yeahs. Cuz yuh know wy? I hab a black cat bone."

(789)

789 237

We had heard of the potency of the black cat bone. Other Negroes had told us that it could ward off conjure, cure sickness, or even give its possessor the power to fly. Thus far, however, we had met no one who had acquired so miraculous a charm.

"How did you get the bone?" we excitedly queried. We summoned up visions of Jackson creeping in the dead of night to some lonely spot near a cemetery and shooting a black cat between its glowing green eyes. The actual facts proved far different.

"Wen I wuz a young man," said Jackson, "I ketched a big black cat. Den I made a big fyuh in duh yahd an put on a pot uh watuh an let it come tuh a bile. Den I tied duh black cat up an put im in duh watuh alibe an put a weight obuh duh pot tuh keep im in and uh let im bile tuh pieces. Den I strain duh stoo an separate duh bones an I shut muh eyes an pull duh bones tru muh mouf till uh got duh right one. All deze yeahs I kep dat bone an nuttn ebuh do me no ebil."

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dey jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [88]

•789 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the
567 group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face
829 brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut
[115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [89]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [88]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we
776

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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775 776 were informed that a variety of spirits were said to be seen on the island. These, it seemed, took different sizes and shapes and frequently appeared to the local residents.[54, 55, 59]

"Sometimes," said Celia, "doze spirits put spells on yuh, fix yuh."

754 "Spirits ain duh only ones," added Peter McQueen. "Folks kin wuk wid cunjuh too.[15] Ain dasso, Uncle Robert?"

"Dasso," Uncle Robert nodded sagely. "Muh own brud-duh wuz cunjuhed. He hab a spell put on um. He hab fits all duh time—hydrophobical fits—act lak he crazy. Nuttn we do hep im, an attuh a few yeahs he die."

754 "Only ting yuh kin do tuh keep frum bein cunjuhed is tuh carry a han," said Peter. "Mos folks tote a han wid um."[8, 12, a, c, d]
• 789

"Plenty folks kin fix yuh wid a han dey make deysef," said another voice.

754 "What are the charms made of?" we wanted to know.

"Haiah," "Nails,"[10] "Frum duh cloze" were the various responses and Celia enlarged on this information. "Ef yuh hab a enemy, nebuh let um git a piece uh yuh cloze. An yuh bun yuh haiah an yuh nail parins. Dey kin sho make pow-uhful han frum deze."

We inquired if many persons made a profession of this, and Peter informed us, "Sometimes dey git um frum a root doctuh."[8a, d, 48]

759 "Duh root doctuh kin hep yuh too," added Uncle Robert.
789 "Dey is powful smaht. I use tuh heah tell ub a root man name Smaht McCall.[8, 48] Ef yuh git in any trouble, yuh jis go see um an he git yuh out ub it. Deah wuz a man wut got rested. He wuz plenty skeah bout wut would happen tuh um. He go see Smaht McCall an Smaht say not tuh worry cuz he would hep um. Duh day uh duh trial come an wen dey try duh case, a buzzud fly in duh cote house win-duh.[68b] He fly roun. Den he light on duh jedge desk. Well,

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759 suh, wid dat buzzud deah duh jedge jis couldn do nuttn. He
789 jis had tuh pick up an go. Duh case wuz dismissed."

"Tell bout wut Smaht McCall done tuh Doctuh Rogers,"
754 requested Uncle Jack.

759 "Well, Doctuh Rogers, he wuz a regluh doctuh an sometime duh folks would go tuh see um wen dey git sick stead ub goin tuh Smaht McCall. Smaht, he git mad. He say he fix dis Doctuh Rogers. He put a spell on duh hawse. Wen Doctuh Rogers go out nex time an git in he carriage, duh hawse run right intuh a tree an Doctuh Rogers git kill." [15]

759 As an afterthought he finished with, "Sometime deze root doctuhs is smahtuhn duh regluh doctuhs. Long time ago a doctuh tell me I hab tuh stop eatin meat. He say it ain good fuh me an ef uh eat it, I git sickn die. I bin eatin it ebuh sence an Ise still alibe. Dat doctuh bin dead fuh yeahs. Mos deze root doctuhs knows plenty; dey know nuff tuh lib."

262 There were a number of palmetto trees in the section and we asked if any of the people had ever heard of eating palmetto cabbage.

"Yes'm," they answered.

"Palmettuh cabbages is good eatin."

"Yuh kin jis cut it up an eat it raw an yuh kin cook it up wid fat meat," Uncle Robert told us.

273 "Yuh kin make good palm wine outuh duh berries," volunteered Peter McQueen.[45]

538 Various members of the party asked Peter McQueen to tell one of the numerous stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Wolf. Peter pondered for a minute; then he started:

539 "Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Wolf wuz alluz tryin tuh git duh bes uh one anudduh. Now Bruh Wolf he own a hoe an it wuk fuh crop all by itsef.[39] Bruh Wolf jis say, 'Swish,' tuh it. Den he sit down in duh fiel an duh hoe do all duh wuk.

"Bruh Rabbit he wahn dat hoe. He hide behine bush an watch how duh wolf make it wuk. One day wen duh wolf

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775 tuh be plenty keahful bout duh spirits. Duh spirit is hungry jis lak duh pusson. Yuh hab tuh put food in duh ruhm fuh duh spirit tuh come eat." [58]

"Dat is duh truth," agreed young Elizabeth. "Ef duh spirit is hungry, it will sho come back an hant yuh." [59f]

This talk of spirits started us on a new train of thought and we were curious to learn of the local theories regarding ghosts and witches.

"Duh spirit nebuh go in duh groun wid duh body," [56] volunteered Emma. "It jis wanduh roun. Dey come out wen duh moon is noo."

[115] Mary Stevens,* whose short, stocky figure was clad in bright pink and who wore a sailor hat perched rakishly on her head, stated, "Duh spirits is ebryweah. Dey peah mosly at duh fus dahk an in duh middle night."

Young Elizabeth, too, had something to say about spirits. "I sees em all duh time," she said. "Dey dohn hurt yuh none, jis walk long wid yuh an talk. Some hab duh head on an some hab duh head off." [59a]

754 From ghosts and shadows of the night the discussion followed its natural course to even darker powers, such as conjure, evil roots, and counter charms. The little group glanced slyly at one another. It was in lowered tones that they volunteered remarks on this subject.

"We do heah bout folks rootin each udduh all duh time.[15] Yuh sho hab tuh be keahful. Some folks weahs a dime aw a penny tied on duh ankle an wen it tun black, dey knows somebody is tryin tuh root em." [12a, c, d]

[789] [301]

"What are the conjures made of?" we wanted to know.

"Dey make em uh haiah an nails an frum lots uh tings," we were told.[10]

Elizabeth said, "Duh heabiest root I ebuh heard bout wuz a cunjuh made uh some funny oily stuff in a bottle. Duh enemy ketch duh pusson's spirit in dat bottle an dat wuz a

* *Mary Stevens, Sunbury.*

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754 powuhful spell.[8] Duh man fell sick an had tuh go tuh a root doctuh [48] fo he git cuod."

777 "Yuh sho hab bad luck ef yuh do a lot uh tings," warned one of the women. "Nobody ebuh carry a hoe aw a rake tru duh house. Das a bad sign."

"It's bad luck tuh carry wood on yuh shoulduh tru duh house," was added to this information.

777 "But it ain bad luck ef you weahs a Lucky Haht," in-
789 terposed Emma.

"And what is a Lucky Heart," we inquired.

"It's fuh good luck. All duh people roun yuh carries Lucky Hahts and Lucky Mojoes an sech tings." [6]

527 Respecting harvest festivals one of the women said, "I hab heah tell how dey dohn do dat no mo." [38]

535 "We do git tuhgedduh an hab dance an pahties an big
[178] suppuhs," stated another. Her eyes sparkled at the pleasant memory. "We does duh Snake Hip an duh Buzzud Lope."

The others chorused, "An addalas dance we did duh Fish Tail an duh Fish Bone an duh Camel Walk." [17]

535 All efforts failed to persuade the women to describe these dances. Evidently thinking of the antics of their neighbors at the recent dance they laughed repeatedly, shaking their heads and nudging one another but refusing to be cajoled into a demonstration.

115 After learning that we wished to record the old customs as far back as possible, the women suggested that we visit Uncle Jonah,* who was the great grandfather of Elizabeth. In answer to repeated halloos the old man came trudging down the road. As he drew nearer the car, we could see that he was a spry, erect little figure, clad in a blue chambray shirt and a pair of dark trousers. Although he carried a gnarled stick for support, he appeared to move with considerable rapidity. His salutation was, "Dis is Uncle Jonah, duh man wut swalluh duh whale."

* *"Uncle Jonah," Sunbury.*

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[20]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 322 764 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey [567] ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 154 •[189] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69a] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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775 787 I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[81]

776 787 "Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[84b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[84b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em (753) an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

• 789 754 "Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtection,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

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•789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an[12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.'"

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body
[533] and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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775 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?"
845 we asked.
787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh
[755] chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[66]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh
789 tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 13] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

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115 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town.
361 He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh
829 road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

(759) "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh." [8]

(789) Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away." [8, 12a, c, d]

(789) The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it [?77] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body [789] cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes [825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol- [759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle 775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye 776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's 775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered, 775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh 764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the 782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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789 propped up against one of the buildings, we recalled a belief prevailing in most of the Negro communities already visited.

"Does a hoe possess magic qualities?" we wanted to know.

Uncle Ben and Reuben glanced at each other, then muttered in unison, "Yes'm, duh hoe is magic sho nuff."

[777] From Reuben we received the additional statement, "Ef yuh carry duh hoe tru duh house, it sho mean bad luck."

Uncle Ben's contribution was, "I heah lots uh tings bout duh hoe. I heah tell bout how it jis stan right up in duh fiel by itsef an wuk fuh yuh widout nobody techin it—das ef yuh kin wuk it right." [39]

533 When we asked about the music played at dances and at church services, Uncle Ben explained to us, "Some yeahs
535 back at duh dances dey would alluz beat duh drums an shake some kine uh bones wut dey make frum cow's ribs. All duh folks would keep time wid deah hans an feet an dance tuh duh music." [23]

Apparently the memory of similar affairs was pleasant to Reuben, the young guide, for his eyes gleamed and his white teeth flashed in a sudden smile. "Fo I wuz married," he said, "I use tuh go tuh dances an picnics all duh time. Dey would hab only duh drums fuh music an dey would beat on em an duh folks would dance roun in a ring tuh duh toon."

122 As it was growing dark, we were forced to end our visit to this interesting settlement. Reuben led the way back to the car and we plunged again into the pine forest.

574 Going back over the trail we commiserated with Reuben,
606 who apparently made the trip frequently. "I comes tuh see em mos ebry day. Yuh see, Ise married tuh deah baby girl," he confided.

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754 bins cuz das wut mos folks make cunjuh outuh.[10] Ef dey git yuh haiah, yuh hab to do any ting dey wahn yuh tuh."

Alec stated solemnly, "Some folks is alluz sayin dat spirits is bodduhin um.[59] Nebuh hab trouble wid um muhsef."

•[789] This was explained by Rachel who said that they knew a horse-shoe was an excellent remedy for "keeping duh hant away."[8]

"Witches come in at night an ride yuh too,"[69] said Alec. "Jis ride duh folks till some ub um gits so po dey jis pass way."

754 231 We asked if they had ever heard that a frizzled chicken could dig up conjure laid down for a victim and they both nodded in affirmation.

"Chicken kin sho dig up cunjuh.[12a] Alluz hab heah uh dat," they echoed.

115 Alec told us that he had been born three years before freedom. He dwelt for a time on those long-past days and recollected some of the customs that had been prevalent then.

533 764 202 763 "Use tuh alluz beat duh drum at fewnuls. Right attuh duh pusson die, dey beat um tuh tell duh udduhs bout duh fewnul. Dey beat a long beat. Den dey stop. Den dey beat anudduh long beat. Ebrybody know dat dis mean somebody die. Dey beat duh drum in duh nex settlement tuh let duh folks in duh nex place heah."[26]

202 We had previously been told of a similar means of communication employed by the people in this section in former years. At various points large metal discs were hung on [534] trees and posts. On these messages had been beaten out and relayed from place to place. In this manner the people were informed of dances, picnics, meetings, wakes, and other such gatherings.[26]

764 The old couple went on to describe what took place at a wake.

"Wen dey fix duh cawpse, dey put pennies on duh eyes an

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829 a misery in duh leg aw ahm, yuh kill a black chicken an split it open an slap it weah duh pain is an dat will cuo duh pain.

"She tell me dat in Africa she lib in a palmettuh house. She say dey kill animals wid a bow an arruh. Some dey use fuh food an some dey kill fuh skin. All duh people keep deah finguh nail long so dey could grab tings tuh eat off duh trees an bushes. Eben attuh she come tuh dis country, she keep uh nail long fuh a long time. Wen she staht cuttin um, she alluz bun duh pieces an she bun duh combins frum uh haiah too. She say it dangerous tuh let anybody git um. Dey make cunjuh gense yuh.[10] She say in Africa dey plant berries an pumpkin an dey had tuh plant um ebry seben yeahs or dey die.

"Friday wuz duh day she call huh prayuh day. Den she use tuh make bread. Wen she mix it up, she put duh dough in a wet bag an bake it in duh ashes.

"She tell me bout duh hahves time wen duh folks stay up all night an shout. At sun-up dey all sing an pray and say dey live bettuh an be mo tankful duh nex yeah." [38]

"Was your 'gran' grown up when she came from Africa?"

"No'm, she wuz jis a leedle ting. She say dat duh way
829 she happen tuh come frum Africa wuz dat dey wuzn use tuh
567 seein anyting red. One day dey see a boat wid a red piece uh clawt flyin on it. Wen dey go up close tuh see it, dey wuz caught. Huh mothuh, Theresa, wuz caught too an dey
829 wuz brought tuh dis country. Attuh dey bin yuh a wile, duh mothuh git to weah she caahn stan it an she wannuh go back
• 789 tuh Africa. One day muh gran Ryna wuz standin wid uh in duh fiel. Theresa tun roun—so—" here Rosa made two quick swings with her skirt. "She stretch uh ahms out—so —an rise right up an fly right back tuh Africa.[69a] Muh gran say she wuz standin right deah wen it happen. She alluz wish dat uh mothuh had teach uh how tuh fly. She try an try doin duh same way but she ain nebuh fly. She say she guess she jis wuzn bawn wid duh powuh."

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
(825) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
(789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
777 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[22] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
535 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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533 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh
534 way." [24]
764

We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of
534 drums.

"We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry
[237] um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that
567 were real Africans.
829

"Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduh-
829 stan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue,
789 he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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567
829
789

gits tuhgedduh an stick duh hoe in duh fiel an den say 'quack, quack, quack,' an dey riz up in duh sky an tun hesef intuh buzzuds an fly right back tuh Africa." ssh, ssh

At this, we exclaimed and showed our astonishment.

"Wut, you ain heah bout um? Ebrybody know bout um. Dey sho lef duh hoe stannin in duh fiel an dey riz right up an fly right back tuh Africa."

Had Wallace actually seen this happen, we asked.

"No, ma'am, I ain seen um. I bin tuh Skidaway, but I knowd plenty wut did see um, plenty wut wuz right deah in duh fiel wid um an seen duh hoe wut dey lef stickin up attuh dey done fly way."

115
[789]
[322]

This story of the flying Africans seemed to be a familiar one, for it was later repeated to us by William Rogers,* who lived about a mile from Darien on the Cowhorn Road. We had been told that he had been a cabinet maker in his youth and still spent much of his spare time in the carving of a variety of objects. The old man was evidently well known in the vicinity, for upon inquiry neighbors quickly directed us to his house.

Because a short time ago a fire had destroyed Rogers' home and most of his possessions, we found him living in an unfinished cottage which was as yet unpainted except for the bluish-green trimming on all the window facings. In spite of the apparent newness of the house, there was a pleasant homelike atmosphere about it. Proof of Rogers' skill was demonstrated in scroll-work which decorated the porch and in a cupboard and fine square chimney in the dining room which the old man and his wife were building.

[322]

Rogers, who was seventy-two years old, was small of stature with copper-colored skin and alert black eyes. His manner was affable and friendly despite the fact that a recently suffered paralytic stroke had partially deprived him of the use of his hands. He told us that his grandmother had been

* *William Rogers, Cowhorn Road, Darien.*

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115 Georgia but still retained many pleasant recollections of the days of her early youth. She had heard of many African customs and went on to tell us some of these.

829 "I heahd many time bout how in Africa wen a girl dohn ack jis lak dey should, dey drum uh out uh town. Dey jis beat duh drum, an call uh name on duh drum an duh drum say bout all duh tings she done.[36] Dey drum an mahch long an take duh girl right out uh town.

"Girls hab tuh be keahful den. Dey caahn be so triflin lak some ub em is now. In Africa dey gits punished. Sometime wen dey bin bad, dey put um on duh banjo. Dat wuz
626 in dis country."

This being "put on duh banjo" was unintelligible to us and we asked for an explanation.

"Wen dey play dat night, dey sing bout dat girl an dey tell all bout uh. Das puttin uh on duh banjo. Den ebrybody know an dat girl sho bettuh change uh ways."

829 The story of flying Africans was a familiar one to the old woman and she said that her mother had often told her the
• 789 following incident which was supposed to have taken place
567 on a plantation during slavery times.

"Duh slabes wuz out in duh fiel wukin. All ub a sudden dey git tuhgedduh an staht tuh moob roun in a ring. Roun dey go fastuhnfastuh. Den one by one dey riz up an take wing an fly lak a bud.[69b, 69c] Duh obuhseeuh heah duh noise an he come out an he see duh slabes riz up in duh eah an fly back tuh Africa. He run an he ketch duh las one by duh foot jis as he wuz bout tuh fly off. I dohn know ef he wuz neah nuff tuh pull um back down an keep um frum goin off."

115 As we left, Priscilla accompanied us down the walk to the gateway. She was reluctant to see us go and until the last minute regaled us with a variety of stories.

We had learned that an elderly Negro named Lawrence Baker * lived out on the Ridge Road near the Ridgeway Club.

* *Lawrence Baker, the Ridge Road, near Darien.*

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [30]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [59] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

795 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[59] Wen a witch come in duh
• 789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
[825] mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 252 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 764 785 789 231 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way. She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd." Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11b,c] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." 8, 12a, c, d

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he
567 answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh. Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about
313 Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by
782 a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
775 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[29] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
•789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
567 wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh, yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh ol' massuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an 'riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly —An Nancy got um.' "[A]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin, narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[12b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[12a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 567 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he (192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 534 533 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum. Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

535 We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 789 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[22, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front (351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
(351) been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
(165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
(764) hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
(783) long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[58]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
(753) Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 68c] He
(567)

* *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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•789 say all his fambly in Africa could fly. I ain seen em fly muh-
sef but he say he could do it all right. We's sked ub im wen
we's boys an use tuh run wen we see im come."

115 During the interview Emma, Charles' wife, hovered nearby,
seemingly very much interested in the proceedings. Finally
we asked her to come and talk to us. Although she said that
she was too young to remember much of the old times, she
gave us some recollections regarding superstitions and Afri-
can customs.

"Now muh gran Betty she wuz African an she plant benne
[241] seed. Once yuh staht plantin benne, yuh got tuh plant em
[761] ebry yeah aw yuh die. I tell yuh who kin tell yuh sumpm
bout ole times an das Chahls Murray. He ain tell me how
ole he is but I ketch he age jis duh same. Yuh go down tuh
duh main road a lill way an duh road spring off tuh Chahls
Murray house."

Emma also told us how to reach Ben Sullivan, one of the
oldest men living on the island.

361 From Hunter's we turned left on a lane flanked by a
thicket of low trees and bushes. After about two or three
miles we came to a clearing where there was a scattering of
houses and sheds.

115 A tall, spare man was plowing in a field to the left of the
road. We hailed him and asked him if he could help us find
Ben Sullivan. He left his mule and plow and came over to
the car. He was tall, as straight as a soldier, with a lean
agility that bespoke youthfulness. Over his long jaws and
rather straight features his copper skin was smooth.

"Ise Ben Sullivan," * he said, and we were puzzled.

"But," we said, "the Ben Sullivan we are looking for is an
old man."

"Ise duh only Ben Sullivan," he answered. "Ise eighty-
eight."

It seemed incredible that this active, intensely alive man

* *Ben Sullivan, St. Simons Island.*

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829 an parakeet. An, too, he say nuttn ebuh die way. Duh crops jis come back ebry yeah widout habin tuh be planted.

"Das all I membuh Hettie tellin bout Africa. Muh fathuh's fathuh come frum Africa too but wen muh fathuh Belali wuz a small young lad, muh granfathuh wehn tuh Dungeness on Cumberland Ilun tuh trade in slabes an nebuh wuz seen agen. It wuz muh fathuh Belali dat made rice cakes."

When asked about his father's mother, Ben continued, "Muh fathuh's mothuh lib at Altama. Huh name wuz Luna, but muh fathuh's fathuh wuz a unmarried man. Deah's many tings I do not membuh, it wuz sech a long time ago. I know dat wen deah wuz tuh be a buryin, dey alluz bury duh dead at night at duh plantation. Dey alluz come in frum duh tas befo dahk.

"In doze days deah wuz no way tuh git tuh Savannah cep
[505] by boat an wen Mr. Couper wannuh go, he use a boat bout fifty foot long an bout six foot wide. He take six strong oahsmen an dey would make it in ten aw twelve hours. I heahd tell ub a house buil by a man frum Africa, wid cawn stalks an mud an wid a straw filluh."

829 The flying story about old Alexander, the root maker, had interested us and we asked if Ben Sullivan had heard of it.

•789 "I ain heahd specially bout him but Ise heahd plenty Africans talk bout flyin. Deah's plenty ub em wut could fly.[68c, 69b] I sho heahd em talk bout great doins an Ise heahd ole Israel say duh hoe could wuk by itsef ef yuh know wut tuh say tuh it.[39] It bin a long time sence Ise tought bout tings lak dat, but ef uh studies bout em, dey comes back tuh me."

115 On the way back from Harrington to St. Simons village we stopped at Nora Peterson's * small cabin to talk with her. Nora, the daughter of Tom Floyd, an African who came to

* *Nora Peterson, St. Simons Island.*

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[49] He
759 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
759 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick
• 789 wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuñ. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [38] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

•789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [6] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

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000 and taking possession of them. Among the BaKongo, the curse of the dying is much dreaded, especially that of a relative, for the deceased will soon enter the spirit world. A dying person may admonish those around to take care of his or her affairs. "If you do not, I shall fetch you, and you will not become old here on earth." The dying one may also request the living to "wrap me well in the cloth that I leave," may insist that the living hold many lamentations after the death and care for the deceased's family. If not properly buried, the deceased might bring *kindoki* (evil).[12]

567 763 A curious example of the application of both African and Christian practices among the slaves is provided by a former South Carolina bondsman. According to the informant, a good-looking and very popular slave girl named Mary became ill and died after a lingering illness of four or six months' duration. The slaves on the surrounding plantations were [754] sure that Mary had been conjured (poisoned) by a rival in a love triangle. The plantation proprietor, a Methodist minister, had Mary treated by [759] his brother, a practicing physician. While the doctor was attending Mary, the slaves appealed to their own doctor, a plantation slave who also treated 567 the young woman. But Mary died, and, according to the author, her 764 funeral, which as was traditional took place at night, "was the largest ever held in all that region of the country":

> The coffin, a rough home-made affair, was placed upon a cart, which was drawn by an old Gray, and the multitudes formed in a line in the rear, marching two deep. The procession was something like a quarter of a mile long. Perhaps every fifteenth person down the line carried an uplifted torch. As the procession moved [533] slowly toward "the lonesome graveyard" down by the side of the swamp, they sung the well-known hymn of Dr. Issac Watts:
>
> "When I can read my title clear
> To mansions in the skies,
> I bid farewell to every fear
> And wipe my weeping eyes."
>
> [789] Mary's baby was taken to the graveyard by its grandmother, and before the corpse was deposited in the earth, the baby was passed from one person to an- [775] other across the coffin. The slaves believed that if this was not done it would be impossible to raise the infant. The mother's spirit would come back for her baby and take it to herself.
>
> [533] After this performance the corpse was lowered into the grave and covered, each person throwing a handful of dirt into the grave as a last farewell act of kindness to the dead, and while this was being done the leader announced that other hymn by Dr. Watts:

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"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound
My ears, attend the cry;
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie."

. . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

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The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

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Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

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assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the insignia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of African tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appetites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings, broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects pertaining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire roun de station and find out who he be. Dey say he uh man from John Island and dey call 'e name to me.

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *ukisi*, essentially a positive force working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gullahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gullah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out "speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex,

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APPENDIX E

# *Gullah Folkways*

Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

## *Folk Beliefs*

Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[4]

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Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

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"Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulphur. Dey is say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. No'm. Dey ain fer trubble me sense dat one time. Uncle Murphy he witch doctor, en he bin tell me how fer fend em off. Dat man full ob knowledge. He must hap Gawd mind in em. So I totes meh powder en sulphur en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd." 539 776 825 789

[p. 354 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 888 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

(789) If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

(534) And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or (534) stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 578 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 199 There's been a great awakening through television and through the news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

159 829 **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**

Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[789] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

[845] [789] A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

[789] [751] Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

[754] The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
669 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(354) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
(775) kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
• 789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

(177) [25] *A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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787 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—
763 now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

•789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts (171) of Africa.

567 Kingsley says in his *Treatise* that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a con-
759 jurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring
197 implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me
754 there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his
(551) magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to
[789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr. Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
854 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
774 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of
789 the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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*nial Slavery*, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606.

16. A. S. Salley, ed., *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726–1812* (Columbia: State Co., 1919), 22–25; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; repr. from 1820 ed.), 379–81; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 72–74; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 602–3.

17. John Wakhead to SPG, September 26, 1715, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

18. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL.

19. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL; Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 20, 1712, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 7; Letters of J. Ottolenghe, July 12, 1758, SPG, London Ms. of Dr. Bray's Associates, Letters from the American Colonies, BX 19, reel 10; Klingberg, *Carolina Chronicle*, 118–19.

20. *SCG*, May 4, 1734; Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapter 10; *SCG*, April 16 and 23, 1737; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 342.

21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19.

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51.

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13.

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

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[For information on "root doctors", see Category 759.]

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## FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[58]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts[59]
(787) and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordinary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[8b] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 625 West Waldburg Lane.*

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# *Springfield*

361 ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TO-
gether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population
of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah
near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several
[368] wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed
modern brick school building, and a number of stores that
supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

771 Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So
somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the
[787] spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering
at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising
to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work
and against which many inhabitants of this locality are al-
ways on guard.

115 A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washing-
ton,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. I
•[791] is said that Washington's patronage is growing stead-
[759] ily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house,
seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment
that has descended upon them.

791 The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a
queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly,
347 and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut se-
[352] curely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting
of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed
directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the
353 dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

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353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 787 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson,"[22a,*] he told us, "cuz I wuz bawn wid a double cawl[4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

789 754 "I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh down sick aw eben kill yuh.[8] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[48] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub[10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 791 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 [593] We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

[351] The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

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787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
775 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
776 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
(115) eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[8]

754 "I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

• 791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[48] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh oppurate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

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• 791 759 went tuh uh house once. She show me a box full uh packages an she say dat ebry one wuz a han fuh diffrunt tings.[8b-c] I reach out tuh git hole ub em, but she stop me an say ef uh touch em, dey lose all duh powuh. Clara and Doctuh Sheppard bote dead now.

789 "Ise heahd lots uh stories bout folks wut could fly. Some time back I wuz libin in Woodville wen a man come tru deah. He wuz frum Liberty County. Dis man talk lot bout duh story uh duh Africans wut could fly. He say all dis wuz true. He say he wuz takin awduhs fuh wings an dey wuz all yuh need tuh fly. A peah uh wings coss twenty-five dolluhs. Duh man take yuh measure an a five dolluh deposit an say he collec duh balance wen he delibuh duh wings. Lots uh people gib deah awduh fuh wings, cuz all deah libes dey been heahin bout folks wut could fly. Duh man jis go roun takin awduhs an collectin five dolluhs. Das duh las any ub us ebuh heah uh duh man aw duh wings."

791 759 Clara Smith,* a resident of this community, told us that she too remembered the time when Dr. Sheppard and the woman called Clara, who it appeared was her aunt, had operated a thriving business. "I didn unduhstan much wut dey did," she said, "but dey wuz bote kep busy all uh dat time. Deah wuz alluz a long line uh folks waitin tuh see em.

"Dey say my Aunt Clara wuz bery good. She could wuk roots an gib good luck hans an tell fawchuns, and fix yuh enemies.

754 "One time a man come an git muh aunt. He say somebody cunjuh his wife.[15] She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days at a time. My aunt go tuh duh house an dig all roun. She fine a sack filled wid sulphuh, an haiah,[10] an matches, an grabeyahd dut.[9] Den she look in duh house an she fine mo sacks in duh mattress, in duh pilluh, an in duh dressuh draws. Deze cunjuh sacks wuz wut causin duh woman tuh [789] be crazy. My aunt destroy duh sacks an gie duh woman a

* *Clara Smith, 1159 East Duffy Street.*

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754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[49c]

[755] [789]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
787 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[59] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a close frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

[763]

"I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
754 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen
• 791 dey ain ride im.[60] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[22] an gib hans[8c, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1201 Murphy Avenue.*

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BROWNVILLE

Kum baba yano
Lai lai tambe
Ashi lai lai lai
Shi wali go
Dhun.

•791 759 789 In the heart of the thriving Brownville community live fortune tellers, root doctors, and vendors of magic charms who conduct flourishing businesses.[22a, c, 48] There is a ready market for their wares which are used for the various activities of daily living. Numerous perplexities pertaining to matters of business, luck, and love affairs are thought to be solved by the mere possession of certain charms.[8]

115 789 472 Mattie Sampson,* a robust young Negro woman, told us that she does an active mail order business as representative of the Lucky Heart Company, the Sweet Georgia Brown Company, and the Curio Products Company. She supports herself comfortably by means of selling her credulous neighbors good luck perfumes, roots, lodestones, and similar charms. "Duh chahms an good luck puhfumes an powduhs do deah wuk independent of any additional hep," Mattie said. "Ef anybody believe a puticuluh chahm is wut dey need, well, dat chahm will do duh wuk."

"Mos of muh customuhs depen on special chahms tuh bring em good luck," the young woman continued. "Dey nevuh puhmit deah supply tuh give out but awduh it ovuh an ovuh. I have sevral bes selluhs. One is duh *Mystic Mojo Love Sachet*. Dis is sometimes call *Quick Love Powduh* an is guaranteed tuh make yuh populuh, successful, an happy. Yuh use it tuh attrac a pusson an tuh make dat pusson admyuh an love yuh. A lill uh dis powduh is wone in a bag aroun duh neck aw rubbed on duh body. But ef yuh prefuh, yuh kin sprinkle it in duh dressuh draw aw in duh bottom uh duh shoes.

* *Mattie Sampson, West 32nd Street.*

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

•791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
775 talked with spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
[551] 'Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
[101] "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
[192] edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25s] and a hog *gulluh*.

[322] To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step," [34a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried." [1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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SANDFLY

•791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, •]

791 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church
794 of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctify-
783 ing process in order to be saved. After this has been accomplished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We
[533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds
262 of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables. The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[25]

791 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had
533 spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered
202 hearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[27b, •]
[782] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[58b, •]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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775 Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was
774 described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

774 The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodi-
513 cally to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in
(761) sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

754 Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their
787 belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the
(791) Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

763 The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider
456 it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

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Thus, diviners combined physical, religious, and psychological approaches in their treatments. Perhaps in instances where a physical cure was warranted herbal medicines sufficed. But when a patient was convinced that superhuman agencies were at the root of the problem, a diviner resorted to similar countermeasures of supernatural proportions, and it was a case of spirit acting upon spirit. Patients with faith enough in their specialists, priests, or priestesses might be relieved of a spell they felt in the grip of, "cured" of a psychosomatic complaint, or the healer might even employ an effective herbal remedy while prescribing an amulet, in which case the two powers working together were credited with effecting a cure.[23] 171

African diviners were specialists who usually considered themselves "called" to their positions, either as youths or later in life. The profession was also passed on within the family. The nature of the "calling" was generally through dreams in which deities or ancestors summoned a would-be diviner to the work. The training process was extensive and candidates were schooled in medicinal knowledge, magic, and witchcraft countermeasures. In the Upper and Lower Guinea regions, mandatory secret societies assumed the task of training religious specialists and the process took place over a number of years in which candidates were isolated from everyone except other initiates and teachers. Among ethnic groups of the Kongo, medicine specialists were sometimes trained in special secret societies. The class of diviners was elaborate (with over fifty orders), since BaKongo religion was solidly based on magico-healing *(minkisi)*. Yet a "proper specialist" or *nganga* need not necessarily belong to any society.[24]

Functions of spiritual leaders and diviners were of paramount significance in the New World setting. In the colonial era these leaders most likely provided a direct link with and representation of the past. Later they demonstrated the African-American adaptive capacity as they incorporated their influence into the Christian religion as well as sometimes operating completely outside of it. In the early days, when memories and reminiscences of Africa were fresh, African diviners assumed religious leadership. From this group may have emerged the "spiritual parents"—men and women whose position was unauthorized by whites, but central to the slaves' spiritual and religious orientation. Their existence predated the coming of organized Christian instruction to the Sea Islands. Yet they became the Gullahs' plenipotentiaries, responsible for 171 79

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guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as having a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-building, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who maintained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote:

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

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APPENDIX E

# *Gullah Folkways*

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

127 128 178

### *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

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17 *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 450–52, 458; Wyatt
113 MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Kongo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 84; Laman, *Kongo* II: 130–31; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 246–47.

19. Laman, *Kongo*, II: 22–23; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 217–20, 246–57; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 71, 77–82, 315; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 158–71.

20. Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 266–68, 278; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 92; MacGaffey, *Custom*
171 *in Lower Kongo*, 148–50; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 86; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 36–
113 39; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 86; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 30–33; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr.
771 from 1941 ed.), 206; Roger Bastide, *African Civilizations in the New World*, trans. Peter Green (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 106, 161; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments*
775 *of the Sun*, 181–203; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 132–58; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139–47; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Honoring the Ancestors; Kongo-American Graves in the American South," *Southern Exposure* 28 (September–October, 1985): 42–57; "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 181–93; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–86; South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27A, WPA, SCL: Folk-Lore Scrap-Book, "Mortuary Customs and Beliefs of South Carolina Negroes," from an article originally published in the *Atlanta Constitution* by May A. Waring, *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 7 (1894): 318–19.

21. Opoku, *West African Religion*, 147–51; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Reli-*
171 *gion*, 80–84; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr,
113 *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–213; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo* III: 81–104; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–20, 232–35; Willoughby, *Soul of Bantu*, 192–95; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–19; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 41 (November–April, 1890–91): 825–26.

22. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 50–55, 71–72, 186; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, Chapter 4; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211–13; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 57, 81–104, 157–59; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 231–36; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 110–14; Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, 106–7, 117–21; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 169, Chapters 15–16.

23. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 213–14; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 54–59; Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 148–49; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 168–171, Chapters 15–16; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37; Janzen and MacGaffey, *Kongo Religion*, 34–35; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 81–105.

24. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 166–67, Rattray, *Religion in Ashanti*, 38–39; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 71–72; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 211; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 22–23; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 824–29; Weeks, *Among the BaKongo*, 214–18; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 37, 11[illegible]; Laman, *Kongo*, II: 130–32.

• [791] 25. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; *Minutes; Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which organization of societies was discussed, 271–72, January 7, 1842 and November 1, 1840, 12, BC; *SCA*, Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, 162, Penn School Papers, SHC; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

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794 346 bership of two million and a local membership of about fifty. There is nothing prepossessing about the small white building. The wooden floor is sprinkled with sawdust and except for the piano the only furniture is several roughly built wooden benches. The walls of the mission are hung with placards bearing inscriptions, of which the following are a few: "Peace—the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink, but joy, peace and good will," "Peace and Good Will to the World," "Peace, Father Divine is God, Salutation is Peace."

794 At about eight o'clock in the evening members begin straggling in, two or three at a time. They are dressed soberly, with a noticeable lack of bright colors and ornamentation of any description, as one of the precepts of the cult is the sacrifice of all worldly possessions. Upon joining the church they must surrender everything of material value to Father Divine. The old life is a thing of the past. The convert must accept new habits, new names, and an entirely new scheme of existence.

794 •793 (796) The ardor of followers is not dampened by the fact that their leader has never been known to visit the Savannah branch. They claim that he is always present spiritually and can in this manner accomplish his miracles. At the meeting a major part of the service is given over to a number of testimonials, presented by many of those present. One by one the converts intone their devotion to Father Divine * and vividly recount what he has done for them.

794 796 A stout Negro woman bearing the name of Sister Patience

*curately portrays the House as it was found in this community. For this reason it was thought well to include it.*

** Father Divine is said to have been born George Baker on a Hutchinson Island rice plantation near Savannah about sixty years ago. Sometime in the late 1890's it appears that he opened a meeting house in the Negro section of the Old Fort, calling himself "The Son of Righteousness." His activities in the community abruptly ceased when, after some trouble with the authorities, he fled from Savannah to escape a gang of whites who aimed to make him prove himself the reincarnation of Christ by walking on the Savannah River.*

*Arriving in Baltimore, Maryland, he joined a religious sect headed by*

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794 796 Peace * gives the following testimonial: "Once it wuz muh highes ambition tuh know duh tings uh duh worl. I loved cahds an drink an udduh vices. No day passed wen I wuz not so drunk dat I would gib out an hab tuh go tuh bed. Now it is not so. I hab nebuh seen duh Fathuh in duh body, but I know dat he is God, fuh I hab made spiritual contac wid him. Because uh rightous libin I am now weighin two hundud pouns. Praise Fathuh."

A thin, wiry little Negro man, ** whose eyes gleam with a fanatical light, speaks next. He gives his name as Noah's Ark and states that Father Divine has given him the power to raise his wife from the dead and has caused him to enter upon a new and sanctified life. Faithful Patience, the wife, is also present and in turn testifies as to the truth of his statement and as to her own faith in Father Divine.

Triumphant Virgin, † happy in the knowledge that she is now leading a blameless existence, steps forward and gives the following statement: "I know Fathuh Divine tuh be God cuz he lifted me out uh duh guttuh and changed me frum a drunkud an all udduh low tings dat I use tuh be.

• [793] *Father Jehovia. Later, in New York City the new disciple decided to open his own cult. It was then that he adopted his present name and that his converts created the maxim "Father Divine is God."*

*Converts both white and Negro were eager to join the new order. Today Father Divine computes his followers as being between $1,000,000 and $0,000,000, although outsiders give a more conservative estimate. The leader travels extensively and "heavens" have been established in various parts of the country. His weekly income is reputed to be $20,000 and is derived from the many business establishments operated under his supervision.*

*He has a fondness for flashy clothing, wears a five dollar gold piece for a stickpin, and rides about in a pale blue Rolls Royce and a scarlet monoplane.*

*The self-styled Messiah has now extended his activities to the field of politics, both national and international. There is a variance of public sentiment concerning him. To followers he appears to be "reincarnated God," while enemies insist he is a fraud, a hypnotist, and a remarkably clever actor who is at present growing a little tired of the role he has chosen to enact.*

*Robert Allerton Parker, "The Incredible Messiah" (Boston, 1937), pp. 80, 93, 94, 106, 183, 188, 209–36.*

** Sister Patience Peace, Old Fort.*

*** Noah's Ark, Old Fort.*

*† Triumphant Virgin, Old Fort.*

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794 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine.
796 Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the
796 chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demon-
786 strations become more and more violent. Several of the con-
gregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious in-
toxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19]
[533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic
clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out
its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious
version of an improvised hymn. The participants in the
dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of con-
tortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed
smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver,
they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden
benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance
goes on.[46]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the
worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine,
the man who, according to their own account, was not born
in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in
New York City and who was sent to earth to save his fol-
lowers from destruction.

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## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though
[342] on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teach-
[368] ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits
794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16]
• [793] returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular mem-
[352] bers and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color
794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly
292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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794 (292) congregation don their newest and most colorful garments. Preparation has been made for all emergencies. In attendance are burly guards whose duty it is to see that nothing occurs to disturb the smooth performance of the ceremonies. The floor has been thickly sprinkled with sawdust and the stout posts at the front of the church are padded to prevent injury to overzealous worshipers.

794 793 796 At the sudden sharp sound of a whistle all activity ceases; there is silence in the church. The Armor Bearers leave the building to escort the Bishop to his seat of honor. Soon they return, followed by the Queen who is arrayed in a pale green satin evening dress over which is worn a black velvet cape lined with scarlet. A double line of uniformed guards follows, and marching proudly between the lines is the Bishop. According to his own statement, the Holy Prophet, as his followers call him, is of Portuguese birth. His long dark hair which falls to his shoulders, his piercing eyes, his pointed beard, and sideburns all combine to give him a distinguished and unusual appearance.*

The procession continues to the front of the church, where, with much ceremony, the Bishop seats himself upon a lofty throne set far back on the spacious platform. The

* *Details of the early life of "Daddy Grace" are clothed in obscurity and little can be learned of the real origin of the House of Prayer. Some claim that he is of West Indian birth, others that he was born Marcilino Manuel Garcia in Portugal, and still others interpret his references to " a land beyond the sea" as indication that he hails from Egypt. All members of the cult must be baptized and during a four-week session in 1936 1,789 candidates were ministered to at a charge of $1.00 each. The Bishop advocates that members give generously of their material goods to the church and he has been known on occasions to go about among his congregation seizing purses and demanding that worshipers sacrifice treasured jewelry. It is a well known fact that his profession of "spiritual leader" has proved a vastly profitable one, and in the course of the last several years he has amassed a huge fortune. Many of "Daddy's" enterprises are looked upon with disfavor and suspicion by the police department. His frequent clashes with the law over various matters of an extremely worldly nature serve only to increase the attendance and the collections at the church and also give the Bishop much desired publicity. Followers are unimpressed by his occasional arrests, secure in the knowledge that no earthly force can ever conquer "Daddy." See* Time (*New York*), *March 7, 1938, XXXI, No. 10, p. 20.*

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
•793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[432] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[755] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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796 Ebrybody gib at leas one nickel now wile we still hab duh
794 privilege uh gibin tuh Daddy. Step up, ebrybody."

Until this point Bishop Grace, apparently indifferent, has
796 had no active part in the ceremony, but he now steps for-
•793 ward. There is a sudden hush.

"Daddy" becomes an intimate, vivid part of the group. Coming down among the congregation, he addresses his talk now to one individual, now to another, dropping frequently into the southern Negro dialect. The theme of his address is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The main issue, however, is often sidetracked, and the speaker comments in turn upon world politics, the war, anecdotes of his own trips abroad, his persecution by enemies, all of whom "the Lord struck down dead," and the general condition of the local community. The entire discourse is interspersed with humorous sayings that find a delighted response. "Daddy" advises his followers strongly against trusting anyone. "If the angel from Heaven comes down an wants an extra pair of wings, don't trust him," he warns. "Tell him you ain't got no time to keep books today. He have to pay cash." Near the conclusion of his talk the Bishop says that he can accomplish anything he chooses, even to sinking ships, destroying fleets of planes, or conquering entire nations. He is not the actual power, he says, but he is so close to it that he has only to reach out his hand and pull the switch.

After every sentence or two that "Daddy" utters his listeners echo his statements with such remarks as "Ain't it so, Daddy," "Dat is duh trute," "Yes Daddy," "You tell em, Daddy," "Hallelujah," "Amen." These utterances do not always agree with what the speaker has just said but nevertheless are meant to express thorough approbation. At one time "Daddy" tosses to a woman in the congregation a
[786] rose he has used in illustrating a point in his sermon. This

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796 unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent
• 793 that she is seized with violent convulsions.
(786) Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of
(782) the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of
(152) each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out
(533) a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

551 Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in
(115) which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

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829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
567 wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh, yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly —An Nancy got um.' "[A]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

• 793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin, narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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•793 from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were
794 afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to
(292) the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah
796 the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, where-
537 with shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and rea-
796 soning with his congregation. His voice would carry a
786 pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the
796 able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The
533

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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793 537 796 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

[871]

[539]

Heavenly Father
Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 533 [793] [794] [786] Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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## A Sermon

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For true, the Lord ben give em silver trumpet,
and he shonuf know how for blow em!

The Reverend Renty Pinckney is minister of New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. His sermon is not presented in its entirety here, because it is very long. The Reverend Mr. Pinckney, like most island ministers, has memorized the Bible thoroughly; his creativity is revealed by his ability to join scattered allusions into a cohesive whole.[23]

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### The Bread of Life

Rev. Renty Pinckney
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God is the Bread of Life
God will feed you when you get hungry *Oh yes! I know he will. All right! Yeah. Amen! Yes sir!*

Look on the mountain
Beside the hill of Galilee *My Lord!*

Watch his disciple
Riding on the sea *Yeah! Uh huh!*

Tossing by the wind and rain *Yeah. Come up*

Going over the sea of temptation *Uh hum*

Brother, I don't know
But I begin to think
In this Christian life *Yes!*

Sometime you gone be toss *Yes, yeah!*

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
796 the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[793] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
285 have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the patterns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
226 though they are endangered by development and pollution of the waters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
[823] tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.
[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
178 more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
538 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
[207] tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television because the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants, ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an audience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Guliah, the island language, is being affected by population
197 changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
[192] older generations are not being passed on to the children because the islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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## Chapter 3

782 537 128 1. The prayers are often presented in a chanting style difficult for non-Gullah speakers to understand. Thus I gratefully acknowledge the aid of Mrs. Ida Morris-Hamilton of Wadmalaw Island for helping with transcriptions and translations.

113 2. See Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy;* Harold Carter, *The Prayer Tradition of Black People* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1976); William H. Pipes, *Say Amen Brother* (New York: William Federal Press, 1951); and Jones-Jackson, "Oral Tradition."

782 533 3. The prayers are normally accompanied by music. If no musical accompanist is available, the prayer giver and the congregation create their own musical accompaniment with handclaps, shuffles, and moans.

113 4. See Carter, *Prayer Tradition;* Pipes, *Say Amen Brother;* and Molefe Asante, *African and African-American Communication Continuities* (New York: Council of International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1975).

782 126 128 5. This prayer was delivered impromptu by Mr. James Brown, who is known for his ability to deliver stirring words with absolutely no prior preparation. I am grateful to him and Rev. Renty Pinckney for permitting me to record this prayer during church services. I am likewise grateful to Rev. Chester R. Jones for his comments on my analysis of the prayer. I owe special thanks to Rev. Alfred Owens of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church, Washington, D.C., for his invaluable assistance in providing references for the many biblical allusions in the prayer. All references are to the King James Version.

000 6. Ps. 51, David's cry for repentance and mercy, may have been a model for this passage.

7. Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58.

8. Rom. 6:12, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:53–54; John 15:1.

9. Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5.

10. John 1:32.

11. Phil. 3:13.

12. Ps. 1:14.

13. John 12:2, 25:4.

14. 2 Cor. 7:5.

782 15. The speaker adapts his prayer to fit the occasion by including the purpose for which he is offering his prayer in strategic places. Many of the following passages are based on the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes; the speaker brings them into his prayer as responses (e.g., "Want my spirit meek and mild").

• [793] 16. The minister is often considered the assembler and leader of the community as well as of the church. Thus, like Moses, he is viewed as a deliverer of the people, one chosen by God to be the inheritor of the silver trumpet. See Num. 10:1–10.

17. This is a rural expression of the idea from Matt. 7:24–29 that whosoever builds his house on solid rock shall not be moved by the storms of life.

18. Jerusalem is not only the holy biblical city but, literally, the name of the AME church in which this prayer was delivered.

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175 567 oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840, "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccustomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

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> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan*'?" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

175 193 197 Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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sanction from planters and overseers as the "spiritual elders" of the people. One St. Helena planter who spent little time on the island, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned there in 1833 that he hoped the Methodists could improve the religious condition among the Gullahs. The biggest problem according to the planters was the black leaders whose control had to be broken.[50]

Thus missionaries vied with black spiritual advisers for religious leadership in the slave community.[51] There was no way for the Methodists to counter the influence of slaves whom the Gullahs regarded as spiritual advisers but who made no claim to Christianity. Methodists felt that under Christian instruction customs and practices perpetrated by this leadership would die out in time. But the missionaries believed black leaders who fused "paganism" with Christianity were most detrimental to the Methodist cause. These leaders had either to be set on the "true" path or their influence undermined. The competition proved difficult. Everywhere they went among the Gullahs, missionaries found black leaders successfully impeding Methodist influence. From Beaufort Mission, T. E. Ledbetter reported in 1836 that although some "pious" Episcopalian planters allowed missionaries to preach to slaves, he saw no evidence of progress:

> . . . we combat a great many falso notions, and . . . fatal doctrines which have been elderly imbibed by the colored population through the instrumentality of ignorant and superstitious teachers among themselves. And nothing is more difficult to overcome than a strongly prejudiced understanding . . . many among them are opposed to us.[52]

Some missionaries, even without planter approval, attempted completely to halt black spiritual leadership. Others hoped to communicate with Gullahs by recognizing or even appointing certain "elders." Both tactics often bred frustration. From Pocotaligo Mission in Beaufort District, John N. Davies reported in 1840:

> A black man, one of them [the slaves] whom they claim for their spiritual father, and, as they say, "had brought them through the spirit," became corrupted and inflated with self-importance—I gave him a close talk, with a design of moving him, when he held up the wand of his sweeping influence by asserting that all the children [the people] would follow him. As we have no authority to visit them at the plantation we chose the only mode of saving them, . . . to select and appoint a zealous and upright man, of their number to be with him as an aid and guard; meanwhile a noise came from abroad of large depredations being

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committed which implicated this and several plantations . . . nearly all have ceased to attend and we fear they are rushing to ruin—Lord have mercy upon them and upon me."

This missionary's report typifies one significant aspect of white attempts to usurp black leadership — that of replacing an individual who could not be subordinated with one seemingly more controllable. Undoubtedly, the "zealous and upright" man was more cooperative than pious. The audacious missionary had no access to the plantation where his spiritual rival lived, nor apparently did he have the good wishes and confidence of the planter. Some planters left it completely up to the Gullahs as to whether or not they attended missionary services, and others specifically forbade it; this contributed to the continued presence and influence of black leaders. Moreover, as the Davies' account reveals, slaves given passes to attend preaching appointments often found other more lucrative or entertaining means of utilizing their temporary mobility. Fear of this limited movement and assembly was a continual obstruction in obtaining unified support for religious instruction from the slaveholders. When Christian conversion took on a new seriousness in 1845, large slave gatherings for religious purposes, never popular, were discontinued and the emphasis shifted to individual and family instruction on plantations. The latter type of religious teaching eventually brought the Methodists more success.[34]

Still many Gullahs displayed skepticism toward the Methodists and resisted offending their own leaders. From Pocotaligo, John N. Davies continued to inform the public of his problems:

> We have had some trouble at another preaching place, occasioned by the puffing up of father S., as he is called, but plantation authority forbids his guiding the people. They have appeared spellbound, not to move or think without him. He a poor creature of dust imagines himself to be the Great Shepherd whose voice alone "the sheep know," and whom alone the true sheep will follow. . . . We visit the plantations and explain as far as possible. God grant us brighter days and better times.

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But despite only marginal encouragement from both planters and slaves, the missionaries continued to "suffer and rejoice and pray and labor." And from the beginning, though suspicious and cautious, some slaves came to hear the missionaries by choice. The fact of their attendance was considered progress as expressed by one optimistic missionary in 1835:

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175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
• 793 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
[554] sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
[797] ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

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tical about employing blacks even as helpers. William Capers insisted that "helpers" only be "a feeble staff—not leaned upon. They can no more do the missionary's work than a staff can walk." On the other hand, Sea Island Baptists placed much Christian teaching on the shoulders of black leaders. Methodists were consistently confronted with the problems created by this difference in tactical approach. After 1845 most black elders operated with the approval of slaveholders. Some, according to Methodists, had rudimentary knowledge of Christianity. But most, said the missionaries, represented "the very essence of ignorance and superstition." Some slaves came to Methodists' preaching and "precious seasons" and "effusions of tears would ensue." But Methodists lamented that slaves immediately deserted them for "one of their own":

> Let it be known that one of these [slaves] is to preach on such a day and there is such a rush . . . that they may have the pleasure of hearing one of their own color . . . what else than mischief can be expected from the teaching of an ignorant enthusiast who knows nothing of God's word, and puts his own delusions in the place of divine truth? . . . and they say that whenever they come to hear me, it is from duty . . . because I am employed by their owners."

Wherever Baptists authorized Christian instruction, Methodists found black leaders and black societies. "The society exerts its influence against us which is remarkably strong," wrote the missionary at Pocotaligo in 1844. "This 'society' is altogether in the hands of the colored people who are actively engaged against us." Thus black leaders struggled to maintain their position among their people and continued preaching and practicing their own version of "Christianity." Methodists hoped the establishment of missions would fragment the influence of black teachers and thus foster the cause of "true" religion. A lengthy editorial was printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* in 1846 where the author discussed the "deplorable exhibition of pseudo religion" among slaves of the large plantations in coastal South Carolina:

> The superstitious notions prevalent here and there, are probably the reflects of—more ancient superstitions, handed down by tradition and propagated by so called *leaders*, who prior to the preaching of the gospel by . . . the missionaries . . . wielded a fearful amount of spiritual influence among their followers, and the negro communities of the plantations generally. And it is what with remarkable tenacity these superstitious actions still maintain their hold in spite of a better teaching. Instead of giving up their visionary religiónism, embracing the simple truth . . . our missionaries find them endeavoring to incorporate their

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superstitious rites with a purer system of instruction, producing thereby a hybrid, crude, and undefinable medley of truth and falsehood.[78]

Many missionaries saw slave children as the future of the enterprise. Others were even skeptical about that. According to one Methodist, "so far does prejudice extend, even the children on some of these places refuse to be instructed, because of the example of their parents and the older ones." Many Baptist planters left instruction of the young in the hands of plantation "help" who taught the children prayers and whatever else their religious instruction consisted of. Gradually, Methodists were forced to admit that despite their consistent though infrequent preaching and catechizing, they could not successfully compete with black leadership operating clandestinely or with the approval of Baptist churches and slaveholders.[79]

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The Episcopalian mission established in 1849 on the Sea Isalands took away the near monopoly that Methodist missionaries previously had among a number of Episcopalian planters. Episcopalian slaveholders observed the same uninterested attitude among the slaves as Methodists witnessed. John Edwin Fripp, a St. Helena Episcopalian, allowed his slaves to attend the preaching of a diocese missionary while Fripp himself was in residence on the plantation. But given a choice, few showed up to hear "Mr. Welch" when the minister was on the plantation. According to Fripp's Journal:

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> Sat. Dec. 19th—Rev. Welch is down tonight lecturing to the Negroes. Will go to Seabrooks in the Morning. The Negroes appear very backward in coming to hear him. They are getting tired of religion I expect.

No doubt "religion" was not what tired Fripp's slaves, but the dry "lecturing" which often characterized missionary sermons. Gullahs realized that planters were not truly concerned with their spiritual welfare and the they recognized the one-sidedness of their situation. An old coachman on the same Fripp plantation stated "massa been unjust to we. Take all we labor and get rich, then say we lazy, Can't care for we self, give us two suits a year, dat our wages."[80] No one need wonder about the degree of enthusiasm Gullahs had for the religious emissary of such masters.

Thus, a key to understanding the appeal of the Baptist faith for Gullahs lies in recognizing the slaves' rationale. Methodist emphasis on order and hierarchy left little room for internal flexibility in the denomina-

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*Sam Polite, the Praise House elder. From the Penn Historical Collection. (Permission granted by Penn Community Services, Inc., St. Helena Island, South Carolina.)*

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CHAPTER 8

# Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity

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Do not pass we by, My Jesus, as you go on de road from Jericho to de new Jerusalem, but tarry at de door and speak de word of hope to we heart and blow de breeze of blessing upon us. Almighty and eternal Father, we de prisoners of Hope, turn to de stronghold and begs oona (you) fur give we de long look and de over-coming patience dat we could have 'couragement fur go forward and see de truth dat will make us free. Do God, if it so please you, Massa Jesus, Gib me de long look like Moses, so I could see into de Promised Land from de mount, if my weary feet ain't neber guine to walk in de New Jerusalem with my people. . . .*

"Let me lib wid de musket in one hand an' de Bible in de oder,—dat if I die at de muzzel ob de musket, die in de water, die on de land. I may know I hab de bressed Jesus in my hand, an' hab no fear."
"I hab lef' my wife in de land o' bondage; my little ones dey say eb'ry night, whar is my fader? But when I die, when de bressed mornin' rises, when I shall stan' in de glory, wid one foot on de water an' one foot on de land, den, O Lord, I shall see my wife and' my little chil'en once more."**

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Sam Polite lived to become senior elder on the Benjamin Fripp plantation. Polite did not know his age, but had "ben a man fore 'gun shoot'" (Battle of Port Royal, November 1861), and became the most respected and sagacious elder on St. Helena Island. Those who knew and observed

*Prayer of Sam Polite, "The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, SHC.
**Gullah soldier's prayer, in Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48.

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793 him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

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> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

771 The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued [177] religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking [797] of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

175 797 [177] [178] Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

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they hoped, would encourage obedience, docility, humility, and a "turn-the-other-cheek" attitude. The elders' judgment was important to planters, who realized the influence these leaders exercised. Masters probably depended upon the reasoning power of elders, expecting them to use Christianity as a soothing influence in the slave quarters. Although law forbade black religious gatherings without three slaveholders being present, this edict was grossly violated in the Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, and black societies were rarely visited by whites supposedly superintending black worship.

Thus, black elders' duties of oversight, direction, watchcare, and advice were extensive. Since they ultimately had the last word on whether or not the "Christian" character of a "seeker" of religion warranted that individual's being accepted into "de Ark ob Safety," the supremacy of these leaders was considerable.[15] Yet black elders undoubtedly used their position of power with measure, fairness, and to benefit of the slave community, for they always maintained respect among the bondspeople. Their message was one of encouragement and their capacity to inspire moral confidence largely depended upon their verbal ability, gravity of deportment, and consistent record of honesty and correctness. As guardians of the community and articulators of group values, they may have counseled patience and been the main proponents of the Christian attitude of "resignation," which observers attributed to some Gullahs, as a form of protection. Above all, black elders were firm about depredations within the slave quarters, watching closely "to detect some delinquency" or "any shortcomings," yet ready to forgive an errant member.

> They visit, pray with and exhort the sick, rebuke the impenitent, counsel the weak, conduct social meetings for prayer, whenever such meetings are permitted by the proprietor of a plantation, and especially have vigilant watch over the young, striving to keep them in the path of rectitude.[16]

The other group of religious leaders, spiritual fathers and mothers, were not white-sanctioned leaders of the Praise House, but among the Gullahs they were recognized as legitimate and reportedly had "the most absolute authority over them." They were a continuous foil to Methodist missionaries and often disliked by planters because these religious leaders successfully incorporated non-Christian elements into white Protestantism. From this group came Praise House leaders and the "committee' that acted as the religious court. Thus on an individual plantation, the

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism. Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena:

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . .—near the water stood a large

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175 band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr.
•793 Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his
whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be
attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried
795 dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175 Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates'
794 "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented
the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the
795 community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not
[171 only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and
partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

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Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Eddings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

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48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

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50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6; ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

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55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Mission* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

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61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

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64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who argues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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195 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[195] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field
[197] to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

• [193] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31,
1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843,
[197] July 28, 1843.

13 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

113 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

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113 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to
175 be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn., 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the
113 Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside:*
197 *A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.
113 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought*
199 *from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford Univer-
195 sity Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162: John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

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19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

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21. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

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24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Gola of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Dewoin People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Gleho Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* 1 (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [157] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and ●793 talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People [794] to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

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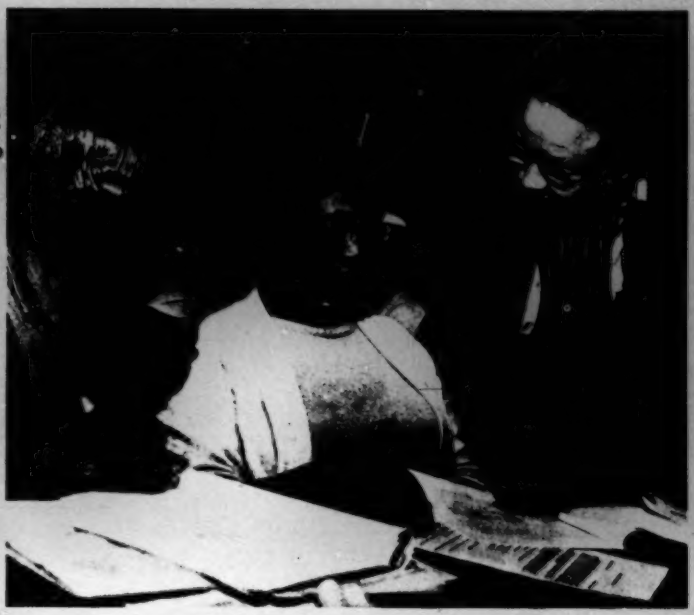

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•793

need for something. He tried to find out what he could do to help. He would go around to the piccolo joints and talk to people, and go down to the fishermen and talk to them, go to the growers and talk to them. After awhile he didn't have to buy anything for the people. He was getting everything donated. Once people saw that they could depend on him, then he started getting into the social issues. That's when he started working with my daddy. Then they would call in McKinley and some of these other people, and they would brainstorm about the problems. To me, Rev. Goodwin did more for people on these islands, especially from the pulpit, than anyone since my daddy.

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*Rev. A. C. Jenkins*

## ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
346 and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
461 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
476 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
493 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
368 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
794 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
794 vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
571 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

796 services as depicted in the literature is still rather accurate and need not be entertained here, except to say that the general patternings of the services and demonstrations of faith via "shouting" has remained as a center of church services.

The Church Structure

794 (993) The Pastor is the head of each church. There may or may not be a pastor "in training" to assist as needed. Under the Pastor is the Elder Council of Deacons. This body is comprised of the oldest male members of the congregations. The Deacons Council, through a committee structure, runs the affairs of the church. Next in the structure are the Elder Mothers. followed by the general congregations. Aside from their committee responsibilities, the Elder Deacons take part in Sunday services. An extremely learned body, the Elders are easily as able in the scriptures as the Pastors. Their learned abilities and oratorical skills are particularly evident during Funeral services. In these services, the Deacons take turns recalling through their eyes the life of the deceased person. Their eulogies delivered by these Soul stirring orators are the highlighted feature of the rites.

The Practice of the Sea Island Religion

771 554 The islander does not simply outgrov religion. On the

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)A how to make "goof
754 bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came
(551) to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the
[682] uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own
[888] children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have
159 been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything
342 to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good Afri-
754 can mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

231 In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-
825 looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand"
754 buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

•793 At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure
751 customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From
796 the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural
000 aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

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How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping."[33] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[33] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica." (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)*

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763 spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents,
764 mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a
171 [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

793 Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of
796 spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the
537 subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the
771 religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh
181 rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

175 When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me
567 the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves
191 of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few
175 words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[35] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the
567 story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[35] For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.

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## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile 795 194 away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn [193] dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the Afri- [182] can manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them [194] some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to [577] the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are [114] baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in [196] this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

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159 always attended early mass. She never married; her sweetheart, Ishmael, belonged
567 to another family, and his owners, thinking he would not be worth much to them in the field if his wife were on another plantation, encouraged a match with one of their own slaves.

159 To the end of her life, she smoked a pipe, and cooked her food in a black pot over a fire in the yard exactly as she had done in her youth. She must have been very strong, as she rowed a boat, did her half-acre of cotton, and, in her own words, "never knew what it was to be tired." She was a hundred and nine years old when she died in 1936, and evidently came of an exceptionally long-lived family, for her father was a centenarian, her sister lived to be a hundred and eight, and a cousin, also born in 1826, outlived her. Janey was straight and healthy to the last, and the sphinx-like, unwrinkled face in her coffin was like a piece of smooth black ebony. I had not realized in life how handsome she was or how Egyptian were her features. The inexpressible dignity of that dark mask so impressed me that I went back three times to make sure I would not forget it.

## "BURYIN'"

764 Old residents of St. Simon's tell me that before the days of automobiles, when
533 even horses [22] and wagons were luxuries, a Negro "buryin'" was an impressive affair. The mourners sang as they walked from the church, where the service was held, to the graveyard a mile away. The singers could be heard the minute they left the church, for at that time "they opened their mouths. They weren't like the young people today—too proud to sing." [23]

764 The home-made coffin, lined with "paper cambric" and covered with black
[492] calico or darkened with lampblack, was placed in the "rough box" and carried on a one-horse wagon. Only the preacher rode with the driver. The men walked single
[493] file on one side of the road and the women on the other.

[562] When the minister could not come to the island for the church service, it was
[481] not held until his next visit—possibly in three weeks, sometimes in three months.
[793] In the days when "Reverend" Andrew Neal officiated, if he was urgently needed to

[22] After the War Between the States only a vicious stallion, belonging to the Coupers, was
[23] left on St. Simon's. It was necessary to hobble him before he could be used. There were plenty
[136] of ponies, called "tackies," living on the salt marshes; but Joe tells me they were wild, like deer, and it never paid to buy one.

[23] It was said of Adam and Neptun' Small and MacWilliams that they could be heard a mile —than which, according to slave standards, there was no higher praise.

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764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[715] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
764 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers,
191 there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my husband died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me
[123] if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

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533 Quarterman told me that when the Negroes "suspicioned" someone was tell-
567 ing tales to the driver to get one of them a whipping, they would sing a song like the following while at work in the field:

[539]

O Judyas he wuz a 'ceitful man
He went an' betray a mos' innocen' man.
Fo' thirty pieces a silver dat it wuz done
He went in de woods an' e' self he hung.

● 793 A Negro "stump-knocker"—as itinerant preachers without a regular charge
533 used to be called—frankly told me he wasn't much on preaching, but when it came to singing he always got his people—and a meal. Another preacher of this class, with a remarkable flow of rhythmic words and a fine grasp of the dramatic build-up—not necessarily connected with ideas—boasted to me of his ability to get his congregation "goin'."

## FIVE FINGERS IN THE BOLL

248 When I asked Josephine what the words "five fingers in the boll" meant, she ex-
533 plained that in the shade at the bottom of the stalk of cotton the bolls are likely to be rotten; they come off in the hand, and "y'u can't make any time grabbin' de cotton out uv 'em." "Fingers" are the compartments holding the white fiber. The song has reference to the variety that contains five in a boll, but I am told that some have three, and others four. I confess I never noticed how many there were.

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Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud [20] all day
Way down in the bottom—whah the cotton boll's a rotten
Won' get my hundud all day.
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll
Befo'e I'll be beated—befo'e I'll be cheated
I'll leave five finguhs in the boll.
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day
Black man beat me—white man cheat me
Won' get my hundud all day.

[433] [248] [20] Ninety pounds of cotton was looked upon as the least a hand should pick in a day.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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567 ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C.
795 Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island
and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to
•793 place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances,
567 and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in
795 dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect
or striking resemblance to some form or type which has
787 been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[82] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 They were also quick to follow the custom of the
795 whites in "churching" offending members. "The dis-
688 cipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[83]

567 The church was not only responsible for giving Chris-
794 tianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teach-
212 ing a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[82] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

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The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune:

(533)
(539)

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2]

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A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
[848] the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

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As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

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the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

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It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits." [26]

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In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc.* no. 79, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Wording, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

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285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak [824] and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this 412 district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 532 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

• 794 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 932 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 128 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

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794 346 bership of two million and a local membership of about fifty. There is nothing prepossessing about the small white building. The wooden floor is sprinkled with sawdust and except for the piano the only furniture is several roughly built wooden benches. The walls of the mission are hung with placards bearing inscriptions, of which the following are a few: "Peace—the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink, but joy, peace and good will," "Peace and Good Will to the World," "Peace, Father Divine is God, Salutation is Peace."

794 At about eight o'clock in the evening members begin straggling in, two or three at a time. They are dressed soberly, with a noticeable lack of bright colors and ornamentation of any description, as one of the precepts of the cult is the sacrifice of all worldly possessions. Upon joining the church they must surrender everything of material value to Father Divine. The old life is a thing of the past. The convert must accept new habits, new names, and an entirely new scheme of existence.

794 793 The ardor of followers is not dampened by the fact that their leader has never been known to visit the Savannah branch. They claim that he is always present spiritually and can in this manner accomplish his miracles. At the (796) meeting a major part of the service is given over to a number of testimonials, presented by many of those present. One by one the converts intone their devotion to Father Divine * and vividly recount what he has done for them.

794 796 A stout Negro woman bearing the name of Sister Patience

*curately portrays the House as it was found in this community. For this reason it was thought well to include it.*

** Father Divine is said to have been born George Baker on a Hutchinson Island rice plantation near Savannah about sixty years ago. Sometime in the late 1890's it appears that he opened a meeting house in the Negro section of the Old Fort, calling himself "The Son of Righteousness." His activities in the community abruptly ceased when, after some trouble with the authorities, he fled from Savannah to escape a gang of whites who aimed to make him prove himself the reincarnation of Christ by walking on the Savannah River.*

*Arriving in Baltimore, Maryland, he joined a religious sect headed by*

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•794 796 Peace * gives the following testimonial: "Once it wuz muh highes ambition tuh know duh tings uh duh worl. I loved cahds an drink an udduh vices. No day passed wen I wuz not so drunk dat I would gib out an hab tuh go tuh bed. Now it is not so. I hab nebuh seen duh Fathuh in duh body, but I know dat he is God, fuh I hab made spiritual contac wid him. Because uh rightous libin I am now weighin two hundud pouns. Praise Fathuh."

A thin, wiry little Negro man, ** whose eyes gleam with a fanatical light, speaks next. He gives his name as Noah's Ark and states that Father Divine has given him the power to raise his wife from the dead and has caused him to enter upon a new and sanctified life. Faithful Patience, the wife, is also present and in turn testifies as to the truth of his statement and as to her own faith in Father Divine.

Triumphant Virgin, † happy in the knowledge that she is now leading a blameless existence, steps forward and gives the following statement: "I know Fathuh Divine tuh be God cuz he lifted me out uh duh guttuh and changed me frum a drunkud an all udduh low tings dat I use tuh be.

(793) *Father Jehovia. Later, in New York City the new disciple decided to open his own cult. It was then that he adopted his present name and that his converts created the maxim "Father Divine is God."*

*Converts both white and Negro were eager to join the new order. Today Father Divine computes his followers as being between 21,000,000 and 30,000,000, although outsiders give a more conservative estimate. The leader travels extensively and "heavens" have been established in various parts of the country. His weekly income is reputed to be $20,000 and is derived from the many business establishments operated under his supervision.*

*He has a fondness for flashy clothing, wears a five dollar gold piece for a stickpin, and rides about in a pale blue Rolls Royce and a scarlet monoplane.*

*The self-styled Messiah has now extended his activities to the field of politics, both national and international. There is a variance of public sentiment concerning him. To followers he appears to be "reincarnated God," while enemies insist he is a fraud, a hypnotist, and a remarkably clever actor who is at present growing a little tired of the role he has chosen to enact.*

*Robert Allerton Parker, "The Incredible Messiah" (Boston, 1937), pp. 80, 93, 94, 106, 183, 188, 209–26.*

** Sister Patience Peace, Old Fort.*

*** Noah's Ark, Old Fort.*

*† Triumphant Virgin, Old Fort.*

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•794 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine.
796 Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the
796 chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demon-
786 strations become more and more violent. Several of the con-
gregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious in-
toxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19]
[533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic
clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out
its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious
version of an improvised hymn. The participants in the
dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of con-
tortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed
smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver,
they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden
benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance
goes on.[46]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the
worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine,
the man who, according to their own account, was not born
in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in
New York City and who was sent to earth to save his fol-
lowers from destruction.

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## *Brownville*

361 BROWNVILLE, MORE PROSPEROUS OF ASPECT THAN the Negro communities usually fringing business and industry, spreads westward along the edge of Savannah. Though (342) on its Currytown boundary it, too, contains the inevitable shacks in lanes, several of its streets, paved and tree shaded, are lined with good frame and brick houses which are occupied by the more well-to-do Negroes, among them teach- (368) ers, doctors, lawyers, and business men. A substantial school building and the Charity Hospital speak of advanced social consciousness.

368 On Bismark Street is found the House of Prayer, one of the many churches established throughout the country by Bishop Grace. Here several times each year the leader visits •794 his congregation, and the day on which "Daddy Grace" * [16] (793) returns to his flock is always a gala occasion. Regular members and visitors from outlying districts crowd the heavy (352) lumber benches of the House of Prayer. The air is tense with excitement. Above the confusion can be heard the strident but rhythmic beat of drums.[23] Bright splashes of color 794 are given by the crepe paper decorations and the vividly 292 contrasting military costumes of members of the church organizations, among which are the Lilies of the Valley, the Queens, the Royal Guards, the Silver Leaf Band, the Transportation Committee, Male Ushers No. 1, Male Ushers No. 2, and the Sons and Daughters of the Prophet. Others in the

* *Though the meetings of Bishop Grace are common to many parts of the United States, it was thought well to include an accurate description of the House of Prayer as it was found in this community.*

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•794 (292) congregation don their newest and most colorful garments. Preparation has been made for all emergencies. In attendance are burly guards whose duty it is to see that nothing occurs to disturb the smooth performance of the ceremonies. The floor has been thickly sprinkled with sawdust and the stout posts at the front of the church are padded to prevent injury to overzealous worshipers.

794 At the sudden sharp sound of a whistle all activity ceases; there is silence in the church. The Armor Bearers leave the 793 building to escort the Bishop to his seat of honor. Soon they 796 return, followed by the Queen who is arrayed in a pale green satin evening dress over which is worn a black velvet cape lined with scarlet. A double line of uniformed guards follows, and marching proudly between the lines is the Bishop. According to his own statement, the Holy Prophet, as his followers call him, is of Portuguese birth. His long dark hair which falls to his shoulders, his piercing eyes, his pointed beard, and sideburns all combine to give him a distinguished and unusual appearance.*

The procession continues to the front of the church, where, with much ceremony, the Bishop seats himself upon a lofty throne set far back on the spacious platform. The

** Details of the early life of "Daddy Grace" are clothed in obscurity and little can be learned of the real origin of the Houses of Prayer. Some claim that he is of West Indian birth, others that he was born Marcilino Manuel Garcia in Portugal, and still others interpret his references to "a land beyond the sea" as indication that he hails from Egypt. All members of the cult must be baptized and during a four-week session in 1936 1,789 candidates were ministered to at a charge of $1.00 each. The Bishop advocates that members give generously of their material goods to the church and he has been known on occasions to go about among his congregation seizing purses and demanding that worshipers sacrifice treasured jewelry. It is a well known fact that his profession of "spiritual leader" has proved a vastly profitable one, and in the course of the last several years he has amassed a huge fortune. Many of "Daddy's" enterprises are looked upon with disfavor and suspicion by the police department. His frequent clashes with the law over various matters of an extremely worldly nature serve only to increase the attendance and the collections at the church and also give the Bishop much desired publicity. Followers are unimpressed by his occasional arrests, secure in the knowledge that no earthly force can ever conquer "Daddy." See* Time *(New York), March 7, 1938, XXXI, No. 10, p. 30.*

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
796 multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace[22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
[432] ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[755] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
786 and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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796 less of the hindrance to the rest of the worshipers, jumps up
786 and down wildly, crying out in a shrill, hysterical voice. At length, exhausted, he sinks to the floor and is dragged by friends from under the whirling feet of the others.

One woman, seized by such a paroxysm, falls to her knees, screaming incoherently. Exhausted by her violent emotion, she lies on the rough board floor, her jaws hanging open loosely, her eyes closed. Slowly, she raises her hands and beats them together muttering, "Praise Daddy. Praise Daddy Grace."

[533] The pulsating rhythm of the instruments increases in tempo. A man leaps high into the air, gesticulating and babbling; faster and faster he whirls, until he too falls from utter exhaustion. Still the wild display continues. The terrific nervous strain is taking its toll, and now all but a few of the dancers stumble wearily. The steady, insistent sound of the drum urges them on; feet still shuffle, hands beat out the rhythm, and voices chant an incoherent incantation.

796 Abruptly the band ceases and members straggle back to their places. Those who have fallen out from exhaustion are dragged to the benches by their friends.

796 The service continues. During the evening many collections are taken up. Two of the deacons, acting on behalf of
•794 the Bishop, urge the people to contribute freely. Their methods of approach present a strong contrast. One, stout, dark-skinned, and clad in a pearl gray suit, has a gentle and persuasive manner. He says softly to the congregation, "Precious Haht, hep us tuh raise fawty bucks fuh Daddy Grace right quick. Wile duh Prophet sits on duh throne befo us, let us all contribute freely tuh him."

The other deacon, short and wiry, darts about among the congregation. His manner of speaking is quick, and he barks his orders to first one and then another of the church members. "Step right up now," he advises. "Dohn hole back on us. Anybody else now, come right up an contribute.

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796 Ebrybody gib at leas one nickel now wile we still hab duh
•794 privilege uh gibin tuh Daddy. Step up, ebrybody."

Until this point Bishop Grace, apparently indifferent, has
796 had no active part in the ceremony, but he now steps for-
793 ward. There is a sudden hush.

"Daddy" becomes an intimate, vivid part of the group. Coming down among the congregation, he addresses his talk now to one individual, now to another, dropping frequently into the southern Negro dialect. The theme of his address is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The main issue, however, is often sidetracked, and the speaker comments in turn upon world politics, the war, anecdotes of his own trips abroad, his persecution by enemies, all of whom "the Lord struck down dead," and the general condition of the local community. The entire discourse is interspersed with humorous sayings that find a delighted response. "Daddy" advises his followers strongly against trusting anyone. "If the angel from Heaven comes down an wants an extra pair of wings, don't trust him," he warns. "Tell him you ain't got no time to keep books today. He have to pay cash." Near the conclusion of his talk the Bishop says that he can accomplish anything he chooses, even to sinking ships, destroying fleets of planes, or conquering entire nations. He is not the actual power, he says, but he is so close to it that he has only to reach out his hand and pull the switch.

After every sentence or two that "Daddy" utters his listeners echo his statements with such remarks as "Ain't it so, Daddy," "Dat is duh trute," "Yes Daddy," "You tell em, Daddy," "Hallelujah," "Amen." These utterances do not always agree with what the speaker has just said but nevertheless are meant to express thorough approbation. At one time "Daddy" tosses to a woman in the congregation a
[786] rose he has used in illustrating a point in his sermon. This

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## SANDFLY

791 In a section of Sandfly known as Baker's Crossing lives Ophelia Baker, better known as Madam Truth, professed fortune teller and clairvoyant. The woman's sober attire and her modern attractive house give little evidence of her profession. When holding a seance, however, her whole appearance undergoes a change; her body becomes tense and jerks spasmodically; her dark eyes roll wildly. Of her ability in her chosen field the medium says, "I advise on business an love affeahs. I tell good an bad nooz comin tuh yuh. Deah's a remedy fuh ebry trouble an I hab dat remedy, fuh a spirit hab brung it tuh me."[22a, •]

791 Madam Truth, a member of the Holy Sanctified Church of Sandfly, said that all members must undergo a sanctify-
•794 ing process in order to be saved. After this has been accom-
783 plished members claim to be able to hear, from a great distance, singing, talking, and the sounding of drums. We
[533] were told that the beating of the drums has a special significance, but that was all we could learn on the subject; we were told that this was a secret, divulged only to members.

794 Members of the church are forbidden to eat certain kinds of fish and also cabbage, lettuce, and other green vegetables.
262 The reason they give is that they have received a warning from the spirits that it is unwise to eat these foods.[25]

791 The plump, dark-skinned fortune teller said that she had spent her childhood on Skidaway Island. She remembered
533 bearing the drums beaten to tell the people in the nearby
202 settlements of an approaching dance or festival. Her father had been one of those who beat the drum and thumped out a regular message on it, a message that could be heard for miles and was clearly understood by all those who had heard it.[26]

764 The woman also remembered wakes which had been held on Skidaway. Coffee and sandwiches were served the[37b, •]
[782] mourners, each one of whom poured some of the coffee on the ground for the spirit of the deceased.[58b, •]

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SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
567 wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh, yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly —An Nancy got um.' "[8]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
• 794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin, narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A, [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to the island but a type native to the district.

His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, wherewith shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and reasoning with his congregation. His voice would carry a pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29] As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning •794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and ~~to parts~~ of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[191] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[194] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to par-
[196] ticipate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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782 It has been suggested that some respondents in African-American
794 congregations may not understand or actually accept what the speaker
537 says but respond instead to the highly contagious cadence established
533 by the call from the speaker and response from the audience.[4] This observation may be justified in part: one may not be stimulated to respond to the message in the prayer, but it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the rhythm with which the prayer is delivered. Without a doubt, however, some congregants listen carefully to every detail—not only to receive the message but because, seeing that the prayers are not written, potential prayer givers must be attentive in order to learn the art of the prayer tradition.

782 Perpetuating this tradition is made easier by the formulaic element
537 in their arrangement. They usually begin with a quotation from the Bible, a poem, or, more traditionally, some lines from the Lord's Prayer. The speaker usually has no prior knowledge that he will be asked to pray. Thus, the quotation gives him time to organize his thoughts and prepare himself to deliver an effective prayer. He is at liberty to alter a quotation to his own specification and often the alteration is more effective than the original. For example, the lines "For thine is the kingdom / The power and the glory" may be improved to "O Lord, that thine may be our kingdom / We expecting your kingdom to be / [a] poor sinner['s] glory!"

After the quotation, the speaker begins his personal prayer, a structured oration with a proem, line of appeal, and peroration. The proem opens with a rhetorical salutation to God commensurate with the solemnity of the occasion. It permits the speaker to express his humility as a servant of God, using such words as *mutable* and *impermanent*. The speaker does not presume to be as fortunate as the "foxes of the forest" or "the birds of the air." He projects himself as a mere waif
(539) asking for mercy with his knees bent in supplication:

Master Jesus, hear me
Another one of you[r] servant
Bow this evening, Jesus

Sin anguished and bended

. . . . . .

Crying to you this evening, Jesus
For Mercy

While mercy can reach [us]

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*Gullahs worshiping in Goose Creek Church. (Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York.)*

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39] 175 567

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that: [162]

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41] 175 [567]

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries 175 567 794 [177]

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175 and a tower, a first indication of a notable black membership at this
567 Island church. In 1819, the Euhaw Church reported a membership of
• 794 "18 Whites and 4 Colored," and the church at Black Swamp had thirty white and one hundred black members.[42]

175 Some slaves, during the "Second Great Awakening," beginning around
567 1800, were exposed to Christianity in Baptist churches. Often blacks
797 were "converted" when no whites came forth. In 1800, Richard Furman of Charleston wrote to a Philadelphia Baptist minister of the success the new minister at Euhaw Church was experiencing. In nine months, "Mr Cook" had "baptized about twenty persons." Most of them "are Negroes."[43] This is a very small number, but nonetheless demonstrates that actual black membership does not tell the whole story. Obviously blacks were baptized in many instances without being given church membership. While this demonstrates black exposure to Christianity, it also illustrates the paucity of "Christian" instruction.

175 Even the religious revitalization that began in the North after the War of 1812 and spread to some parts of the South, was not greatly effective in the Carolina Lowcountry. In 1821, a long-term visitor from Connecticut living in Robertville wrote:

> The Religious state of things here it is hoped is improving. A few are enquiring "What they Shall do to be saved" . . . we who have been accustomed to having ministers settled in every village must feel the dearth of ministers in this part of our country where the toilers are ripe for the harvest and seem only to want Faithful Laborers in the vineyard. . . . The inhabitants of this place are all connected by inter-marriages, and I am afraid are very wordly minded and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than the rise and progress of religion.[44]

Although Baptists had no national association, local organizations exemplify how negligible black membership was in white churches. By 1806 there were 130 Baptist churches in South Carolina, most of which were in the upcountry. Communicants totaled 10,560, 3,500 of whom were reportedly black. Sixteen years later, according to the 1822 South Carolina Baptist Convention, the number of black Baptists had not greatly increased. The Baptist Church at Charleston had a black membership large enough to allow for separate meetings with "proper" regulations by 1819. It is questionable how many of the total black church membership was made up of slaves. In the case of the Charleston Baptist Church's black membership, the majority of the congregations were free. Yet an

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Even some time after 1831, general Baptist concern for the spiritual well-being of their slaves was limited. Only a small number of churches showed significant increases in church membership in about a ten-year period following the revival. This gradual progression itself was unique to older Sea Island churches. Leading Baptists stimulated to "duty" by the "revival spirit," and mindful of the currents affecting church and state nationally, attempted to generate more Christianizing activity through their influence in the Savannah River Baptist Association. In 1832 the Association formed a committee to seek funds from member churches to hire Baptist missionaries for the slaves. Since this effort was a slow process, the Association further recommended that ministers devote a certain part of their time exclusively to the slaves. The organization went on record as "feeling a deep interest for the spiritual improvement of our colored population, who have hitherto been neglected."[4]

The committee was composed of large slaveholders, many of whom were also deacons or pastors of the more prosperous churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, Black Swamp, Hilton Head, and Euhaw. These congregations had comparatively large black memberships, and the committee members were known for their "good works" in general and for the interest they took in converting their own slaves. But the resolutions expressed more of the committee's own sentiments and personal concern than a real plan of action. Baptist congregations were autonomous, and slaveholders in the Sea Island region resisted efforts of individuals in the denomination to create a Christian instruction movement. For a variety of reasons, Baptist efforts at slave conversion met with some success where it existed. But if measured in terms of church membership and frequency of exposure, such endeavors, were not extensive.[5]

About a third of South Carolina's Baptist laymen and two-fifths of the ministers were slaveholders. Baptists in the Sea Island region, the most numerous sect since 1820, counted the wealthiest and largest slaveholders among its numbers. Consequently, antislavery sentiments were never expressed there despite early debates elsewhere in the South. On the contrary, the official opinion of South Carolina Baptists was expressed in 1822 following the Vesey Conspiracy, by Richard Furman of Charleston. "Slavery," wrote Furman, "was clearly established in the Holy Scriptures by both precept and example."[6]

Nevertheless, South Carolina Baptists confronted strong abolitionist sentiment from church members in other regions. As with Methodists, the controversy dominated national meetings in the 1830s. Abolitionists'

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rupted a church. He was often unsuccessful. The Savannah River Baptist Association consistently commented on the languid condition of the majority of churches in the 1830s. During the 1840s and 1850s the Association promoted Sabbath Schools-not only as a means of instructing slaves, but also to combat the "declension and prevailing coldness" as well as "lack of grace" in white churches. It is surprising that slaves ever received Christian instruction considering the circumstances of Baptist churches without "grace" or filled with "paranoia" about abolitionists. Yet some planters provided plantation meetinghouses for the slaves especially after 1845. Here African-Americans met among themselves under supervision of some "trusted" black elder. Through these "invisible institutions" slaves received some Christian instruction. More significantly, they used these opportunities to interpose their own interpretations on Protestantism. Nowhere was this development more evident than in the Sea Islands. Congregations there were far ahead of their sister churches in terms of wealth, stability, leadership, and an early though gradual commitment to ostensibly integrating Gullahs into the Christian religion.[15]

Two significant events occurred in the Sea Island region in 1831. First, the presence of Methodist missionaries among the slaves. Second, the appearance of a fiery revivalist named Daniel Baker. Both happenings were determining factors in initiating a "change of heart" among Sea Island Baptists about teaching some Christian doctrines to the Gullahs.

Baptist planters of the Sea Island region laid claim to a tradition of religious dissent that began long before American independence. Some Baptist founders in the region were early disciples of George Whitefield when the established church refused to admit him to the pulpit.[16] Prominent Beaufort District Baptists of the 1830s, such as the Fripps, Fullers, Lawtons, Chaplins, and Robertses, were descendants of pioneer homeseekers, and identified with a legacy of an evangelism older than American Methodism. Given such claims to revivalist tradition and considering the apostolic dictates of the Faith, Baptist planters may well have experienced some degree of guilt and embarrassment as Methodist "knights of the saddle bags" descended upon the Sea Islands to undertake what thier spiritual brethren had neglected.

Further pressure was brought to bear in 1831 and 1832 as Beaufort District quaked under the forceful impact of a revival initiated by a cultivated and spirited evangelist. Daniel Baker was a Southern Presbyte

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gious meeting and decided to attend, "confident of their ability to withstand all the preacher's snares." They attended Baker's meeting and found themselves "overcome" by a force stronger than they, and stripped "of the armour wherein they trusted." Before the revival ended, eight of the party of eleven "were found sitting at the feet of Jesus." One became a bishop, and another a presbyter of the Episcopal church.[19]

Word of the spiritual awakening in Beaufort District was carried to other parts of the state and even attracted coverage in national religious presses. The Methodist *Christian Advocate and Journal* printed an article illustrating the pitch of regeneration fervor aroused in Beaufort. The correspondent, one of those converted, stated that "no one can conceive who was not present," the effects of the revival on the resort town. Schools were closed, businesses, shops, and stores were shut—even politics were forgotten. The church was "filled to overflowing—seats, galleries, aisles, exhibited a dense mass of human beings from hoary age to childhood." Yet despite the multitude, "breathless silence" prevailed, broken only by the preacher's "reproving, persuading, imploring, thrilling" voice. Crowds reportedly came forward, and fell prostrate at the feet of the altar, as the musical voices of hundreds rose over the kneeling multitude. The scene was compelling, related the participant-observer, and "it was not in human hearts to resist the influence that awoke its sympathies, and spoke to its purest and most elevated feeling."[20]

Residents insisted that Baker was responsible for bringing new life to many Lowcountry churches. This rebirth was most visible in Beaufort. Citizens there claimed that even twenty years later there was a "a higher moral and religious tone, and a more intelligent and consistent profession of Christianity maintained."[21]

The Beaufort Baptist Church recorded a sizable white membership increase over a period of about ten years following Baker's appearance. And the augmentation of black members was unprecedented. According to membership lists, only 62 whites united with the church from 1804 (the year of its establishment) to 1831. From July 1831 to October 1840, 110 whites joined the congregation. Thus the majority of Beaufort Church's over 2,000 member increase from 1831 to 1840 consisted of black converts. Increases at other Beaufort District Baptist churches participating in the revival, though not as impressive, were nevertheless considerable compared to the majority of other churches in the Savannah River Baptist Association.[22] Thus, emerging zeal in some of the Baptist churches

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175 After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into
567 Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in
797 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association mission-
ary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Bea-
[795] ker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the
795 largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May
River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around
• 794 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District
[162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29]
[567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

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In the latter and generally most vigorous period of the movement for Christian instruction from 1845 to 1861, Baptist involvement continued to center in areas where evangelizing efforts were already in progress, such as the Sea Islands. Although several Lowcountry churches did increase their black membership during the period, such augmentation was numerically insignificant. Most membership returns submitted to the Savannah River Baptist Association had racial designations by 1848. These reports indicate that a few individual Sea Island churches maintained fairly large memberships and Beaufort Church had unusual increases. But the majority of Baptist churches in the Lowcountry south of Charleston seemed to fall short of the goal of religious conversion of bondspeople. Actually neither Sea Island Baptists, Baptist missionaries, nor lukewarm Baptist churches adequately "served the spiritual needs" of so large a black population. In 1859, as civil conflict approached, the total black membership of the Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association was not yet 7,000.[30] In some ways these figures are unimpressive, but they nevertheless demonstrate black exposure to Christianity through Baptist efforts. We can also surmise that black church members were the best conduits of the faith in the slave quarters. When this is considered, Baptist influence is even more manifest, for few Gullahs actually joined the Methodist church. Most Gullahs "converted to Christianity" or even adherents of it accepted the denomination of their masters, a preference that continued even after bondage. This raises questions about the nature of Baptist activity among the Gullahs, and why the denomination of slaveholders so strongly appealed to slaves.

Superficially, Lowcountry planters appear to represent "paternalism" par excellence. Those "young and refined" citizens of the Sea Island communities who claimed Daniel Baker for their spiritual patron included such men as C. C. Pinckney, William H. Barnwell, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Stephen Elliott, and Richard Fuller. These men represented the quintessence of South Carolina Lowcountry aristocracy, dominating landholdings and counting their slaves by the hundreds. Beaufort was the chief place of residence for most Baptist planters. But some of the stauncher Baptists such as the Lawtons, Robertses, Bosticks, and Nortons shunned "iniquitous" recreations offered by the Sea Island resort town and created their own manorial splendor at Robertville, Lawtonville, and Gillisonville. These planters reportedly excelled in erudition

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cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo. 175 797

### *"Christian" Slaves*

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave: 17 567 794 797

> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading 17 567 794

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to the slave galleries be moved to the outside so that the two races would not have to pass each other, or use the same entrance when they met to worship God in common.[37] One can thus imagine the disdain that "gentle" white folk felt at being in close quarters with field slaves.

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Some whites considered it a dangerous practice to allow slaves to leave plantations to attend church no matter what their status. Thomas Fuller, Episcopalian brother of the venerable Richard, reported on the state of religious instruction at the Charleston Meeting. Fuller complained that the habit of black church members descending upon the town of Beaufort was deplorable:

> Removed as so large a number are, every Sunday from the control and discipline of the plantation, and impossible as it is for the Church to know and control their conduct, they use their liberty in ways and for purposes adverse to their morals. Nothing seems to me more essential in order to their becoming a religious people, than that they be subjected to the supervision of the plantation, of the minister of a Church, that will investigate and correct their wrong views and bad habits. . . . It is owing, I think, to the want of religious instruction and discipline on the plantations, that the influence of religious instruction and the spirit of subordination among the negroes is so little seen and felt.[38]

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Baptist planters themselves recognized and attempted to confront these problems. As church memberships increased, a means of superintending the widespread congregation and keeping slaves on the plantations was needed. Black church members were organized into plantation associations under the jurisdiction of the church.

These "black societies" were the nucleus of the Gullah socioreligious community. They existed even before preaching stations were established and were reportedly religious bodies which slaves entered into voluntarily, although the nature and origin of these societies was unknown. Methodist missionaries found them already organized and a hindrance to Methodist authority among the slaves, especially when their practices were under the rubric of Christianity. In 1833, John Field, a St. Helena planter, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned to the island. Speaking for himself and "others," Field expressed his disapproval of the societies, and of the slaves' association with the Baptist Church on St. Helena. According to Field, the slaves who joined the church were "almost entirely under the control of Negro leaders." The Methodist missionary's preaching on the island prompted "constant ap-

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the elders] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

175 567 794

Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

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Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

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he left), and late-coming Baptist missionaries who brought the last surge of slave baptismal activity in the mid-1850s. Apparently little screening occurred prior to uniting with Baptist churches, except examinations imposed upon the slaves by black leadership. Slaves were accepted into the Church from the societies, and admission was based on a profession of faith, evidence of "good character" from the slavemaster, and recommendation from the white brother in charge, who relied on intelligence received from the black elder.[46]

This lack of a meaningful conviction to teach Christianity raises the question of why some slaveholding Baptists accepted such large numbers of slaves into the churches at all. Neither a revival spirit nor Northern agitation fully explain the motivation. But activities of the Church Committee on Discipline perhaps express the manner in which Baptists expected Christianity to best serve them as slaveholders. Their change in attitude reflected the general shift away from paranoia about Christianizing slaves. After 1845 many believed that practical Christianity could work for the slave system. And although the majority of Gullahs had little or no contact with the Baptist church itself, church members felt the restraining arm of the faith through the Committee on Discipline.

Church discipline is an old concept, dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Early Baptist discipline was similar to the English Separatists' 1696 "Confessions of Faith," and integral to views of Christian fellowship for believers. This spiritual and communal sense revolved around creating a "true and orderly gospel church," with members conducting personal behavior according to Old Testament biblical tenants. Later, London Baptists' "Confessions of Faith" reflected concern for "order and discipline," and this was emphasized by their American counterpart, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, when in 1742 they composed their confessions and annexed a particular discipline code to it. In 1769 the Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia model. Not all, probably not most, American Baptist churches had explicit discipline references in their confessions although discipline was a reality in the churches. But Charleston Baptists and their Lowcountry congregational extensions were products of the Calvinist-Baptist tradition as is reflected in their patent emphasis on discipline, and in other ways previously discussed.[47]

Nineteenth-century Southern and frontier evangelical congregations fostered a sense of community through worship, revivals, camp meet-

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ings, prayer meetings, and discipline. Church discipline kept alive the "heavenly pattern" which each church personified. This "city set on a hill" meted out censure and excommunication regularly to offending members who paled its self-image of purity and piety. As the country expanded, church discipline was used to control the raw excesses of new communities struggling against such "immoralities" as "drinking, fornication, gambling, dueling and profanity." Evangelical churches grew increasingly more powerful and espoused an increasingly conservative theology in the South and perhaps elsewhere. This trend toward religious conservatism was tied, though not exclusively, to political and social developments in the South, most notably to slavery. An obvious manifestation of this was the national polarization of church denominations.[48] In the Lowcountry, another significant and more immediate expression of efforts to protect the existing social and political order through religion is found in the function of discipline committees on plantations. Every Lowcountry church examined for this study with a large black membership had such a committee. The nature of this committee's concern with the slaves' activities reveals how Baptists intended to make Gullahs "good Christians" mainly insofar as Christianity made them better slaves. The work of the Committee on Discipline in the largest Sea Island church amplifies this thesis.

Once attention focused on slave conversion, the most pressing church business was discipline of slave members. The Committee existed previously, but was reorganized and restructured in 1840, and its function broadened. According to the Minutes, the disciplinary body governed behavior of all church members, "both bond and free," but was specifically charged with looking into breaches of conduct committed by bondspeople. This committee of eight brethren investigated a few white cases, mostly involving social lapses. But in the "inquiry and investigation" of slaves, the "Committee on Discipline" had "broad" but "conservative powers."[49]

As with white "brethren in charge" of black societies, prominent Sea Island slaveholders, such as Benjamin Chaplin, Saxby Chaplin, William Fuller, James Fripp, and Edward Fripp dominated discipline of the Gullahs. Furthermore, members of the Discipline Committee might also double as superintendents of a black society. Sea Island planter Benjamin Chaplin, for example, was a member of the disciplinary body and also superintendent of the Beaufort Society. Noted for cruelty to his

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slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

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Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

[797]

> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

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175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
795 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
•794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[55]

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
569 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
268 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

[533] The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[795] church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
569 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely
• 794 religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
[674] the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
621 law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626] House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368] plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
175 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

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175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands
195 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern
occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the
194 church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur
829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
> "No Chillun?"
> "I'm not married."
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
> "Oh, you'r joking."
> "Fact."
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
> "You a member sure."
> "Eh?"
> "A member, a church member."
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant
771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a
829 contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders, referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

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they hoped, would encourage obedience, docility, humility, and a "turn-the-other-cheek" attitude. The elders' judgment was important to planters, who realized the influence these leaders exercised. Masters probably depended upon the reasoning power of elders, expecting them to use Christianity as a soothing influence in the slave quarters. Although law forbade black religious gatherings without three slaveholders being present, this edict was grossly violated in the Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, and black societies were rarely visited by whites supposedly superintending black worship.

Thus, black elders' duties of oversight, direction, watchcare, and advice were extensive. Since they ultimately had the last word on whether or not the "Christian" character of a "seeker" of religion warranted that individual's being accepted into "de Ark ob Safety," the supremacy of these leaders was considerable.[15] Yet black elders undoubtedly used their position of power with measure, fairness, and to benefit of the slave community, for they always maintained respect among the bondspeople. Their message was one of encouragement and their capacity to inspire moral confidence largely depended upon their verbal ability, gravity of deportment, and consistent record of honesty and correctness. As guardians of the community and articulators of group values, they may have counseled patience and been the main proponents of the Christian attitude of "resignation," which observers attributed to some Gullahs, as a form of protection. Above all, black elders were firm about depredations within the slave quarters, watching closely "to detect some delinquency" or "any shortcomings," yet ready to forgive an errant member.

> They visit, pray with and exhort the sick, rebuke the impenitent, counsel the weak, conduct social meetings for prayer, whenever such meetings are permitted by the proprietor of a plantation, and especially have vigilant watch over the young, striving to keep them in the path of rectitude.[16]

The other group of religious leaders, spiritual fathers and mothers, were not white-sanctioned leaders of the Praise House, but among the Gullahs they were recognized as legitimate and reportedly had "the most absolute authority over them." They were a continuous foil to Methodist missionaries and often disliked by planters because these religious leaders successfully incorporated non-Christian elements into white Protestantism. From this group came Praise House leaders and the "committee' that acted as the religious court. Thus on an individual plantation, the

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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175 793 795 band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder. Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175 • 794 795 [171] Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

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gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature.[11]

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith. Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

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Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other [154] things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner.

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, [533] while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[41] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
787 been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
794 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
[795] that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The
[533] three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 787 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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29. Ibid., 113–30.

30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

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31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

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32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14, Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

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38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

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39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

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42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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175 113 *of Charleston Meeting*, 5–6, 14; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, October 21, 1841, 4, BC.

12. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 14–15.

13. "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Almira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," John H. Tucker to T. D. Grimke, n.d., early in 1845, SCHS; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72; "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6, November 24, 1849, 7–8, BC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; John B. Adger, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev. J. B. Adger of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*, May 9, 1847 (Charleston: T. W. Haynes, 1847), 12–13, and *Life and Times*, 164–99; Reverend Alexander Glennie, *Sermons Preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844), passim; Charles Colcock Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, 27–33; and *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Savannah: T. Purse, 1844), passim; Reverend A. F. Dickson, *Plantation Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855), passim; Tupper, *Baptist Church of South Carolina*, 317–18; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 71–85; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4; Rev. J. H. Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters. A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of A Church Erected in Charleston, S. C., For the Benefit and Instruction of the Colored Population* (Charleston: Steam-Power Press, 1850), 48–51.

14. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6–7, November 24, November 26, 1853, 10–11, November 25, 1854, 19, November 23, 1855, 12, November 14, 1857, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, November 11, 1843, 66, BC; Benedict, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, 39.

15. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, passim, BC; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 7, 1853, 179, BC; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History: A Historical Sketch of the Old Black Swamp Church," Lawton Family Papers, SCL.

16. See Chapters 3 and 4.

175 113 194 17. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1831, 18–20, BC; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Diary of William P. Hill, 1833–39, SHC (Hill was a Universalist from Maine who went South for health reasons and became a Baptist preacher); Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 67–68; W. H. Dowling, "Black Swamp Church," n.d., SCL; Baker, *Life and Labours*, 144–45, 157, 169–73.

18. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed. "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 34–36.

17 113 19. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–36.

20. *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–37.

21. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 154–55.

(194) 22. Racial designations were not yet indicated nor names of slaves included on membership rolls. But the slaves' acceptance into the church was recorded in the Minutes. *Minutes,*

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Labours*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Ramblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 175 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104–6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29, 1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274. 17 113 567 794

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

40. See Chapter 6. 175 113 794 567

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72.

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185.

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847, 111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerasulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1. 175 113 567 346

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 175 113 567

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175 113 567 BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tomber*, 145, 147, 151.

[795] [794] 46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197, November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tomber*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

175 113 47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

175 113 795 794 49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

175 113 685 55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

[795] [794] 56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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17 15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–
13 105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

(701) 16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

(722) 17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

(533) 18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

### 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

(794) (346) 1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

(795) 2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

(368) (533) 3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1977).

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5.

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70.

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household, they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22.

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr. from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 592.

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13.

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

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# PREFACE

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The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. . . . Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker, and the dreamer. This is the firing line.

*W. E. B. DuBois, speech at Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, October 20, 1946*

177 THE TRAFFIC on River Road is heavy. When I first came to this part of Johns Island in 1964, it was a quiet rural black community. Now expensive cars cruise past on their way to Kiawah and Seabrook islands. These resort islands can only be reached by driving across Johns Island and meeting the approval of a guard at a security gate. Beyond the guarded gates are plush hotels and upscale shopping facilities, beachfront houses and condominiums. Those who are waved through the checkpoint are mainly affluent visitors from afar.

• 794 533 The traditional and the modern coexist eerily on Johns Island now. I notice the incongruity at once in Wesley United Methodist Church. I sit in its elegant pews and listen to the organist and the robed choir perform staid hymns from the Methodist hymnal. But the congregation sings out in the old African polyrhythmic style of the sea islands, almost as though the hymns were ancient spirituals. The present organist accompanies the hymns in a jazz-influenced modern gospel style that dominates the singers and sometimes drowns them out. The result is exciting, but I miss the special kind of excitement of the old *a capella* shouting style for which Johns Island is famous.

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[505] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
177 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
• 794 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place
• [794] in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[795] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
474 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club, a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[529] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[872] [P.xii-B] cation and voter registration.
[366]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters, some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913. 'Fa Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

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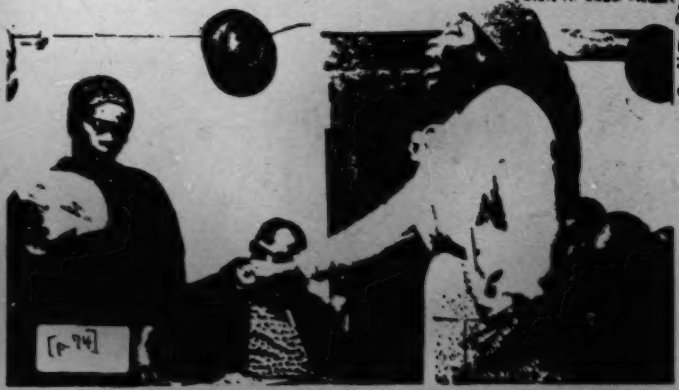

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## THE SICK BENEFIT, AND DEATH BENEFIT

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In the old days people couldn't afford insurance so we make up that Moving Star Society from ten cents each from Sunday School. We decided to bought a piece of ground to build that hall. And after we got 'em built we give 'em name: "Moving Star Hall." We got member from all different church. Generation after generation join and come out, join and come out. Some die and gone. The sick benefit. And death benefit. We still yet going on. By the help of the Lord we 'spect to go on 'til we are done.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## THAT SOCIETY THERE, THEY TREAT YOU ALL RIGHT

Society is better than insurance to me. That society is supposed to tend the sick and bury the dead. Everybody who in there pay dues. They write from twenty-five cents up to one dollar a month. You is a twenty-five-cent member, you get twenty-five dollars when you die; you is a fifty-cent member, you get fifty dollars; you is a seventy-five-cent member, you get seventy-five dollars; you is a dollar member, you get a hundred dollars. Just as much as you pay, that's as much you get out. If you be sick, society service two person out to sit down with you all night, every night, until you get better or worse. If you don't go and sit, you be have to pay a dollar fine. If you sick and aren't able to pay your bills, they keep it up for you, live or dead; they elect money from the table and they keep you arrear. Insurance not going to do that.

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And then the insurance man going to give you your money—put it on the table. Now, how you going to bury? That money can't move to dig grave. But that society there, they treat you all right. They don't give you your money and leave you there. They give you your money and give you attention. And we got pallbearers and everything in there. We got the pallbearers to take you from the undertaker and bring you to the church; take you from the church and carry you in the graveyard. They put you down there, and we got the member to cover you up. See, that's done.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. John Smalls*

## EVERYBODY HAS A TURN

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In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. We put him in the front to take the text. Then take myself, I follow. Then whosoever I wanted to assist—Eli Smith or any other leader. And we go on that way. Everybody has a turn.

We have prayer service the first Sunday night in the month; and the second Sunday night let the brothers preach; then the third Sunday night we let the sisters testify; then we go right back on the fourth Sunday night the brothers will preach again. We used to had it just how it come. We feel like prayer meeting tonight, we have that. But later days, we decided we would mark it out, that every person would know where he going.

That way we trying to do it now. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

(533) Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you wanted to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody. They can't sing long as you're talking; wait 'til you finish talk.

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*Mr. John Smalls*

## TURN THESE BIG FISH LOOSE

Now friends, we still moving on.
I'm not going to linger with you
'Cause I want to turn these big fish loose.

Brother Deas will come and set the foundation,
The road we going to travel by,
That all of you could know the way to go.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Joe Deas*

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## TONIGHT YOU GOT A BLESSED CHANCE

I thank you for this great privilege I have before you.
You know from last January '64, I didn't have to been here.
My face could have been under the clay.
But at this same particular hour I have a chance
To rub shoulder to shoulder with you,
I can speak language to language,
I can look face to face.
It is a great joy.

Now we started on a new task, started a new race.
From the twenty-fifth morning we been running,
We been wrastling to behold this very hour of the night.
How many haven't lived to been able to see the day?
Some gone by car,
Some pass away with fire,
Some gone by water.

All part of the world is stirred up now.
Tonight you got a blessed chance to go to the house of God.
Some want to come out tonight and can't come,
And some can come that wouldn't come.
But the day will come.
The day will come.

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

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## YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF

You can feel yourself in that hall. You have a chance to explain yourself —anybody who want to. But in church on Sunday, we just have one preacher talk. And you might get a chance to raise a song or pick out one person to make a few remarks. But to that hall, everybody could have they way, tell your own story. That's the difference it makes.

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*Mr. John Smalls*

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## GOOD MORNING WARRIORS

Good morning Warriors!
How y'all feel?
I'm feeling special alive.

I just rise to tell you all my aim
And whole heart's desire.
My desire is to go the whole way.
I give thanks for being brought
Not from just last December
But from an infant birth.

I can say, "Are we yet alive
To see each other's face."
Thank God for His redeeming grace.

Since last January
Rocky was my road,
Tedious was my journey.
What troubles have I seen,
What conflicts have I passed.

If I had ten thousand tongues
It wouldn't be enough
To give thanks to Thee
Who took my feet out of the miry clay
And put them on a solid rock.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

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## A SERMON: LET NOT THEM THAT EAT DESPISE

I'm not gonna tarry before you, Warriors. I'm glad to be here to mingle my voice among my sisters and brothers. I hope and trust that if this sermon don't do you any good, I hope it won't do you no harm.

You know you can go from one part of the Bible to the other. God say we should love one another. Let not them that eat despise them that eat not. Let us remember one another. Don't let us be like Dives now. Let us try to be just as Lazarus. Dives despised the poor. Lazarus went and ask just for a crumb that fall from the table, and before Dives had the passion on him to give, he call the dog on him. But the poor beast have compassion and lick Lazarus.

Time going pass and go on. Time come along when the poor man die. He went on home to God and been at rest. Rich man Dives die, and his home was in Hell. When he lift up his eye in Hell and saw Lazarus in Heaven, he began to memorize. He know he didn't do right, but he cries, "Oh Father, let Lazarus come and dip his finger in the water and cool my trials and trouble."

God says, "No. You had all the good times, plenty of money. You didn't need Lazarus at that time. You need him now, but it too late."

Dives say, "I got five brother. Just give me a chance that I may go back and tell them to get their heart right, that they may shun this torment place I'm in."

And He say, "No. I got Moses and I got the prophets; let them hear what they say. If they don't believe the prophets, they won't believe you, Dives."

Pray for me, Warriors. Let us sing like we singing for the last time. Let us pray like we are praying for the last time. Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow the sun may shine on your grave. Jesus told us to dig deep and lay your foundation on a solid rock, that when the storm of life blow against you, you're gonna find your Father rock. If you dwell upon Him, everythin' will be all right. The world can't do you no harm.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

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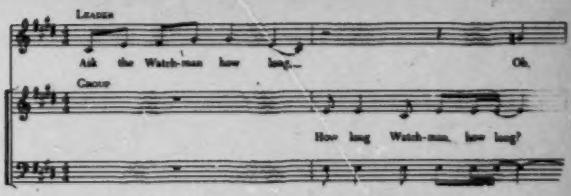
**ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG**




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.
Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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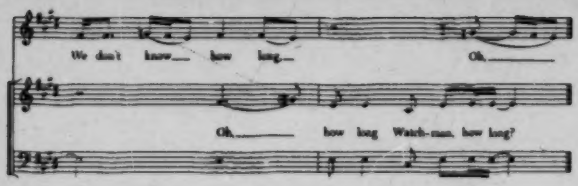


Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Rev. James Drum

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

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Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

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4: Carawan & Carawan .B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 522 (869) There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (178) We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 771 178 862 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF PEOPLE WHO REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THESE ISLANDS

554 Sometimes people don't recognize the hard work of people behind the scenes. I'll give you an example of people who really made a difference in these islands. Mrs. Alleen Brewer Wood came to Johns Island in 1929. Her husband, Rev. Brewer, was the pastor of two churches on the island. She was quite a community person. She would help with anything that needed doing. [757] These were the days when people depended on root medicine and midwifery, what I call indirect health care. It was not the approved method of health care, but people had their own methods for taking care of problems. Mrs. Wood was around in that time when we were trying to get people to feel better about themselves, and trying to teach them about self-respect. She was one of the persons that we call the "grandmoms of the islands," instrumental in so many little things that you don't hear that much about. She helped lay down some of the foundation for the projects that came to Johns Island. Later on she taught the Citizenship School classes on Edisto.

554 793 Rev. McKinley Washington was one of those people that my daddy really relied on. He would call him up every Sunday morning before church and talk over with him the things he would like to see discussed in church—voter registration or whatever the issue was. He was just a young minister in those days, right out of school. He started the NAACP here. And later they formed [668] a group from the Presbyterian church called the Self-Development of People [794] to deal with the needs of people on Edisto. They bought an old school building (used to be the school for the white kids) and used it as a community building.

When Esau was working through the Charleston Citizens' Committee, which took in all of the sea islands, Rev. Washington was his connection for Edisto and Yonges islands. People were always reluctant about how fast to [178] move to bring about change. They will go with you for awhile, but then if it looks like you're not giving up, some will want to put the brakes on. So Esau had to have people that would keep that motivation going. And McKinley was one of those people. He's a real good speaker. His voice is deep and heavy, and when he starts preaching, you have to listen to him. So my daddy used him as an inspirator.

When Rev. Willis Goodwin came to Johns Island to pastor in 1966, people just looked on the ministry as church on Sunday. When Rev. Goodwin got here he changed all that. His ministry was seven days per week. He would go around to the people who were sick or were in need—and everybody was in

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ME. I DON'T LIKE TO PRETEND

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At first I thought people won't want to hear this kind of song. But after I went to Atlanta, Georgia, I was very pleased. I was happy. Everybody was so nice. And I enjoyed myself. That's the first time I ever leave Johns Island to go sing.

Going off, it made me learn a lot. You see a lot of people. You enjoy yourself. People treat you so nice. They really make me feel like I'm something special. That time we went to Seabrook, my picture was in the paper. The lady I work for daughter, she get the picture. She call and say, "Tootsie, you're a celebrity. Your picture's in the paper."

You know, I like to be me. I don't like to pretend. If I go off, I'm not going to pretend that I'm somebody else. I'm going to be me! My children and grandchildren are happy. They're happy to know that their grandmommy go off and sing and picture been in the paper. So I'm happy, too. I didn't realize days past and gone that things was going to work out like that.

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The best trip I had was when a busload went to Washington from Wesley Church. Rev. Goodwin went and everyone was like one big family. The bus driver took us around and showed us different places. We had a good time. On Sunday morning, we did a church service at the festival.

I really wish we could get some more programs off from here. That's something I been looking forward to. If just once a year, you just get away on some kind of program. I like to see friends I've made in different places. And when I go, I don't want to rush off. After we sing, I want to sit around and listen to other people sing.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989-
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*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a
794 song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and
796 shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You
888 express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

771 794

I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

794 It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her
533 some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through,
796 when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they
794 have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying.
178 That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

6: Smith I,Y-5 (no date) 1989
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000 -13% of its residents.

SEA ISLAND RELIGION

795 The most dominant institution in Sea Island society is
794 the church. There are numerous churches on each island. These churches are Protestant in denomination and are about equally divided among Methodist and Baptist congregations. These congregations may have as few as forty or as many as two hundred members. Each congregation supports the operational expenses and contributes to the maintenance of the church facility. Ordinarily this facility is a large one room, single floor, cinder block building. The size and renovation are generally determined by the financial resources of the congregation. In some cases, along with renovation the church has been enlarged by one or two rooms.

794 Until the late 1950's each congregation tried with all
796 effort to have its own Pastor, but this became increasingly difficult, so today, even the larger membered congregations have reduced their Sunday services to a bi-monthly schedule. The Sunday gathering is really the time of the community's elders. The entire day revolves around church attendance and relaxing in the Spirit of the Lord. Sunday services generally start for the congregation at 11:00 A.M. and concludes near 2:30 P.M. Afterwards there may be elder meetings or evening prayer attended primarily by the senior
796 congregation members. The nature of the Sea Island religions

796 services as depicted in the literature is still rather accurate and need not be entertained here, except to say that the general patternings of the services and demonstrations of faith via "shouting" has remained as a center of church services.

The Church Structure

794 (793) The Pastor is the head of each church. There may or may not be a pastor "in training" to assist as needed. Under the Pastor is the Elder Council of Deacons. This body is comprised of the oldest male members of the congregations. The Deacons Council, through a committee structure, runs the affairs of the church. Next in the structure are the Elder Mothers, followed by the general congregations. Aside from their committee responsibilities, the Elder Deacons take part in Sunday services. An extremely learned body, the Elders are easily as able in the scriptures as the Pastors. Their learned abilities and oratorical skills are particularly evident during Funeral services. In these services, the Deacons take turns recalling through their eyes the life of the deceased person. Their eulogies delivered by these Soul stirring orators are the highlighted feature of the rites.

771 554 The Practice of the Sea Island Religion

The islander does not simply outgrow religion. On the

771 islands a man's worth is measured by his religious dedica-
[554 tion. This is so much the case, that the question of out-
growing religion, or active versus the inactive participa-
tion of the congregation is not a legitimate concern. The
practice of weekday religion is more vigorous than the
Sunday demonstrations of faith.

Here on the Islands, religion penetrates every aspect
of life. It is rare to encounter islanders who are not
learned in the scriptures. This includes islanders who be-
771 cause of personal conflicts with the church's institution-
795 alized style, no longer attend Sunday services. The blunt
of this disagreement is usually focused at the church's
social inactivity; they say the church simply is not doing
enough.

The Church's Doings

795 Before the coming of community action programs, helping
• 794 neighbors in need was the exclusive role of the church. To
some extent, the church is still the most active agent in
this regard. Whose analysis shows that congregation members
make up the policy making bodies of all the community action
programs on the island. It appears, now that these program
resources are available, the church has taken a more in-
direct role. Rather than continuing the tradition of
neighbor helping neighbor, neighbors in need are now di-
rected to available program resources. When the need is

795 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older tradi-
794 tional methods of helping are reenacted.

### The Young Islander and the Church

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795

> Gome ta ole timb religion, gome to ole timb religion, gome ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub for ma mama, it be good enoub for ma papa, it be good enoub for me. It be good enoub for me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has meaning and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in
[791] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

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### SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE: A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

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Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

434 an unemployment rate of 3.1%, which compares to a 3.7% ratio
592 for male workers. Females were the heads of 836 of the
464 families with poverty level incomes.

434 On a county basis, the median annual income of Black workers was $4,635. Black female head of households earned a median income of $3,162. Six thousand nine hundred and forty-one or some 44.6% of the 13,576 Black families in the county had incomes below the poverty line. The median income of families below the poverty line was $2,193. Fifteen per cent of the total number of families were receiving public assistance.

The 1960 census reported 10% of the Sea Island families with incomes under $1,000; 65% of this work force earned less than $2,000. This United Methodist Church survey re-
464 ports a 15% unemployment rate across the islands. Employ-
794 ment in "the area is of a seasonal nature and most people are out of active employment for a large part of the year."[2]

The discrepancies between these figures are apparent.
464 First hand exposure to the islands would suggest the accu-
794 racy of the latter figures. However, the methodological
114 limitations of the church survey effort makes the reported estimates suspect. For example, the researchers were on the islands only one week, during which time they concentrated

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[2]Colin Moore and Robert Washington, A Profile of Rural Poverty, A Report on Economic Conditions in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, August, 1970.

464 794 114 their time and energy in interviewing the leadership personnel of each island, and consequently relied quite heavily on the estimations they provided. The error possibilities which accompany this procedure as the basis for later projection statements are well noted.

HOUSING ON THE SEA ISLANDS

362 There are 11,557 housing units on the five Sea Islands. The median number of persons per unit is 4.01; 3,743 of these units are occupied by Black families. The median number of persons per Black occupied unit is 4.65.

The by island breakdown shows a total of 6,642 units on James Island. One thousand one hundred and twenty-eight of the total are units occupied by Black families. There are 4.63 Blacks and 3.64 Whites per units.

Johns Island has a total of 1,875 units, with 4.01 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 678 of these units and there are 4.58 Blacks per unit.

Wadmalaw Island has 477 units and 4.24 persons per unit. Three hundred and seventy-two of these units are Black occupied, with 4.62 persons per unit.

Yonges Island has 2,224 units and 4.15 persons per unit. Blacks occupy 1,326 of these units; there are 4.78 Blacks per unit.

There are 329 units on Edisto Island, and 4.18 persons per unit. The persons per unit average for Black household

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave (533) songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of (128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of (171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation 171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what 761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

• 794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon 796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, 533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(787) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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533 796 At one of our singing festivals, Liverpool, who was well over a hundred at the time, became excited as he heard again the old prayer-meeting song, left his seat, joined in the swaying group of sixty-five singers, and gave a demonstration of the "right hand of fellowship" which he performed with the dignity seen in the minuet. First he gave his right hand to the singer on his right; then, bowing sedately, he crossed his left hand over to the same member. Both hands were then shaken as the singers bowed with the rhythim before passing to the next neighbor and repeating the same ceremony.

(539)

'Tis well an' good I come here tonight
come here tonight
come here tonight
Well an' good I come here tonight
For to do my Master's will.
O Brother Quarterman show me the way
show me the way
show me the way
O my brother show me the way—
The way to the Promised Land.

• (794) At old-time prayer meetings the following song brought out all of the members—one at a time—on the floor, breaking up any tendency to stiffness. Each rose as his or her name was called and moved around the circle, returning to the group when another member's name was about to be called.

This same song was called an "ant'em" on Eleuthera, (one of the Bahamas). 533 539 When I asked the singer if it was old, she said: "Methuselum sung 'um."

Oh mh Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Sister Bessie where were you
My sister where were you
My sister where were you
When the Lord was passin' by.

(Illustration 16) A

A, [For Illustration 16, see Category 142, plate facing p. 97--Analys]

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794 796 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

175 159 [533] [291] [829] This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533 539

I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
  Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
  Believer I know

[4] The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a *shift*. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.

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## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile 795 •794 [793] away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the Afri- [782] can manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them [794] some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to [577] the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are [114] baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in [196] this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

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795 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed
•794 to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is
[788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tide-
178 water section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the
[783] outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[114] [17] [14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

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567 346 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the plantation where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[81] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[82]

567 794 796 533 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing, pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members of a church.[83] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine one word 'ginst t'oder."[84] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

(782)

[81] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[82] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[83] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[84] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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567 994 796 535 [782]

read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

567 796 535

"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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567 ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C.
795 Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island
and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to
793 place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances,
567 and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in
795 dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect
or striking resemblance to some form or type which has
787 been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

567 They were also quick to follow the custom of the
795 whites in "churching" offending members. "The dis-
688 cipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

567 The church was not only responsible for giving Chris-
794 tianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teach-
212 ing a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[84] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[85]

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[86] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

[84] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[85] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[86] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

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248 175 [657] men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

•794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded [492] the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on [493] foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy [292] calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy containing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

794 576 175

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune:

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2]

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
[848] desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
• 794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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533 202 [115] Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[36] A member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

•795 796 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh [533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 301 789 [777] Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently worn on the ankle to insure good luck[9] and to give warning by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a, c] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off." **

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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## *Sunbury*

123 OUR CAR CAME TO AN ABRUPT STOP IN THE SANDY road before the board fence which enclosed a small group of weather-beaten clapboard houses. We called to a young Negro girl who lounged in a doorway and she came forward to see what we wanted. Almost simultaneously there appeared from the other houses scattered about the clearing a number of other persons.

Two women about thirty-five years old and nine or ten small children all approached the fence. At first they were rather wary, but their attitude gradually turned to friendliness and they hung over the high board fence, talking and laughing in great good humor. Elizabeth Roberts,* the (115) young girl whom we had first seen, appeared to be the leader of the group.

•795 We were interested to know if these people had river baptisms any more. "Duh Sunbury Baptis Church an duh Palmyra Baptis Church both hab baptizins," Elizabeth told us. "Cose it depend on how many folks wants tuh leab duh Presbyterian Church an jine duh Baptis. Mos ub us is already baptize."

"Where do they hold the baptisms?" we inquired.

The group all pointed in the direction of the river. "Right obuh deah in duh Sunbury Ribbuh," they chorused.

(796) Elizabeth again took the initiative. "All duh candidates (292) is robed in wite," she explained. "Duh preachuh come frum

* *Elizabeth Roberts, Sunbury.*

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*795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
[783] tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [63] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[777] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[25] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[26] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[27b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh
796 ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahs it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

•795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb
[783] tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call
[783] that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh
[533] beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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764 tings, den duh udduhs in duh fambly will die too. Dey will
[761] folluh right long. Folks alluz hab two fewnuls. We hab one wen dey die an den once a yeah we hab a suhvice fuh ebrybody wut died durin duh yeah.[42] Duh preachuh say a prayuh fuhrum all."

795 From this source we obtained added verification of the fact that river baptisms were still held.

"We alluz baptize on duh ebb tide," said Rosa. "Duh
[783] watuh washes duh sin away. Duh preachuh pray up on
[782] duh bank an den wen he baptize duh candidate, he pray tuh duh ribbuh tuh take away duh sins." [43]

527 Later in the conversation the women recalled harvest festivals [38] that had been held many years before. "Dat wuz alluz a big time." Anna's rather somber face lit up at the remembrance of the festive occasion. "Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus crop tuh duh chuch an we prepeahs a big
[782] feas. We pray an gib tanks fuh duh crop an pray fuh duh
[535] nex yeah. We all eat an sing an dance. One uh duh dances call duh Buzzud Lope.[17] We still dance dat tuhday."

115 Rosa told us proudly that she was a granddaughter of Katherine Basden who had been recognized as a leader among
[554] the Negroes in the section.

"Me an muh brudduh wuz muh granmudduh's favorites," she said. "She alluz said she lak us bettuhn all duh udduh chillun. Wen I wuz only bout twelve yeahs ole, she tell me wen I grow up I would take huh place an carry on duh wuk she wuz doin."

[533] Moving her powerful shoulders in rhythm and clapping her hands together, the woman sang us a song that her grandmother had crooned to new-born babies as she held them in her arms. The words were, for the most part, indistinguishable. Over and over we caught one repeated phrase, "nikki yimi, nikki yimi."

[763] "Muh granmudduh wuz took very sick. She knew she wuz gonuh die. Dat wuz jis wen muh oldes chile wuz bawn.

764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe." [35]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs." [36]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope," [17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does anudduh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away." [63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us.
262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they
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231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[56, 58]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people 534 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom. 202 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. [792] "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [783] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an say dey want tuh be save.

795 "We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we 796 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi- [782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh [783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
[533] There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of the things of which she had heard him speak.

829 "He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
782 I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
829 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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000 Club. We followed the road for about two miles and came finally to a signpost directing us to turn right in order to reach the club. This section in former times had been occupied by extensive plantation holdings. Most of these estates had been deserted for years and now and then we saw a house, once evidently charming but now in a dilapidated and crumbling condition.

Through an old gateway to what had once been a prosperous estate we rode past acres now weed-grown and neglected. At last we came upon a one story white plantation house. Inside blinds were at all of the French windows and the wide floor boards gave indication that the house had probably been standing for about one hundred years.

115 The man for whom we were looking was plowing in a field at the rear. Baker's rugged build and his keen intellect made it difficult to believe that he was in his late seventies. For years he had acted as caretaker of the club and often lived in the plantation house, as it had been unoccupied for some time.

533 He had heard of the custom of beating drums to warn
763 people of a recent death. He said, "Dey use tuh alluz beat
202 duh drum aw blow duh hawn wen somebody die.[24] Dey beat two licks on duh drum, den dey stop, den dey beat tree licks. Wen yuh beat dat, yuh know somebody done die.[24, 26] Lots
534 uh duh drums wuz home-made. Dey wuz made out uh goat
[237] skin aw coon skin wut stretch out obuh hoops.[25] Deah wuz tree sizes uh drums. Deah wuz duh big barrel drum. It wuz highuhn it wuz cross. Den deah wuz a lill drum frum twelve tuh fifteen inches wide an bout eighteen inches high. Duh udduh drum wuz duh medium size, kine uh in between duh udduh two. Duh big drum wuz duh one dey beat at duh wake. Dey use drums at dances an meetins, too.

764 "Wen we hab a fewnul, we all mahch roun duh grabe in a ring. We shout an pray."

•795 We wanted to know if river baptisms were always held
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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [83]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [30]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [85]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
(351) been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
(165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an
(764) mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

• 795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide
(783) come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[63]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn. Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put
(753) sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhself but dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's
829 a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He

(567) * *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

829 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their
567 heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection
(782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance
(533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs
(534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh
533 fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid
(535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh
782 pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery
(585) dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh
• (795) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh
(783) ribbuh.[25]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[35] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[68] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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17 organized and preceded by missionaries who set up preaching places in
799 the Beaufort district and in the Savannah River area. The novelty of Baptist views on baptism and church membership were so different from other traditions that they attracted much attention and at first ensured ostracism in the Sea Island region. The Baptist mission at Beaufort was organized into a church in 1800. But upwardly mobile Baptists did not immediately gain respectability from the Episcopalian community. The Reverend Henry Holcomb lived in Beaufort and served the Baptist Church
17 there for a number of years before and after the War for Independence.
• 795 In a letter he discussed early attitudes toward the Baptists:
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> The principal inhabitants of Beaufort though possessed of learning, wealth and talents, were with a few honorable exceptions, strangers to true religion, and strongly prejudiced against the Baptists. The doctrine of regeneration they treated with contempt; and baptism, if we understand the meaning of the word, had never been administered in their vicinity. If ever I felt the ensnaring fear of men, it was then, but . . . God and truth were on my side. . . . Several "fellows of the better sort" made attempts to turn ministerial exercises into ridicule . . . stealing my Bible . . . while I was administering the Lord's Supper.[30]

Yet Sea Island Baptists overcame initial prejudice, and Episcopalians (postwar Anglicans) grew accustomed to witnessing baptizings in the Beaufort River. Contrary to Episcopalian apprehensions, baptismal rites were administered with the greatest solemnity, and even Baptist church services contained none of the evangelical enthusiasm that characterized Methodists at that time. Leading citizens eventually converted to the Baptist faith. Episcopalian acceptance was probably influenced by Baptist economic success. Before the War for Independence, Baptists were already on the list of Sea Island "aristocracy", rivaling Episcopalians in wealth consisting of land and slaves. This occasioned intermarriage between the once rivaling denominations. One of the most illustrious Bap-
17 tist ministers of South Carolina, Richard Fuller of Beaufort, came from
799 an Episcopalian lineage which included colonial Indian fighters, legislators, and signers of the Declaration of Independence. The Fuller family owned several Sea Islands and hundreds of slaves. The Lawton-Robert family, Baptist converts from the Huguenot sect, migrated to South Carolina from France. They organized the little Black Swamp Church upon acquiring properties at Robertville (between Beaufort and Savannah). Robertville became one of the wealthiest areas in South Carolina and the Lawton-Roberts were among the most prominent families in the Low-

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17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

175 797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 [795] Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

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in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

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Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, long-time residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

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Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

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175 567 797 [795] After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association missionary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Beaker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 795 794 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District [162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29] [567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

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he left), and late-coming Baptist missionaries who brought the last surge of slave baptismal activity in the mid-1850s. Apparently little screening occurred prior to uniting with Baptist churches, except examinations imposed upon the slaves by black leadership. Slaves were accepted into the Church from the societies, and admission was based on a profession of faith, evidence of "good character" from the slavemaster, and recommendation from the white brother in charge, who relied on intelligence received from the black elder.[46]

This lack of a meaningful conviction to teach Christianity raises the question of why some slaveholding Baptists accepted such large numbers of slaves into the churches at all. Neither a revival spirit nor Northern agitation fully explain the motivation. But activities of the Church Committee on Discipline perhaps express the manner in which Baptists expected Christianity to best serve them as slaveholders. Their change in attitude reflected the general shift away from paranoia about Christianizing slaves. After 1845 many believed that practical Christianity could work for the slave system. And although the majority of Gullahs had little or no contact with the Baptist church itself, church members felt the restraining arm of the faith through the Committee on Discipline.

Church discipline is an old concept, dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Early Baptist discipline was similar to the English Separatists' 1696 "Confessions of Faith," and integral to views of Christian fellowship for believers. This spiritual and communal sense revolved around creating a "true and orderly gospel church," with members conducting personal behavior according to Old Testament biblical tenants. Later, London Baptists' "Confessions of Faith" reflected concern for "order and discipline," and this was emphasized by their American counterpart, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, when in 1742 they composed their confessions and annexed a particular discipline code to it. In 1769 the Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia model. Not all, probably not most, American Baptist churches had explicit discipline references in their confessions although discipline was a reality in the churches. But Charleston Baptists and their Lowcountry congregational extensions were products of the Calvinist-Baptist tradition as is reflected in their patent emphasis on discipline, and in other ways previously discussed.[47]

Nineteenth-century Southern and frontier evangelical congregations fostered a sense of community through worship, revivals, camp meet-

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ings, prayer meetings, and discipline. Church discipline kept alive the "heavenly pattern" which each church personified. This "city set on a hill" meted out censure and excommunication regularly to offending members who paled its self-image of purity and piety. As the country expanded, church discipline was used to control the raw excesses of new communities struggling against such "immoralities" as "drinking, fornication, gambling, dueling and profanity." Evangelical churches grew increasingly more powerful and espoused an increasingly conservative theology in the South and perhaps elsewhere. This trend toward religious conservatism was tied, though not exclusively, to political and social developments in the South, most notably to slavery. An obvious manifestation of this was the national polarization of church denominations.[48] In the Lowcountry, another significant and more immediate expression of efforts to protect the existing social and political order through religion is found in the function of discipline committees on plantations. Every Lowcountry church examined for this study with a large black membership had such a committee. The nature of this committee's concern with the slaves' activities reveals how Baptists intended to make Gullahs "good Christians" mainly insofar as Christianity made them better slaves. The work of the Committee on Discipline in the largest Sea Island church amplifies this thesis.

Once attention focused on slave conversion, the most pressing church business was discipline of slave members. The Committee existed previously, but was reorganized and restructured in 1840, and its function broadened. According to the Minutes, the disciplinary body governed behavior of all church members, "both bond and free," but was specifically charged with looking into breaches of conduct committed by bondspeople. This committee of eight brethren investigated a few white cases, mostly involving social lapses. But in the "inquiry and investigation" of slaves, the "Committee on Discipline" had "broad" but "conservative powers."[49]

As with white "brethren in charge" of black societies, prominent Sea Island slaveholders, such as Benjamin Chaplin, Saxby Chaplin, William Fuller, James Fripp, and Edward Fripp dominated discipline of the Gullahs. Furthermore, members of the Discipline Committee might also double as superintendents of a black society. Sea Island planter Benjamin Chaplin, for example, was a member of the disciplinary body and also superintendent of the Beaufort Society. Noted for cruelty to his

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slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

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Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

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> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

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175 "guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary
• 795 tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously
794 because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cot-
685 ton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[11]

175 Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt
685 not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals.
673 Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their pe-
181 culiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

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partition behind him, & fastened on the other side—in this position the poor wretch was left for the night. . . . The wretch [Sandiford] returned to his victim about daylight next morning & found him, as anyone would expect, dead, *choked*, *strangled*, frozen to death, *murdered*.[61]

That same day the jurors reached a verdict—the slave met his death by choking on the chain his master put around his neck, "having slipped from the position in which he was placed." The verdict, Chaplin wrote should have been Roger died from "inhumane treatment," for he not only strangled from trying to disengage himself, hence becoming entangled in the most "shocking position," but was also "stiff dead" from the cold. In Chaplin's "individual" opinion the act was deliberate, but unpremeditated murder. Whether Chaplin attempted to convince the court of this is unknown. The case, like many such situations was certainly murder, but it behooved slaveholders to protect their position. The "witness" against Sandiford was a slave, the planter was related to at least four of the eight jurors and property rights were supreme in the South. Whatever Chaplin felt in private, his public posture was another matter. Furthermore, five years later, he defended an overseer who killed a runaway slave for stealing watermelons.[62]

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Since Sandiford was a Baptist planter, his conduct came before the Beaufort Church where he held membership. The crime apparently occurred on February 18, 1841, and the inquest was held the next day. However, not until March 31 was the incident was brought to the Beaufort Church's attention according to the Minutes. At that time it was discussed at the "Business Meeting," and Sandiford ordered to appear at its next session. On May 5, after receiving "a letter" from Sandiford, his case was "postponed for further consideration." On June 30, "the case of Brother Sandiford was again postponed," and never mentioned after that time. Sandiford's letter was not part of the Minutes and its contents are unknown. Undoubtedly he defended his actions, and though the case probably made him an unpopular communicant, he was never "disciplined." He eventually sold his property and left the region. But more significant, this rawly violent, not to say un-Christian act went uncensored by the Baptist Church.[63] One can imagine what a stir it caused among the slaves, some of whom probably had sanguine expectations that at least ecclesiastical action would be taken. Such occasions reinforced for slaves the fact that even in matters of "Christian" justice, a double standard applied.

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175 land, but many were taken forcibly. Gullahs risked and often lost their
561 lives to flee, telling horror tales of death and suffering inflicted upon anyone suspected of desiring either to remain on the Sea Islands or to escape from the mainland where the planters "refugeed." The fact that they continued to flee under these circumstances is the best testimony to their sense of independence and will to freedom. One such incident was told to Laura M. Towne:

> A woman today just escaped from her owners on the Mainland. She said she had hard work to escape, sleeping in the marsh and hiding all day. She brought away her two little children. Her master had just whipped her oldest son almost to death because he was suspected of trying to join the Yankees.[65]

Although the Battle of Port Royal ended in an easy Northern victory and occupation, the rest of South Carolina remained in Confederate hands. Planters fled the Sea Island region but returned, sometimes under cover of darkness, hoping to force slaves back to the mainland. Blacks and whites picketing the region could not place men at every landing spot and Gullahs lived in apprehension of the slaveholders' return. Susannah's master returned several times, once telling slaves to burn the cotton. "Why for we burn de cotton? Where we get money then for buy clo' sho' and salt?" So instead of burning cotton, they guarded it nightly. Women kept watch and men stood ready to defend their interests when the alarm sounded. At the Oaklands plantation of rebel Baptist Dr. Sams, a field hand named Cupid told Charlotte Forten how his master had daringly returned to St. Helena, risking capture by Northern soldiers, solely to retrieve slaves. Sams attempted to cajole Cupid into cooperation:

> He ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he [Sams] came to look for them, not one of his "faithful servants" was to be found.[66]

688 To the end Baptists had "faith" in the "faithfulness" of their slaves,
795 apparently believing that the white church had secured fidelity among the Gullahs. Just how far some whites took this assumption is illustrated

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by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865: 175 567

Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67] 688 795

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68] 175 567

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures. 175 567 795 688 684

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions 175 567 584

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175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
793 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
(554) sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
(797) ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

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tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation.

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently.

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how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "General Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:

> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
> .....
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
> .....
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
> .....
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude toward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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the evergreens, typical of Christ's life and teachings. They gave breathless attention to all this, ejaculating from time to time, "My Lord! is dat so?"
I know now they understood very little of all I said, but no speaker ever had more interested and attentive listeners. When I sat down, one of the leaders chanted rather than spoke a touching prayer, in which he styled me his "dear imperial preacher."
Then the white friends sang,—"Joy to the world, the Lord has come."
By this time the entire audience was aroused and ready to pray and sing all night. In each prayer the speaker tried to introduce, in his uncouth phraseology, some of the passages of Scripture he had heard read.[5]

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Though lacking a basic background regarding the teachings and historical importance of Christ, Gullahs strongly identified with his suffering, crucifixtion, and resurrection. This, to them, was Christianity, and since they felt their earthly lives so closely paralleled that of Jesus, becoming "Christians" was for Gullahs somewhat of an apocalyptic fulfillment. In fact, much of the essence of their understanding of Protestant religion centered around Jesus and His followers. Other writers have suggested that African-American slaves saw themselves primarily in the same light as the Children of Israel. This association certainly inspired some of the Charleston rebels in 1822, as already discussed. Also, the commander of Gullah troops, Thomas Higginson, stated that the men's memories were a "vast, bewildered chaos of Jewish history and biography," and that most great events from the past, up to "the American Revolution, they instinctively attributed to Moses." How the experience of the Jews aroused the Gullahs was witnessed by a Civil War missionary:

Last week I read to the *church full* the account of the escape of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. I was amazed at the impression it seemed to make. The remarks the old men made were graphic and eloquent. It made them recount with praise to God their escape. The little church seemed like dreamland to me almost when they got stirred to talk.[6]

Yet most Gullahs conceptualization of Christianity centered on the experiences of Jesus rather than the Jews, as is evident in their songs, prayers, and conversations. The militant nationalism so strongly associated with the Jewish struggle was a prominent ideology of Christian-oriented slaves during the Vesey Conspiracy but was not a major orientation in Gullah religion. Instead, as far as Christianity was concerned, Gullahs relied on a conviction that a moral wrong had been committed

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middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

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> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

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Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

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In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

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it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew, through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

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175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands
195 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern
occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the
194 church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble
noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur
829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
> "No Chillun?"
> "I'm not married."
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
> "Oh, you'r joking."
> "Fact."
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
> "You a member sure."
> "Eh?"
> "A member, a church member."
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant
771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a
829 contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

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Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

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The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'" process:

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> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river.
> When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

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normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of burials), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote: 175 789 567

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back.". . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation: 175 789 567 795

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body—all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[22]

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More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

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in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism. Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena:

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . .—near the water stood a large

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band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175 794 795 [171]

Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society. 175 794 795 (567)

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude. 175 794 795 567 (787)

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli- 175 794 799 567 797

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
787 been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
794 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
[795] that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The
[533] three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo-Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation experience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage.

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APPENDIX B

# *Excerpts from a "Missionary Sketch" Written by Thomas D. Turpin to the Christian Advocate and Journal, January 31, 1834.*

. . . the number of adults to whom I had access in preaching were about 1,000, one third of whom were in the Baptist Church and in the negroes societies, and almost all of them under Baptist influence; and that a great many of those lived on an island who scarcely ever saw the pastor of the Church to which they belong. Hence they had societies organized among themselves; and that those societies were very corrupt, and appeared to be very much under the influence of Roman Catholic principles; and that they did penance, and the following was a specimen, viz; that they had three degrees of punishment, and that the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third, a quart of corn; and that they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; and that it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing; and if it should be divulged by any one member, that one had to go on the low seat, or pick up the benne seed. I observed, having to contend with all this superstition and

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797 ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism, that I had added very few to the Church; and I had, moreover, strived very little to do this, but rather strived to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict.

But it appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons. Notwithstanding, though it has been said, that I have shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it has hit the Episcopalians. If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended I feel it my duty to heal the wound.

797 In regard to the words Baptist influence, it has also been observed, that it has generally been received as intending to mean that the whites
• 795 have knowledge of those corruptions among the negroes, and tolerate them. I had no such meaning. I simply meant that the negroes were under the peculiar influence of the Baptist tenets. Now, unless the Baptist tenets tolerate the doing of penance (which the world knows to the contrary), it could not mean that they tolerated these things among the negroes. It is notorious that almost all of the negroes in the bounds of my mission are prejudiced in favor of the Baptist Church.

681 As it respects the picking up of the benne seed, it has been said that it was not a very likely thing that it could be done in one night. In answer to this, I heard a gentleman say, no longer than last week, that the rule was, if it was not done in one night, they had to continue until
795 they did it—Again, as regards those of whom I spoke, who scarcely ever saw the pastor of the Church to which they belong, they were a set of negroes belonging to Andrew Marshall's church of Savannah. It may be objected that Andrew Marshall is nothing more than a negro. If he is, that does not derogate at all from the truth of the assertion made in the letter stated above. The negro has been authorized by the Church to preach and baptize.—He has done it, and he has baptized a great many in this low country; and those of whom I spoke are in that number. He is the only pastor that those negroes have on the island. He never comes to see them, nor any other Baptist minister. Therefore the facts remains, there are many negroes on Bull's Island that scarcely ever see the pastor of the Church to which they belong. This is the light in which I in-
[797] tended it should be received . . . the little negroes improve on the mission, but the adults are about the same as represented in the above statement.

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APPENDIX C

# Baptist Churches

TABLE C.1

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| | Churches | Constituted | Number Baptized | Membership |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| * 1 | Euhaw | 1745 | 43 | 841 |
| 2 | Beach Branch | 1759 | 65 | 132 |
| 3 | Healing Springs | 1772 | 7 | 143 |
| * 4 | Pipe Creek | 1776 | 38 | 287 |
| 5 | Treadaway | 1776 | 6 | 66 |
| 6 | Columbia | 1780 | 2 | 115 |
| * 7 | Black Swamp | 1786 | 11 | 294 |
| 8 | Great Saltcatcher | 1793 | 59 | 127 |
| 9 | Barnwell | 1803 | 13 | 126 |
| 10 | Springtown | 1803 | 66 | 244 |
| *11 | Beaufort | 1804 | 239 | 1,292 |
| 12 | Rosemary | 1804 | 11 | 114 |
| 13 | Willow Swamp | 1805 | 0 | 34 |
| 14 | Union | 1805 | 7 | 220 |
| 15 | Little Saltcatcher | 1807 | 21 | 50 |
| *16 | St. Helena | 1809 | 138 | 536 |
| *17 | May River | 1811 | 36 | 621 |
| 18 | Beulah | 1811 | 0 | 20 |
| *19 | Prince Williams | 1813 | 70 | 140 |
| 20 | Steep Bottom | 1814 | 3 | 44 |
| 21 | Cypress Creek | 1814 | 41 | 144 |
| 22 | Double Ponds | 1825 | 1 | 58 |
| 23 | Philadelphia | 1827 | 9 | 75 |
| 24 | Kirkland | 1827 | 12 | 162 |
| 25 | Black Creek | 1827 | 69 | 111 |
| 26 | M't Pleasant | 1828 | 4 | 38 |

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TABLE C.1 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833*

| *Churches* | *Constituted* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 3 Mile Creek | 1829 | 29 | 64 |
| 28 Matlock | 1830 | 0 | 33 |
| 29 Bethesda | 1830 | 8 | 30 |
| 30 Steel Creek | 1830 | 23 | 71 |
| 31 Joico's Branch | 1831 | 3 | 30 |
| 32 Ebenezer | 1831 | 3 | 21 |
| 33 Coosawatchie | 1832 | 34 | 196 |
| 34 Beach Island | 1832 | 0 | 38 |
| *35 Hilton Head | 1832 | 86 | 212 |
| 36 Sardia | 1833 | 14 | 33 |
| 37 Pleasant Prospect | 1833 | 0 | 43 |
| Total | | 471 | 6,805 |

*Beauford District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 23, 1833, 11, BC.

TABLE C.2

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1842*

| *Churches* | *Number Baptized* | *Membership* | *By Whom Supplied* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | . . . No Report . . . | | W. A. Lawton |
| Beach Branch | 0 | 71 | E. Estes |
| Healing Springs | 1 | 104 | D. Peeples |
| *Pipe Creek | 12 | 131 | I. Nicholes |
| Treadaway | 1 | 31 | H. D. Duncan |
| Columbia | 17 | 141 | L. M. Brown |
| *Black Swamp | 13 | 278 | George Kempton |
| Great Saltcatcher | 18 | 130 | James Fant |
| Barnwell | 2 | 140 | D. Peeples, M. Shoares |
| Springtown | 0 | 183 | L. B. Brown |
| *Beaufort | 152 | 1,947 | R. Fuller |
| Rosemary | 0 | 111 | D. Peeples |
| Union | 8 | 240 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Little Saltcatcher | 0 | 70 | George Walker |
| *St. Helena | 61 | 762 | W. Hall |
| *May River | 30 | 888 | W. A. Lawton |
| *Prince Williams | . . . No Report . . . | | L. G. Bowers |

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| Churches | Number Baptized | Membership | By Whom Supplied |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deep Bottom | 1 | 33 | C. J. Robert |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 37 | I. Nix |
| Philadelphia | 4 | 87 | L. M. Brown |
| Smyrna | 3 | 207 | M. Shoares |
| Black Creek | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Mount Pleasant | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| St. John's | 1 | 3 | George Walker |
| Matlock | 0 | 9 | (No Pastor) |
| Bethesda | 0 | 57 | William Baxley |
| Steel Creek | 19 | 131 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Joico's Branch | 25 | 73 | H. D. Duncan |
| *Coosawhatchie | . . . No Report . . . | | H. D. Duncan |
| Beach Island | 5 | 189 | H. Z. Ardis |
| Friendship | 0 | 66 | (No Pastor) |
| *Hilton Head | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sardia | 9 | 34 | John Youmans |
| Pleasant Prospect | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Sandy Run | 11 | 61 | J. Fant |
| Gent's Branch | 9 | 32 | (No Pastor) |
| Beaver Dam | 1 | 43 | John Youmans |
| M't Temperance | . . . No Report . . . | | (No Pastor) |
| Long Beach | . . . No Report . . . | | J. Munch |
| Beulah | 14 | 51 | J. Fant |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | 20 | W. Price, B. Ferguson |
| Mount Aaron | 2 | 33 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Three Lower Runs | 2 | 39 | Joseph A. Lawton |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 0 | 76 | (No Pastor) |
| Total | 421 | 6,508 | |

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*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near Sea Islands.
*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1842, 16, BC.

TABLE C.3
*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

| Churches | Baptized | Black Members | White Members | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Euhaw | 8 | 442 | 32 | 474 |
| Beach Branch | 12 | 70 | 64 | 140 |
| Healing Springs | 0 | 23 | 31 | 54 |
| *Pipe Creek | 20 | No Breakdown | | 179 |
| Columbia | 0 | No Breakdown | | 146 |

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TABLE C.3 *(continued)*

*State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851*

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| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Black Swamp | 10 | 259 | 64 | 323 |
| Great Saltcatcher | 0 | 43 | 106 | 149 |
| Barnwell | 1 | 71 | 3 | 105 |
| Springtown | 8 | 73 | 107 | 180 |
| *Beaufort | 32 | 2.477 | 196 | 2,673 |
| Rosemary | 3 | 20 | 98 | 118 |
| Union | 6 | 148 | 39 | 187 |
| Little Saltcatcher | 4 | 17 | 162 | 179 |
| *St. Helena | 16 | 866 | 34 | 900 |
| *May River | 25 | 510 | 30 | 540 |
| Steep Bottom | 9 | 54 | 38 | 92 |
| Cypress Creek | 0 | 14 | 46 | 60 |
| Philadelphia | 9 | 120 | 10 | 130 |
| Smyrna | 7 | 223 | 43 | 266 |
| St. John's | 0 | 6 | 30 | 36 |
| Matlock | 20 | 26 | 70 | 96 |
| Bethesda | 9 | 11 | 91 | 102 |
| Steel Creek | 2 | 64 | 11 | 75 |
| Joico's Branch | 0 | 1 | 57 | 58 |
| *Coosawhatchie | 29 | 258 | 38 | 296 |
| Beach Island | 19 | 22 | 38 | 60 |
| Friendship | 0 | No Breakdown | | 90 |
| *Hilton Head | 1 | 106 | 2 | 108 |
| Black Creek, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 104 |
| Pleasant Prospect | 5 | No Breakdown | | 57 |
| Sandy Run | 17 | 44 | 56 | 100 |
| Gent's Branch | 0 | 7 | 38 | 45 |
| Beaver Dam | 0 | 1 | 40 | 41 |
| Long Beach | 3 | 12 | 75 | 87 |
| Union, Colleton | 0 | No Breakdown | | 25 |
| Mount Aaron | 0 | 3 | 37 | 40 |
| Lower Three Runs | 1 | No Breakdown | | 38 |
| Doctor's Creek, Colleton | 8 | No Breakdown | | 47 |
| Round O | 0 | No Breakdown | | 48 |
| Great Swamp | 0 | 15 | 18 | 33 |
| Blackville | 0 | 15 | 55 | 70 |
| Sand Hill | 10 | No Breakdown | | 35 |
| Bedon's | 0 | No Breakdown | | 44 |
| Peniel | 12 | No Breakdown | | 66 |
| Mount Olive | 2 | 6 | 17 | 23 |

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**BAPTIST CHURCHES** 34[1]

| *Churches* | *Baptized* | *Black Members* | *White Members* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cypress Chapel | 0 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| Bethel | 0 | No Breakdown | | 12 |
| Beulah | 0 | 25 | 7 | 32 |
| Total | 308 | 6,052 | 1,805 | 9,282 |

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*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands. These churches claimed 4,918 members out of a total black membership return of 6,052. Most of the 4,918 blacks were members of the Sea Island congregations at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River, and Hilton Head.

*Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1851, 20, BC.

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stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10, BC; see Appendix C.[A] Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

3. *Minutes of the Euhow Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 41, February 18, 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tumber*, 147. Some Episcopalian planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C,[A] see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839, 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A. [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Laboure*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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175 113 567 BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tomber*, 145, 147, 151.

46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197, November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tomber*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP. [795] [794]

175 113 47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

175 113 795 794 49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

175 113 685 [795] [794] 55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

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175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

[795] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to
[797] baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[793] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31,
[797] 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

113 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### 8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to
175 be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn.,
113 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed.
797 Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Univer-
113 sities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

799 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau,
795 *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

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164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113

7. George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), II (2) 180–91. (779) (795)

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Boxume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 173 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. (701)

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15. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 54–55; Higginson, *Army Life*, 63, 72, 86–105, 149–50; H. G. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," *Continental Monthly* 4 (August, 1963): 202–3; Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 64, 87–93.

16. Higginson, *Army Life*, 46–48, 70–71, 240–41; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 196.

17. Allen Diary, 82–83; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 99, n. 1, 102, 114, 181–82; Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4–5; Towne Diary, 14, 21; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 143–56.

18. Forten, "Sea Islands, Part I, 588.

19. Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1912), 26.

20. Higginson, *Army Life*, 192; Tilden G. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (New York: Atheneum, 1970; repr. from 1968 ed.) 257–60.

21. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Allen Diary, 164.

22. Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 204.

23. Higginson, *Army Life*, 208.

24. Edelstein, *Strange Enthusiasm*, 257–60 For an enlightening and provoking treatment of "romantic racialism" see George M. Frederickson, *Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Chapter 4; William Francis Allen, Charles P. Ware, and Lucy M. Garrison, *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.), 48; Higginson, *Army Life*, 208–9.

25. Rev. Mansfied French to Revs, Whipple and Jocelyn, n. d., AMA.

26. Higginson, *Army Life*, 235.

27. Ibid., 71, 236–38, and his Appendix D, 267–76.

28. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 457.

### 9. *Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters*

1. Mrs. William R. Wister, "Recollections of a Southern Plantation and School," Penn School Papers, vol. 5, 19, SHC; Rosa B. Cooley, *School Acres*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 148–49; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 52, Penn School Papers, SHC; "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

2. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 11, 1840 and January 7, 1842, 12; October 7, 1859, 271–74, BC; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 104–5.

3. Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Towne Diary, 52, Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 61, 69–72; William F. Allen et al., *Slave Songs of the United States* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951; repr. from 1867 ed.) xviii.

4. Thomas J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York: Henry Hold, 1930), 243–54; Towne Diary 26, 42; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672; Edward L. Pierce, "The Negroes at Port Royal, S. C.," Doc. 51 in *Rebellion Record*, ed. Frank Moore, Suppl. 1 (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871) 305; Lawton, "Religious Life," 54–57, 60–62; Patricia Guthrie, "Catching Sense: The Meaning

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[794] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
• [795] pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

198 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
414 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
[443] a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
529 It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
872 on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
(666) [P.xii-B] cation and voter registration.

000 -13% of its residents.

SEA ISLAND RELIGION

795 794 The most dominant institution in Sea Island society is the church. There are numerous churches on each island. These churches are Protestant in denomination and are about equally divided among Methodist and Baptist congregations. These congregations may have as few as forty or as many as two hundred members. Each congregation supports the operational expenses and contributes to the maintenance of the church facility. Ordinarily this facility is a large one room, single floor, cinder block building. The size and renovation are generally determined by the financial resources of the congregation. In some cases, along with renovation the church has been enlarged by one or two rooms.

794 796 Until the late 1950's each congregation tried with all effort to have its own Pastor, but this became increasingly difficult, so today, even the larger membered congregations have reduced their Sunday services to a bi-monthly schedule. The Sunday gathering is really the time of the community's elders. The entire day revolves around church attendance and relaxing in the Spirit of the Lord. Sunday services generally start for the congregation at 11:00 A.M. and concludes near 2:30 P.M. Afterwards there may be elder meetings or evening prayer attended primarily by the senior

796 congregation members. The nature of the Sea Island religions

771 islands a man's worth is measured by his religious dedica-
[554 tion. This is so much the case, that the question of out-
growing religion, or active versus the inactive participa-
tion of the congregation is not a legitimate concern. The
practice of weekday religion is more vigorous than the
Sunday demonstrations of faith.

Here on the Islands, religion penetrates every aspect
of life. It is rare to encounter islanders who are not
learned in the scriptures. This includes islanders who be-
771 cause of personal conflicts with the church's institution-
• 795 alized style, no longer attend Sunday services. The blunt
of this disagreement is usually focused at the church's
social inactivity; they say the church simply is not doing
enough.

The Church's Doings

795 Before the coming of community action programs, helping
794 neighbors in need was the exclusive role of the church. To
some extent, the church is still the most active agent in
this regard. Whose analysis shows that congregation members
make up the policy making bodies of all the community action
programs on the island. It appears, now that these program
resources are available, the church has taken a more in-
direct role. Rather than continuing the tradition of
neighbor helping neighbor, neighbors in need are now di-
rected to available program resources. When the need is

795 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older tradi-
794 tional methods of helping are reenacted.

794 The Young Islander and the Church
883
795

> Gome ta ole timb religion, gome to ole timb religion, gome ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub fer ma mama, it be good enoub fer ma papa, it be good enoub fer me. It be good enoub fer me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has meaning and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in
[771] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE:
A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

758 Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical
759 personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
(533) observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
(128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
(171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
• 795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
761 explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his
rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with
a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(782) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence
told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried
the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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## BAPTISM

795 533 On a frosty Sunday morning many years ago, I happened to be on the bank of the Frederica River south of the Fort. From a distance I heard the Negroes singing what sounded like a dirge, but as they came closer I found it was a baptismal song, sung by the procession which had formed, as is customary, at the church a mile away.[12] It was headed by the minister, followed by his assistants, the deacons and other members in pairs, while the "candidates" brought up the rear. The girls were dressed in white, but the boys wore ordinary overalls and work shirts. The solemn dignity of the occasion was impressive. Joe Lowman, one of the assisting preachers, with great earnestness addressed the congregation. He exhorted those of his hearers who had not been baptized to take no chances. In an intimate conversational tone he gave his views on the subject. He wanted it clearly understood that he was not prepared to say, "nobody was going to be saved who had only had his head sprinkled"—but he, for one, was not for disobeying instructions. The Lord ordered us to go down into the water, and that was all there was about it. It was like sending a boy to the store for potatoes; if he brought home turnips it would not be the same thing at all.

795 794 [793]

After the discourse and the usual prayers,[13] which were punctuated in the African manner with encouraging responses, rhythmically delivered, the officiating minister went down into the river to the spot selected by the deacon, who, with his staff to show the depth, had preceded him. While those on the river bank sang

[782]

[12] Before leaving the church the minister calls his congregation to order, and gives them some last-minute instructions. One cautioned his flock to conduct themselves on the way to the water in an orderly manner befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He said: "Now, I don't want any talkin' or laughin'.—Don' y'u begin to tell about your bean patch an' your peas. This ain' no time for it."

[794] [577]

[13] In a recent book the assertion is made that our Negroes "pray to the river" when they are baptized. This sounds like an African survival until it is learned that "to" means "beside" in this instance. It is no wonder that those who are unfamiliar with our Negroes and their use of words make curious mistakes.

[114] [196]

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795 794 "Wade in the Water," the candidates, each escorted by a church member, followed to the water's edge. There the girls' skirts were tied above their knees to prevent undignified billowing, and the assisting deacon led each candidate to the spot where the minister stood in about two-and-a-half feet of water.

The Negroes probably follow the usual procedure of white Baptists; however, I find that no two preachers use precisely the same words, though the substance is [788] always the same: "In obedience to the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ I baptize thee"—and at this point the immersion takes place—"in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen"—and up comes the sputtering, shivering candidate. When the procession returns to the church, the ones who have just been baptized line up and receive the "right hand of fellowship" from the minister and the church members—and not until then may they consider themselves as safely within the fold.

Although the water was bitterly cold that February morning, the young people behaved very well, and only one squealed a little—which was considered very bad form. If you do not come up like a lamb it is "suspicioned" that your conversion has not been authentic, and the baptism may need to be performed again.

795 178 [783] In the old days, when the Negroes were closer to Africa, baptisms in the tidewater section took place punctiliously, no matter how inconvenient the hour, on the outgoing tide.[14] In the interior, of course, where rivers and streams can be depended upon to carry the candidate's sins away from him, a baptism can be safely set for any appointed hour. Now, cement tanks are built in the yards of conventional churches, and another picturesque custom will soon be a thing of the past. Many a time have I gone to the South End or to Frederica, before sunrise, in the hope of learning something new. Something new was not always forthcoming, but the picture in the low morning light was worth going miles to see.

[114] [171] [14] *The stress laid by Negro Baptists upon baptism being performed on the outgoing tide lends support to the theory, held by Melville Herskovits, that the strong adherence to the ritual of baptism among Negro Christians is related to "the great importance of the river-cult in Africa, particularly in view of the fact that, as has often been observed, river-cult priests were sold into slavery in great numbers."* (Handbook of Social Psychology.)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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764 "preach the funeral,"[24] the St. Simon's Negroes would row all the way to Savannah
793 —over eighty miles—to get him. They landed at Frederica, where the First African
[195] Baptist Church was located.

At Aaron's funeral Laura gave the time-honored dramatic touch by growing
764 hysterical, throwing up her arms, and screaming: "Good-bye Aaron—y'u gone for-
152 ever." While the clods were shoveled upon the coffin, singing providentially kept
[767] us from hearing the sound. Different men, headed by the undertaker, took turns filling in the grave. The way they joked and laughed as they worked rather shocked me. I understand, however, that Africans show the same levity after distressing occasions.

M. H. Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa*, mentions the intense love of the
764 African for funerals, and, according to the descriptions given by other explorers,
171 there is a striking similarity in the burial customs of the natives and their rural American cousins. In Africa it is believed that the position of the ghost in the other world requires that the funeral be as expensive as the family can possibly provide. Furthermore, without a fitting ceremony the departed spirit cannot reach its final destination, but lingers among the living, making conditions very uncomfortable for them. The Negroes of our Southern states show the same feeling about
764 funerals. They spare no expense in making them elaborate affairs. One that took place on St. Simon's years ago will long be remembered: "Why, Mrs. Parris', it cost four hundred dollars. They sent to Savannah for flowers, and she was buried in new white slippers that cost six dollars . . . !" I notice that the American Negro, no matter what the work or business in hand, puts it aside for such an event. To pay the cost of a funeral that will be a credit to the corpse as well as his family, the
[426] survivors will mortgage what property they may have, if they have not been so
[767] provident as to take out an insurance policy, join a "Bury League," or pay to some society or lodge dues which range from ten to twenty-five cents a week.

[24] When Quarterman's son-in-law died, his daughter said to me: "Tell the old man my hus-
[123] band died three weeks ago and the funeral will be preached next Sunday." Then she asked me if I would please give her a black hat. A Northern friend frequently sent me boxes of summer hats in the autumn. If the original owners could have seen them in winter on the dusky wearers, they would have been surprised. The fun of fitting out the singers with becoming hats has always made me wonder if I hadn't missed my calling.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[60]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[61] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[60] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[61] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C. Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances, and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect or striking resemblance to some form or type which has been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[82] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

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They were also quick to follow the custom of the whites in "churching" offending members. "The discipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[83]

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The church was not only responsible for giving Christianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teaching a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[82] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

175 657 585

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

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Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

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[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

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The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

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As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

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794 346 bership of two million and a local membership of about fifty. There is nothing prepossessing about the small white building. The wooden floor is sprinkled with sawdust and except for the piano the only furniture is several roughly built wooden benches. The walls of the mission are hung with placards bearing inscriptions, of which the following are a few: "Peace—the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink, but joy, peace and good will," "Peace and Good Will to the World," "Peace, Father Divine is God, Salutation is Peace."

794 At about eight o'clock in the evening members begin straggling in, two or three at a time. They are dressed soberly, with a noticeable lack of bright colors and ornamentation of any description, as one of the precepts of the cult is the sacrifice of all worldly possessions. Upon joining the church they must surrender everything of material value to Father Divine. The old life is a thing of the past. The convert must accept new habits, new names, and an entirely new scheme of existence.

794 793 The ardor of followers is not dampened by the fact that their leader has never been known to visit the Savannah branch. They claim that he is always present spiritually and can in this manner accomplish his miracles. At the meeting a major part of the service is given over to a number of testimonials, presented by many of those present. One by one the converts intone their devotion to Father Divine * and vividly recount what he has done for them.

[796]

794 796 A stout Negro woman bearing the name of Sister Patience

*curately portrays the House as it was found in this community. For this reason it was thought well to include it.*

** Father Divine is said to have been born George Baker on a Hutchinson Island rice plantation near Savannah about sixty years ago. Sometime in the late 1890's it appears that he opened a meeting house in the Negro section of the Old Fort, calling himself "The Son of Righteousness." His activities in the community abruptly ceased when, after some trouble with the authorities, he fled from Savannah to escape a gang of whites who aimed to make him prove himself the reincarnation of Christ by walking on the Savannah River.*

*Arriving in Baltimore, Maryland, he joined a religious sect headed by*

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794 796 Peace * gives the following testimonial: "Once it wuz muh highes ambition tuh know duh tings uh duh worl. I loved cahds an drink an udduh vices. No day passed wen I wuz not so drunk dat I would gib out an hab tuh go tuh bed. Now it is not so. I hab nebuh seen duh Fathuh in duh body, but I know dat he is God, fuh I hab made spiritual contac wid him. Because uh rightous libin I am now weighin two hundud pouns. Praise Fathuh."

A thin, wiry little Negro man, ** whose eyes gleam with a fanatical light, speaks next. He gives his name as Noah's Ark and states that Father Divine has given him the power to raise his wife from the dead and has caused him to enter upon a new and sanctified life. Faithful Patience, the wife, is also present and in turn testifies as to the truth of his statement and as to her own faith in Father Divine.

Triumphant Virgin, † happy in the knowledge that she is now leading a blameless existence, steps forward and gives the following statement: "I know Fathuh Divine tuh be God cuz he lifted me out uh duh guttuh and changed me frum a drunkud an all udduh low tings dat I use tuh be.

[793] *Father Jehovia. Later, in New York City the new disciple decided to open his own cult. It was then that he adopted his present name and that his converts created the maxim "Father Divine is God."*

*Converts both white and Negro were eager to join the new order. Today Father Divine computes his followers as being between 21,000,000 and 30,000,000, although outsiders give a more conservative estimate. The leader travels extensively and "heavens" have been established in various parts of the country. His weekly income is reputed to be $20,000 and is derived from the many business establishments operated under his supervision.*

*He has a fondness for flashy clothing, wears a five dollar gold piece for a stickpin, and rides about in a pale blue Rolls Royce and a scarlet monoplane.*

*The self-styled Messiah has now extended his activities to the field of politics, both national and international. There is a variance of public sentiment concerning him. To followers he appears to be "reincarnated God," while enemies insist he is a fraud, a hypnotist, and a remarkably clever actor who is at present growing a little tired of the role he has chosen to enact.*

*Robert Allerton Parker, "The Incredible Messiah" (Boston, 1937), pp. 80, 93, 94, 106, 183, 188, 209–36.*

** Sister Patience Peace, Old Fort.*

*** Noah's Ark, Old Fort.*

*† Triumphant Virgin, Old Fort.*

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794 Muh ole name is dead an now tings reign tru Fathuh Divine.
796 Peace Thanks, Fathuh."

794 As the evening wears on, more of the devotees join in the
796 chanting and in the spirited singing of the hymns. Demon-
786 strations become more and more violent. Several of the con-
gregation, caught in the throes of a powerful religious in-
toxication, begin to dance and sway with abandonment.[19]
[533] Others in the group encourage the dancers with a rhythmic
clapping of hands and stamping of feet.

[533] On and on the dancers whirl while the piano pounds out
its accompaniment; above the din rises the wailed repetitious
version of an improvised hymn. The participants in the
dance seem oblivious to everything except the series of con-
tortions in which they are indulging. Eyes half closed, fixed
smiles on their faces, every muscle in their bodies aquiver,
they stumble blindly on. Some bump into the wooden
benches, others fall exhausted to the floor. Still the dance
goes on.[46]

[793] Over and over can be heard the hoarse chanting of the
worshipers as they continue to give praise to Father Divine,
the man who, according to their own account, was not born
in the ordinary manner but was "combusted" one day in
New York City and who was sent to earth to save his fol-
lowers from destruction.

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794 (292) congregation don their newest and most colorful garments. Preparation has been made for all emergencies. In attendance are burly guards whose duty it is to see that nothing occurs to disturb the smooth performance of the ceremonies. The floor has been thickly sprinkled with sawdust and the stout posts at the front of the church are padded to prevent injury to overzealous worshipers.

794 793 796 At the sudden sharp sound of a whistle all activity ceases; there is silence in the church. The Armor Bearers leave the building to escort the Bishop to his seat of honor. Soon they return, followed by the Queen who is arrayed in a pale green satin evening dress over which is worn a black velvet cape lined with scarlet. A double line of uniformed guards follows, and marching proudly between the lines is the Bishop. According to his own statement, the Holy Prophet, as his followers call him, is of Portuguese birth. His long dark hair which falls to his shoulders, his piercing eyes, his pointed beard, and sideburns all combine to give him a distinguished and unusual appearance.*

The procession continues to the front of the church, where, with much ceremony, the Bishop seats himself upon a lofty throne set far back on the spacious platform. The

* *Details of the early life of "Daddy Grace" are clothed in obscurity and little can be learned of the real origin of the House of Prayer. Some claim that he is of West Indian birth, others that he was born Marcilino Manuel Garcia in Portugal, and still others interpret his references to "a land beyond the sea" as indication that he hails from Egypt. All members of the cult must be baptized and during a four-week session in 1936 1,789 candidates were ministered to at a charge of $1.00 each. The Bishop advocates that members give generously of their material goods to the church and he has been known on occasions to go about among his congregation seizing purses and demanding that worshipers sacrifice treasured jewelry. It is a well known fact that his profession of "spiritual leader" has proved a vastly profitable one, and in the course of the last several years he has amassed a huge fortune. Many of "Daddy's" enterprises are looked upon with disfavor and suspicion by the police department. His frequent clashes with the law over various matters of an extremely worldly nature serves only to increase the attendance and the collections at the church and also give the Bishop much desired publicity. Followers are unimpressed by his occasional arrests, secure in the knowledge that no earthly force can ever conquer "Daddy."* See Time (*New York*), *March 7, 1938, XXXI, No. 10, p. 30.*

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794 Queen stands at the Bishop's right, facing the congregation.
793 The music blares forth with renewed intensity and the entire
multitude, led by the uniformed guard, passes in single file
• 796 before the throne. As members approach the Bishop, they
pledge themselves to him by removing their hats and bowing
low. In the midst of all this commotion "Daddy" sits, a remote, detached figure, his downcast eyes seemingly indicating that he is scarcely aware of this carefully planned reception.

794 Between the musical numbers several of the congregation
796 rise and loudly testify to the miracles that Bishop Grace [22]
[778] has performed in their behalf. A flourishing sale is con-
ducted in consecrated handkerchiefs and copies of a news-
[432] paper published by the cult. These are believed to possess
unusual healing powers.[8, 12] A ready market is also found
[755] for large pictures of the Bishop, for it is said that to chew
up his likeness will cure many kinds of illness.

The grand march is spectacular. All those present assemble in the large center aisle. The band strikes up a lively measure and the procession starts. At the front of the church the line of march divides, half the people going down one side aisle, the other half going down the opposite one. At first the procession is orderly and fairly quiet, but
[533] as time passes, the music becomes increasingly loud. Above the brass instruments the steady throb of the drum can be heard. Voices are raised in accompaniment, feet stamp, shoulders sway, and hands clap.[19]

796 Around and around the procession winds. The singing
and dancing become wilder and more abandoned. Many
786 now close their eyes, dancing blindly and stumbling into
those near them and into the benches and posts. By this time the music is almost deafening and the noise made by the worshipers is equally loud. The muscles of their bodies twitching convulsively, they continue in their dance.[46]

Occasionally one of the participants stops, and, regard-

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•796 less of the hindrance to the rest of the worshipers, jumps up
786 and down wildly, crying out in a shrill, hysterical voice. At length, exhausted, he sinks to the floor and is dragged by friends from under the whirling feet of the others.

One woman, seized by such a paroxysm, falls to her knees, screaming incoherently. Exhausted by her violent emotion, she lies on the rough board floor, her jaws hanging open loosely, her eyes closed. Slowly, she raises her hands and beats them together muttering, "Praise Daddy. Praise Daddy Grace."

[533] The pulsating rhythm of the instruments increases in tempo. A man leaps high into the air, gesticulating and babbling; faster and faster he whirls, until he too falls from utter exhaustion. Still the wild display continues. The terrific nervous strain is taking its toll, and now all but a few of the dancers stumble wearily. The steady, insistent sound of the drum urges them on; feet still shuffle, hands beat out the rhythm, and voices chant an incoherent incantation.

796 Abruptly the band ceases and members straggle back to their places. Those who have fallen out from exhaustion are dragged to the benches by their friends.

796 The service continues. During the evening many collec-
794 tions are taken up. Two of the deacons, acting on behalf of the Bishop, urge the people to contribute freely. Their methods of approach present a strong contrast. One, stout, dark-skinned, and clad in a pearl gray suit, has a gentle and persuasive manner. He says softly to the congregation, "Precious Haht, hep us tuh raise fawty bucks fuh Daddy Grace right quick. Wile duh Prophet sits on duh throne befo us, let us all contribute freely tuh him."

The other deacon, short and wiry, darts about among the congregation. His manner of speaking is quick, and he barks his orders to first one and then another of the church members. "Step right up now," he advises. "Dohn hole back on us. Anybody else now, come right up an contribute.

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•796 Ebrybody gib at leas one nickel now wile we still hab duh
794 privilege uh gibin tuh Daddy. Step up, ebrybody."

Until this point Bishop Grace, apparently indifferent, has
796 had no active part in the ceremony, but he now steps for-
793 ward. There is a sudden hush.

"Daddy" becomes an intimate, vivid part of the group. Coming down among the congregation, he addresses his talk now to one individual, now to another, dropping frequently into the southern Negro dialect. The theme of his address is, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap." The main issue, however, is often sidetracked, and the speaker comments in turn upon world politics, the war, anecdotes of his own trips abroad, his persecution by enemies, all of whom "the Lord struck down dead," and the general condition of the local community. The entire discourse is interspersed with humorous sayings that find a delighted response. "Daddy" advises his followers strongly against trusting anyone. "If the angel from Heaven comes down an wants an extra pair of wings, don't trust him," he warns. "Tell him you ain't got no time to keep books today. He have to pay cash." Near the conclusion of his talk the Bishop says that he can accomplish anything he chooses, even to sinking ships, destroying fleets of planes, or conquering entire nations. He is not the actual power, he says, but he is so close to it that he has only to reach out his hand and pull the switch.

After every sentence or two that "Daddy" utters his listeners echo his statements with such remarks as "Ain't it so, Daddy," "Dat is duh trute," "Yes Daddy," "You tell em, Daddy," "Hallelujah," "Amen." These utterances do not always agree with what the speaker has just said but nevertheless are meant to express thorough approbation. At one time "Daddy" tosses to a woman in the congregation a
[786] rose he has used in illustrating a point in his sermon. This

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unexpected honor overcomes the recipient to such an extent that she is seized with violent convulsions.

Noticing that the hour is growing late, the Bishop abruptly ends his talk. There follows a prayer, led by one of the deacons and chanted rather than spoken. At the end of each line the man's voice catches on a high sob verging on hysteria, and those in the congregation murmur an almost inaudible echo of the speaker's plea. The other deacons join in the recital and in the wild sobbing. At the conclusion of the prayer a high pitch of excitement is reached.

It is now time for the Bishop to take leave of his flock. Slowly, reverently, his attendants bring him his top coat and high Stetson hat. From his pocket "Daddy" draws out a large white handkerchief which he waves slowly in accompaniment to the closing hymn, a corrupt version of *Nearer My God To Thee*. The worshipers, too, wave their handkerchiefs in solemn tribute to their departing leader.

Shortly after a visit from the Bishop we pursued our course of research in Brownville. We found a number of people who had been named for week days or the month in which they had been born. Thursday Jones,* when questioned about this particular custom, replied, "Dey name me dat way jis cuz uh happen tuh be bawn on Tursday, I guess. Sech tings seem tuh be in our fambly. I hab an uncle whose name is Monday Collins. It seem tuh come duh fus ting tuh folks' mine tuh name duh babies fuh duh day dey is bawn on." [20]

Another man ** told us, "We hab membuhs in our fambly name Monday, Friday, July an Augus. Dey jis didn tink ub any name tuh call em but duh day dey wuz bawn.[20] Deah wuz two brudduhs call July an Augus an deah two sons wuz name aftuh um. Some uh deze names go all duh way back tuh slabery time. Duh chillun jis name aftuh duh kin."

* *Thursday Jones, Brownville.*
** *John Blackshear, 625 Grapevine Avenue.*

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829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [704]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing
•796 and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23] The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the
533 "settin-up" or wake.[36] "Dey would have some hot drinks,"
764 recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones
829 Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [704] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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533 202 [115] Another native of Skidaway,* now living in Sandfly, also remembered drum codes being sent out from Skidaway.[26] A member of the Baptist Church, he has never heard drums beaten in the house of praise, but he described with great pride and earnestness the ceremony of a river baptism.

795 •796 "We gadduh at duh chuch wid duh candidates who comes all dressed ready fuh baptism in long wite robes. Duh deacons range duh folks in line, two by two. Den duh mahch tuh duh ribbuh begin, duh pastuh an duh deacons leadin duh way. Dis is a solemn time, an duh candidates an deah friens an relatives all rejoice. As we mahch we sing. Some uh duh [533] songs we sing is *I'm Gwine Down tuh duh Ribbuh ub Jawdan* an *Oh, Who Will Come an Go Wid Me?*

"Wen we git tuh duh ribbuh some uh duh folks is so happy an dey scream an jump roun so much dat some uh duh udduhs hab tuh hole em. Duh candidates is led intuh duh watuh, one by one, an baptize. Attuh duh baptizin dey change deah cloze an we all go tuh duh chuch fuh duh communion services."

754 301 789 [777] Here, as in many other sections, a silver coin is frequently worn on the ankle to insure good luck[8] and to give warning by turning black at any effort by an enemy to conjure the wearer.[12a, c, d] In regard to this custom of wearing a coin one woman who is married to a man "wid duh powuh tuh see tings"[22a,*] said, "Duh folks roun yuh use tuh weah five dolluh gole pieces on deah ankle, but hahd times jis nachly make dem gole pieces jump off."**

The same woman told that when she and her husband first moved to Sandfly several years ago, a neighbor employed a conjure man to put a spell on them to drive them away.

"I membuh wen deze folks cross duh way wuz cunjuhin us, an strikin roun, I went tuh duh sto an change a dolluh bill fuh one of deze silvuh dolluhs. It wuz roun an shiny as yuh

* *John Bivens, Baker's Crossing.*
** *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

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# *Sunbury*

OUR CAR CAME TO AN ABRUPT STOP IN THE SANDY road before the board fence which enclosed a small group of weather-beaten clapboard houses. We called to a young Negro girl who lounged in a doorway and she came forward to see what we wanted. Almost simultaneously there appeared from the other houses scattered about the clearing a number of other persons.

Two women about thirty-five years old and nine or ten small children all approached the fence. At first they were rather wary, but their attitude gradually turned to friendliness and they hung over the high board fence, talking and laughing in great good humor. Elizabeth Roberts,* the young girl whom we had first seen, appeared to be the leader of the group.

We were interested to know if these people had river baptisms any more. "Duh Sunbury Baptis Church an duh Palmyra Baptis Church both hab baptizins," Elizabeth told us. "Cose it depend on how many folks wants tuh leab duh Presbyterian Church an jine duh Baptis. Mos ub us is already baptize."

"Where do they hold the baptisms?" we inquired.

The group all pointed in the direction of the river. "Right obuh deah in duh Sunbury Ribbuh," they chorused.

Elizabeth again took the initiative. "All duh candidates is robed in wite," she explained. "Duh preachuh come frum

* *Elizabeth Roberts, Sunbury.*

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795 Savannah an he is dressed in a long robe. He walk long an
•796 duh folks all mahch behine im. Dey goes down tuh duh rib-
[292] buh an sing as dey go. Dey alluz hab duh baptizin wen duh
[783] tide is goin out so duh watuh will wash duh sins away. Attuh dey all gits tuh duh ribbuh, dey stop an duh preachuh ast duh candidates tuh step fawwud. One by one he dip em in duh watuh an dey is buried in baptism. Wen dey is all baptize, duh preachuh pray tuh duh ribbuh an [43] ast dat all sins be taken away. Den all duh folks sing an shout an praise duh Lawd."

The little group leaning on the railing nodded in agreement and as if in memory of the ceremony their bodies swayed rhythmically. As we listened and watched we could almost see the white robed procession winding to the river bank; we could almost hear the chanting of the converts as their sins were washed away.

764 The conversation turned to burial customs in the section and the women told us that "settin-ups" were still held for those who died.

"We all sit wid duh body an sing an pray an keep duh spirit company," said one of them.

Another added, "At duh fewnul we sing an we puts our
[777] hands on duh cawpse tuh say goodbye. It bad luck not tuh do dis." [31]

We had heard in other communities that in case of death away from home the body is brought back to its native town for burial. This custom is also prevalent in Sunbury, we learned.

"Ebrybody wannuh be buried in deah own town," [1] Eliza-
[609] beth said. "An we nebuh bury strainjuhs wid our own folks. Ef a strainjuh die yuh, we bury em in duh strainjuh's lot." [3]

775 Emma Stevens,* tall and slim, a baby in her arms and several small children gathered about her, spoke up, "Yuh got

* *Emma Stevens, Sunbury.*

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285 of large round baskets, about twenty inches in diameter, with matching covers that fitted well down over the rim. Isaac used bulrushes and grasses for his material and worked with a sure deft touch that insured sturdy construction.

533 He remembered that drums had been used for a variety of
534 purposes during his youth. He said, "I use tuh dance tuh duh drum.[33] I recall wen dey beat duh drum tuh call duh
[202] people on Harris Neck tuhgedduh fuh a dance aw fewnul.[36] Cose, dey hab a diffunt beat wen dey call um tuh a settin-up aw fewnul frum duh one dey use tuh call um tuh a dance.
534 Deah wuz two kine uh drum. One dey call duh kittle drum, an one wuz duh bass drum. It stan bout two an a half foot
764 high. Dey use tuh alluz hab a settin-up wen somebody die. Wen folks would go tuh duh settin-up, dey would gib um bread an coffee.[37b, c]

795 "Dey still hole ribbuh baptisms yuh. Dey git tuh duh ribbuh an attuh dey pray an sing up on duh bank, duh
796 preachuh take duh candidates down in duh ribbuh. Fo he
[782] baptize each ub um, he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh an ax fuh all duh sins tuh be wash away."[63]

775 Remembering what we had been told about the haunted road to Maringo, we questioned Isaac and he said, "Yes'm, I hab heah bout duh hanted road tuh Maringo on duh Young Man Road. Lots uh folks say deah is spirits roun deah.[59] Wen yuh try tuh pass duh fawk in duh road, duh spirits stop yuh sometime an wohn let yuh by. Some uh duh spirits mus be good, fuh Ise heahd one story bout a man who wuz passin by an all ub a sudden his hawse jis stop shawt in his tracks. Jis wouldn go anudduh step. Duh man try an try, but he couldn make duh hawse moob. Den he see a spirit come long an it take hole ub duh hawse bridle an lead him long. Duh hawse go right long. Den duh spirit disappeah. I hab heahd lots uh stories bout dat road but uh nebuh see nuttn muhsef."

115 Our next interview was an unusually delightful one. Sit-

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789 juh on em too. They's made of haiah, an nails,[10] an grave-
754 yahd dut,[9] sometimes from pieces of cloth an string. They tie em all up in a lill bag. Some of em weahs it roun the wrist, some of em weahr it roun the neck,[11b] an some weahs a dime on the ankle. Then ef somebody put down cunjuh fuh em it tun black an [12a, c, d] they git anothuh one tuh wawd off the evil.[6] Some of em has a frizzled chicken in the yahd. People do say they kin dig up cunjuh an keep it frum wukin gense yuh.[12a]

754 "Yuh heah all the time bout folks wut is cunjuhed. They gits crippled up an ef they dohn do nuthin bout it, some of em dies."[15]

795 We asked if river baptisms were still held in the section
•796 and Liza answered, "Yes'm, they hole the baptisms right
[783] down yonduh in the rivuh. They always hole em on the ebb tide; that's so the sins be washed away. All the pruhcession mahch down tuh the rivuh. The preachuh leads the way. Fus the preachuh stan on the bank an pray. Then he take
[782] the candidates one by one an dip em in the watuh. Then he
[783] make a prayuh fuh the rivuh tuh wash away the sins.[63] I call that prayuh 'the matrinal.' "

Liza was unable to explain just what this term meant, but she said it was always applied to the prayer to the river.
764 She told us, too, that "settin-ups" were held for those who died and that the mourners sat up all night with the body
[533] and sang and prayed. "In the ole days they always use tuh beat the drum at the funeral an they still does it tuhday. As they take the body tuh the graveyahd, they beat the drum as they move long.[24] They put the body in the grave. Then they mahch roun an sing an beat the drum."

759 We had been told that several midwives rendered services to those residing in the section. We asked Liza about this and she told us, "Anna Johnson, she's my sistuh. She's a midwife an she tends tuh lots of folks roun heah. Those
[755] midwifes sho knows wut tuh do.[48] They use a shahp knife

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764 dey put salt on duh stomach tuh keep it frum purgin. Ebrybody put duh hands on um tuh say good-bye.[31]

[533] "On duh way tuh duh grabe dey beat duh drum as dey is mahchin long.[34] Wen duh body is put in duh grabe, ebrybody shout roun duh grabe in a succle, singin an prayin. Each one trow a hanful uh dut in duh grabe."[33]

527 The conversation shifted to topics of a more cheerful nature and Rachel told us that in former years at harvest time, they had been in the habit of holding "crop suppuhs."[35]

Her face creased itself into a delightful grin and her eyes shone as she told us, "Dat sho wuz a big time. We hab a big feas. All night we shouts an in duh mawnin right at sunrise we pray an bow low tuh duh sun. Muh great-gran—she [782] name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun."

535 Alec's thoughts in the meantime had turned to more trivial affairs. He went on to tell us about the various dances that are popular at the present-day social affairs.

"Cose we do duh Buzzud Lope,"[17] he began. "Ebrybody knows dat. Den we alluz does an' iuh dance. We calls it 'Come Down tuh duh Myuh.' We dance roun an shake duh han an fiddle duh foot. One ub us kneel down in duh middle uh duh succle. Den we all call out an rise an shout roun, an we all fling duh foot agen."

795 In answer to our question about river baptisms the old people informed us that they are still held in the section.
796 Alec described these. "We all sing an pray an duh preachuh pray tuh duh Lord. Cose duh candidate caahn be save less he reely want tuh be. Duh preachuh an duh candidates goes [782] down in duh watuh. Den duh preachuh make a prayuh tuh [783] duh ribbuh an duh ribbuh washes duh sin away."[63]

It is bad luck to eat certain types of food, Rachel told us. 262 This belief had never influenced Rachel or Alec but they 777

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POSSUM POINT

231 hollowed-out log set on legs served as a watering trough for the ox.

764 Susan told us about the death of her mother, Rachel La Conte, who had come from Liberty County. "She die right in dis house. Dey measure uh wid a string. Dey beat duh [533] drum tuh tell ebrybody bout duh settin-up.[26] We all set [202] up wid duh body. We hab a big wash pot full uh coffee an hab a big sack uh soda crackuh fuh duh folks.[27b, c] Ebrybody place dey han bery light on uh eahs an on uh nose an den dey say, 'Dohn call me. I ain ready fuh tuh go yit.' [30, 31]

"We bury uh by tawch light attuh dahk. Ebrybody [782] mahch roun duh grabe in a succle. Ebry night attuh duh [795] fewnul I put food on duh poach fuh duh spirit tuh come git it.[54, 55]

533 "In duh ole days dey beat duh drum tuh call duh people
534 tuh duh fewnul.[24] Dey beat it slow—boom—boom—boom.
202 Wen dey wannuh stuhrup duh folks fuh a dance aw frolic, dey beats duh drum fas. Den dey knows it ain fuh no fewnul an dat it's fuh a good time. Duh people neahby, wen dey heahs it, beats deah drum an das how dey sends a message so udduh folks gits it.[26]

534 "I kin membuh two kine uh drum. Deah wuz duh lill kittle drum. Hit wuz bout fifteen inches cross an tree an a half foot high. Dat wuz duh drum dey beat fuh a settin-up."

795 Susan, too, gave us a description of the river baptisms. "Dey baptize in duh watuh down at duh landin. All duh [792] candidates is dressed in wite. Dey all confess deah sins an [783] say dey want tuh be save.

"We all mahch long in a line an sing an pray. Wen we
795 git tuh duh ribbuh bank, we stop an duh preachuh say a long
796 prayuh tuh duh Lawd. Den duh preachuh take duh candi-
[782] dates one by one and dey go down in duh ribbuh. Duh
[783] preachuh he say a prayuh tuh duh ribbuh. Dey alluz bap-

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
(533)

There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up con-
jure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Afri-
cans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus
O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He
call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm
fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the
grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a
small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-
five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline
features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
the things of which she had heard him speak.

829 "He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey
gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh
forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink
in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
782 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an
829 bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she
say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud
she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz
'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen,
ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson
bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab
somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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535 point Aunty Jane rose to give us an exhibition of two dances, the Buzzard Lope and the Snake Hip.[17]

361 Across the highway from Aunty Jane's settlement, about one mile north of Darien, back of a turpentine still, is an irregular settlement of small houses, most of which are enclosed by high dilapidated paling fences. Here Wallace 115 Quarterman * occupied a cabin with his daughter, Abby Gibson. Wallace was old but with a clear mind, and he enjoyed a high standing in his community. We felt that he would know about the old beliefs and customs.

[361] We left the highway on a narrow dirt road, little more than a path through the bush, and after much winding in [351] and out we came upon a street of Negro cabins with their enclosed yards, vegetable patches, and tumbled down sheds. Wallace was sitting on the porch of Abby's house. Lizzie Sanders volunteered to be our guide and paid a visit to Wallace along with us.

We asked him how old he was and where he was born.

"Ise bawn July 14, 1844. Now figguh dat out fuh yuhsef, missus. Ise bawn at Sout Hampton, Libuty County, an [567] I belong tuh Roswell King, but he done die long bout sometime in duh fifties an Ise sole fuh debt tuh Cunl Fred Waring on Skidaway Ilun. Ise bin bout fifteen wen I sen tuh Skidaway."

124 For a long time we had wanted to establish some connection with Skidaway Island that reached back before the War between the States. We questioned Wallace about the church on Skidaway.

• 796 "We sho did hab big time goin tuh chuch in doze days. Not many uh deze Nigguhs kin shout tuhday duh way us [534] could den. Yuh needs a drum fuh shoutin."

We asked if they shouted to a drum then.

534 "We sho did. We beat a drum at duh chuch an we beat a 533 drum on duh way tuh duh grabeyahd tuh bury um. We 764

* *Wallace Quarterman, Darien. Deceased autumn, 1938.*

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793 from the draught. This was Preacher Little who, we were
794 afterwards told, was an itinerant preacher, not a native to
(292) the island but a type native to the district.

•796 His text, read in a loud, commanding voice, was "You ah
537 the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savory, where-
with shall it be salt; it is then no good and should be trompled
intuh earth." The exposition of this pronouncement was
awaited with breathless interest.

The sermon that followed, however, was in no way connected with the text. Preacher Little divided his sermon into three parts and lectured his congregation on "straying frum duh paat." What he said was not really coherent. Words stood out, phrases rang in our ears, quotations from the Bible resounded at random but that was the beginning and the end. The impelling element was the sound of Preacher Little's voice.

796 In each part he began slowly, quietly, persuading and rea-
786 soning with his congregation. His voice would carry a
pleading question to them and they would answer, "Huh."[29]
As he progressed, the quiet reasoning diminished; he shouted to his listeners. The "Huh—Huh's" became loud, guttural, vibrating grunts that echoed through the little building. Regular stamping of the feet began; the vibration penetrated into every corner. It was impossible not to think of the beating of the drum. The regular rhythmic, swelling noise was deafening. It meant agreement with Preacher Little. It urged him on to greater heights until his shouting voice not only seemed to fill the church but to reverberate from wall to wall. This climax was reached three times, at the end of each of the three parts of the sermon. Each time it seemed to act as a great emotional purge to the listeners and leave them happily exhausted.

796 When the sermon ended, spirituals were sung under the
able direction of a young Negro named George Smith.* The
533

* *George Smith, Sapelo Island and Brunswick.*

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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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821 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to
•796 the sun.

764 Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the
[825] coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[38]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

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829 ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh
[567] wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

759 Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

759 "Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He
754 kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody.
789 Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

829 Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

534 Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of
535 the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey
533 ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way
[764] tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin
[795] den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize
[796] em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh
[783]

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[63] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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858 Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the
[581] couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized re-
(847) gardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a
592 young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new
855 one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the
887 care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some chil-
855 dren are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is per-
848 haps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of
855 wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

795 The church is probably the most important social organization in
• 796 the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus
779 based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in
794 the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. Ac-
775 cording to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul
794 returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body
[170] and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their mas- [567] ters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal indus- [874] trial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

•796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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793 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can
537 arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the
area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to
•796 keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when
young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhet-
orical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essen-
[871] tial characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does
not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island minis-
ters have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and
surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For ex-
ample, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the
classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he
makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, master-
fully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

Heavenly Father
[539] Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing.
533 It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a
good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives.
[793] Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their
gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought
[794] to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit,
which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in
turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of
despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services sing-
ing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the
[786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking
and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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starts slowly and softly, gradually increasing in tempo while the shouters strive to keep up with it; it becomes louder and faster until they are totally spent.

The call-and-response style is still the tradition of worship in Sea Island churches, just as it is in most southern black churches. The minister calls out a statement, and the congregation repeats it or gives a rhythmic and raucous reply. Though many of the men act as responders to the ministers, few shout or become "happy" as many of the women do. However, those who do join in the movements of the shout do so with considerable zeal. These frenzied shouts are related to the practices of certain African religious cults.[55] In 1904 a woman wrote of her encounters with the spirituals and shouts of the Sea Islands and asked an inhabitant what explained them. The respondent replied that when the preacher read from the Bible how those "dry bones ter lib ergin," something deep within her would come to life and she would begin to holler and sing some old "shout" song from Africa.[56] I observed similar call-and-response services in Nigeria: though I could not always understand what was being said in the language of the service, I found that I could nevertheless join in singing the reply.

Today there are many customs and practices unique to the Sea Islands and to parts of Africa which offer investigators rich insights into African and African-American traditions. The Sea Island language and oral literature did not develop and survive apart from the social and cultural environment which produced them. The extended family household and the Sea Island burial customs, religious beliefs, and styles of worship are no less evidence of African roots and preservations than is the language itself. As long as these roots remain viable, the Sea Island people will maintain their cultural integrity; only when such traditional roots die will their culture die. I hope that an awareness of these influences upon the culture will aid in understanding the African influences upon the language and literature discussed in the following chapters.

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538 not only on the children but on the adults who often came to visit her as
115 well. Many times the children sat with their eyes glued to her face or staring dazed into the fire, hypnotized by the slow, steady rhythm of her voice unfolding the bizarre events of her tale. At times, her voice became so low, and she paused so long, that some of the younger children stirred, and the older ones lashed out in anger at them for disturbing the chilling mood that had been created. In tales of hags, ghosts, and other strange happenings, the audience did not usually respond quickly as they did with other, less suspenseful, tales, primarily because topics such as these were not taken lightly by the is-
[M1] landers. Many are staunch believers in hags, ghosts, voodoo, and the occult. Thus tales of this kind were told not only for entertainment but to inform or to reaffirm the listeners' belief in the existence of these seen and unseen forces rampant throughout the islands and the universe.

538 Furthermore, such grave topics often had an aesthetic appeal somewhat different from that of funny or historical tales. The audience was not lively, loud, or as energetic as it would be when listening to the exploits of Ber Rabbit. Witty stories are deserving of spirited and excited responses. In listening to tales of the supernatural, the audience tended to be not only quiet but filled with awe and reverence, even more for one who knew of such things by firsthand experience than for the topic itself. There was some verbal interplay between Miss Deeley and her audience, but it was much more subdued than even in prayers
[M4] and sermons. In prayers and sermons the audience is expected to par-
[M6] ticipate openly in the event. People are free to speak as loud and become as verbally unrestrained as they want "when the spirit hits them." In listening to tales like Miss Deeley's, the audience was restrained both by the subject and by the speaker's use of a lowered, even whispered, tone to help create an eerie effect; many times the listeners had to strain to hear every word. As a result, most displays from the audience were in the form of low moans ("ummmm . . . uh") or an occasional "yeah, man," "shonuf so" or "where you de say you see em?" In these narratives—especially where a story was felt to have an actual basis in fact—the listeners' questions were not rhetorical, and the speaker took time out from the events of the tale to answer them.

159 Miss Deeley was one of the few informants who still included
533 songs in some of the tales told. Songs are an inherent part of most West
538 African stories, and of stories told throughout the Caribbean, because

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## A Sermon

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538

For true, the Lord ben give em silver trumpet,
and he shonuf know how for blow em!

The Reverend Renty Pinckney is minister of New Jerusalem AME Church on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina. His sermon is not presented in its entirety here, because it is very long. The Reverend Mr. Pinckney, like most island ministers, has memorized the Bible thoroughly; his creativity is revealed by his ability to join scattered allusions into a cohesive whole.[23]

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796

### The Bread of Life

Rev. Renty Pinckney
New Jerusalem AME Church
Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina
July 1980

God is the Bread of Life
God will feed you when you get hungry *Oh yes! I know he will. All right! Yeah. Amen! Yes sir!*

Look on the mountain
Beside the hill of Galilee *My Lord!*

Watch his disciple
Riding on the sea *Yeah! Uh huh!*

Tossing by the wind and rain *Yeah. Come up*

Going over the sea of temptation *Uh hum*

Brother, I don't know
But I begin to think
In this Christian life *Yes!*

Sometime you gone be toss *Yes, yeah!*

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53 By the wind of life *Yes, my Lord!*
•796 The wind gonna blow you
From one side to the other *Yes!*

On this Christian journey

The way ain't gone be easy on us children *No!*

And the disciple as they was going across *Oh yes sir! Yeah.*

The wind was tossing
As they was going over to Cana *All right! Uh hum*

The King was on the safe [same] side
To the Sea of Galilee *All right*

To the land Gothen
It was so sufficient size
To be call a city *Yeah, right! Yeah*
It was close to the seashore *Shore. Yes*

One half mile long
Quarter of a mile wide *Yes sir!*

Brother, I know
Jesus would be so glad *So pleased!*

There he was among them
Brothren of our Lord
And his disciple *Yes! Yes sir. Oh yes*

The Gospel!
Of John was formed in writing *Writing*

Jesus was towhead *All right*

They begin to wonder brother *Yeah!*
How is this could be *Yeah!*
We left him on the other shore *Yeah*
But this morning we are here *Yes, here. My Lord!*

Jesus don't have a boat *Boat.*

Don't have a airplane *Ah hah! Yeah!*

Here he are on the bank this morning *Yes sir*

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Yea God! *Yeah God! Amen!*

What a fortune
All the power in he hand *Oh Yeah!*
Got power for we *Yeah*
When we get hungry *Yeah*
He's able to feed us *Yes sir*

O Lordy!
Come to tell you children *Yes!*
Jesus! is the Bread of Life *Jesus!*

My brothren *My God!*
Come to him *All right!*
Come to him *Yeah!*
He feed you when you get hungry *All right. Oh yeah!*

He will be on the ark *Yeah!*

Yea God! *My God*

Upon the montain someone said
Jesus said *Yeah!*

If you come to me
I'll give you water *Water*

In dry land *Dry land!*

O Lordy!
Jesus is the Bread of Life *Yes!*

How do you know *Uh huh!*

He's the Bread of Life? *Yeah!*

When he begins to speak *Yeah!*

He's the Bread of Life, brothren *Yeah!*

O Lordy!
I begin to think back *Yeah!*

In Moses time
when he said *Yeah!*

God feed them *Oh yeah!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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53
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With manna from on heaven
My brother! *All right, yeah!*

I was out in the wilderness
Didn't had nothing to eat *Uh huh*

God feed them *My Lord!*

With manna from on high *Yes!*

To stop a little while

(Pause)

I be able to preach for you *Yeah! All right*

If you feed me with that bread *Yeah! All right*

I be able to call him *Yeah*

If you feed me with that bread *Yes*

O Lordy! *Oh Lord!*

I be able to book up *Yeah! All right*

Pick up my brother *Yes!*

Who is down in the ditch this morning *Oh yeah!*

If you feed me this morning *Yes! Lord*

I be able to call *Yeah Lord*

The lost sinner home *Yeah!*

O Lordy!
Jesus!
Is the Bread of Life *Yeah*

God knows
Somebody look *Yes*

Back in space of time *Yes!*

Saw Jesus
Coming through
Seventy-two generations *Yes. Uh huh*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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53
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One said
When he look at Jesus *Oh yes!*

Yea God! *Yea God!*

His feet *All right*

Look like polish brass *Yeah!*

Eye look
Like a consuming fire *Consuming fire*

Hair look
Like lamb wool *Lamb wool*

Pressing the wine press *Yeah!*

All by himself *By himself*

Coming down to the gate *Yeah!*

To let you and I
Have a right *Right*

To the Tree of Life
O Lordy! *Oh Lordy!*

Jesus is alive *All right!*

My brothers *Yes!*

When I get hungry *Ah yeah!*

My soul get hungry
I go to Him *Yeah. All right!*

And say unto Him *Yeah. That's right!*

God I want you
Feed me with the Bread of Life *Yes!*

Feed me *Feed me!*

Til I want no more *Want no more!*

Then at last *At last!*

In this old world *Yes! This old world. Thank you! At last. Yes sir. Step right on up. All right*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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(Long pause)

Brother, I don't know about you, friend *Yes*

But I begin to sing *Yeah!*

Deep down in my heart *All right! Sir!*

But Jesus is the Bread of Life *Uh huh! All right*

Great God! *Yes!*

Some how *Some how. Yeah!*

Some way *Some way!*

That same Jesus *That same Jesus!*

One day *Yes!*

I Look down *Yes sir! Yeah!*

Into the old pit *All right!*

A little wretch
Like me was
My brother *Yeah!*

Stoop down *Stoop down!*

And lift me up *Lift me up!*

Take my feet
Out of the mucky mire *Yeah!*

Climb up on
Rock of eternal ages
Establish my goings *Yeah! Yeah!*

Say unto me *Amen!*

I want you *All right!*

To go out into the world *Yeah!*

Tell man and women *Yeah!*

I said
I was dead
But I'm alive, brothren *I'm alive!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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53
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Tell them I said *Yeah. All right!*

When they get hungry *Yeah!*

If they would come to me *Yeah!*

I would feed them *I will feed them. Yes!*

Tell them I said *Yes*

When they get lonely
Don't have a friend *A friend*

I will be a friend for them *Yeah*

Tell them I said *Yeah*

When all bodies *Yeah*
Walk off from them
And put he name on every milepost *Oh Lord!*

I'll be right there with them *Yeah!*

Tell them I said *Yeah! Yeah!*

When mother, father
Forsake you *Oh yeah*

I be by your side *By your side*

O Lordy!
And when you come *Come, Jesus!*

To the end of your journey *Yeah!*

And you are weary *Weary!*

Of life my brother *Yeah!*

Old battle is won *Won!*

I'll be right there *Be right there!*

When the time come
My God almighty! *My Lord*

Gonna call the Angel *Yeah!*

Take care *Oh yeah!*

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I want you to
Stand around *Oh yeah!*

The throne this morning *Oh yes*

Want you to sing *Yeah!*

As you ever sing before
Somebody who will come out *Yeah!*

From Jerusalem *Yeah!*

Crying out
I know *All right!*

Back yonder *Yonder*

In yonder world *Yonder world*
I cry some Sunday

A charge *Jesus! A charge I have! Right*

To glorify *Glorify!*
My brother *My brother!*

I don't know
But I look across
In the amen corner *Corner*

See somebody *Yeah!*

Who cry out
One day *Yeah!*

I saw the lighthouse *Yeah! Oh yeah*

O Lordy! *My Lord*

I wanna be there! *Oh yeah!*

I wanna be there! *Oh yeah! Oh yeah!*

I wanna be there! *Oh yes! I wanna be there!*

Over yonder

(Long pause)

I wanna view the beauty land
Where God eternal glory *Eternal glory!*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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53 Where all wicked *Wicked*

• 796 Shall cease *Cease, cease! Yes Lord!*

All weary soul *All weary soul!*

Shall be at rest *Rest!*

Jesus said
I am the Bread *I am the Bread. The Bread. I am the Bread*
Of Life

Let us Pray *All right! Yes sir! Yes Lord! Let us pray!*

. . . . . .

538 Gullah Tales Exemplifying Audience Participation

(524) RIDDLER: Round like a top. Deep like a cup.
Mississippi river ain't full em up!

RESPONDENT: A sifter (strainer)

The reply from the audience is as germane to the Sea Island tales as it is to the prayers and sermons. However, the relaxed social atmosphere in which tales are told permits more exchange between speaker and listener than does the more orthodox surroundings of the prayers and sermons. The storytellers are not set apart from the group by a sacred podium or some other feature used to separate participating service members from the rest of the group. The listeners are therefore free to inject words and phrases, utter clarifying remarks, make gestures, or even help the teller along with his tale if appropriate. These interactions are very subtle and in no way interfere with the performance of a good tale. Likewise, no good tale can be told without the responses of an active audience, and no good tale can be told without the traditional "warming" period to create the right atmosphere. Like the prayers and sermons, the tales are usually preceded—if there is an audience present to act as respondents—by songs, spiritual or otherwise, and then by games, riddles, jokes, and dozens. As previously mentioned, the friendly teasing relaxes the audience and serves the same purpose as the *akuko eji awake nti* in Igbo: it prepares the group

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178 There is continuity, too, in the religious services. Worship is
771 shared with others who appreciate the place of religious exercises in
the traditional structure of beliefs and values. The services continue to
796 be alive, energetic, and thoroughly enjoyable. Sermons and prayers
[173] are still passed on orally from one generation to the next, rather than
written down. The sermons are delivered by ministers who are natives
[193] of the island area, who speak the language, and who value the old
traditions.

178 Basketry and marketing remain important, for two reasons. They
have economic significance, but pride has also become a factor. The
285 children learning the basket traditions now are being told that the pat-
terns they are weaving repeat not only the patterns woven by their
grandparents but those of their African ancestors before them.

178 Fishing and netting continue to provide livelihoods for many,
though they are endangered by development and pollution of the wa-
226 ters. The islanders are "river and ocean" people. They gauge their
[821] workdays by the sun and by the ebb and flow of the tides. Some con-
tinue to use the marsh mud to fertilize their gardens. Others go to the
[823] banks of the ocean recesses to sit, fish, and tell tales of Ber Rabbit,
[538] tales often so vivid that many of the children swear they have actually
seen him bounding down the island paths. The fishing techniques and
[461] the love and respect for the ocean are being passed on to the children
[867] along with the tales, myths, lies, and legends of island life.
[868] The folklore and literature of the Sea Islands, unsurprisingly, are
more alive on the remote islands than on the more commercialized
178 ones. Though television, with its cartoon characters and talking pic-
538 tures, is an arch rival for even the most gifted teller, on stormy days
[207] and dark, gloomy nights no one is permitted to watch television be-
cause the islanders believe that it draws electricity and increases the
possibility that their homes could be struck by lightning. During these
times the children are gathered and told tales of Ber Rabbit, hants,
ghosts, witches, and hags, and no television program can hold an au-
dience as spellbound as some of the island storytellers.

178 Gullah, the island language, is being affected by population
changes, television, and the schools. Children are seldom named after
197 days of the week any more, but most are still given two names: one to
[551] use at school and one to use at home. Many of the words familiar to the
older generations are not being passed on to the children because the
[192] islanders, like most parents, want their children to attain good educa-

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175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she had the following dialogue:
567

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and
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witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She noticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but Maurice's story was a tragic one: 175 771 779 796

His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' rationalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ, were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival. 175 771 779

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative inclinations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by General David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much: 175 771 177 [701]

We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

175 794 567 779 [779] [171]

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

175 567 794 796 [797]

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175 569 794 796 797

At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other [154] things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner.

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, [533] while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38]

175 569 796 786 535 533

Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

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Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

175 794 796 (869)

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

175 796

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

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000 African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[43] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty
• 796 years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island
786 blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have
787 been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved
794 "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church
[795] that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The
[533] three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

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or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters: 796 786 787 794 533

Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs: 154 796 175 796 567

The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

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175 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor.
•796 The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood
567 was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been
[786] singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[43]

771 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of com-
567 munal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plan-
177 tation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spir-
[178] itual and communal sense. By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

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114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of the older folk material. Each of these projects brought a complex mixture of success and problems and a renewed determination to keep trying.

131 For generations the Johns Island people were
133 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat un-
[491] til the early part of the century, when bridges and causeways connecting it with the mainland began to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these de-
177 scendants of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect, Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals and hymns and a local "praise house" form of worship.

344 Old and new institutions existed side by side. For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered clapboard building—had been the central meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a "tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge, and a community of worship. Here the members
• [786] could express themselves freely and fully; in the Sunday night worship service each person took a turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Meth-
794 odist Church, where a number of these same peo-
346 ple attended regular Sunday services. Here the old folk ways were gradually being replaced by more formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
796 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
533 Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a month when he preached in other churches, the congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
(344) and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
(794) to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
(795) pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people will take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
474 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
(443) a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
(529) It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
(872) on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
(666) (p.xii-B) cation and voter registration.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SHOUTING FOR A BETTER DAY

796 533 786 Every Sunday night these people have meeting at Moving Star Hall. Every December 24th they have what we call a Christmas watch night meeting, and every December 31st, a New Year's watch. They sing from twelve o'clock until day clean.

They know the tune, they're ready to shout. They're giving praise to the great Supreme Being who have stood by them in the past days from slavery up to this present. Just to hear these songs remind us of our hardship. Those songs are the ones that made them happy, made them go through those hard days—the days when they didn't have a place to live of their own, didn't have a piece of land of their own, and were living on a plantation.

786 796 These people are hard-pressed people, and they are optimistic enough to believe that there are better days coming. When they get into these religious shouts, they feel so happy until that's all they can do but shout. The motions go into the hands and into the feet and they start clapping, and you can't keep them sitting—not when they start clapping, brother. They feel so happy 'til they got to shout. People sixty years and seventy years old clap and shout and jump all over the floor without falling down.

786 796 154 These people are trying to satisfy themselves, satisfy their soul. It's the only place they could be happy because life is so hard and sometimes there are any number of persons who do not know where the next meal is coming from. They can't talk back if they go on the farm regardless of how mean they were treated. Sometime their task they had was overburdening: Sometimes somebody watching them that they didn't have a chance even to stoop. They sometimes sad. But they're trying to get rid of it. If you could come and see them how they look when they singing and shouting, you can see they singing for a better day, shouting for a better day. And that's the thing that make them keep on shouting.

*Mr. John Smalls*

## ANYTIME YOU COME, YOU IS IN

796 786 We don't charge nothing to come in Moving Star Hall. Moving Star Hall are free, and the door are open for each and every one. Whether you are white, whether you are dark like myself, or different color, come in. If you can preach, come on. We all preach. Don't say, no, you can't come up to this table. You can preach, pray, or testify. If you want speak, anything you want say, you got the opportunity—we give it to you.

'Cause we know we are in God hand. God made *all* of us. Don't make a few and somebody else made some; God made all. So I am happy to meet you all.

I hear the white madam say a while ago she glad we let 'em come in. "No, don't worry with that, Madam. Anytime you come, you is in. Bring friend, whatever; you's in." So sing, shout, get happy. But don't fall out!

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*Mr. James Mackey*

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## SHOUT

That's so much the most thing I could do—shout. I'll tell you, with the spirit of God, you don't care what pain you got. You forget about that when you shout. When I going out, I feel so painful I scarcely don't go. But I say to myself, just as well if I go now, 'cause will come a day when the limbs fail me.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL

The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters; some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house--only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 869

Used to be plenty people there--all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 553

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week--Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

142 291 796 532 786 794

[p. 94]

*Mr. John Smalls*

## EVERYBODY HAS A TURN

794 796 In the meeting, Brother Joe Deas, he are the oldest person in there, we takes him for the leading man. We put him in the front to take the text. Then take myself, I follow. Then whosoever I wanted to assist—Eli Smith or any other leader. And we go on that way. Everybody has a turn.

We have prayer service the first Sunday night in the month; and the second Sunday night let the brothers preach; then the third Sunday night we let the sisters testify; then we go right back on the fourth Sunday night the brothers will preach again. We used to had it just how it come. We feel like prayer meeting tonight, we have that. But later days, we decided we would mark it out, that every person would know where he going.

That way we trying to do it now. Brother Deas takes the text, when is preaching night, and the boys supposed to preach from that text he give you. You can go preach anywhere you want to preach, but you come right back to that same text.

(533) Any individual, soon as the man finish preach, if you wanted to raise a song, you raise it. And another way, anytime we call someone up to preach, if anybody want to sing for you, can sing you up there. Then one can sing you down. Anybody. They can't sing long as you're talking; wait 'til you finish talk.

539 796 *Mr. John Smalls*

## TURN THESE BIG FISH LOOSE

Now friends, we still moving on.
I'm not going to linger with you
'Cause I want to turn these big fish loose.

Brother Deas will come and set the foundation,
The road we going to travel by,
That all of you could know the way to go.

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*Mr. Joe Deas*

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## TONIGHT YOU GOT A BLESSED CHANCE

I thank you for this great privilege I have before you.
You know from last January '64, I didn't have to been here.
My face could have been under the clay.
But at this same particular hour I have a chance
To rub shoulder to shoulder with you,
I can speak language to language,
I can look face to face.
It is a great joy.

Now we started on a new task, started a new race.
From the twenty-fifth morning we been running,
We been wrastling to behold this very hour of the night.
How many haven't lived to been able to see the day?
Some gone by car,
Some pass away with fire,
Some gone by water.

All part of the world is stirred up now.
Tonight you got a blessed chance to go to the house of God.
Some want to come out tonight and can't come,
And some can come that wouldn't come.
But the day will come.
The day will come.

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

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## YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF

You can feel yourself in that hall. You have a chance to explain yourself —anybody who want to. But in church on Sunday, we just have one preacher talk. And you might get a chance to raise a song or pick out one person to make a few remarks. But to that hall, everybody could have they way, tell your own story. That's the difference it makes.

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*Mr. John Smalls*

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## GOOD MORNING WARRIORS

Good morning Warriors!
How y'all feel?
I'm feeling special alive.

I just rise to tell you all my aim
And whole heart's desire.
My desire is to go the whole way.
I give thanks for being brought
Not from just last December
But from an infant birth.

I can say, "Are we yet alive
To see each other's face."
Thank God for His redeeming grace.

Since last January
Rocky was my road,
Tedious was my journey.
What troubles have I seen,
What conflicts have I passed.

If I had ten thousand tongues
It wouldn't be enough
To give thanks to Thee
Who took my feet out of the miry clay
And put them on a solid rock.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

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## A SERMON: LET NOT THEM THAT EAT DESPISE

I'm not gonna tarry before you, Warriors. I'm glad to be here to mingle my voice among my sisters and brothers. I hope and trust that if this sermon don't do you any good, I hope it won't do you no harm.

You know you can go from one part of the Bible to the other. God say we should love one another. Let not them that eat despise them that eat not. Let us remember one another. Don't let us be like Dives now. Let us try to be just as Lazarus. Dives despised the poor. Lazarus went and ask just for a crumb that fall from the table, and before Dives had the passion on him to give, he call the dog on him. But the poor beast have compassion and lick Lazarus.

Time going pass and go on. Time come along when the poor man die. He went on home to God and been at rest. Rich man Dives die, and his home was in Hell. When he lift up his eye in Hell and saw Lazarus in Heaven, he began to memorize. He know he didn't do right, but he cries, "Oh Father, let Lazarus come and dip his finger in the water and cool my trials and trouble."

God says, "No. You had all the good times, plenty of money. You didn't need Lazarus at that time. You need him now, but it too late."

Dives say, "I got five brother. Just give me a chance that I may go back and tell them to get their heart right, that they may shun this torment place I'm in."

And He say, "No. I got Moses and I got the prophets; let them hear what they say. If they don't believe the prophets, they won't believe you, Dives."

Pray for me, Warriors. Let us sing like we singing for the last time. Let us pray like we are praying for the last time. Take no thought for tomorrow, for tomorrow the sun may shine on your grave. Jesus told us to dig deep and lay your foundation on a solid rock, that when the storm of life blow against you, you're gonna find your Father rock. If you dwell upon Him, everythin' will be all right. The world can't do you no harm.

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Mrs. Dorthy Jones

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# I DON'T KNOW HOW FAR I'M GOING

Good morning, Warriors,
I'm sitting down right now,
I feel like singing and shouting, Jesus,
But I got to be very careful.
I don't know how far in '65 I'm going,
For my heart pump me from one side to the other,
And then it hurt me from one side to the other.
I don't know when my awful day will surely come
And then my appointed hour.

I can say this new brand morning
In another January,
"Are we yet alive to see each other's face."
Oh glory, and praise Jesus,
Give us of His dying and redeeming grace.
I know from last January,
Many days have I looked up on the highway
Wondering which way I must go.
Lord, you know I thank you for this hour of
The morning.
For I know it's none of my goodness,
I know if justice had plumb the line
All my daily travels would have cut off
And then never no more return.

If I shall cut off from God
I don't want to have no gathering to do.
I want to live so that I shall pass from
Life unto death.
I don't know if I going to be in my bed,
And then I don't know if I going to be on the highway.
I know this hour of the morning
I got peace with everybody,
And then I got peace
With all my neighbors' children.
I can say this hour of the morning,
I am just what I am.

Thank you, Jesus,
I don't know how far I'm going,
Got a pain racking the body right now.
And then I got to be very careful, Jesus.
I ask you all to pray for me
So I may be able to run on.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter and the Moving Star Hall congregation*

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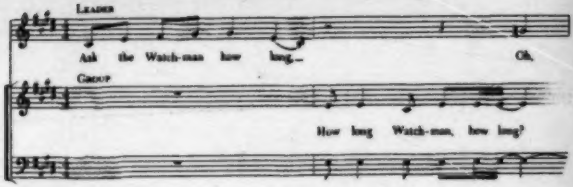
**ASK THE WATCHMAN HOW LONG**




Leader: Oh ask my brother how long,
Group: How long Watchman, how long?

In sixty-four how long? . . . etc.
Well, ask my daughter how long . . . etc.
Well, ask my preacher how long . . . etc.

Oh all my neighbors, how long? . . . etc.

Oh before the roll call . . . etc.
Oh just a few more risings . . . etc.
Oh ask my leader how long . . . etc.

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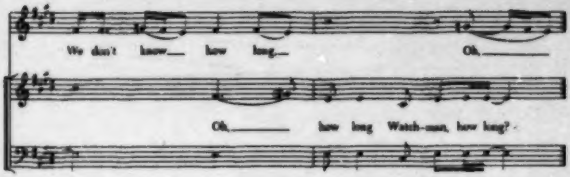


Well, all my neighbors how long? . . . etc.

Oh soon it will be over . . . etc.
Watchman, how long? . . . etc.
You know how long, how long . . . etc.
Ask my friends how long . . . etc.

Brother Jenkins, how long? . . . etc.

Oh, how long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?
How long, how long,
How long Watchman, how long?

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN?
South Carolina
Johns Island

REV. JAMES CRAW

## GET ON YOUR HOLY HORSE

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Be careful, my friends, because sometimes the
Chairman of Hell begin to saddle up his pony.
He gonna override somebody.
You walk down the road
And somehow your feet begin to be tangled.
The road become rocky, hard to cross.

Hallelujah, my friends,
Put on your travelin' shoes.
Get on your holy horse
Because sin are now pressing hard,
Many dangers follow.

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[P-88]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 582 (869) There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 796 786 (078) We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

159 771 178 889 794 796 For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. James Mackey*

**MORNING**

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Here am I again once more, Heavenly Father,
The worm of the dust
Ready to bow this hour of the morning
On my bruised and bending knee.
Thank you, My Father, for your guardin' angel,
That guard me all night long
Until morning light appear.
And before he went from his watch,
He touch my eyes this morning with a finger of love,
And my eye become open
And behold a brand new Monday morning.
Oh, God, if you so please
Give us that holding out spirit,
That you may own us all
When we done trod across the many street of Charleston.
Oh God, what I say for our neighbors,
And the neighbors' children around in this vicinity,
Oh please, Our Father,
Make them more patient, more acknowledge,
May we love each and one another.
Help us to help each other.
And each other's cross to bear.
And Our Father, if you please,
Remember the President of this United States,
Oh, remember the officials.
And Our Father, once more I say
For the President of the N.A.A.C.P.,
Throw thy arms of protection around them,
May they achieve victory in whatever they may undertake to do.
Lead them, Our Father,
Through the unfriendly world where there's no friendly grace.
We know we must fight to increase our courage
That we may be able to endure the pain.
I ask you to please remember mankind far away,
Whatever his town may be.
Make him realize, that awful day will surely come.
And then have mercy, My Father,
When I done walk the last mile of the way,
Done all that you 'signed my hand to do,
When I shall come down off the stage of action,
Must surrender under the black banner of Death.
Ask you, Jesus, give me a resting place
Somewhere in your Kingdom
Which Job declare
The wicked cease from troubling.
Amen.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 91]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1969
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 794 In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs. (796) (888)

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

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I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

794 533 796 It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through, when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 794 178 It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying. That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 221]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[p. 222]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. A. C. Jenkins*

## ANY MINISTER WHO DOESN'T TAP INTO THOSE DEEP FEELINGS WILL NOT SURVIVE HERE

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I want to bring a world view into the church—a view that includes justice and liberation in Latin America and in South Africa. My challenge is to make it real to the people on Johns Island, and if it is real for them, they want to shout about it. The way I can touch those feelings is to end my sermon with the words to one of the old songs.

Any minister who doesn't tap into those deep feelings will not survive here. The people will go elsewhere. I love serving on Johns Island. Before I was here I was at an elite church in Charleston. Amens were few due to a different worship experience.

*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## I TAKE MY TAPE RECORDER TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

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I enjoy the older people. I'm always around them, and I talk with them often. I enjoy the singing. In fact I take my tape recorder to church every Sunday, hoping for one of the old spirituals raised from the floor. Then I play them all through the week on my stereo here or in my car. It's very uplifting. I don't miss any opportunity I get to hear the older people sing. To me, that's pride. I really enjoy listening to them and I think it's great that they have managed to preserve that aspect of our history.

I'm afraid that eventually after all these people are gone that the younger people will not feel as comfortable carrying on. I wish it wouldn't happen, though.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## A LOT OF PEOPLE MISS IT

344 We don't have class meeting in the hall anymore. I miss it. We don't have
346 it now because all these young preachers have everything to the church.
796 What are a few people going to do in a big old church like that? If the people
178 turn out, it never be too large. I like to go to the hall cause you can have your way. You can exercise better. You can feel yourself. You can do the same thing in the church, but the church so big.

178 We used to have watch meeting on Christmas night. We turn out in the
796 hall and be there until sunrise. On New Year's, people go all night and be there til New Year roll in. We pray and sing until New Year roll in, then they go to preaching. And about five or six o'clock, then the ladies take over to testify. You don't find that now. Some people can't even say their prayers.

A lot of people miss it. These people is too funny. I can't figure how people could change so fast. Everybody go down to the church. They have watch meeting there, but they don't go but half the night. The hall go until day broad clean. Sometime people shout there until eight or nine o'clock in the morning. We have crowd from all different place—Wadmalaw and Mt. Pleasant and James Island. Ooh man, that hall is packed.

484 It's too dangerous now to walk to the hall at night. You don't find nobody
674 walking this road no more. It's not the cars only, people do wicked. People
178 will kill you and knock you down and do all kind of thing with you, no, no. When you see my door shut, it's shut. I don't come out.

The people don't have no old songs now, the people have new songs. And
178 I don't know one of them. When they start to sing, I just shut my mouth.
533 Nothing but new songs now. Ain't got a taste to it. Ain't got a spirit in it. But when the old people used to start to sing those old songs, and it's time to go to church, man, you run.

512 505 (574) neighbor in the hospital of a nearby town. Young men sometimes go across the water again for recreation in town. Young women usually cannot drive either a boat or a car and are dependent upon some male family member for transportation if they wish to go into town for similar reasons. Electricity 365 came to the island in 1964 and changed the habits of the islanders considerably. Today television provides a major 207 517 source of recreation for most families in the evenings. Children of ten and eleven watch it many hours in the afternoons and evenings. 206 Telephones have been available since 1972. Some children engage in frequent and lengthy conversations with their mainland friends after school. A new boat 504 landing is scheduled for completion in 1977, which will be 505 large enough to accommodate a ferry. With its completion, reliance on small motor boats will be phased out and mainlanders will have easier access to the island. When the ferry becomes operational, it is probable that the community will become much less of a closed community in important ways.

512 Weekends are reserved for the major social activities of the community. Saturdays are devoted to shopping for (438) (574) major supplies in town, or for entertaining mainland visitors and relatives. The major social event of the week is the 512 Sunday morning church service. Most islanders walk two or • 796 three miles to the major church at the center of the island. (493) A few families keep four-wheeled vehicles on the island, and 491 older residents ride in these. Roads on the island are sandy

491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
• 796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
511 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
888 ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
538 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[157] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
[166] time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

000 -13% of its residents.

SEA ISLAND RELIGION

795 794 The most dominant institution in Sea Island society is the church. There are numerous churches on each island. These churches are Protestant in denomination and are about equally divided among Methodist and Baptist congregations. These congregations may have as few as forty or as many as two hundred members. Each congregation supports the operational expenses and contributes to the maintenance of the church facility. Ordinarily this facility is a large one room, single floor, cinder block building. The size and renovation are generally determined by the financial resources of the congregation. In some cases, along with renovation the church has been enlarged by one or two rooms.

794 796 Until the late 1950's each congregation tried with all effort to have its own Pastor, but this became increasingly difficult, so today, even the larger membered congregations have reduced their Sunday services to a bi-monthly schedule. The Sunday gathering is really the time of the community's elders. The entire day revolves around church attendance and relaxing in the Spirit of the Lord. Sunday services generally start for the congregation at 11:00 A.M. and concludes near 2:30 P.M. Afterwards there may be elder meetings or evening prayer attended primarily by the senior congregation members. The nature of the Sea Island religions 796

•796 services as depicted in the literature is still rather accurate and need not be entertained here, except to say that the general patternings of the services and demonstrations of faith via "shouting" has remained as a center of church services.

### The Church Structure

794 (793) The Pastor is the head of each church. There may or may not be a pastor "in training" to assist as needed. Under the Pastor is the Elder Council of Deacons. This body is comprised of the oldest male members of the congregation. The Deacons Council, through a committee structure, [illegible] the affairs of the church. Next in the structure are the [illegible] Mothers, followed by the general congregations. Aside from their committee responsibilities, the Elder Deacons take part in Sunday services. An extremely learned body, the Elders are easily as able in the scriptures as the Pastors. Their learned abilities and oratorical skills are particularly evident during Funeral services. In these services, the Deacons take turns recalling through their eyes the life of the deceased person. Their eulogies delivered by these Soul stirring orators are the highlighted feature of the rites.

### The Practice of the Sea Island Religion

771 554 The islander does not simply outgrow religion. On the

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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342 Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated
799 in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song,
982 followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustra-
[178] tion 12). Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four
[711] corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

342 The addition to the original Cabin was *not* blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

353 In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution
[123] which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins
[754] are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[39] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration
[533] (Illustration 14), it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

000 DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our
342 Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming,
[711] except to bring good luck.

787 Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in oc-
763 cult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[171] [39] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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567 that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof
754 bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came
(556) to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the
(682) uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own
(888) children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have
159 been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything
342 to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good Afri-
754 can mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

231 In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-
825 looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand"
754 buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

793 At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure
751 customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From
•796 the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural
000 aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] *Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.*
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red," Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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St. Simon's Island



How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Granman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [33] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[33] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica."* (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical *a* helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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spot long enough to find out many fascinating things about Africa's black residents, mentions the fact that "In the cold wet months it is inconvenient to have . . . a [funeral] feast, and if some one dies at that time of year, the feast is often postponed until the dry season."

Negro preachers—particularly those who possess good voices and a store of spicy proverbs—often deliver sermons and offer prayers that stick in the mind. One I heard in Liberty County (the one whom I thought afflicted) expatiated on the subject of sin. He made it clear that certain types were worse than others. "Sin is a mean thing," and his tone was scornful; but when he said: "Self is a terrible thing!" it was thunderous and convincing. In a barn of a church in Camden County the substance of the preacher's prayer was in these touchingly earnest words: "We're down here, Lord, chewin' on dry bones an' swallerin' bitter pills. We can't do nothin' without You." Whatever may be said about the emotional character of the religion of our American Negro, it must be conceded that his sins are of the flesh rather than the spirit. He is generous with his last crust, and there would be no need of orphanages if white people, in proportion to their means, adopted as many children as colored people.

When it comes to terse economy of speech we are obliged to concede that no one can equal the Negro. Mrs. Annie Arnold, born on St. Simon's in 1844, gave me the perfect example of this fact in recounting a bit of local history. A cargo of slaves of the Ebo tribe had been landed at a suspiciously secluded spot on the west side of the island. They preferred death to a life of captivity, and as they walked into the water the leader said: "The water brought us here. The water will take us away." No one but an African could have expressed such poignant unhappiness in so few words. In view of the fact known to traders that the Ebo men made poor slaves and were prone to suicide,[33] the account is probably true. The Negroes believe the story, and to this day they have to be extremely hungry to fish by themselves at Ebo Landing. One night a few years ago some colored boys braved tradition, and went 'possum hunting in the neighborhood. I have my own ideas as to the real cause of their terrifying experience, but the fact remains that no others have been tempted to repeat it.

Sir Charles Lyell tells us that "The slave trade ceased in 1796, and but few negroes were smuggled into Georgia from foreign countries, except indirectly for

[33] *For this reason as few as possible were accepted by the traders.*

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During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

[2] Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."

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535 27) makes with head and shoulders bowed slightly forward, arms held close to her body, elbows bent at right angles, forearms thrust out before her, and palms upturned in a supplicating gesture. White musicians and dancers have obtained much from these untutored people, who appear to have an inborn gift for rhythm in its many manifestations. Work or play, preaching, praying, music, sculpture, or dancing—all are one to them when it comes to rhythmic expression.

## HA'K 'E ANGELS

567 Deacon Eddy Thorpe, of McIntosh County, who contributed this Watch Night shout, explained that the slaves, when allowed to go to a praise-house that was out of bounds, were given passes with their promise to return before sun-up. On New Year's Eve the service consisted of prayers, religious songs, and a sermon by the preacher. At midnight, different members offered thanks to the Good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months and implored His aid for the year to come. The shouting then began, and continued until dawn. This shout, which varies little in content or rhythm in Glynn, Liberty, McIntosh, and Camden counties,[3] was the last to be sung as the watcher, appointed for that duty, announced: "Day's a-comin'":

(782)

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(539)

Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels
Day, day Oh—see day's a-comin'
Ha'k 'e angels

[3] In the vicinity of Albany, Georgia, there is a similar version that uses "Yonder Come Day" instead of "Ha'k 'e Angels."

A. [For Illustration 27, see Category 142, plate facing p. 181--Analysis]

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## UNTIL I DIE

796 I am told that this shout was once a favorite at "foreday meetin'," held on Sunday in the neighborhood of five o'clock.

Laura considered it her duty to ring the bell, and get the other members out to church. Since her death, however, nobody has felt the urge to take her place, and on St. Simon's the early service has lapsed:

[533]
[534]

I'm goin' tuh set in the humble chair
Coin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Coin' tuh rock from side tuh side
Un-til I die.

Chorus: Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
Un-til I die (leader)
Un-til I die (basers)
I'm goin' tuh rock from side tuh side 'til I die.
(Repeated several times)

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## KNEE-BONE

533 [461] [501] Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

[177] [196]

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

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## MY SOUL ROCK ON JUBILEE

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This song was sung and shouted after prayer meeting and after church service—usually when the church "got a soul":

Chorus: 'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord![13]
'N Jubilee—'N Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

---

Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
Long time talkin' 'bout Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
My mother done gone to Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
I got a right in Jubilee
A-a-a-h my Lord!
I got a right in Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

Repeat Chorus:

In reference to the following version, Clara said: "When it gets hot, them that's on the outside of the church comes runnin' in." I asked what she meant by "getting hot." "O, you feel good. You know things is warmin' up and you gets revived":

I come t' tell you 'bout Jubilee
O-o-o-h my Lord!
Come t' shout that Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee[14]
O-o-o-h my Lord!
That Jud! That Jud! That Jubilee
My soul rock on Jubilee!

[13] A wild quavering cry given by the "high tribble"—far above the other singers—makes your "hair riz," as the Negroes say.
[14] Faster, with double rap on "That Jud! That Jud!"

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121 other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church
(538) observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave
songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of
Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled
as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consid-
eration.

533 Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter
and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which
may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of
(128) them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the
ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so
much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of
(171) them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the
section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to
795 baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation
171 rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what
explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans'
761 concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

## CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

794 Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon
796 Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in,
533 they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The
younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come
to the Cabin and "show them the way."

(152) [1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubt-
(782) edly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his
rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or
two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some
appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the con-
gregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with
a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

(787) [2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence
told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish
towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She tried
the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

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533 •796 At one of our singing festivals, Liverpool, who was well over a hundred at the time, became excited as he heard again the old prayer-meeting song, left his seat, joined in the swaying group of sixty-five singers, and gave a demonstration of the "right hand of fellowship" which he performed with the dignity seen in the minuet. First he gave his right hand to the singer on his right; then, bowing sedately, he crossed his left hand over to the same member. Both hands were then shaken as the singers bowed with the rhythim before passing to the next neighbor and repeating the same ceremony.

(539)

'Tis well an' good I come here tonight
come here tonight
come here tonight
Well an' good I come here tonight
For to do my Master's will.
O Brother Quarterman show me the way
show me the way
show me the way
O my brother show me the way—
The way to the Promised Land.

(794) At old-time prayer meetings the following song brought out all of the members—one at a time—on the floor, breaking up any tendency to stiffness. Each rose as his or her name was called and moved around the circle, returning to the group when another member's name was about to be called.

This same song was called an "ant'em" on Eleuthera, (one of the Bahamas). When I asked the singer if it was old, she said: "Methuselum sung 'um." 533 539

Oh mh Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Jesus bin yer
O He bin yer
Jesus bless my soul an' gone.
Sister Bessie where were you
My sister where were you
My sister where were you
When the Lord was passin' by.

(Illustration 16) A

A. [For Illustration 16, see Category 142, plate facing p. 97--Analyst]

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"Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

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(533)
(291)
(829)

This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

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I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
  Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
  Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

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## MY GOD IS A ROCK IN A WEARY LAND

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This song belongs to the exhorting-sermon type which has an African counterpart. The old-time preacher rhythmically chanted his sermon; at effective intervals he broke into song, in which he was joined by the congregation.

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Chorus: My God is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
My God is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop let me tell you 'bout the Chapter One
When the Lord God's work has jus' begun
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Two
When the Lord God's written his Bible through
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Three
When the Lord God died on Calvary.

Chorus: An' Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
weary land
in a weary land
Ah know He is a rock in a weary land
Shelter in a time of storm.

Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Four
Lord God visit 'mong the po'
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Five
Lord God brought the dead alive
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Six
He went in Jerusalem and healed the sick.

(repeat chorus)

Stop and let me tell you 'bout Chapter Seven
Died and risen and went to Heaven
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Eight
John seen Him standin' at the Golden Gate
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Nine
Lord God turned the water to wine
Stop and let me tell you 'bout the Chapter Ten
John says He's comin' in the world again.

(repeat chorus)

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Lord called Jonah t' Nineveh Lan'
To preach the gospel in de terrible d'man'
Jonah risen an' 'e went on down de Joppa two years started over
yonda to Tarsha two years to wait 'pon God's comman'
Got on the ship went down to de lowermos' deck
The cap'n of de ship started to sail
Got in de midst o' de middle o' de deep
The cap'n of de ship got de trouble in min'
Search the ship from bow t' stern
The' foun' ole Jonah fast asleep
Wake up . . .

The last two lines, which ended with "tell you now," I could not get. These were followed by the chorus. Further vicisitudes of Jonah were related in two more long verses.

## AN' HE NEVER SAID A MUMBLIN' WORD

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Last Easter I attended service, by special request, at a makeshift Baptist "tabernacle" far from the highway, in the pine wilderness of Camden County. There was a roof over a part of the one-story shack, but it lacked sides except behind the pulpit. The benches were planks on blocks of wood, and pine slabs were put on the swampy ground to keep our feet dry. In his sermon the minister pointedly stressed the fact that spiritual comfort was infinitely to be preferred over that of the flesh. His earnestness and conviction in describing Christ's appearance before Pilate, and the fortitude with which He bore His sufferings, made the scene too vivid for Phyllis, who became excited, jumped from her seat, and shrieked: "He didn't do nothin'! No He didn't! He was an innocent man! Yes He was!" She was in truth a modern witness for my Lord.

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See how they done my Lord
done my Lord
done my Lord
See how they done my Lord
An' He never said a mumblin' word.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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*Colored Persons* was published in Savannah in 1837. These are only two of many such works published in the South. 567 797

The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist denomination collected for their missions to the Negroes between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars in 1837 and in 1840 reported nineteen missionaries, thirteen missions, 232 plantations administered unto, 5,482 members, and 3,811 children.[48] Very little data can be obtained concerning the activities of the Baptist denomination among the sea-island Negroes, although it is known that more of them adhered to the Baptist faith than to any other. In the summer of 1838 a revival of religion commenced among the Negroes of Liberty County, Georgia, and spread throughout the entire coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia, continuing for two years. During that time the Congregational Church in Liberty County and the Baptist churches throughout the region greatly added to their colored membership.[49]

In addition to the space reserved for slaves in the rear and in the gallery of "Brick Church" on St. Helena Island, practically every plantation had its own "praise house" where the people held their weekly services. In case the planter provided no separate building, services were held in the cabin of the religious leader. Miss Towne wrote to a friend shortly after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the praise house was "always the cabin of the oldest person in the village of negro houses."[50] She was 567 796 346 567 346

[48] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, pp. 82, 83.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[50] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 20.

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567 doubtless speaking from a knowledge only of the planta-
346 tion where she was then residing, for her co-workers have left descriptions of various praise houses on the Island. W. C. Gannett wrote in April, 1862, that the praise house on Pine Grove plantation was "quite a nice little house,—the best on this part of the island."[81] The praise house of Eustis plantation on Ladies Island which their mistress, then living in Massachusetts, had built them was a church indeed.[82]

567 Once, twice, or even three times a week, those who
794 were religiously inclined met at the praise house to sing,
796 pray, and exhort. Edward L. Pierce estimated that about half of the adult Negroes on St. Helena were members
533 of a church.[83] The praise meeting usually opened with a "sperichil" followed by a hymn which the leader "deaconed out" two lines at a time, reading from a well-worn psalm book, if perchance he had learned to read, pretending to read, nevertheless, holding the book nearer the flickering light as if to make out the words, all the while calling out the lines from memory. Cuffy, the leader of the praise house on Pine Grove plantation, always made his own hymns, improvised from hymns of the whites, "praying to de Lord Jedus teach um as he in de woods [to] jine
[782] one word 'ginst t'oder."[84] After another hymn and perhaps a spiritual, the leader would ask for a prayer, then

[81] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 20 n.

[82] See also Wm. Henry Trescot, "Address on Gen. Stephen Elliott, delivered in the House of Representatives of South Carolina, Sept. 8, 1866," p. 5. For many years preceding the War, Rev. Stephen Elliott, father of General Elliott, of Beaufort, "had declined the rectorship of a regular congregation, and, having built a church upon his own plantation, preached regularly and most efficiently to the slaves of the neighborhood."

[83] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I., 305.

[84] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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read a long passage from the Bible and after another prayer call upon a member to speak.

Edward L. Pierce attended several praise meetings on St. Helena in 1862 and reported that "their exhortations to personal piety were fervent, and though their language was many times confused, at least to my ear, occasionally an important instruction or a felicitous expression could be recognized. In one case, a preacher of their own, commenting on the text, 'Blessed are the meek,' exhorted his brethren not to be 'stout-minded.'"[55]

After another prayer and song the "shout" began.[56] Although the prayer meeting invariably preceded the shout, the members considered the shout a part of their worship, explaining that "it exercise de frame."[57] Pushing the benches back to the wall and perhaps putting another piece of lightwood on the fire in the hearth and on the one which burned red before the door, the worshipers began the recreation which for the church members took the place of the informal dance.

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"Old and young, men and women, sprucely-dressed young men, grotesquely half-clad field hands—the women generally with gay handkerchiefs twisted about their heads and with short skirts—boys with tattered shirts and men's trousers, young girls barefooted," wrote Miss Harriet Ware who attended many a shout on St. Helena in the

[55] Pierce, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[56] Mr. William Elliott, of Columbia, S. C., a relative of the William Elliott frequently quoted in these pages, states that "the 'shout' is the object of the meeting to which the rest is the introduction." Mr. Elliott speaks from an intimate knowledge of sea-island customs. The shouts, however, which the writer attended on St. Helena Island in 1928 were invariably commenced after the praise meeting had been dismissed.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 27.

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567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
535 first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
535 by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[88]

567 Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
796 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[89] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 27n; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[89] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's salute, or swept them quickly from their heads.

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a shrill, cracked voice the tune: 793 796 175 (533) (539)

> "Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
> For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
> Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
> Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[2] (782)

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed- 175

[2] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

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[For general background information on the history of slavery and missionization in Georgia and South Carolina, see Categories 175 and 17, pp. 67-109, and 113-251 passim.]

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[For general information on the history of slavery and missionization in Georgia and South Carolina, see the NN23 Sea Islanders file, 3: Creel, Categories 17 and 175, pp. 67-109 and 113-251 passim.]

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174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

175 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[197] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

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capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary: 175 533 197

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena: 175 533 [197]

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the 114

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175 If the results of Christian instruction were measured by numbers of rebellions following Vesey and Turner, it could be said that insofar as status quo proponents were concerned, such instruction of bondspeople was eminently successful. Slaves appeared to accept Protestantism taught in a spirit purposely antithetical to their will to freedom. Emphasis was on authority, dependence on future rewards and punishments for suffering or wrongdoing on earth, and a profound inequality between master and slave. This seemed especially the case in the Sea Islands. There no widespread slave conspiracy or rebellion was known of, and Christianity appeared well entrenched by the time of freedom.

121 This study examines the Christian conversion process among the Gul-
lahs in an effort to understand these slaves' interpretation of Christianity
175 and the motives behind attempts to Christianize them. It is hypothesized that Gullah slaves of coastal Carolina used Christianity as an ideology with strong connotations supporting their sense of freedom. Early efforts to resist bondage, represented fusing Christianity with Africanity to provide a militant nationalism articulated by the black rebels of Charleston. Failure of that Conspiracy shook the Gullah community and may have facilitated a new adaptive structure in which slaves selectively employed Christianity in ways important to their own social existence. Slaves continued to oppose bondage, not with physical force, but by creating a strong, religious collective which shielded them from a sense of alienation. But their experiences were also based on an African world view and cultural structure though conceptually expressed in Christian terms. In the new religion, the slaves found some features reminiscent of their African socioreligious past. It also offered an explanation for their historical situation, which inspired currents of hope. On the Sea Islands, Gul-
121 lahs partly used the moral teachings of Christ as a basis for community
175 structure and organization. Yet they saw no contradiction in refusing to
•799 blindly internalize everything they were taught. Thus Gullahs did not trespass against their own moral sense or jeopardize their integrity as a people struggling against oppression. Their retention of an African world
121 view enabled them to maintain an appreciation of life on a collective level, striving to preserve the group consciousness that was a main ingredient of African heritage. Hence Christian and African traditions helped shape the resistance culture and plantation commonwealth that evolved in the slave quarters. In this sense religious instruction of the slaves can-

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175 person." For some time there was no one in the province to preach or administer sacraments until one more to the liking of certain communicants was substituted. The new rector was reportedly of "evil fame" and on one occasion, "in his cups baptised a bear."[6]

Some Carolina clergymen had harsh words for the planters who made their lives and work difficult. The most dedicated minister, Francis Le Jau of Goose Creek, wrote that "revenge, self-interest, engrossing of trade, peaces of profit" in anything whatsoever were the only concern of planters. Le Jau was convinced that the "topping men" of the colony "were satisfied with a church which they could largely control and which made no pietistical demand on their way of life." And in a voice of unity the clergy wrote to the Society in London that the worse "generation of infidels" they had to deal with were not "those poor heathen slaves," but their masters. Speaking with "equal grief and truth" the clergy considered the planters' actions and attitudes to "have made themselves worse than dogs."[7]

175 The problem of Christian instruction was even more dire in the Sea Island Parish of St. Helena. Until 1733 when Georgia was settled, this 799 was South Carolina's southernmost frontier, embracing the township of Beaufort and surrounding islands. While more settled parishes were populated with whites and Africans, St. Helena was primarily still part of the Indian lands. The major occupation of the handful of settlers was Indian trade. Yemassee Indians inhabiting the region tried to maintain friendly relations with white settlers. But avaricious land grabbing and broken trade agreements caused conflicts that endangered the parish's existence. In 1715 the Yemassee waged all-out war, and the entire province faced extinction. Many settlers took refuge in Charleston. St. Helena was completely uprooted while an army of 600 whites and 400 slaves was obliged to engage the Indians throughout the southern regions of Carolina. Not until 1716 did white families return to St. Helena and rebuild their dwellings. But frequent alarms occasioned by Spaniards as well as Indians forced homeseekers to flee at a moment's notice to more densely occupied and better protected parishes.[8]

Although missionaries were sent among Indians around St. Helena as early as 1704, twenty more years passed before a church building for whites was erected. Prior to 1725 the nearest parish church was forty miles away from St. Helena by water travel. Six pews accommodated the Anglican communicants which consisted of around thirty-nine fami-

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lies in 1728. The first rector was Lewis Jones who served in that capacity until 1745. Jones painted a bleak picture of life on the frontier. "The inhabitants are mostly poor planters of corn, pease, rice and a good many of them living at a great distance from each other," he wrote in 1728. There were at that time sixty-two families in the parish, thirty-nine of whom were Anglican, twenty-one Presbyterian, one Independent, and one Anabaptist. At that time only 170 slaves lived in the entire parish, and hence they were a minority, an atypical situation for early Carolina.[9]

The parish had no school although a few families had private teachers. As for the Negro slaves, Jones admitted in 1728 that "no care" was taken in Christianizing them. The reason, he cited, was due to their frequent removal to other areas, since Spaniards and Indians plagued the frontier, carrying away slaves. As a result, the number of St. Helena slaves decreased rather than increased from 224 in 1727 to 170 in 1728, while the entire colony's black population was over 20,000 in 1727.[10] Several possibilities may explain the disappearance of slaves. Spaniards provided a safety valve and chance for freedom. Indians may have done the same or may have simply attempted to decimate the white people's black labor force. Proximity to freedom and the paucity of whites must have intensified slaves' expectation of obtaining liberty. If later developments are any indication, slaves took advantage of these opportunities and the removal of slaves from the area represented white efforts to prevent this. The pattern continued until the Spanish and Indians were pushed back by the settlement of Georgia.

But the Sea Island region received early missionary attention for the slaves from another Anglican source. Thomas Bray (1658–1729/30) was the chief organizer of the three Anglican missionary efforts—the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), established in 1699, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), formed in 1701, and the Associates for Dr. Bray, established in 1723/24 and reorganized in 1729–30. Bray's first concern was Christianizing blacks and Indians. But he also shared, with Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, an interest in improving the lot of prisoners in England. With encouragement and financial support from high places, Bray and a group of sympathizers attempted to put a missionary plan into operation, hence the founding of Bray's Associates. Because Thomas Bray and a number of Associates became involved in plans to found Georgia, it was determined that the southern missionary movement should begin near Savan-

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nah (since the Trustees did not initially intend to have slaves in Georgia). One Associate and Georgia Trustee wrote to John Wesley prior to the latter's departure for Georgia as a missionary to whites:

> One end for which we were associated was the conversion of Negro slaves. As yet nothing has been attempted in this way; but a door is opened, not far from home [i.e. Georgia]. The Purryburgers have purchased slaves; they act under our influence; and Mr. Oglethorpe will think it advisable to begin there.[11]

Thomas Bray did not live to see Oglethorpe settle Georgia or to witness the missionary attempt among South Carolina slaves. But he and his Associates were instrumental in bringing about one endeavor to Christianize slaves in South Carolina.[12]

A colony of Swiss Protestant refugees, led by Jean Pierre Purry, settled on the southern frontier on the north bank of the Savannah River in 1731. This was about 20 miles from where Savannah, Georgia, would be located in 1733. Two Moravian missionaries, commissioned by the Associates to instruct slaves in Purrysburg, arrived there in 1739. The missionary venture failed. Few blacks were in the area, and one missionary became ill and died within six months. The other sailed for Philadelphia the following year. But an even more significant note on the ill-fated nature of the plan was the fact that these missionaries apparently could not even speak English. Yet this early activity and interest in slave conversion in the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Island region set the stage for future developments. The Georgia Trustees' alteration of their brief policy of slavery exclusion in the colony, the proximity of the two colonies, and the Trustees' early concern for religious instruction made the Sea Island region fruitful territory for the evangelism of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening. These early associations also perhaps laid the foundation for later acceptance of black independent churches at a time when such institutions were forbidden elsewhere. Georgia's evangelistic fervor and liberalism spilled over into the South Carolina slave population in the Sea Island region.[13]

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Lewis Jones remained at St. Helena until his death in 1745 and his main concern as rector was with white communicants. In 1736 he complained to the Society that despite his endeavors he had only been allowed to baptize one black and one mulatto slave. Bringing Christianity to slaves in St. Helena was discouraging work. Writing to the Secretary in England he stated that "the pious zeal of the venerable Society, and

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of its worthy Diocesan for promoting Christian knowledge among the Negroes meets with but a cold reception." This attitude was further strengthened by the 1739 Stono Rebellion. From St. Helena Lewis Jones lamented the fact that twenty-three "much indulged" slaves from his parish had joined the rebellion.[14]

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But St. Helena witnessed some spiritual awakening. Whitefield preached there in 1739 and convinced a few whites to instruct slaves in Christianity. Whitefield however was not popular with the Anglican hierarchy. Unbeknownst to Lewis Jones, Whitefield had been censored by Commissary Alexander Garden in Charleston, and the latter was outraged upon learning that the outspoken evangelist was preaching in the Anglican Church at St. Helena. Further problems were created for Jones by one of Whitefield's St. Helena disciples, a planter named Hugh Bryan. Bryan, considered a mystic and an eccentric, preached to his slaves and reportedly openly predicted they would rebel and obtain their freedom.[15]

Like sister parishes, St. Helena suffered from problems of white communicants with only marginal interest in spiritual matters. Jones complained that duly elected vestrymen refused to serve even after accepting appointments. Church attendance was also poor. Jones suggested Sunday worship be held only once in five weeks. But even these infrequent services were poorly attended with the total numbers of communicants usually not exceeding twenty. Still, the long tenure of Lewis Jones brought an added stability and consistency for the Church of England on the frontier and it remained the dominant denomination throughout the colonial era. After Jones' death, ministers came and went in rapid succession. As the parish grew in economic enterprise through cultivation of indigo, a demand for slaves gave St. Helena a new significance. Yet, except for short-term effects of the Great Awakening, Anglicans in the Sea Island region remained aloof toward spiritual enthusiasm for themselves and their burgeoning African-born black population.[16]

Pecuniary interest and spiritual indifference were not the only factors that generated hostility and a "cold reception" from planters. The element of sheer physical self-preservation cannot be discounted as a reason for planter resistance. They were spread out on the frontier, surrounded by a predominantly hostile population—namely West Africans and Indians—and were in the process of exploiting both through bondage and unfair trade practices. Whites had every reason to fear of slave insurrec-

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freedom. It came in Charleston. As John Lofton points out, Santo Domingo provided a practical example of a successful black revolt, the age offered a philosophy, while natural inclinations and oppression supplied a rationale.[29] By 1822 ideology and leadership were present. The record shows that legions of slaves in the Lowcountry, hoping to spur a statewide insurrection under the contagion of freedom, prepared to take by force what was rightfully theirs. The rebellion strategy was formulated and formented under the guise of an African-Christian association in Charleston known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This strategy and the rebellion's leadership reflected the composition of slave society in coastal South Carolina and the spiritual orientation of the insurrectionists. Indeed, the attempted rebellion embodied militant aspects of two religious traditions. It was closely linked with the Methodist Church but was to be carried out under a mystique of African supernatural forces. Moreover, the relationship with African religious tradition may have been the strongest bond among the insurrectionists in their designs. In the Lowcountry, the real language of egalitarianism came from Christian ideology. This did not always translate into support for emancipation, although some whites, for a time, broached the issue. More significantly, the liberal trend led to black exposure to Christianity on a level not previously experienced. Although some slaves may have accepted Christianity just as it flowed out of the white man's mouth, many did not. This latter group used the Christian religion to help provide the genius of their liberation struggle.

### *Slave Religion in the Postwar Lowcountry*

In the Lowcountry, early black exposure to Christianity was largely the work of those previously influenced by George Whitefield, and of postwar Methodists. Although a member of the Anglican clergy, Whitefield, as previously discussed, was not popular with the established church in South Carolina. His staunchest followers were within dissenting congregations. The English evangelist was particularly effective among Puritan-Baptists because of his Calvinist stand on scriptural authority, regenerate membership, and justification by faith. The first Lowcountry extension of the Old England Baptists was the establishment of a church at Euhaw in 1746, for the benefit of communicants who moved their habitations south to these Indian lands and to Edisto Island. Other churches were

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organized and preceded by missionaries who set up preaching places in the Beaufort district and in the Savannah River area. The novelty of Baptist views on baptism and church membership were so different from other traditions that they attracted much attention and at first ensured ostracism in the Sea Island region. The Baptist mission at Beaufort was organized into a church in 1800. But upwardly mobile Baptists did not immediately gain respectability from the Episcopalian community. The Reverend Henry Holcomb lived in Beaufort and served the Baptist Church there for a number of years before and after the War for Independence. In a letter he discussed early attitudes toward the Baptists:

> The principal inhabitants of Beaufort though possessed of learning, wealth and talents, were with a few honorable exceptions, strangers to true religion, and strongly prejudiced against the Baptists. The doctrine of regeneration they treated with contempt; and baptism, if we understand the meaning of the word, had never been administered in their vicinity. If ever I felt the ensnaring fear of men, it was then, but . . . God and truth were on my side. . . . Several "fellows of the better sort" made attempts to turn ministerial exercises into ridicule . . . stealing my Bible . . . while I was administering the Lord's Supper.[10]

Yet Sea Island Baptists overcame initial prejudice, and Episcopalians (postwar Anglicans) grew accustomed to witnessing baptizings in the Beaufort River. Contrary to Episcopalian apprehensions, baptismal rites were administered with the greatest solemnity, and even Baptist church services contained none of the evangelical enthusiasm that characterized Methodists at that time. Leading citizens eventually converted to the Baptist faith. Episcopalian acceptance was probably influenced by Baptist economic success. Before the War for Independence, Baptists were already on the list of Sea Island "aristocracy", rivaling Episcopalians in wealth consisting of land and slaves. This occasioned intermarriage between the once rivaling denominations. One of the most illustrious Baptist ministers of South Carolina, Richard Fuller of Beaufort, came from an Episcopalian lineage which included colonial Indian fighters, legislators, and signers of the Declaration of Independence. The Fuller family owned several Sea Islands and hundreds of slaves. The Lawton-Robert family, Baptist converts from the Huguenot sect, migrated to South Carolina from France. They organized the little Black Swamp Church upon acquiring properties at Robertville (between Beaufort and Savannah). Robertville became one of the wealthiest areas in South Carolina and the Lawton-Roberts were among the most prominent families in the Low-

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country. Other affluent Baptist-Episcopalian members of the slavocracy in the Sea Island region included the Bosticks, the Elliotts, the Popes, and the Fripps. Thus the stigma attached to Baptists subsided. By 1812 the once dissenting faith was a respectable form of worship in the Sea Islands. Lowcountry Baptists had always identified with planter interests and with slaveholding. The Reverend Holcomb lived long enough to see "the flower of Beaufort filling their seats at the Lord's table" for communion at the Baptist Church.[31]

When George Whitefield appealed to planters for religious instruction of slaves, Baptist compliance may have been more forthcoming, in some cases, than among other denominations. His remonstrances did not seem to diminish Puritan-Baptist attraction to his preaching. Whitefield, after all, was a slaveholder himself. Thus in isolated pockets of coastal Carolina and Georgia, preaching to blacks did occur and had obvious results around the time of the War for Independence and afterwards.

As previously discussed, the first organized black religious gathering under Christian auspices in the South was at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, between 1773 and 1775. That occurred on the estate of planter and Indian agent George Galphin, through the efforts of a Connecticut Baptist named Wait Palmer. David George, one of Galphin's slaves, was a convert of Palmer's, and was appointed elder over the little band of eight after being instructed in that office. David George was greatly influenced and encouraged by a black Baptist preacher named George Liele (also called George Sharp). Liele, under the guidance of Georgia white Baptists, had become a practicing exhorter. His master, Henry Sharp, a deacon of the Burke County church where Liele was "called," freed his slave, although Liele continued on with the white family. In his capacity as a preacher George Liele ministered to various plantations as well as to whites and blacks in his own church near Savannah. Liele's master, a loyalist, fought with the British and was killed. Liele remained with the British during the Savannah occupation.[32]

When the War for Independence began, slave owners prohibited ministers from visiting the plantations, fearing that information about the war, especially Dunmore's and Clinton's freedom offers, would cause black defection. With ministers no longer visiting, David George, who had experienced a call to preach under the ministrations of Liele, took over the little church, then numbering about forty. When the British overran the seacoast region, American patriots, Galphin among them,

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175 spiritual state. While slave labor produced "the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and all the superfluities we possess," they received "nothing equivalent." On the contrary, wrote Bryan, "we keep from them the key of knowledge, so that their bodies and souls perish together in our service."[37]

If Christian instruction among slaves languished in supposedly liberal coastal Georgia, in coastal South Carolina it was deplorable among many Baptists whose attachment to the former preachings of George Whitefield stopped short of missionary work among the slave masses. Baptists were interested in extending the faith, as evidenced by how quickly they spread to the coastal and upcountry frontier. But this evangelical zeal did not extend to the general slave population. Early Sea Island Baptists (567) were involved in protecting slavery, consolidating property, and maintaining a money crop. Like Episcopalians, they viewed efforts of spiritual uplift among masses of slaves as dangerous and antagonistic to economic interests.

175 The War for Independence did much to unsettle growth in the Sea Island region. Once the war ended the people engaged in reconstructing •797 their society and reconstituting their economic priorities. Little time was spent on contemplation of their souls. In 1792, Matthew Tate, a friend of Benjamin Rush and an Episcopalian minister, became rector at St. Helena Church in Beaufort. The spiritual life was low according to Tate, who was himself primarily interested in economic advantage. Since there was no other Episcopal clergyman for 40 miles, Tate boasted of the money to be made from conducting marriages and funerals. Also the availability of single, preferably wealthy widows was a notable concern of the rector's.[38] Given such pecuniary preoccupations on the part of ministers it is understandable that the state of Christianity suffered.

175 Religion did not assume a prominent role in the lives of either Baptists or Episcopalians in the coastal and Sea Islands region. Indigo, cotton, 567 rice, slaves, and a well-planned social calendar received highest consideration. In 1766 a Philadelphian, John Bartram, visited the coastal and Sea Island regions of South Carolina and Georgia. Even at this early stage of development a certain affluence was observed. Bartram wrote in his diary that the "best inhabitants" had great farms distanced from the seacoast towns. On the farms "they keep numerous Negro slaves, who are closely employed in cultivating the ground, or sowing plank, or looking after their stock for maintenance of their masters." The farms were

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175 and a tower, a first indication of a notable black membership at this
567 Island church. In 1819, the Euhaw Church reported a membership of
794 "18 Whites and 4 Colored," and the church at Black Swamp had thirty white and one hundred black members.[42]

175 Some slaves, during the "Second Great Awakening," beginning around
567 1800, were exposed to Christianity in Baptist churches. Often blacks were "converted" when no whites came forth. In 1800, Richard Furman
• 797 of Charleston wrote to a Philadelphia Baptist minister of the success the new minister at Euhaw Church was experiencing. In nine months, "Mr Cook" had "baptized about twenty persons." Most of them "are Negroes."[43] This is a very small number, but nonetheless demonstrates that actual black membership does not tell the whole story. Obviously blacks were baptized in many instances without being given church membership. While this demonstrates black exposure to Christianity, it also illustrates the paucity of "Christian" instruction.

175 Even the religious revitalization that began in the North after the War of 1812 and spread to some parts of the South, was not greatly effective in the Carolina Lowcountry. In 1821, a long-term visitor from Connecticut living in Robertville wrote:

> The Religious state of things here it is hoped is improving. A few are enquiring "What they Shall do to be saved" . . . we who have been accustomed to having ministers settled in every village must feel the dearth of ministers in this part of our country where the toilers are ripe for the harvest and seem only to want Faithful Laborers in the vineyard. . . . The inhabitants of this place are all connected by inter-marriages, and I am afraid are very wordly minded and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than the rise and progress of religion.[44]

Although Baptists had no national association, local organizations exemplify how negligible black membership was in white churches. By 1806 there were 130 Baptist churches in South Carolina, most of which were in the upcountry. Communicants totaled 10,560, 3,500 of whom were reportedly black. Sixteen years later, according to the 1822 South Carolina Baptist Convention, the number of black Baptists had not greatly increased. The Baptist Church at Charleston had a black membership large enough to allow for separate meetings with "proper" regulations by 1819. It is questionable how many of the total black church membership was made up of slaves. In the case of the Charleston Baptist Church's black membership, the majority of the congregations were free. Yet an

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around the time of Vesey's Conspiracy, most were slaves. But the up-country, frequented by circuit riders and stimulated by numerous revivals, contained the majority of the state's 18,460 black Methodists at the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Thus the coastal plantations, especially in the Sea Islands, were the main target areas during the thirty years of Methodist religious efforts among the bondspeople of South Carolina, and parts of Georgia.[10]

When the South Carolina Methodist Conference met in February 1830, its Missionary Society produced a stirring report entitled "The Southern Slave Population." Authored by James O. Andrew, a slaveholding bishop from Augusta, Georgia, the document noted the lack of missionary service to slaves and lauded the attention and encouragement given by C. C. Pinckney. More significantly, the report indicated a rising concern within the Southern Methodist church. In 1831 Andrew's report was published in the national Methodist journal, indicating that a movement was under way in the regional jurisdiction of the South Carolina Conference. Bishop Andrew acknowledged that in the face of "so many obstacles," a long period of negligence had characterized Methodist attitude. Yet he insisted that the Methodist church was not unmindful of the so-called irreligion of the slaves:

> We saw the efforts made to send the Gospel to distant Pagans, and we heard of the success of those efforts with much gratification. But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity and to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency, and longed to see put into operation such an instrumentality as should extensively and successfully, carry the Gospel to the large and increasing slave population.[11]

The difficulties and magnitude of the undertaking had until recently hindered the Church's commitment Andrew reported. But a new day was dawning. Of late, the Church was "cheered and strengthened" and much gratified by the expressed advocacy of the renowned C. C. Pinckney. The South Carolina Conference considered the words of so "notable and respected" a Carolinian to be a "valuable and powerful auxiliary" in the work undertaken. Speaking on behalf of the Methodists' missionary branch, the slaveholding bishop reiterated even more strongly themes pounded out by Pinckney: the "moral baseness" of un-Christian slaves had to be combated. Among bondspeople, stated Andrew, "the tender

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in the isolated, unhealthy Lowcountry and Sea Island regions. Some of them were buried there. One wonders how long the question of slave conversion would have lain dormant except for the efforts intended to stabilize the plantation system. This primary goal, seasoned perhaps with some element of conscience, caused a few influential slaveholders to promote the experiment. A definite parallel existed between spiritual and temporal interests. And the view that Christianization would lead to a more efficient and submissive labor force slowly gained credibility. 175

Despite postulations about Methodist involvement in Vesey's Conspiracy, Southern Methodists were not antislavery, and Lowcountry planters had little real reason to suspect them as harbingers of black liberation. By their own admission they were a denomination whose Southern branch believed in slavery. The South Carolina Conference's reaction to the Vesey Conspiracy was to reaffirm their proslavery position. Andrew, in his 1830 report, stated that the church's responsibility was not to contemplate slavery as an institution. Such speculations, according to Andrew, brought much "evil" to the slaves without any corresponding benefits. "We look upon the blacks just as we find them," he wrote, ". . . hoping only to bring them into the enjoyment of freedom of a higher character; freedom from the bondage of Satan, from the control of passions and lusts."[16]

Yet such statements, undoubtedly sincere, could not immediately dispel suspicion and doubt. The burgeoning abolitionist movement, and the fact that some Northerners were already going south to do what Southern clergymen had heretofore left undone, made the task of the South Carolina Methodists even more difficult. Antislavery sentiment gained momentum among Methodists and other denominations in the North. Anxiety about the abolitionists disguised as "men of the cloth" going among slaves made any missionary a suspect until proven otherwise. One Sea Island missionary in the employment of the South Carolina Conference complained to the Missionary Society: 175 797.

> My success in getting access to the colored people, as far as I flattered myself in the early part of the year, has been in some measure obstructed, growing out of the excitement got up by the abolitionists.[17]

Sea Island and Lowcountry planters were surrounded by a dense black population as compared to a paucity of whites. White communities felt particularly vulnerable. A Northern Presbyterian minister, Courtlandt

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Van Renssalaer, was forced out of Virginia as a missionary among the slaves. He then attempted to preach to the neglected bondspeople of the Sea Island and Savannah River regions in 1835 and 1836. His career was abruptly halted when a circular appeared stating that a gentleman of "high respectability" had information that Van Renssalaer held secret meetings with slaves, "and consulted with them on their means of revolt, their armies . . . when they expected to be ready. . . ." The "authorities" were alerted, and "Van Renssalaer would have been arrested but when sought for he had suddenly left." The missionary denied the charges from his Northern sanctuary and indicated they exemplified the opposition to the "work" which he and others endeavored to accomplish among the slaves.[18]

Allegations about antislavery activity being conducted by Northern missionaries, a distrust of so novel an experiment, and a traditional association of religion with rebellion evoked open hostility to Christian instruction in many cases. The idea of perfect strangers going among their "people" to preach was not one to which planters could easily adjust. The South Carolina Conference proclaimed repeatedly the official Methodist position on slavery: that it was an institution of "Divine Providence," that the issue of slavery did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Church but was "exclusively appropriate to the civil authorities," and that the Conference was resolved "not to intermeddle with it." Representing the South Carolina Conference in 1838, William Capers, Superintendent of the Missions to the Slaves, further affirmed the Methodist belief that "the Holy Scriptures . . . do unequivocally authorize the relation of master and slave." Capers, himself a slaveholder, affirmed:

> Our missionaries inculcate the duties of servants to their masters, as we find these duties stated in the Scriptures. . . . We hold that a Christian slave must be submissive, faithful and obedient . . . we would employ no one in the work who might hesitate to teach this; nor can such a one be found in the whole number of preachers in this Conference.[19]

In spite of such reassurances, skepticism among slaveholders continued and invitations to instruct Sea Island and Lowcountry slaves constituted a mere trickle in the 1830s. In a letter to William Capers, C. C. Pinckney expressed his own gratitude for the services of the Methodists. But he also stated that the majority of the seaboard planters were "still adverse to missionary efforts and give us ample cause to pray that their

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eyes may be opened." Nevertheless, missionaries increased their efforts yearly and other denominations applauded the undertaking. In 1838 an interdenominational group of influential clergymen met under the auspices of the Methodist Missionary Society and asserted their growing concern and commitment to slave conversion. They agreed that areas of the large cotton and rice plantations along the sea coast from the Savannah to the Pee Dee rivers in Georgia and South Carolina would receive the bulk of attention. In most of the state, churches existed in nearly every area, but the group admitted that even there, accommodations for blacks were insufficient. However, at least no one could say, "Negroes of the neighborhood are without the gospel." Such was not the case "on the Sea Islands, and in the delta of the rivers, where the Negroes are most numerous." These thousands had no churches accessible to them, and the interdenominational group confessed, "they are as destitute as if they were not inhabitants of a Christian land." The plantation missions were undertaken for the benefit of these slaves.[20]

Southern churches and seminaries were not long in taking note of the movement. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, as well as Methodists preached sermons on the benefits of the enterprise. Gradually, some planters, convinced of the desirability of Christian instruction, publicly declared their approval at agricultural meetings and in agricultural journals. Denominational newspapers also kept up arguments in favor of religious instruction. William Capers prepared a short catechism for the missionaries' use in instructing slaves. Arguments of appeal rarely varied. Although the interest of the plantation was preemptory, the security of the country and saving of black souls were also loudly proclaimed. The 1830s was a period of persuasion and promotion of Christian proselytizing, with the Methodist church directing the campaign and receiving widespread if not unified support from a number of quarters. In the words of one church association spokesman, discussing conditions in South Carolina and Georgia during this period, "The religious instruction of our slave population, entirely suspended in some parts of the country, through the lamentable interference of abolition fanatics, has proceeded with almost unabated diligence and steadiness of purpose."[21]

In the Sea Island region south of Charleston, Methodist missionaries acquired early access to some plantations. Two missionaries, George W. Moore and Thomas D. Turpin, arrived in 1833. Moore's appointment included Beaufort and the surrounding islands. His first charge consisted

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of two plantations and two preaching appointments in Beaufort (attended by slaves from several plantations), six plantations on Paris Island, and one plantation on each of the five remaining islands around Beaufort. Turpin's appointment in the Beaufort District, called the May and New River Mission, included Hilton Head, Bull's and Dawfuskie Islands, and the mainland between the May and New Rivers.[22]

The most successful method of gaining permission to evangelize slaves involved having a sympathetic local planter approach fellow slaveholders on behalf of the missionaries. In the Sea Islands Methodists were actively supported by William E. Baynard. The Baynard family were large slaveholders with plantation interests on Hilton Head and Edisto Islands as well as on the mainland. Baynard was a frequent intermediary between planters and missionaries. Writing to him in 1833, one Hilton Head planter expressed his confidence in the cause:

> I am anxious that the mission to the colored people in this community be continued . . . that the gospel should be preached to them in their cabins and the Scriptures explained in such a plain and simple manner that they may fully understand what true religion is.[23]

Baynard was not always so successful. While some slaveholders simply refused to allow missionaries on their plantations, others gave the experiment a try but found "results" discouraging. For example, William Pope, Sr., Baptist patriarch of a Sea Island family who owned the largest amount of aggregate acreage on St. Helena, Dawfuskie, and Hilton Head, answered Baynard's inquiry of 1834 in the negative. Pope felt that Thomas Turpin, sent the previous year, had gained few converts. He wrote:

> If I am not deceived one or two of them [the slaves] will long remember him with gratitude . . . but am inclined to think he has not met with decided success . . . he has had to encounter some difficulty, discouragements and prejudices which he has not been able to fully overcome—tho' he has certainly laboured faithfully, and been zealous and diligent in the discharge of his duty.

Pope concluded his letter by stating that the missionary's services would be discontinued since the "means and opportunities" of religious instruction had improved; there were "now two churches on this Island [Hilton Head] in which there is service at least twice a month."[24]

There appeared to be a consensus among certain planters in the May and New River Mission to withhold cooperation from Turpin and the Methodists. James Sealy, also a planter on Hilton Head Island, wrote to

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Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he "could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming. 175 797 567

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary, "these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin: 681 673

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats belonged to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gullahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident, 17 681 567 797 673

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since this regulation took place within a religious context, ostensibly under the rubric of Christianity. High and low seats in Gullah society assumed a meaning different from African Poro-Sande society. But the function of regulation and community control was still present. The Gullahs reserved the "low seat" for those who betrayed community interests by divulging "the secret of stealing," undoubtedly from the master. This demonstrates the seriousness of solidarity among the people. Thus picking up the benne seed was reserved for the worst of crimes "according to their view of the crime." While the Methodist missionary believed the slaves had incorrect ideas about who should be punished, slaves themselves were using an internal logic with little reference to Protestant conceptions of sin. This Gullah interpretation of sin was at variance with their Christian instruction. A sense of contrition for the safety and peace of the plantation or out of fear of the Christian God was not a motivating issue. For the Gullahs, moral guilt fell on those who forsook socioreligious authority and loyalty in the slave quarters. The presence and influence of black leadership was also revealed as the "punishments" were administered by a "priest." This implies no relationship to the Christian church to which some of the slaves belonged. Missionary Turpin believed the rites strangely akin to Catholicism. Obviously they were not. But in West Africa Poro-Sande priests and priestesses were responsible for administering justice and punishment. Thus this role had some cultural-historical continuity. Slaves saw nothing incongruous about adopting elements of Christian religion and adapting those to aspects of their traditional spiritual heritage still serviceable in the New World setting.

The penance for the "sin" of divulging the secret of stealing was no brief activity, but a rather trying feat. A "gentleman" residing on Bull's Island informed Turpin that an individual usually could not pick up all the scattered benne seeds in one night. And "if it was not done in one night they had to continue until they did it." Thus while the benne seed ritual was not comparable in degree to African punishments instituted by the Poro Council for community crimes, there is a symbolic reference. While representing a form of censure for erring members, it was not the way "Christianized" slaves were expected to interpret the concept of "sin." Turpin stated in his report that having to contend with "all this superstition and ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism," he had added few church members. Nor, reported Turpin,

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did he strive to do so, "but rather . . . to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict."[28]

Planters in the May and New River Mission region were offended by statements implying that they tolerated practices such as the one Turpin discussed. Sea Island Baptists felt under attack for not instructing black converts in "true" principles of Christianity and for baptizing slaves without scrutinizing their religious life. Turpin was smarting from the cold reception he received from planters. Turpin did in fact infer that some planters were aware of and permitted un-Christian practices among slaves baptized as Baptists. It was after all a "gentleman" of the Island who had explained to Turpin the workings of the benne seed penance he had observed. Methodist unpopularity among Sea Island planters was recognized at the Missionary Society Headquarters. Soon after the report was circulated, Turpin was removed from the May and New River Mission, and assigned to the John and Wadmalaw Islands Mission in the Charleston District. Turpin insisted, however, that he did not intend to discredit the planters. Nor, he said, did he mean that planters knowingly sanctioned "corrupt" practices among the slaves. Turpin merely wished to point out how irreligious so-called converted slaves were. Through the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, he made a somewhat cynical apology, which undoubtedly did little to assuage the ire of Sea Island planters:

> But it [the report] appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons, notwithstanding though, it has been said that I have "shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it was hit the Episcopalians." If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended, I feel it my duty to heal the wound.[29]

Turpin had indeed offended the planters, especially his comments on the slaves' lack of "truly religious" training, despite Baptist church membership. He believed that the "converted" slaves made a mockery of Christianity. These slaves who "scarcely ever saw the pastor" of their church were members of the First African Church in Savannah. Andrew Bryan's nephew, Andrew Marshall, was the pastor. In 1830, church membership was 2,417. Although a black church, whites were responsible for control and for the conduct of its members. Whites came to the

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175 The South Carolina Conference wanted favorable, optimistic reports. In their efforts to absolve the Southern Church from Northern reproach, Methodists expected missionaries to cease concentrating on the nature of "superstitions" among the slaves, on "moral degradation," or sect rivalry. Such emphasis suggested that the enterprise was not successful. Also to focus on planter impropriety undermined the confidence the Methodist church hoped to instill among the slaveholding class. Perhaps as a result of Turpin's unpopular "Missionary Sketch," late in 1833 William Capers published a notice to missionaries stating that the sort of information then being received was unsatisfactory. "General remarks," wrote Capers, "by no means furnish the requisite information." The Superintendent of Missions instructed each missionary to provide a quarterly report which, if nothing else, answered the following types of questions:

—how many preaching places have you
—how many schools, teachers, scholars, how many of these are natives
—how many since the last report
—Revivals.[32]

After Turpin's controversial report, statistics and discussions of Christian-type experiences dominated missionary information from the field. It was more significant to detail the conversion of an old African-born slave than to outline what appeared to be latent types of "Roman Catholic" ceremonies. The former type of religious experiences were dramatized in the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate* in the 1840s and later.

175 Missionaries assigned to the Sea Islands and coastal regions maintained a healthy optimism, but reports were often discouraging. Early support
• 799 from slaveholders was spasmodic and intermittent, and bondspeople took a lax attitude toward Methodist discipline. In 1835, John Coburn reported from Beaufort that, while his charge had increased to include twenty-one plantations with 400 children under catechetical instruction, "the prospects of this mission are not considered flattering." He blamed "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" for his lack of success, yet recommended that the station be continued for at least another year. In 1836 Coburn indicated that improvement had taken place, yet church membership dropped considerably because of many expulsions and the fact that some planters had withdrawn their slaves from the mission. His work was also greatly hindered because the islands, separated by wide waters, were frequently impassable for small boats.[33]

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The "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" discussed by Coburn came from two sources. First, Gullah leaders continued to exert influence and they resented as well as resisted supersedence of their authority. Secondly, a growing number of slaves professed affiliation with Baptists of the region. Many missionaries complained that these alleged black Baptists were unfamiliar with Christian doctrines. Thus from the missionaries' point of view, the complexity was actually three-tiered: a powerful black leadership holding sway through beliefs and practices apart from Protestantism, a conflict with black "professors of the faith" whom missionaries considered mere "pretenders," and both problems compounded by the skepticism of Baptist and Episcopalian slaveholders. The missionaries admitted that religious instruction under such circumstances was a formidable task.[34]

Methodist Sea Island missionary activity experienced various periods of growth and decline. Methodism was persistent, but there was never a massive moment into the church on the part of the Gullahs. By 1839, the May and New River Mission had been discontinued and the limited number of converts absorbed by the Beaufort and Savannah River organizaiton. Also by 1839 Methodists created a new mission in the Beaufort district, called Pocotaligo, and another in the Charleston district called Edisto Island Mission, including Jehossee and Fenwick Islands. Edisto was by far the most prosperous of the Sea Island missions. By 1842 Beaufort Mission embraced thirty plantations but contained only 310 members, with 370 children under instruction. The Pocotaligo missionary ministered at nine plantations, had 295 church members, and 156 children under catechetical instruction. Progress was slow in these areas compared to other missions north of Charleston and in the upcountry. For example, the North Santee Mission embraced only fifteen plantations but had 528 church members and the Black and Pee Dee Rivers Mission covered twenty-five plantations with 1,180 church members. By the time of national division within the Methodist church in 1844, the Beaufort Mission had dropped to twenty plantation appointments, and Pocotaligo still served only nine. The Edisto Mission however, maintained steady progress.[35]

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Figures relating to church membership are not impressive considering the thousands of slaves in the coastal and Sea Island region. Still, Methodist missionaries remained active there until 1861, even after it became apparent that Baptist influence would predominate. Not only were white

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175 oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was
567 one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840,
175 "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccus-
567 tomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar
197 creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan'*?" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

175 Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or
793 as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own
197 religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

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sanction from planters and overseers as the "spiritual elders" of the people. One St. Helena planter who spent little time on the island, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned there in 1833 that he hoped the Methodists could improve the religious condition among the Gullahs. The biggest problem according to the planters was the black leaders whose control had to be broken.[50]

Thus missionaries vied with black spiritual advisers for religious leadership in the slave community.[51] There was no way for the Methodists to counter the influence of slaves whom the Gullahs regarded as spiritual advisers but who made no claim to Christianity. Methodists felt that under Christian instruction customs and practices perpetrated by this leadership would die out in time. But the missionaries believed black leaders who fused "paganism" with Christianity were most detrimental to the Methodist cause. These leaders had either to be set on the "true" path or their influence undermined. The competition proved difficult. Everywhere they went among the Gullahs, missionaries found black leaders successfully impeding Methodist influence. From Beaufort Mission, T. E. Ledbetter reported in 1836 that although some "pious" Episcopalian planters allowed missionaries to preach to slaves, he saw no evidence of progress:

> . . . we combat a great many falso notions, and . . . fatal doctrines which have been elderly imbibed by the colored population through the instrumentality of ignorant and superstitious teachers among themselves. And nothing is more difficult to overcome than a strongly prejudiced understanding . . . many among them are opposed to us.[52]

Some missionaries, even without planter approval, attempted completely to halt black spiritual leadership. Others hoped to communicate with Gullahs by recognizing or even appointing certain "elders." Both tactics often bred frustration. From Pocotaligo Mission in Beaufort District, John N. Davies reported in 1840:

> A black man, one of them [the slaves] whom they claim for their spiritual father, and, as they say, "had brought them through the spirit," became corrupted and inflated with self-importance—I gave him a close talk, with a design of moving him, when he held up the wand of his sweeping influence by asserting that all the children [the people] would follow him. As we have no authority to visit them at the plantation we chose the only mode of saving them, . . . to select and appoint a zealous and upright man, of their number to be with him as an aid and guard; meanwhile a noise came from abroad of large depredations being

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committed which implicated this and several plantations . . . nearly all have ceased to attend and we fear they are rushing to ruin—Lord have mercy upon them and upon me.[53]

This missionary's report typifies one significant aspect of white attempts to usurp black leadership — that of replacing an individual who could not be subordinated with one seemingly more controllable. Undoubtedly, the "zealous and upright" man was more cooperative than pious. The audacious missionary had no access to the plantation where his spiritual rival lived, nor apparently did he have the good wishes and confidence of the planter. Some planters left it completely up to the Gullahs as to whether or not they attended missionary services, and others specifically forbade it; this contributed to the continued presence and influence of black leaders. Moreover, as the Davies' account reveals, slaves given passes to attend preaching appointments often found other more lucrative or entertaining means of utilizing their temporary mobility. Fear of this limited movement and assembly was a continual obstruction in obtaining unified support for religious instruction from the slaveholders. When Christian conversion took on a new seriousness in 1845, large slave gatherings for religious purposes, never popular, were discontinued and the emphasis shifted to individual and family instruction on plantations. The latter type of religious teaching eventually brought the Methodists more success.[54]

Still many Gullahs displayed skepticism toward the Methodists and resisted offending their own leaders. From Pocotaligo, John N. Davies continued to inform the public of his problems:

> We have had some trouble at another preaching place, occasioned by the puffing up of father S., as he is called, but plantation authority forbids his guiding the people. They have appeared spellbound, not to move or think without him. He a poor creature of dust imagines himself to be the Great Shepherd whose voice alone "the sheep know," and whom alone the true sheep will follow. . . . We visit the plantations and explain as far as possible. God grant us brighter days and better times.

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But despite only marginal encouragement from both planters and slaves, the missionaries continued to "suffer and rejoice and pray and labor." And from the beginning, though suspicious and cautious, some slaves came to hear the missionaries by choice. The fact of their attendance was considered progress as expressed by one optimistic missionary in 1835:

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Although the colored people were generally in a lukewarm state and inattentive to preaching when I commenced, there has been an encouraging improvement, whether it is the novelty of the thing that has drawn them out, or the special regard had to them by their owners in getting a preacher exclusively for them, I know not, but one thing is certain . . . they attend the appointments very regularly and a deep concern is manifested in the congregation generally."

The Gullah's increasing attention to Methodist presence can be understood on a number of levels. In the life of a slave any occasion which brought a cessation from labor was welcomed. One can imagine the excitement as well as skepticism in the quarters when news spread of the coming of a white "spiritual man" whose sole purpose was to administer to slaves. Certainly their interest was measured. Yet for these isolated African-Americans the special attention itself was something new. Furthermore, preaching places facilitated gathering of bondspeople from various plantations, providing opportunities to visit with friends, relatives, and probably lending a gaiety and sense of freedom to the event. Missionaries recorded little lasting progress of a religious nature as a result of their preaching at these large assemblies. Planters insisted the gatherings produced more harm to the system. But these occasions appealed to the slaves for reasons other than the spiritual content of the sermons. Preaching stations provided many with their only opportunity to be away from the plantation. Monthly meetings became convivial holiday-type excursions, adding to the few outlets in a life too often dulled by pointless, profitless toil. The gatherings provided a reason for attending to personal hygiene, to don whatever their "best" attire consisted of—faded though colorful turbans and caps; their one pair of shoes; tattered, coarse and worn, yet carefully laundered gingham skirts and breeches of iridescent check. Missionaries reported with frustration that slaves readily engaged in the singing and attentively responded to the prayers, but many slept through whole sermons although at the meeting's end they heartily shook hands and thanked the missionary "fur de Wud."[56] Gullah gratitude was probably not so much for the Word as for what it represented in terms of offering an alleviation of routine. Such comments may have been expressions of cynicism. Yet some missionaries evinced a genuine concern and imparted to the Gullahs a different sense of worth and dignity. The most positive and uplifting principles of the "religion of the heart" seeped through the lessons on obedience, subordination, and prostration. And the Gullahs came to recognize a

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175 relationship between Christian imagery and their own historical position. This was the triumph for which the committed amongst the missionaries 799 labored. They added but few "true" Methodists to church rolls but won the "heart" of many slaves. Nevertheless, even at its soul searching, heartrending best, slaves employed Methodism as an exculpation from bondage. Those preaching among the slaves imparted a spiritual ideology founded upon this premise. The dualism of the religion was not lost on the Gullahs.

175 In the period before the national division of the Methodist church, missionary activity was circumspectly observed by slaveholders who feared that antislavery doctrines, inadvertently or otherwise, might be disseminated. The South Carolina Conference instructed that the content of sermons emphasize the "duty" of servants to masters, not because it would avert suspicion, but because the state episcopacy sincerely believed this was the most important element of Christianity to be taught to slaves. In any case, the textbook prepared by William Capers for the use of plantation missionaries, referred to as a catechism, reflected an interpretation of the Christian religion to an enslaved people. The introductory section consisted of hymns, prayers, commandments, the Creed, and portions of the scripture having to do with duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, and servants and masters. The remainder of the little book was in question-and-answer form, obviously designed for slave children. This portion of the text covered parts of the Bible that the South Carolina Conference specifically wanted pointed out, namely, the creation, the fall, and the life and death of Christ.[57]

For sermons, St. Paul provided the missionaries with favorite subjects and was also the apostle most quoted by proslavery elements. Other scriptural texts used ostensibly relegated blacks to a fate of perpetual bondage and aimed at convincing them to accept enslavement as the natural order. Slaves were taught a selective Christianity—a doctrine of contentment and humility. No text espousing such scriptural tenets as "The truth shall make you free" or "The laborer is worthy of his hire" could be preached. There was of course none of the militant Christianity discovered and expounded by the black rebels in Charleston years before. Most of the Old Testament was ignored except when certain passages could serve as a conduit further to reinforce white domination.

One account of the narrow latitude of preaching was left by Lunds-

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175 The "class meeting" was an important method of personal instruction and among the slaves its function was broadened in an effort to quicken their interest in Christianity. In "class," adults were given instruction, doctrines were explained, and general check-ups were made on the progress of individuals. Here the missionary asked and answered individual questions and slaves related the nature of their religious experiences. Also, through examinations in "class meetings" missionaries ascertained the state of Christianity on the plantation, and decided who was ready for church membership. Furthermore, since "class" was held on individual estates, the missionaries could have more impact than at the preaching places. In "class," the missionary could, if he chose, be less didactic and more intimate. Some missionaries elaborated on the most dramatic portions of the Bible, hence capturing the Gullahs' imagination. Through these gatherings the missionary became acquainted with his large "flock," usually getting to know the adults and children by name. He ultimately became a familiar face on the plantations he visited, sometimes welcomed and sometimes resented. William Capers wrote to the slave missionaries:

> Class meetings are especially ours. A missionary should emphatically be these three things—a preacher, a catechist, and a class leader. He must be the class leader, whoever may engage to assist him. . . . Unvaried pains should be taken to instruct them in the nature of Christian experience, both by remarks to the class in general, and to each individual. . . . Organization is a main thing in Methodism, and a main thing for missions. Without it there can be no efficient training, little permanent instruction, no order, no discipline.[40]

But "organization," "order," or "discipline" did not impress the Gullahs as much as the sincerity of motive some missionaries conveyed as they acquainted themselves with their charges. Preachers were required to attend the pastoral needs of their widespread congregation. Although some neglected this feature of their duties, others engaged in the work with deliberate gravity. Many missionaries felt more able to open the slaves' heart to Christianity by this method. Some of the most interesting
175 "Missionary Sketches" printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* were
•797 written by A. M. Chreitzberg, stationed on the Beaufort Mission and elsewhere in the Sea Island region. Chreitzberg wrote from the Sea Islands, summarizing his duties outside the pulpit. He provided illuminating insights into the ways some missionaries merited gratitude and confidence from some of the bondspeople:

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It is not only the duty of the missionary to catechize the children and preach to the adults, but also to visit the sick and aged, and it is here that many a triumph has been achieved for his Lord. Many a dark and benighted soul has been brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Here, too, does he frequently prepare himself for the exercises of the pulpit, for it is here that he learns the way to the negro's heart, and becomes acquainted with his ideas of God and religion. The negro knows that his minister is not ashamed to enter his smoky cabin, to take him by his rough and toil-hardened hand, and talk to him about the way to heaven, or to kneel beside his bed, offer prayer in his behalf, and to pour into his heart the consolation of God's word. It is this that frequently takes his heart captive, and binds him to the cross.[41]

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Here then was the religion of the warm heart at its spiritually redeeming best among the Gullahs. A disarming warmth of feeling, an effort to bridge, spiritually at least, the gap between black and white, slave and free was to serve a definite purpose. Such acts, seemingly prompted purely by human kindness, deeply affected the Gullahs, so unaccustomed to being objects of concern among whites except in matters related to labor. Gradually, the more seasoned missionaries like Chreitzberg began to stimulate a "change of heart" in the slaves. Especially affecting was the adaptation of some sermons and lectures to the daily lives and fortunes of the Gullahs. Hence they came to identify elements of Christianity with their own circumstances. Skillful variation of preaching methods, coupled with a fraternal spirit which the missionaries demonstrated toward the Gullahs, was effective. By the mid-1840s a goodly number of slaves had "professed" their conversion to Christianity under Methodist tutelage.

Missionaries such as Chreitzberg took full advantage of opportunities to service their black congregations in the hope of winning more converts. Below Chreitzberg describes the value to be derived from officiating at a Gullah night funeral:

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"What" says the not-to-be-disturbed-at-night Pastor of a Chapel of Ease, "put yourself to the trouble of burying a *dead* negro?" Why not? We have unsuperable objections to burying a *living* one, but see no reason why the last sad office of the Church should not be performed over the remains of the black man. Has he no affections, are there no weeping friends to be consoled. . . . But apart from this, may not the living be effectually warned? When the dead man lies before them in all his helplessness, stricken down in his prime and (as in this case) suddenly called to the final account,—what better time to read to them a lesson on the uncertainty of life.

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These were golden opportunities for the missionary. The entire plantation gathered to see a body laid to rest in "its narrow house." The preacher first consoled the sorrowful widow, bidding her to trust God, "the husband of the widow and father of the fatherless." He then addressed the dead man's fellow servants on the necessity of preparing for death: "In a word I preached Jesus and the resurrection, and by the glimmering of the lightwood fire, was the burial service read and the body committed to the dust." Upon leaving the plantation late that night, the missionary was moved by thoughts which were probably not very different from thoughts which the slaves who had just witnessed the burial might have, "thoughts on life, on life's duties, on life's end: of the wants and woes of the world."[62]

Once again the missionary capitalized on an opportunity to involve himself in the black community and the slaves' experience. His efforts to share in and add meaning to life and death among the bondspeople helped make him a presence in the quarters even if he came but twice a month. He was, for his caring, often looked upon fondly. Although the missionary represented the same forces of oppression as did the master, the slaves perceived the spiritual arm of the dominant society as perhaps its one redeeming quality, a contradiction to serve the slaves' interests. Still the fondness was more on an individual level. A well-meaning Methodist like Chreitzberg was accepted though all he preached and taught was not. From the slaves' vantage point it was unwise to completely relinquish that which had previously provided spiritual solace and replace it with something new and as yet untried. For missionaries able to secure access to plantations, spiritual rewards might be inspiring if short-lived. Through catechism, "class meeting," and carrying out of pastoral duties, Methodists experienced some triumphs for Christianity. Missionaries never succeeded in dethroning black leadership and felt that this influence continually created obstacles to Christian conversion.[63] Nevertheless, Methodists proved to be relentless in the dissemination of their doctrines. As Gullahs grew more attentive to the preachers' words, they discarded the incongruous and discordant features of the instruction and fashioned the religion of slaveholders into something peculiarly their own.

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One of the most significant effects that Methodism had on Gullahs was in the creation of the religious music of these slaves. Some scholars argue that the actual source of Gullah religious songs can be traced to Methodist hymns and tunes sung at camp meetings. Certainly Methodist

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hymns were adopted by the Gullahs and other slaves. Francis Asbury traveled the seacoasts of Georgia and South Carolina frequently. While he gained few white converts, he was impressed with the black response to his preaching. During the Civil War, musicologists and others, fascinated by Gullah songs, noted that what was sometimes called a "Negro song," was of white origin, especially the so-called religious songs. But to these white melodies, the Gullahs added their own "spirit and relish," giving a "peculiar individuality and nationality" to the music. Thus it is pointless and probably inaccurate to insist that whites and blacks did not create sacred music together when they worshipped together. Such was the case at camp meetings and revivals. Still these gatherings were not as common in the Lowcountry as they were elsewhere. Some writers argue that the camp meeting was distinctly a pineland and upcountry institution. Although evidence indicates that a few camp meetings were held in the rice communities—the hinterlands of the Sea Islands—we find no record of its presence on any of the Islands. The influence of the domestic slave trade, black-white cultural borrowing, and diffusion were all factors in the creation and development of African-American music. Nevertheless, a unique continuity in religious songs can be found in the Sea Islands and coastal lowlands. There were indeed two types of religious music among the Gullahs who adopted Christianity: those songs and hymns learned from white religious instructors and mainly Methodist in origin, and those representing the product of the Gullah's own creativity and imagination, generally referred to as spirituals or prayer songs.[44]

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The primary influence of Methodist preachers on the development of spirituals was in providing Gullahs with raw material for their songs. From past spiritual traditions these African-Americans inherited a mysticism, sense of drama, and creative antecedents that aided them in expressing and interpreting through song the apocalyptic and miraculous elements of biblical narration already rich in symbolic imagery. Also, New Testament biblical lore was not unlike the Gullahs' own oppression and suffering. From the Sea Islands in 1843, A. M. Chreitzberg provides examples of the spontaneous creation of spirituals. In delivering his message, the missionary enforced the concepts of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." At the conclusion of the meeting, the group was "much affected" by a "soft female voice" singing:

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Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
We heares dese people de talk about;
Dis berry same Jesus . . .

Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539]

O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[65]

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The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

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175 764 533 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poignant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

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I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
  Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
  To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
  To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
  Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
  When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
  When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 771 799 567 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubtedly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quickened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

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prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[68] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

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Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

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The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to in-
799 struct them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
152 grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
186 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural" means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
799 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices. The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
175 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
177 anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
178 Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state. In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola), and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to traditions of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
175 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African
799 customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

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from Baptist and Episcopalian masters, and limited contact with black preachers.

The Methodists' systematic religious instruction provided Gullahs with the first opportunity for a uniform type of religious culture. This socio-religious nexus did not vary from plantation to plantation or from island to island. It was based on a moral philosophy, not precluding the preservation to some extent of a continued faith in the customs of African-born forebears. The emerging religious association resembled and gave expression to a world view brought from Africa, common to the Gullahs, and suited to their circumstances. More than any other features of the Christian religion, the Gullahs embraced its moral virtues—humanity, humility, fairness, a sense of the dignity of the sufferer, and belief in the merit of all people. No matter how one regards these values, they are celebrated in Christianity, and it was this spirit in Methodist teachings that the Gullahs accepted. The letter of the law, in a strict Mosaic form, and the Pauline sanction of servitude were rejected. There was little room for internalization of the dogma present in Christianity as taught by whites. That would have negated Gullahs' previous belief patterns and their hatred of bondage. Gullah folk Christianity was an ardently felt religion. It was a religion which elevated them above their masters' efforts to make them contented slaves. Far more than Methodism perhaps, Gullah folk religion was a religion of the heart. Their spirituality helped them channel what was expected to be hopelessness, helplessness, and prostration into the forging and further enrichment of a culture. Through individual stamina, collective faith, and cultural development they merged as a people. Their collective faith kept them spiritually free in spite of physical bondage. Their collective faith, together with spiritual freedom, and matched with natural gifts and talents, provided Gullahs with a will to create, the courage to persevere, and power, as a "prepolitical" people, to use religion as a progressive force and shield against white psychological and cultural domination. This collective faith allowed them to believe in themselves and in their dream of ultimate freedom.[71]

The year 1845 was momentous for the history of slave conversion in South Carolina and for the nation as a whole. At that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention were organized. Both denominations pledged to make a more zealous thrust in Christian instruction of the black population. Also, in May of that year,

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175 South Carolina statesmen and clergy called a meeting in Charleston, inviting slaveholders either to attend or submit in writing information on the state of religious instruction among slaves on their plantations.[72] After that time, Christian conversion of bondspeople occupied a more prominent position in antebellum life and thought. It became an issue with social, economic, political, and even moral implications. What was previously viewed as a movement of questionable value soon transformed into a crusade. As the national scene became more and more polarized because of the slavery issue, it was incumbent upon Southerners, as a defense against their "national character," to see that bondspeople received some type of Christian instruction.

175 •797 Although efforts to Christianize slaves became widespread, Methodist presence in the Sea Island region receded. By the late 1840s Methodism there was more symbolic than effective. Even at the time of the Charleston Meeting, Episcopalian planters most actively solicited the services of Methodist missionaries. However, the fact remains that for nearly fifteen years Methodists were the major Christian influence among the Gullahs, planting a foundation for the growth of Christianity among slaves of the Sea Islands and coastal regions. However, the Baptist denomination, once it engaged in religious instruction, claimed the harvest of "converted" slaves.

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17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

175 •797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 [795] Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

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Even some time after 1831, general Baptist concern for the spiritual well-being of their slaves was limited. Only a small number of churches showed significant increases in church membership in about a ten-year period following the revival. This gradual progression itself was unique to older Sea Island churches. Leading Baptists stimulated to "duty" by the "revival spirit," and mindful of the currents affecting church and state nationally, attempted to generate more Christianizing activity through their influence in the Savannah River Baptist Association. In 1832 the Association formed a committee to seek funds from member churches to hire Baptist missionaries for the slaves. Since this effort was a slow process, the Association further recommended that ministers devote a certain part of their time exclusively to the slaves. The organization went on record as "feeling a deep interest for the spiritual improvement of our colored population, who have hitherto been neglected."[4]

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The committee was composed of large slaveholders, many of whom were also deacons or pastors of the more prosperous churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, Black Swamp, Hilton Head, and Euhaw. These congregations had comparatively large black memberships, and the committee members were known for their "good works" in general and for the interest they took in converting their own slaves. But the resolutions expressed more of the committee's own sentiments and personal concern than a real plan of action. Baptist congregations were autonomous, and slaveholders in the Sea Island region resisted efforts of individuals in the denomination to create a Christian instruction movement. For a variety of reasons, Baptist efforts at slave conversion met with some success where it existed. But if measured in terms of church membership and frequency of exposure, such endeavors, were not extensive.[5]

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About a third of South Carolina's Baptist laymen and two-fifths of the ministers were slaveholders. Baptists in the Sea Island region, the most numerous sect since 1820, counted the wealthiest and largest slaveholders among its numbers. Consequently, antislavery sentiments were never expressed there despite early debates elsewhere in the South. On the contrary, the official opinion of South Carolina Baptists was expressed in 1822 following the Vesey Conspiracy, by Richard Furman of Charleston. "Slavery," wrote Furman, "was clearly established in the Holy Scriptures by both precept and example."[6]

Nevertheless, South Carolina Baptists confronted strong abolitionist sentiment from church members in other regions. As with Methodists, the controversy dominated national meetings in the 1830s. Abolitionists'

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175 primary target was Baptist home and foreign missions. There antislavery
• 797 elements labored to obtain official condemnation of their Southern breth-
567 ren not only for slaveholding but for hypocrisy in attempting to spread Christianity domestically and abroad while ignoring their own bondspeople. Accusations prompted some prestigious Baptists to encourage more attentiveness to slave conversion. However, abolitionist recriminations also infuriated Southern congregations. Sea Island Baptists raged over the presence of abolitionist-oriented home and foreign mission "agents." They also denounced abolitionist dissemination of religious newspapers. One such newspaper, *The Christian Reflector*, which argued against a scriptural interpretation of slavery, was sent to Sea Island churches. Not all Northern Baptists were antislavery. Even some of those who were did not advocate abolition, nor propose interference with slavery. Yet the situation was perceived as threatening in the Lowcountry, and it was impossible to procure a consensus on instruction from congregations whose only tie with the regional association was voluntary. Yet, larger churches continued to scrutinize and contemplate the situation. In 1837 further proclamations were used to stir congregations into activity. The Euhaw Church representatives spoke out on the "spiritual destitution of our colored population," and urged the Association to act. The committee previously formed in 1832 had apparently met with little success, and offered three resolutions on the issue. First, emphasizing the duty of ministers to pay "especial attention" to the slaves' spiritual condition. Second, that the "Domestic Missionary" preach to slaves whenever an "opportunity may be offered him." Third, that the General Committee consider the subject and adopt measures to "best secure to our colored population spiritual instruction."[7]

175 Clearly no real commitment was as yet outlined. A few individual churches were already engaging in evangelism among the slaves and attempting to persuade others. The message was one of urging a sense of responsibility, since the Savannah River Baptist Association lacked power to bind churches to a strong general policy. the Association's resources allowed them to employ one missionary, but mainly to serve whites. He ordained officers, preached at the various established churches with no regular ministers, generally superintended the constitution of new churches, and preached to "destitute" whites. Although not specifically precluded from preaching to slaves, the missionary's other extensive obligations prevented his going to plantations where he was needed or ac-

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cepted. The Association did not gain approval to hire a missionary for the bondspeople until 1839. But he encountered so much opposition that by the end of that year, he had no progress report to make and refused to continue in the position.[8]

Among Northern and Southern Baptist clergymen scriptural arguments over slavery were hotly debated and further hindered Baptist planters' involvement in Christianizing activity. According to planters, Northern Baptists were attempting to "procure the massacre of our wives and children" by preaching that all people of the South had a God-given right to freedom.[9] Certainly slaveholders realized that the Bible denounced bondage as well as supported it. Why else would clergymen emphasize "oral" instruction as a means of Christian instruction? Faced with the double meaning of scriptures and fearing the impact of an egalitarian interpretation of the teachings of Christ, religious instruction of the slaves remained unimpressive in the 1830s among most Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association. The Association attempted to meet the issue head on. To pave the way for a Baptist missionary enterprise, the question of the biblical sanction of slavery needed to be firmly and convincingly laid to rest. In 1841 Association ministers issued their position, hoping the resolution would be accepted as official so the work of Christian conversion could commence:

> Resolved, that the subject of slavery has been discussed until all men who seek candidly for truth must be satisfied. The whole Bible, and all history concur to settle this point, there where Christianity finds slavery existing as one of the institutions of a nation, it tolerates it, and seeks not to disturb the relation of master and servant by violence—but to infuse the spirit of love into each of these parties, and prescribes their respective duties—duties which it becomes us to perform on our part, and which, if performed, would render our slaves the happiest and most contented peasantry on earth.[10]

Thus the spirit of Christianity would inspire "love" and stimulate both master and slave to perform their "duty." For the slave, this duty entailed acceptance of a Christianity that taught meekness, subordination, docility, inferiority, and recognition of the rights of master over slave. The master was "burdened" with the "duty" or instilling these "virtues" in bondspeople to make the slaves' "happiness" and "contentment" complete. Some Baptists became reeducated to this manner of thinking, for the resolution was followed by a request from two Sea Island congrega- [797]

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tions for the services of a missionary, approved by the Association of course.

> The Hilton Head Church, and Dawfuskie Church, request your body to send a missionary to preach on these islands. We want, say they, a man of piety and talents suited to our colored population. Your committee recommend that your messengers to the Sunbury Association be requested to solicit our Br. Farley R. Sweat, of Savannah to engage at once in this work, and to occupy this post. These churches have had their desires turned towards this brother, and God has so clearly intimated his will as to Br. Sweat, that your committee cannot believe he will refuse to yield himself to the call of his master. These churches will contribute liberally to the support of their missionary.[11]

Here we observe the close relationship between the Sunbury Association in Georgia and the Savannah River Association in South Carolina. The African Baptist Church was part of the Sunbury Association, and as previously discussed, South Carolina slaves sometimes joined or attended the black church in Savannah. The proximity of Hilton Head and Dawfuskie Islands to Savannah made this possible. Thus in some areas of the coast, slaves not regularly instructed by white Baptists, were exposed to the faith through members of their own race. This contact went further back than the first Baptist missionary to Hilton Head and Dawfuskie.

These two churches' requests did not stimulate a large-scale movement to hire missionaries, but other Sea Island congregations began individually to engage in spreading Christian influence among the Gullahs. Some Southern religionists and "enlightened" planters had, since the Vesey Conspiracy, been convinced that Christian inculcation of slaves was the best security for the plantation system. But when the Northern and Southern churches severed relations in 1844, such approaches were pursued in earnest. While a sense of obligation was expressed, the prominence which secular motives received in the course of the Christian conversion movement was evident at the Charleston Meeting in 1845. Notables who gathered there to champion the cause of Christianizing African-Americans specified their major concerns:

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> The degree of benefit apparently derived by the Negroes generally from the instruction imparted, and particularly as it regards their morals—their tempers and their conduct . . . their regard to truth—the rights of property—and their observance of the Sabbath.
>
> The influence of this instruction upon the discipline of the plantation and the spirit and subordination of the negroes.[12]

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175 taught by Jesus was "the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order." This religion alone possessed the power to curb passions and to accord each group their rights: "to the laborious, the reward of their industry; to the rich, the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles, the preservation of their honors, and to the princes, the stability of their thrones." Jesus, said Thornwell, did not teach insurrection, anarchy, bloodshed, or revolt against masters. "Christian knowledge inculcates contentment with our lot," he preached, and "renders us comparatively indifferent to the inconveniences and hardships of time." Christian knowledge, persuaded Thornwell, subdued the "passions and prejudices" responsible for endangering the "social economy."[13]

175 In 1848 delegates of the Savannah River Baptist Association took de-
797 finitive action, making Baptists of the Sea Island region among the last to engage in the religious instruction enterprise. Even then only "two or more" missionaries were approved to go among the slaves, and money to support the preachers was solicited not guaranteed. As if planter and congregational opposition were not enough, filling missionary posts also proved a trying task. Ministers often refused to accept the charge. This reluctance can be partly explained by the lack of financial support, which is an index for gauging the degree of earnestness. Contributions were never large, generally ranging from thirty-five to fifty dollars annually, but on several occasions were as low as fifty cents. Not until 1853 did Sea Island slaves receive a missionary through the Association. Yet the cause was not totally lost. The Savannah River Baptist Association succeeded in creating interest in the Sabbath School movement for the young after 1849, and some churches as well as individual planters furthered the Baptist cause through this institution while they spurned organized efforts. Other Baptist slaveholders periodically employed their own missionary, or hired Baptist "exhorters" as overseers.[14]

175 Considering conditions among white Baptist churches during the antebellum era, it is not surprising that so little enthusiasm was expressed over the religious welfare of slaves. Many churches met infrequently, once a month, and shared the same pastor. Often a congregation was without a pastor for whole seasons, and the only services were provided by the Association missionary whenever he had the opportunity. This dearth of spiritual ardor was matched by internal strife in various congregations and general unruliness on the part of members. The missionary was sometimes given the task of settling disagreements which dis-

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rupted a church. He was often unsuccessful. The Savannah River Baptist Association consistently commented on the languid condition of the majority of churches in the 1830s. During the 1840s and 1850s the Association promoted Sabbath Schools not only as a means of instructing slaves, but also to combat the "declension and prevailing coldness" as well as "lack of grace" in white churches. It is surprising that slaves ever received Christian instruction considering the circumstances of Baptist churches without "grace" or filled with "paranoia" about abolitionists. Yet some planters provided plantation meetinghouses for the slaves especially after 1845. Here African-Americans met among themselves under supervision of some "trusted" black elder. Through these "invisible institutions" slaves received some Christian instruction. More significantly, they used these opportunities to interpose their own interpretations on Protestantism. Nowhere was this development more evident than in the Sea Islands. Congregations there were far ahead of their sister churches in terms of wealth, stability, leadership, and an early though gradual commitment to ostensibly integrating Gullahs into the Christian religion.[15]

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Two significant events occurred in the Sea Island region in 1831. First, the presence of Methodist missionaries among the slaves. Second, the appearance of a fiery revivalist named Daniel Baker. Both happenings were determining factors in initiating a "change of heart" among Sea Island Baptists about teaching some Christian doctrines to the Gullahs.

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Baptist planters of the Sea Island region laid claim to a tradition of religious dissent that began long before American independence. Some Baptist founders in the region were early disciples of George Whitefield when the established church refused to admit him to the pulpit.[16] Prominent Beaufort District Baptists of the 1830s, such as the Fripps, Fullers, Lawtons, Chaplins, and Robertses, were descendants of pioneer homeseekers, and identified with a legacy of an evangelism older than American Methodism. Given such claims to revivalist tradition and considering the apostolic dictates of the Faith, Baptist planters may well have experienced some degree of guilt and embarrassment as Methodist "knights of the saddle bags" descended upon the Sea Islands to undertake what thier spiritual brethren had neglected.

Further pressure was brought to bear in 1831 and 1832 as Beaufort District quaked under the forceful impact of a revival initiated by a cultivated and spirited evangelist. Daniel Baker was a Southern Presbyte

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175 rian and former pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Washington, of which both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson were members. He left the Washington Church to accept a pastorship in Savannah and there heavily engaged in evangelical preaching. The impact of Baker's sermons was reportedly felt along the entire seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina. Wherever he preached a steady stream of converts came forth. His was not a mass revival since the seaboard white population was sparse. But hundreds attended the protracted meetings which Baker conducted in "the little sea coast towns and villages" mainly inhabited by planter aristocracy. And his sermons reputedly "moved whole communities." Baker wrote in his autobiography that his South Carolina efforts led to "important results" in places such as Gillisonville, Grahamville, Robertville, May River, and Beaufort. The meetings at Beaufort he deemed "the most remarkable." There was no Presbyterian church so Baker preached alternately in the Baptist and Episcopalian churches. "Oh, what blessed meetings we had!" he wrote. Baker preached three times a day "to full houses," and the numbers "hopefully converted amounted to about eighty."[17]

In regard to the number "hopefully converted" in Beaufort, Baker apparently took only white converts into account. Another section of Baker's autobiography quotes the Episcopal minister as stating that there were "two or three hundred conversions in Beaufort under Mr. Baker's ministry," consisting of "a number of whites," seventy of whom presented themselves for confirmation at the Episcopal church, and "very many blacks," who united with the Baptists.[18] Thus at least some of the slaves from the town of Beaufort participated in the Baker revival.

17 At the time of Baker's appearance the two houses of worship in Beaufort were described by one of thier "eminent laymen" as "little better than masonic lodges." The churches had the form of godliness but were "destitute of its power." The "layman" observed that "frequenters of the race-course and the theater found their places at the communion table," and that not even the duelist was excluded. Baker was credited with stimulating religious enthusiasm among "decadent" members of the planter class. An observer of the 1831 revival noted that in at least one instance derision of Baker's mission was transformed into contrition. Notice of Baker's services was sent from house to house. The announcement was received at a whist club during their weekly meeting. The notice was read aloud "amidst shouts of merriment." The group ridiculed the reli-

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in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, long-time residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

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day worship as well as during the week. Slaves attending Beaufort Church were sometimes instructed by their own masters who were also prominent church elders. Aside from scripture, church discipline and rules of conduct were emphasized.[25]

As a Sea Island planter and a favorite son of the community, Fuller could combat some resistance to religious instruction of the slaves. By 1840 he had organized a system of preaching places on the Islands where he or a member of his staff made periodic appearances. Establishment of these preaching stations furthered the Baptist cause, leading to "conversion" of many plantation slaves. While pastor of Beaufort Church, Fuller was respected among the whites as a sincere, inspiring, and effective minister. He was also popular with the Gullahs. Fuller was one of the very few planters who openly denounced the separation of families. He considered this morally wrong and against biblical law. He refused to sell or divide his bondspeople, an important consideration to black people accustomed to seeing "pious" planters disregard slaves' familial ties at a moment's notice. In addition to observing (like a true patriarch) this fundamental principle of humanity, Fuller adopted an evangelical style of preaching said to be filled with "earnestness, fire and melting pathos." An associate who often heard Fuller preach wrote:

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> His whole mien was imposing. When he rose to address a congregation, his very attitude was that of a man conscious at once that he had a most important message to deliver, and that he had the capacity to deliver it worthily. . . . His voice was singularly sweet and of great compassion and managed with such exquisite skill, that his softest whispers were distinctly heard in the remotest parts of a crowded congregation; while his loudest tones did not jar upon the ears of those nearest the speaker. His gestures were always graceful. . . . He subdued others, because, in the loftiest flights of his imagination and the deepest feelings of his heart, he was master of himself.[26]

Apparently a skillful and arousing speaker, Fuller captured the imagination of the bondspeople, something few white preachers could do. The Gullahs also viewed him as a kind and sensitive man whose "good works" were equal to his "faith." No doubt these considerations explain the eagerness with which he was received and accepted by the Gullahs as a preacher and for the warmth with which they remembered him to the Northern missionaries during the course of the Civil War. The Gullahs even created a stanza for Fuller in one of their most revered spirituals: "Massa Fuller on de Tree ob Life, Roll, Jordan, Roll."

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175 After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into
567 Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in
1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association mission-
•797 ary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Bea-
ker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven
[795] antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the
795 largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May
River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around
794 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District
[162] was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29]
[567] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member.

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In the latter and generally most vigorous period of the movement for Christian instruction from 1845 to 1861, Baptist involvement continued to center in areas where evangelizing efforts were already in progress, such as the Sea Islands. Although several Lowcountry churches did increase their black membership during the period, such augmentation was numerically insignificant. Most membership returns submitted to the Savannah River Baptist Association had racial designations by 1848. These reports indicate that a few individual Sea Island churches maintained fairly large memberships and Beaufort Church had unusual increases. But the majority of Baptist churches in the Lowcountry south of Charleston seemed to fall short of the goal of religious conversion of bondspeople. Actually neither Sea Island Baptists, Baptist missionaries, nor lukewarm Baptist churches adequately "served the spiritual needs" of so large a black population. In 1859, as civil conflict approached, the total black membership of the Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association was not yet 7,000.[30] In some ways these figures are unimpressive, but they nevertheless demonstrate black exposure to Christianity through Baptist efforts. We can also surmise that black church members were the best conduits of the faith in the slave quarters. When this is considered, Baptist influence is even more manifest, for few Gullahs actually joined the Methodist church. Most Gullahs "converted to Christianity" or even adherents of it accepted the denomination of their masters, a preference that continued even after bondage. This raises questions about the nature of Baptist activity among the Gullahs, and why the denomination of slaveholders so strongly appealed to slaves.

Superficially, Lowcountry planters appear to represent "paternalism" par excellence. Those "young and refined" citizens of the Sea Island communities who claimed Daniel Baker for their spiritual patron included such men as C. C. Pinckney, William H. Barnwell, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Stephen Elliott, and Richard Fuller. These men represented the quintessence of South Carolina Lowcountry aristocracy, dominating landholdings and counting their slaves by the hundreds. Beaufort was the chief place of residence for most Baptist planters. But some of the stauncher Baptists such as the Lawtons, Robertses, Bosticks, and Nortons shunned "iniquitous" recreations offered by the Sea Island resort town and created their own manorial splendor at Robertville, Lawtonville, and Gillisonville. These planters reportedly excelled in erudition

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175 while he found nothing explicit to support slavery in the New Testament, Fuller maintained that this silence was tacit approval. "What God sanctioned in the Old Testament and permitted in the New," Fuller proclaimed, "cannot be a sin."[35]

Also, despite Richard Fuller's "professed" views against slavery, he maintained his plantations after leaving Beaufort for Baltimore. During the Civil War he was loyal and remained in Baltimore. Following the outbreak of the war he went to Washington, D. C., and called upon Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire about his rights "in regard to his plantations and slaves in Port Royal." Chase wrote:

> Told him that, as a loyal man, he was Proprietor of the land. "How about the Negroes?" he asked. "They were free," I replied. He thought his right to them was the same as his right to the land. Told him opinion would differ on that point, and that, for one, I should never consent to the involuntary reduction to slavery of one of the Negroes who had been in the service of the Government. Told him further what I thought of the character of the rebellion and its results, etc.

The conversation concluded with Fuller indicating his willingness "to acquiesce in the experiments of the Government," but having "grave doubts" about the ability of the Gullahs to behave responsibly as free people. Fuller quoted Machiavelli's saying, "Next to making free men slaves, it is most difficult to make slaves free men."[36]

Richard Fuller may have been antislavery in "principle" and in theory. But in reality he upheld American slavery as a white man's right. Yet, while his theoretical position on slavery was ambiguous, he was unwavering in efforts to expose the black population in St. Helena Parish to Christianity and in his support of such endeavors all over the state.

175 797 At a glance, it appears that during the apex of the antebellum era, Sea Island Baptists combined the qualities of material wealth and an exhibition of missionary zeal. The small white memberships and disproportionately large black galleries ostensibly imply that in the wake of paranoia about abolitionists and general inertia among most Lowcountry churches, Sea Island Baptist planters were exemplary in Christianizing slaves. Yet to what extent did Sea Island Baptist planters actually further the cause of Christianity among the Gullahs? And, insofar as they did, were such teachings instituted out of an acknowledgment of Christian duty? Without denying the individual motivation and limited sense of moral obligation expressed by one such as Richard Fuller, Baptist con-

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cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo.

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### *"Christian" Slaves*

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave:

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> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading

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to the slave galleries be moved to the outside so that the two races would not have to pass each other, or use the same entrance when they met to worship God in common.[37] One can thus imagine the disdain that "gentle" white folk felt at being in close quarters with field slaves.

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Some whites considered it a dangerous practice to allow slaves to leave plantations to attend church no matter what their status. Thomas Fuller, Episcopalian brother of the venerable Richard, reported on the state of religious instruction at the Charleston Meeting. Fuller complained that the habit of black church members descending upon the town of Beaufort was deplorable:

> Removed as so large a number are, every Sunday from the control and discipline of the plantation, and impossible as it is for the Church to know and control their conduct, they use their liberty in ways and for purposes adverse to their morals. Nothing seems to me more essential in order to their becoming a religious people, than that they be subjected to the supervision of the plantation, of the minister of a Church, that will investigate and correct their wrong views and bad habits. . . . It is owing, I think, to the want of religious instruction and discipline on the plantations, that the influence of religious instruction and the spirit of subordination among the negroes is so little seen and felt.[38]

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Baptist planters themselves recognized and attempted to confront these problems. As church memberships increased, a means of superintending the widespread congregation and keeping slaves on the plantations was needed. Black church members were organized into plantation associations under the jurisdiction of the church.

These "black societies" were the nucleus of the Gullah socioreligious community. They existed even before preaching stations were established and were reportedly religious bodies which slaves entered into voluntarily, although the nature and origin of these societies was unknown. Methodist missionaries found them already organized and a hindrance to Methodist authority among the slaves, especially when their practices were under the rubric of Christianity. In 1833, John Field, a St. Helena planter, wrote to the Methodist missionary assigned to the island. Speaking for himself and "others," Field expressed his disapproval of the societies, and of the slaves' association with the Baptist Church on St. Helena. According to Field, the slaves who joined the church were "almost entirely under the control of Negro leaders." The Methodist missionary's preaching on the island prompted "constant ap-

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plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

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The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the elders] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

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Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

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Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

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bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructors of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

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a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Commandments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

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Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

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> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when considering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found

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and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed the slightest thing."[56]

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa," was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney" were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised. Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort, these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

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175 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same
581 woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the
586 one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches oper-
795 ated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gul-
797 lahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and
993 social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those cho-
(554) sen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influ-
(797) ential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

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tical about employing blacks even as helpers. William Capers insisted that "helpers" only be "a feeble staff—not leaned upon. They can no more do the missionary's work than a staff can walk." On the other hand, Sea Island Baptists placed much Christian teaching on the shoulders of black leaders. Methodists were consistently confronted with the problems created by this difference in tactical approach. After 1845 most black elders operated with the approval of slaveholders. Some, according to Methodists, had rudimentary knowledge of Christianity. But most, said the missionaries, represented "the very essence of ignorance and superstition." Some slaves came to Methodists' preaching and "precious seasons" and "effusions of tears would ensue." But Methodists lamented that slaves immediately deserted them for "one of their own":

> Let it be known that one of these [slaves] is to preach on such a day and there is such a rush . . . that they may have the pleasure of hearing one of their own color . . . what else than mischief can be expected from the teaching of an ignorant enthusiast who knows nothing of God's word, and puts his own delusions in the place of divine truth? . . . and they say that whenever they come to hear me, it is from duty . . . because I am employed by their owners.[77]

Wherever Baptists authorized Christian instruction, Methodists found black leaders and black societies. "The society exerts its influence against us which is remarkably strong," wrote the missionary at Pocotaligo in 1844. "This 'society' is altogether in the hands of the colored people who are actively engaged against us." Thus black leaders struggled to maintain their position among their people and continued preaching and practicing their own version of "Christianity." Methodists hoped the establishment of missions would fragment the influence of black teachers and thus foster the cause of "true" religion. A lengthy editorial was printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* in 1846 where the author discussed the "deplorable exhibition of pseudo religion" among slaves of the large plantations in coastal South Carolina:

> The superstitious notions prevalent here and there, are probably the reflects of—more ancient superstitions, handed down by tradition and propagated by so called *leaders*, who prior to the preaching of the gospel by . . . the missionaries . . . wielded a fearful amount of spiritual influence among their followers, and the negro communities of the plantations generally. And it is what with remarkable tenacity these superstitious actions still maintain their hold in spite of a better teaching. Instead of giving up their visionary religionism, embracing the simple truth . . . our missionaries find them endeavoring to incorporate their

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superstitious rites with a purer system of instruction, producing thereby a hybrid, crude, and undefinable medley of truth and falsehood.[78]

Many missionaries saw slave children as the future of the enterprise. Others were even skeptical about that. According to one Methodist, "so far does prejudice extend, even the children on some of these places refuse to be instructed, because of the example of their parents and the older ones." Many Baptist planters left instruction of the young in the hands of plantation "help" who taught the children prayers and whatever else their religious instruction consisted of. Gradually, Methodists were forced to admit that despite their consistent though infrequent preaching and catechizing, they could not successfully compete with black leadership operating clandestinely or with the approval of Baptist churches and slaveholders.[79]

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The Episcopalian mission established in 1849 on the Sea Isalands took away the near monopoly that Methodist missionaries previously had among a number of Episcopalian planters. Episcopalian slaveholders observed the same uninterested attitude among the slaves as Methodists witnessed. John Edwin Fripp, a St. Helena Episcopalian, allowed his slaves to attend the preaching of a diocese missionary while Fripp himself was in residence on the plantation. But given a choice, few showed up to hear "Mr. Welch" when the minister was on the plantation. According to Fripp's Journal:

> Sat. Dec. 19th—Rev. Welch is down tonight lecturing to the Negroes. Will go to Seabrooks in the Morning. The Negroes appear very backward in coming to hear him. They are getting tired of religion I expect.

No doubt "religion" was not what tired Fripp's slaves, but the dry "lecturing" wliich often characterized missionary sermons. Gullahs realized that plauters were not truly concerned with their spiritual welfare and the they recognized the one-sidedness of their situation. An old coachman on the same Fripp plantation stated "massa been unjust to we. Take all we labor and get rich, then say we lazy, Can't care for we self, give us two suits a year, dat our wages."[80] No one need wonder about the degree of enthusiasm Gullahs had for the religious emissary of such masters.

Thus, a key to understanding the appeal of the Baptist faith for Gullahs lies in recognizing the slaves' rationale. Methodist emphasis on order and hierarchy left little room for internal flexibility in the denomina-

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tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation.

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently.

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him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion as a special gift with a unique essence:

> God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

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doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own religion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to 1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who, with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed "religious deterioration" among the former slaves:

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[2]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Missionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "practical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

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how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "General Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following:

> Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
> O Lord, yes my Lord
> . . . . . .
> In de mornin' when I rise,
> Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .
> . . . . . .
> I would not let you go, my Lord,
> I would not let you go,
> . . . . . .
> I can't stay behin' my Lord,
> I can't stay behin'[4]

Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude toward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

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"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

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175 standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves
795 attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of
797 religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term
567 and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary
175 provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of
787 the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'"
567 process:

> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river.
> When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

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adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter-of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

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gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature.[11]

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith.

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Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

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institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage. And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event, the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed. By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement, restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa. Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs, beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order, while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell, who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in 1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking, prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

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At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner. [154]

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also, while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38] [533]

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Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vocally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

. . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

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761 Another spiritual expressed a sense of optimism and a superior atti-
533 tude toward death:
(539)

> O Massa Death,
> He's a very little man,
> He goes from door to door;
> He kills some souls,
> and he woundeth some.
> Good Lord remember me;
> Good Lord remember me;
> Remember me as the years roll round,
> Good Lord, remember me.[2]

771 In Christian belief the finality of death was often negated. One of the
761 most appealing aspects of Christianity for Gullahs was the expectation
177 of a better life after death. This afterlife was not visualized in the African
•791 sense, that an individual's status would not differ from one's mortal po-
775 sition. Instead, Gullahs strongly adopted the Christian concept of heaven,
567 where all "true believers" would sit on "Christ's right side." For obvious reasons, this was one of the tenets of Christianity they most cherished.[3] While their African world view encouraged Gullahs to take a rich, positive attitude toward life, through Christian influence they expected a better life as payment for their suffering. As one person expressed it:

> De harder me cross to bear down here de better I go be prepare to tek me place in dat Happy Land where all is 'joicin, an' when I git dere, I want de Lord to say, "Ophelia . . . come an' rest wid de elect ob de Lord!"[4]

There was little in Gullah prayers or songs to indicate they feared the tribunal expected to reward the "faithful" and damn the "sinners." Thus they disregarded that portion of their religious instruction which strenuously emphasized a judgment day where "every theft or falsehood" would be brought to light and held against them. What was more important to the Gullahs was a change in their conditions. Just as Baptist slavemaster Daniel Pope queried Marcus, the Praise House elder, as to whether the Gullahs really believed Christ wanted "black nigger in heben," so were slaves convinced that the "Kingdom of God" would have almost no white subjects. Gullah Christianity was one of recompense. Slaves accepted the Christian doctrine of eternal life but modified it so that heaven was an exclusive place, primarily available to sufferers of the right hue as expressed by a former slave:

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It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

567 177 177

Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power, and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

761 (797) (177) (178)

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "death-watch":

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This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

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APPENDIX B

# *Excerpts from a "Missionary Sketch" Written by Thomas D. Turpin to the Christian Advocate and Journal, January 31, 1834.*

. . . the number of adults to whom I had access in preaching were about 795
1,000, one third of whom were in the Baptist Church and in the negroes 797.
societies, and almost all of them under Baptist influence; and that a great
many of those lived on an island who scarcely ever saw the pastor of the
Church to which they belong. Hence they had societies organized among
themselves; and that those societies were very corrupt, and appeared to 681
be very much under the influence of Roman Catholic principles; and that
they did penance, and the following was a specimen, viz; that they had
three degrees of punishment, and that the punishment was inflicted
agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the
crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to
pick up a quart of benne seed poured on the ground by the priest; and
if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third, a quart of corn; and
that they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative
to those who ought to be punished; and that it was also a rule among
them never to divulge the secret of stealing; and if it should be divulged
by any one member, that one had to go on the low seat, or pick up the
benne seed. I observed, having to contend with all this superstition and 797

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797 ignorance, together with their prejudices against Methodism, that I had added very few to the Church; and I had, moreover, strived very little to do this, but rather strived to beat down their prejudices and to establish a better principle of religion among them, all of which I should not presume any person in this low country would attempt to contradict.

But it appears to have injured the feelings of many of the Baptist friends. I did not intend to injure their feelings, nor any other persons. Notwithstanding, though it has been said, that I have shot a ball particularly at the Baptists, and in its glance it has hit the Episcopalians. If it has made any mortal wound by its being received in a light different from what I intended I feel it my duty to heal the wound.

797 795 In regard to the words Baptist influence, it has also been observed, that it has generally been received as intending to mean that the whites have knowledge of those corruptions among the negroes, and tolerate them. I had no such meaning. I simply meant that the negroes were under the peculiar influence of the Baptist tenets. Now, unless the Baptist tenets tolerate the doing of penance (which the world knows to the contrary), it could not mean that they tolerated these things among the negroes. It is notorious that almost all of the negroes in the bounds of my mission are prejudiced in favor of the Baptist Church.

681 As it respects the picking up of the benne seed, it has been said that it was not a very likely thing that it could be done in one night. In answer to this, I heard a gentleman say, no longer than last week, that the rule was, if it was not done in one night, they had to continue until they did it—Again, as regards those of whom I spoke, who scarcely ever 795 saw the pastor of the Church to which they belong, they were a set of negroes belonging to Andrew Marshall's church of Savannah. It may be objected that Andrew Marshall is nothing more than a negro. If he is, that does not derogate at all from the truth of the assertion made in the letter stated above. The negro has been authorized by the Church to preach and baptize.—He has done it, and he has baptized a great many in this low country; and those of whom I spoke are in that number. He is the only pastor that those negroes have on the island. He never comes to see them, nor any other Baptist minister. Therefore the facts remains, there are many negroes on Bull's Island that scarcely ever see the pastor of the Church to which they belong. This is the light in which I in- [797] tended it should be received . . . the little negroes improve on the mission, but the adults are about the same as represented in the above statement.

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18. Charles Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC. See also Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 218–19; Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), I: 244–45; *SCA*, July 14, 1863 and December 29, 1843; Allen Diary, 18, 127–28, 151–54.

19. For an extensive bibliography on works about Gullahs and the need for more modern approaches, see Mary A. Twining, "Sources in the Folklore and Folklife of the Sea Islands," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 39 (1975): 135–50; In 1980 the *Journal of Black Studies* devoted an entire issue to Sea Island culture. Twining and Baird, eds., *Journal of Black Studies;* Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, passim; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), passim.

20. Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 291; Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," quoted in Edwin C. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79; Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed. and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), 13–14, 76–79; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row. 1965), 72–76; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860" (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16–17; Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Henry Irving Tragle, *The Southhampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Materials* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Rev. Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism Among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 79–79.

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27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere. 991 113 [191]

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16. 171 113

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30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

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*Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 25; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 196–97. There was a tendency some early missionaries to indiscriminately refer to Indians and Africans as "black Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 39, n. 20.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 37–38; Samuel Thomas to Dr. Bray, January 20, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Thomas Nairne to Dr. Marston, August 20, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 2.

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14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68, 69–70, 72; Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–26.

15. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–74; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colo-*

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*nial Slavery*, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606.

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21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19.

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51.

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13.

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

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175 29. Ibid., 113–30.
113 30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

17 31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9
• 797 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of
113 South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

175 32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson,
113 *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially "appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

(797) 38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin
175 Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.
5.7 39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.
113 40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

(794) 42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

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43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

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44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

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51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

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54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville: E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

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cock Jones. But Jones began about ten years after Capers. See Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 39–45 and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155–57.

11. Andrew, "Slave Population," 314–15.

12. Ibid., 316–19, 322.

13. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 356–61, 365–66, 452–53, 460–62; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 350–62. For a different, more sympathetic view of the Methodists, see Sidney G. Diamond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), passim, especially 18–41, 87–103, 254–73.

14. Andrew, "Slave Population," 321.

15. Letter about the life of George W. Moore, missionary to the slaves in South Carolina, written at the time of his death in 1863 (name of writer of the letter is illegible), HSSCC; Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; *CAJ*, March 16, 1932. Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Pinckney, *Address*, 23, (Appendix); Andrew, "Slave Population," 314; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 66–69. Both Jackson and Fickling take the position that the South Carolina Conference made the first moves toward religious instruction. They probably got this impression from Jones, *Religious Instruction*. In Georgia, two associations were formed by planters for religious instruction in 1830–31. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155.

16. *CAJ*, April 12, 1833, January 22, 1836; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, January 9, 1839, 14–18, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288–91, 295–96; Andrew, "Slave Population," 315–16; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 72–73.

17. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer letter, n.d. (between 1835 and 1836), SHC; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 90–91; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 93–96; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, *CAJ*, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 86; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96.

18. Van Rensselaer letter, SHC.

19. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

20. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 78–79; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

21. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 74–80; Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–18; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 86–87. For an excellent treatment on this surge of activity, see Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4.

22. *CAJ*, May 3, 1833, October 22, 1833.

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23. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Virginia C. Holmgren, *Hilton Head: A Sea Island Chronicle* (Hilton Head, S. C.: Hilton Head Publishing, 1959) 61–67; James Kirk to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 12, 1833, HSSCC.

24. Holmgren, *Hilton Head*, 130–31; William Pope, Sr. to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834. HSSCC.

25. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834: James Sealy to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

26. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

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27. George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of*

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175 *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University 19 (1941): 3, 7; Wilfred D. Hambley, "Initiation of Boys in Angola," *American Anthrologist*, 37, ser. 2, (1935): 36–40.
697
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23. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

29. Ibid. and June 20, 1934.

175 30. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–90. The First African Church's
112 association with white ministers and with the regional Baptist Association was anything but smooth. Because many members were slaves, the African Church was subjected to jurisdictions contrary to Baptist policy. In January 1833, Marshall was barred from preaching in his own pulpit, and the Church expelled from Georgia's Sunbury Association. This struggle and turmoil lasted for five years. The Church managed to keep its status, but lost many members before returning to the good graces of white Baptists. See,Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–94.

31. *CAJ*, October 4, 1833.

32. Ibid.

175 33. John Coburn to the Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 16, HSSCC.
697
112 34. John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 14, 1834, January 31, 1834, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836. Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, July 29, 1836; Pierce Butler to James Smith; March 19, 1839, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 38 Letterbook 1838–1840, HSP; *SCA*, June 26, November 13, 1840.

35. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 9, 1839, 18 and December 25, 1844, 19, HSSCC.

36. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14, HSSCC; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 71–72; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 35; *SCA*, February 23, 1844; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, January 13, 1847, 11, and February 10, 1855, 18, HSSCC; *SCA*, May 25, 1855; *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 13, 1860, HSSCC; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 188.

175 37. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pan-
567 theon Books, 1974), passim, but see especially 3–7, 91–93, 119–20, 135–36, 89–91, 597–
112 98, 658–59; Records of Coffin Point Plantation, St. Helena Island, 1800–1821, SCHS; John Stapleton Papers, St. Helena, 1790–1839, SCL: Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, Beaufort Township Library; Kemble, *Journal*, 42–45, 75; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of A Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986) 30, 55; Diary of Laura M. Towne, Penn School Papers, SHC; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 74–77, 104, 108–12; Major Pierce Butler to John Cooper, March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

38. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 134–35; R. King, Jr. "On Management of the Butler Estate and Cultivation of Sugar Cane," *Southern Agriculturalist* (December, 1828): 597; Kemble, *Journal*, 42. For a different version, one which views the power of the driver as representing an enlargement of black autonomy for Lowcountry slaves in general, see Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the*

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Greenwood Press, 1973; repr. of 1940 ed.), xviii–xix. Civil War missionaries reported seeing Africans in the Sea Islands. Towne Diary, 12, reads: "I saw at church from Gabriel Eddings plantation a woman brought from Africa. Her face was tatooed. She seemed of a more vigorous stock"; Harriett Ware, related an account of her meeting a black steward from the *Wabash* in Port Royal. He had just returned from Africa where a slave ship *Ariel* and its slave-pirate were taken. "He gave us a most interesting account of the whole affair, as he went on board with the Captain when he ordered the hatches to be opened and the nine hundred blacks were discovered." Pearson, *Port Royal*, 225.

48. *SCA*, May 1, 1840; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), 5, 151; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, v. 4, SHC; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC.

49. Allen Diary, passim and 139.

50. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Federal Writers Program, *Drums and Shadows*, Chapter 6; ield to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC.

51. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836.

52. *CAJ*, July 22, 1836.

53. Ibid., June 26, 1835; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843.

54. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49.

55. *SCA*, June 26, 1840; *CAJ*, July 17, 1835.

56. John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 189; Kemble, *Journal*, 58; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, April 25, 1834, September 25, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 24, 1839, June 30, 1843, September 29, 1843.

57. William Capers, *A Catechism for the Use of the Methodist Minions* (Charleston: J. S. Burges, 1833), passim; *SCA*, January 31, 1851.

58. Andrew, "Slave Population," 317–18; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 26, 1838, June 30, 1843; Charles C. Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), 14; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96. Quoted in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, as Revealed in His Letters* (Northhampton, Mass: Smith College, 1925), 14–15.

59. John Bunch to Missionary Society, South Carolina Conference, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, April 10, 1833, September 9, 1833, January 24, 1835, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, December 22, 1843, February 23, 1847; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 298–99.

60. Bunch to Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; *CAJ*, February 7, 1834, June 13, 1834, October 17, 1834, June 26, 1835; *SCA*, April 8, 1842, January 29, 1847, May 6, 1848, March 28, 1851; Crum, *Gullah*, 218.

61. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

62. Ibid.

63. *SCA*, July 14, 1843, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843, August 13, 1847, May 18, 1849, September 6, 1850, May 25, 1855.

64. John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864. Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y. The most well-known individual who argues that Gullah music came from Methodist hymns is Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), ix–xi, 6–8, 74–84; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 159–68. Betts provides a history of the camp meetings in South Carolina and lists

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the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

## 7. *To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861*

1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

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stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

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2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10, BC; see Appendix C.A Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

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3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 11, February 18, 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C,A see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociogical Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1974), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

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8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839, 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A. [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

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175 113 *of Charleston Meeting*, 5–6, 14; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, October 21, 1841, 4, BC.

12. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 14–15.

13. "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Almira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," John H. Tucker to T. D. Grimke, n.d., early in 1845, SCHS; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72; "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6, November 24, 1849, 7–8, BC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; John B. Adger, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev. J. B. Adger of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*, May 9, 1847 (Charleston: T. W. Haynes, 1847), 12–13, and *Life and Times*, 164–99; Reverend Alexander Glennie, *Sermons Preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844), passim; Charles Colcock Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, 27–33; and *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Savannah: T. Purse, 1844), passim; Reverend A. F. Dickson, *Plantation Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855), passim; Tupper, *Baptist Church of South Carolina*, 317–18; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 71–85; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4; Rev. J. H. Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters. A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of A Church Erected in Charleston, S. C., For the Benefit and Instruction of the Colored Population* (Charleston; Steam-Power Press, 1850), 48–51.

14. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6–7, November 24, November 26, 1853, 10–11, November 25, 1854, 19, November 23, 1855, 12, November 14, 1857, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, November 11, 1843, 66, BC; Benedict, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, 39.

15. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, passim, BC; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 7, 1853, 179, BC; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History: A Historical Sketch of the Old Black Swamp Church," Lawton Family Papers, SCL.

175 16. See Chapters 3 and 4.

113 17. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1831, 18–20, BC; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Diary of William P. Hill, 1833–39, SHC (Hill was a Universalist from Maine who went South for health reasons and became a Baptist preacher); Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 67–68; W. H. Dowling, "Black Swamp Church," n.d., SCL; Baker, *Life and Labours*, 144–45, 157, 169–73.

18. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed. "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 34–36.

17 19. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–36.

113 20. *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Stoney, "*Autobiography of Grayson*," 34–37.

21. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 154–55.

(194) 22. Racial designations were not yet indicated nor names of slaves included on membership rolls. But the slaves' acceptance into the church was recorded in the Minutes. *Minutes*,

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*Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2.

24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 67–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.3.

29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

31. Baker, *Life of Laboure*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philanthical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham. Duke University Press. 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

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57. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Allen Diary, 37, 71, 87–88; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Whipple, July 3, 1863, AMA; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 32–33, 40–41.

58. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 377; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 674; Allen Diary, 32, 143; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158–59, 162, 179–81, III (3) 273–75.

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59. Allen Diary, 47–48, 103, 118, 136; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 150–54, 164–65.

60. Allen Diary, 48, 62, 72, 84.

61. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 456–58.

62. Ibid., 124.

63. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, March 31, 1849, 133, May 5, 1849, 134, June 30, 1849, 135, BC.

64. Thomas Wentworth Higginson to Louisa Higginson, October 23, 1863, Papers of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Allen Diary, 91–92; Typescript copy of Diary of Laura M. Towne (varies from Ms. Diary), April 3, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. I, SHC. Theodore Rosengarten perhaps in support of arguments favoring paternalism on the Sea Islands (a point on which we disagree), maintains that black sentiments toward matters "were sometimes not always understood or accurately rendered by the people who solicited information." He cites by example, Laura Towne's reaction to Clarence Fripp's relationship with his slave Rachel. They lived together openly, and during the war, Fripp deeded over his plantation to Rachel. Towne said Fripp "led an infamous life, too bad to write of, to vile to speak of." Rosengarten implies that Towne's disgust toward Fripp centered on his living with Rachel. Yet Laura Towne was not so naive as to condemn Fripp for this alone, However, she was very upset upon learning that Clarence and his two brothers passed Rachel around for sexual favors. "She lived with her master and his two brothers infamously and her children are almost white," wrote Towne. Thus Towne reacted to the wanton license exercised by the Fripps toward slave women. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 166; Towne Diary Typescript, February 14, 1864, Penn School Papers, vol. 2, SHC.

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65. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 162–274; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 358–61, 450–53; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 34; Fripp Diary, 60; Allen Diary, 103; Towne Diary, 14, 20.

66. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 214–20; Towne Diary Typescript, April 3, 1862; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 593.

67. *Minutes, Prince William Baptist Church*, May 20, 1865, 107, SCL.

68. March 14, 1824, in Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Black Swamp Church Mss., SCL; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158; William Tillinghast, *Address to Baptist Ministers of the U. S. Who Hold Slaves by A Minister of the Ministerial Conference of the Black River Association* (Antwerp:, 1845), New-York Historical Society.

69. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 3–4; November 25, 1849, 9, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, April 9, 1841, 15, BC.

70. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1839, 9, BC.

71. Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 158–61; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 201; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

72. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 374–76.

73. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 155; Laura M, Towne to Wendell Phillips Garrison, June 8, 1867, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room Cornell University.

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175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1843.

76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to [795] baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field [797] to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[793] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31, [797] 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

113 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

### 8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to 175 be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn., 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the 113 Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: 797 A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

113 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought* 799 *from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford Univer- 795 sity Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave [28]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr. Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
• 797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
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[28] The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.

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ber of tradesmen on a plantation depended upon the size of the slaveholding and the plantation economy of the owner, every planter on St. Helena Island who owned as many as thirty slaves had at least one tradesman, usually a carpenter. Sometimes the planter had a head carpenter and several subordinates. The Trescot house on Barnwell Island near St. Helena, which had just been completed at the outbreak of the Civil War, was built entirely by Trescot's own carpenters, such work as window sashes and panellings being done in Charleston.[14]

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The carpenter did the building and repair work of the plantation, and when work was slack at home he was usually hired out to neighboring plantations or to some reliable person in Beaufort or Charleston. For instance, in August, 1841, Miss Mary B. Elliott, of Beaufort, paid $69.50 "to Mrs. Oswald's York for carpenter work."[15] In 1851 H. M. Stuart, of Beaufort, paid Joe $19 for plastering a room and $1.50 for mending a chimney.[16]

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Thus, some of the plantation tradesmen exercised as many liberties as free Negroes, and they commanded a position of respect among their fellow slaves. Miss Laura M. Towne, a missionary to St. Helena during the Civil War, found Will, a cabinet-maker on one of the Capers plantations, "very discontented because he was ordered to the field, there being no work at his own trade to do." He was able to read and was "very intelligent and self-respecting."[17] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited James Ham-

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[14] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, p. 145. Congressman William Elliott took this house down in 1876, hosted it to the town of Beaufort, and erected it just as it had been on Barnwell Island. The house is now owned and occupied by Dr. M. G. Elliott.

[15] Elliott Account Book.

[16] [illegible] Account Book.

[17] *Letters and Diary of Laura M.* [illegible]

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Town, New Jersey, visited Beaufort and the neighboring Sea Islands in 1785 he recorded in his diary, "The planters all fix at a distance from the road with avenues cut through the woods leading up to their houses. The Negro houses are laid out like a camp & sometimes resemble one."[37] The Negro quarters, or "nigger-house yard," or "nigger street," as they were variously called, did, indeed, resemble a camp spread out a quarter of a mile back of the master's or overseer's house. Edward L. Pierce in 1862 described the houses of the field hands on St. Helena Island as being "ranged in a row, sometimes in two rows fronting each other. They are 16 feet by 12, each appropriated to a family, and in some cases divided with a partition. They numbered on the plantations visited 10 to 12, and on the Coffin plantation they are doubled, numbering 23 double houses intended for 46 families."[38] Later he reported that on some of the plantations the cabins were "ill-conditioned being without chimneys,"[39] so that when there was a fire inside, the occupants were engulfed by a great cloud of smoke. In 1862 Miss Laura M. Towne described the quarters on the Eddings Point plantation, the Edgar Fripp plantation, and on one of the Jenkins plantations as "wretched hovels" with wooden chimneys and general squalor.[40] Later in the same year Charles P. Ware, another missionary to St. Helena Island, found the houses on the McTureous plantation "terribly out of repair, with wooden chimneys and mud floors."[41]

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[37] Joseph W. Barnwell (ed.), "Diary of Timothy Ford, 1785-1786," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XIII, 145.
[38] Pierce, "Report," in *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, 304.
[39] MS in Port Royal Correspondence, E. L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, April 1, 1862.
[40] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 57.
[41] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 77.

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voted; it is quite a relief to see anything so patriarchal, after the apparently uncomfortable relations of masters and servants in the Northern States."[2] Sir Charles Lyell, another distinguished English guest in this coastal family, thought the condition of the slaves was "more like that formerly existing between lords and their retainers in the old feudal times of Europe, than to any thing now to be found in America."[3]

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Even the slaves themselves admitted that they were generally well-treated. All on St. Helena Island agreed that, while most of them had "good Massa," certain planters were "Massa Debil heself."[4] The Coffin Negroes reproached the northern missionaries who came to the Island after the capture of Port Royal in 1861 with the fact that there was no "confusion" when they belonged to "Ole Massa."[5] Yet other Negroes were careful to show the missionaries their scars from the lash, and one woman solemnly reported that four babies had been "killed within her by whipping."[6] Miss Laura M. Towne found in one dining room "a whipping-post and pulley for stretching and whipping,"[7] which was probably a fly brush with which some facetious person had tried Miss Towne's credulity.

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There was far less cruelty practised on the sea-island slaves than northern sympathizers were inclined to be-

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[2] Murray, *Letters From the United States, Cuba and Canada*, p. 220.

[3] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 261.

[4] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers, Port Royal, May 18, 1862.

[5] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 165.

[6] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 58. For other instances of cruelty practised by St. Helena planters see Sarah M. Grimké, *American Slavery As It Is*. It must be remembered that this book was published to prove a case against slavery and that many of the accusations are obviously absurd.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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567 reluctantly. To check upon the comings and goings of the people it was customary to have "list" twice a day on Sunday when the names of all the men were called, from which none was excused except those who were sick or who had tickets. At the evening list "every negro must be clean and well washed."[46]

### RELIGION AND EDUCATION

567 797 While it is undoubtedly true that some planters in the early days of the introduction of slave labor into South Carolina were hesitant about allowing their Negroes to become christianized for fear that it might elevate them above their chattel state,[47] by the opening of the antebellum period masters quite generally came to look upon the conversion of the Negroes as one of the justifications of slavery. They not only encouraged the various religious denominations to send missionaries to their slaves, but they often built plantation churches for the special use of the Negroes and permitted their sons and daughters to instruct the slaves from the Bible. Missionaries, appointed by the church but chiefly paid by the planters, preached to the Negroes and catechized them. Ministers prepared special sermons and catechisms for them. Bishop Meade of the Episcopal denomination published his *Sermons, Dialogues and Narratives for servants, to be read to them in families* in Richmond in 1836, and the second edition of Rev. Charles C. Jones' *The Catechism for*

[46] Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[47] *The South-Carolina Gazette*, March 27, 1742.

"WE [the Grand Jury at Charles Town] present, . . . that, by influence of . . . HUGH BRYAN, Great Bodies of Negroes have Assembled together on Pretence of religious Worship, Contrary to Law, and destructive to the Peace and Safety of the Inhabitants of this Province."

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*Colored Persons* was published in Savannah in 1837. These are only two of many such works published in the South. 567 797

The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist denomination collected for their missions to the Negroes between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars in 1837 and in 1840 reported nineteen missionaries, thirteen missions, 232 plantations administered unto, 5,482 members, and 3,811 children.[48] Very little data can be obtained concerning the activities of the Baptist denomination among the sea-island Negroes, although it is known that more of them adhered to the Baptist faith than to any other. In the summer of 1838 a revival of religion commenced among the Negroes of Liberty County, Georgia, and spread throughout the entire coastal region of South Carolina and Georgia, continuing for two years. During that time the Congregational Church in Liberty County and the Baptist churches throughout the region greatly added to their colored membership.[49]

In addition to the space reserved for slaves in the rear and in the gallery of "Brick Church" on St. Helena Island, practically every plantation had its own "praise house" where the people held their weekly services. In case the planter provided no separate building, services were held in the cabin of the religious leader. Miss Towne wrote to a friend shortly after she reached St. Helena Island in 1862 that the praise house was "always the cabin of the oldest person in the village of negro houses."[50] She was 567 796 346 567 346

[48] Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States*, pp. 82, 83.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[50] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 20.

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567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
535 first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
535 by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the body of the song and clapping their hands together or on their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic, and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

567 Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
796 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
• 799 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 278; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.

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175 657 797

the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy" with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

175 657 797 75 064

Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43] Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable," and they often slept on the floor at night without a change of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

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To the superintendents the family life of the people was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community. Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22. [44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[46]

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But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

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Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

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[46] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

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The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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192 Bob, dat's a regular Baptis' match—'e wunt bow 'e head in none but 'e own house,"—referring to the Close Communion of the Baptists.

.802 The ordinals, second, third, etc., are expressed by *two-time, three-time*, etc., or simply by the cardinals, as *two Chucsday, two T'ursday, two place*, the "second Tuesday, Thursday, place."

*Proverbs*

538 Tek care bettuh mo'nuh baig paa'd'n (To take care is better than to beg pardon), An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

If yo play wid puppy, 'ee lick yo face, Familiarity breeds contempt.

Cut finguh 'f'aid axe, A burnt child dreads the fire.

A still calf git de mores' milk.

Long talk ketch run'way nigguh.

Slow walkin' mek quick lickin'.

Yaas, bubbuh, uh haa'kee, but uh yent yeddy (Yes, brother, I hearken but I don't hear, i.e., I hear what you are saying, but I'm not paying any attention to it).

T'ief is bad, but t'ief en' ketch iz de debble (To steal is bad, but to steal and get caught is the devil).

Little axe cut down big tree."

Ef yo ent hab hoss to ride, ride cow, Half a loaf is better than no bread.

'E yent matter 'bout de road, so long as 'e kah yo to de right place.

A good dog fuh ebryt'ing is good fuh nutt'n (Jack of all trades, master of none).

Po' buckra an' dog walk one pat' (The poor man and the dog walk the same path).

Mos' kill bud don't make soup (Most killed bird don't make soup).

A man ain't eny more dan a man (i.e., there's a limit to all things).

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(554) "Mr. Gonzales describes an insignificant-looking darkey, Little Joe Fields, whose only claim to distinction was the fact that he was the father of twin boys. When ridiculed on account of his small size, Joe would swell with importance, grin expansively, and retort: "Ki! Little axe cut down big tree! You see dem two twin, enty? Dem duh *my own*."

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193 land, and it has been observed especially among the whites of our Appalachians and Ozarks.

There are two or three unusual verb forms used in the dialect. *Hear* is *yerry* or *yeddy*. *See*, plus its object, has become *shum*, meaning see (sees, saw), it, him, her, them, etc. The former is probably derived with little change from the English dialect pronunciation of *hear*, *heard*, as *year*, *yeard*.[89] Likewise *see*, being nearly always followed by its object, which was usually *um*, was transformed in the rapid Gullah speech to *shum*.

Several English dialect forms like *pit* (put) and *remoan* (remove) survive in the Gullah, besides a number of archaic meanings of certain verbs.[90]

### *Conjunctions*

In addition to the standard uses, the following peculiarities occur. *Than* is often expressed by *nuh* (nor), as it was, in fact still is, in England. Thus "Tek care mo' bettuh nuh be sorry" (to take care is better than to be sorry). *And* is also sometimes *nuh*, as in "you nuh me" (you and I).

### *Numerals, Etc.*

• 802 *Twice*, *second*, *third*, etc., are rarely heard among the older dialect speakers, who prefer *two*, *two-time*, etc. "De t'ree (third) Sunday in November," "Now, in de two place" (second place), "Uh tol' 'um two-time" (twice), "Muh wife 'e been sick now strike de two mont'." *Both* is always *all-two*.[91] "Buh Rabbit en Buh Wolf all-

[89] Some verbs had an *i* or *y* ending in England, e. g., *look* was sometimes *looky*, a form surviving in America.

[90] See the list of archaic and provincial usages given below.

[91] A rare English usage, heard nowhere in this country now except in the Gullah dialect. Compare French, *tous les deux*.

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two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 802
'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc.

*Miscellaneous*

There are many additional points which might be 193
mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92]

VOCABULARY

*Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary*

It may seem that the English dialect paternity of 177
Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the 19
case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch.

A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary 192

[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

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159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't
177 want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we
went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the
803 cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together.
It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start
(241) with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck
crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four.
That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the
177 stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought
the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I
432 could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family
better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

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## DON'T LET THE RAIN CATCH YOU

I remember in 1907 we had a tornado on Saxby place. I stand in my door, and my grandma say, "I going now." And I say, "Yes'm, Grandma, I see you going. Don't let the rain catch you." And you know, the wind pick up the house, just as natural as that. And it carry 'em about two tasks [a task is twenty-one rows in a field]. And my grandma lay down on the stomach and hold on to the wire fence, to the post. Yessir, I know that! And I there home whooping and hollering, "Oh Lord, that big air cloud carry Grandma!" That's right!

[804]

We had another storm in 1911. I cook peas and rice that day. It was a Sunday. Josh was laying 'cross the bed sleeping. I lean against that post and every time I feel that house shake, I say "Josh, get up. You better get up and see he going to storm." You see, I had seen one. Done gone 'cross one in 1886.

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*Tetch*, for remnant. "T'engk Gawd, 'e lef' uh leetle tetch een de bottle."

[804] [461]

*Tas'* (*task*), one hundred and five feet square, one quarter of an acre, the daily task on sea-island cotton plantations.[a] Used now as either a measure of area or of distance. "My gun kin shoot two tas'," i.e. 210 feet or 70 yards.

*Use* in the sense of "frequent certain feeding grounds, be accustomed to go, linger habitually about."[b]

*Yowe* for ewe.

*Frail*, to strike, to beat.

*Ax* for ask.[c]

*Piggin*, a small cedar pail with one panel extended for a handle.

*Pyo'* for "pure," in the sense of "fully, absolutely"; modern slang, "nothing else but": *de pyo' nutt'n*.

*Staa't-naked*, instead of "stark-naked."[d]

*Quile* for coil.

*Find*, in the sense of "to supply with victuals." "Buh Sun promise Buh Fowl-hawk fuh fine um een bittle effn 'e ketch 'im een 'im baid."

*Quills*, still used for pipes of reed or cane.

*Shote*, for young hog.

*Killick*, for "killock," an anchor of stone.

*Gaul* for swamp.

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[a] Mr. Bennett explains a "task" as one-half an acre for a hoe hand; three-quarters of an acre for a cotton-field hand; one-quarter of an acre for a rice-field hand. Thus a man and his family can *cut a tass; tie a tass, an' carry a tass intuh de flat*. From this comes the phrase, a *done-tass niggah*, for a worn out laborer, too weak or too old to work; or lightly, for the laughing darkey, his day's work done and his hoe canted over his shoulder. I. 343.

[b] Widely employed throughout the South by both white and black, usually as a hunting term in connection with doves, partridges, and turkeys. Dignified Elizabethan. Compare Spenser's "Where never foot did use", and Milton's Lycidas,

"Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use,
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks."

Listed along with *quile* (coil) and *gawm* as colloquial white usage by Charles Foster Smith in "Southern Dialect in Life and Literature," *The Southern Bivouac*, Nov., 1885.

[c] Good Chaucerian and Caxtonian; standard English till 1600; still used in the Midland and Southern Dialects in England; and in general much easier and pleasanter to say than "ask".

[d] It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that staa't goes back to the older "start" (steort), tail.

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192 comment, "It is barely possible (but highly improbable) that *staa't* goes back to the older 'start' (steort), tail." But the *N. E. D.* states that *stark-naked* is an alteration of the older *start-naked*, i. e., *tail-naked*, and lists various usages from the 13th century down to recent times. *Start-naked* would then seem to be a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon *steort* after all.

*Stepney*, poverty, privation. "To keep ol' stepney from de do'," is to keep the wolf from the door. Not heard on St. Helena. Smith lists this word as possibly African, which is doubtful. *Stepney* is used in a restricted area,[97*] and it might represent an English usage which has never been noted in any dialect collection. The following is ventured as a possible explanation of the origin of the usage. *Stepney* is the name of an east London parish in which squalor and poverty prevail. *(Ency. Brit.)* *Stepney* or *stipone*, "a kind of sweet compound liquor drunk in some ill places in London in the summer time," (See Grose, *Classical Dict.*, and Wright, *Prov. Dict.*) probably took its name from the parish (See *N. E. D.*). It appears from this that *stepney* was associated with a low condition. Add to this the fact that it is used synonymously with *wolf* in "keep the wolf from de do'," and its English derivation seems fairly certain.

*Swinge*, to singe. Widely used by Negroes and by the white mountain people. Still in use in various parts of England.

*Swanga* (or *swonga*), noun: swagger, a dashing air; adj.: swaggering, boastful, etc. This word has been considered African by certain writers, but it is quite possibly a dialect pronunciation of English *swank* or *swanky*, the latter being used as both noun and adjective with meanings that correspond to those of *swanga*, namely, "a strapping fellow" and "swaggering." (*Prov. Dict.* or *E. D. D.*). A parallel is found in the Gullah *teng* or *tang* for *thank*.

[804] *Task*, a survival of the plantation daily task of a quarter of an acre for each hand. It is also used as a linear measure (105 feet).

[97*] Since this was written Arthur Palmer Hudson has informed me that *stepney* is known in Mississippi.

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The Negro speaks of planting two *tas'* of potatoes, or judges that the river is about a *tas'* wide.

*Titty* (or tittuh), sister.

*Toad*, a young female dog.

*Too*, very. "I *too* sorry you gwine." "Lawd, dat gatuh *too* beeg!" exclaimed a Negro who was rowing me across the Edisto when he saw a large alligator near the boat. Also used in this sense by white people in the low country.

*Tote*, to carry.[98] This word, which is still widely used in the United States, has been the cause of much controversy. Some have attributed it to the Negro, others to the Indian. The English derivation seems so simple that it is not necessary to look elsewhere. In the South, where this word seems to have been used first in this country, *tote* means not merely to carry, but it implies "hefting," supporting or carrying something heavy. When *tote* began to get spread about by newspapers and periodicals, it was taken up by many people who did not appreciate its correct usage, and soon we were *toting* such light objects as books, papers, pistols, etc. This extension of the meaning of *tote* explains the reluctance of some scholars to accept an English derivation.

*Totian*, an Anglo-Saxon verb, has survived in England in various shades of meaning, the most common of which is to peep, to look out. Hence *tot hill*, a lookout place. *Tolt*, from Latin *tolle*,[99] to lift or remove, is probably the immediate precursor of our *tote* if not identical with it. The *E. D. D.* lists as one of the meanings of *tolt*, "to tilt, to raise up," cites a Warwickshire example, "Tolt it up a bit," and states that *tolt* is also

[98] The earliest written use of *tote* found in the U. S. is in a Virginia manuscript, 1677: "They were by Beverly comanded to go to work, fall trees and mawl and toat railes." Quoted in B. W. Green's *Virginia Word-Book*, also in *New English Dictionary*.

It is interesting to observe that in a grammar written by Rev. Brantley York (3rd ed., 1862) and used locally in North Carolina, "tote the wood" was listed as an Irish inaccuracy for "carry the wood" in a list of New England, Dutch, Irish, and general colloquial inaccuracies.

[99] *Tolt* is the name of a writ by which proceedings were removed or "lifted" from the Court Baron to County Court. See any good law dictionary.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



The basis of work on a sea-island cotton plantation was the task. In time the term came to signify a quarter of an acre laid out 105 by 105 feet. The acre was laid out square, 210 by 210 feet. A day's work for a full hand depended upon the time of year and the kind of work he was doing. When listing, the full hand's task was a quarter of an acre. Listing was the first process of preparing the land for cotton after the field had been manured, and consisted of hoeing the grass off the old bed into the alleys. Next the old beds were hauled on top at the rate of a quarter of an acre a day to the full hand. When a plow was used, as it seldom was, the hands followed with hoes, finishing off the beds at the rate of three tasks a day, or three-fourths of an acre. A plowman's allotment was usually four tasks, or an acre a day.

567 461 248 (804) (407)

When the bed had been made, two hands made holes the width of the hoe cross-wise on the top of it at intervals of about eighteen inches. Another hand followed, scattering ten or fifteen seeds in each hole, while two other hands covered them to a depth of about an inch and a half, patting the soil down. Since this was light work the day's assignment in this process was usually three tasks.

A day's work at hoeing after the cotton came up was ordinarily two tasks. Picking, which was done generally by the women and children, was accomplished at the rate of about ninety to a hundred pounds a day for a full hand. The task at assorting was from thirty to fifty pounds of seed cotton a day, at ginning from twenty to thirty pounds a day, at moting from thirty to fifty pounds a day.

The tasks involved in plantation work as laid down

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11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
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for Weehaw plantation near Georgetown, which were also observed on St. Helena plantations, were as follows:[21]

Corn: Sowing done in gang. Covering done in gang.
Hoeing ¼ acre Hauling up ½ acre.
Plowing corn 2½ to 3 acres; a man & mule will tend 30 acres. Stripping fodder ¾ acre on first day—after that strip 1 acre & carry home that of the previous day.

Potatoes & Slips:
Planting—3 [hands] in a ¼ acre, who also bed it up.
Hoeing—2 in a ¼ acre. Hauling up 20 Compass.[22]
Digging slips—men, 5 rows—Women, 4 rows & carry home.
Digging roots for allowance—5 to 7 rows, as they bear.
Weeding is usually done by the shufflers.[23]

Peas: 3 hands to 3 acres when planted between corn.
Harvesting—2 large blankets.

Ditching . . . 6 to 8 tasks. Spreading straw[24]—if wet ½ acre. if dry ¾ acre. Listing in straw—½ acre.

Getting task stakes, 500 to a hand[25]

Splitting Rails—100 Rails 12 ft long & heavy

Cutting Wood—1 cord. . . .

Splitting garden railings—500 to 3 men. . . .

Cutting down & piling up corn stalks, 1 to 1¼ to 1½ acres.

Digging ditches . . . —600 cubic feet.

The tasks at cutting marsh grass and digging marsh mud for fertilizing the fields were estimated by the cart load and varied with the weather and the distance of the marsh from the field.

[21] Henry A. Middleton, Jr., Weehaw Plantation Book.

1 (804)

[22] A compass was five feet as measured by a wooden triangle called a compass.

[23] Children or superannuated men and women.

[24] On St. Helena plantations marsh grass was used instead of the rice straw spread on the Weehaw fields.

[25] Each hand's task was staked off.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 had often been hospitalized for short periods for her condition. She
761 finally lost the battle or, as some islanders said, she finally won the battle, staked her sword in the golden sand, and went home to the Kingdom of God on 4 July 1984. Mr. Hampy was told, and he died the next day, 5 July. Some said that the couple had been together so long that his spirit had become a part of hers and that when she died, he died simply because he lacked the will to live without her. Others commented that since her body remained warm so long after her death, she was waiting for him to follow.

764 Their funeral was one of the most elaborate I have seen in the Sea Island area. The cost was well in excess of fifteen thousand dollars, a total which the couple had prepared for over the years by paying on their funeral policy. They had matching blue caskets with intricate gold designs. Hers was covered with a spread of pink flowers, his with a spread of blue ones. The undertaker was careful with such details as having her coffin brought in first and stationing her coffin to the left of his. These were things that the viewers would observe and remember when they selected someone to handle their own funeral arrangements.

764 The Presbyterian church was packed beyond capacity, and I stood
123 outside the door of the church along with other friends hoping to see the couple one last time. Two male associates had accompanied me to the funeral and stood among the other men on the church ground, chat-
(562) ting. As a female, I knew that I was not permitted this liberty. Women do not stand outside the church and chat when services are going on. If they cannot get inside the church, they stand as close to it as possible or remain in their cars. In a break with custom, the caskets were not opened for viewing the bodies; I walked with others more than two miles up a long, narrow, muddy lane to the gravesite, still hoping to see their faces. However, before I made it up the lane, they had passed the younger children over the caskets to prevent their spirits from being "touched" by the spirits of the dead. As is traditional, they buried Mr.
(775) Hampy and Miss Maime side by side, she on his left, in a densely wooded area to help enclose their spirits. Each grave was covered with
(805) flowers and clocks were set at the time each one died.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Placing a clock on the grave of the deceased to depict the hour of death is still a strong tradition.

[p. 94]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

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36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

[805]
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37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

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39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

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40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

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41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

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51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to d
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

[533] The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[795] church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
567 through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
794 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right." Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House continued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
[674] the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
621 law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626] House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368] plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of commonwealth among the Gullahs.

• 805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
794 sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them
175 during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
567 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense." All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee." The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal association among any group is more significant than outside forces, especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance. Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline" from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

887 In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

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> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

•814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording: and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(p. xvi-A)

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



533 mic, plaintive and beautiful. And sometimes the words themselves, at least the leading phrases, possess a naive appeal and essential poetic power.

533 539 Here are some of the most characteristic:

See God's Angel comin' down
To see Gawd's bleedin' Lam'.

Dark cloud risin', it looks like rain,
The sun drawin' water from Emanuel's veins,
(Wheel, wheel, wheel, O wheel my Lord.)

I want to die easy when I die.

Looka how dey done muh Lawd;
(Never spoke a mumblin' word,
Mumblin' word.)

I ain't gwine grief muh Lawd no mo'.

Oh de blood done sign mah name.

When I git in heben in my elbow chair,
Then I will rock like angel rock,
(T'ank Gawd I git obuh Jerdan.)

Jesus, when dis whole worl' on fire.

O Death, ain't you gots no shame?

I know moon-rise, I know star-rise,
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight,
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de grave-yard, I'll walk through de grave-yard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to judgment in de evenin' of de day,
When I lay dis body down;
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.

533 178 814 In particular, the low-country spirituals have been fortunate in having two distinctly preservative influences exerted on them. The first is the Charleston Society for the Preservation of Spirituals, an organization composed of the leading men and women of Charleston, all of whom

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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South Carolina



533 178 •814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island." In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[171] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, can sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled spernit.*"

[162] "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rosa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

"St. *Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

• 82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which [805] it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the [554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

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50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[12b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
784 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the
759 island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they imported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

775 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[12a]

•821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



821 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to
796 the sun.

Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day
764 customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the
[825] coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[28]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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WHEN I RISE CRYIN' HOLY

Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

[821] Julia Armstrong gives me this version of the same song. It was sung during thunder-storms, which were believed to express God's anger:

Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



## HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest; [19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

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Summer comin' again
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she set me free
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
  Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
  Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821] [19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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nigger been press close to me. I say: "Dats de bery man steal my money." I'quire 776
roun de station and find out who he is. Dey say he uh man from John Island 754
and dey call 'e name to me.

No, I ain't make no 'temp to call de police. Dat man done spend de money anyhow. I jest say: "All right. I goin' to leave yuh wid God."

When I git home, I shet my door and put de whole ting 'fore God. I tell um my trouble and what dat man done 'gainst me. In two week time dat man jest as stiff and cold as uh piece ob iron.[28]

This may be similar to the power of *nkisi*, essentially a positive force 789
working for the good, to ward off *kindoki*, and thus doing an evil deed. 822
Generally speaking, however, the deity represented forces of good. Gul- (776)
lahs believed in the power of God and saw that power as a form of
protection. This may perhaps explain why interviewers for the Federal (342)
Writers Project observed that nearly all the doors and windows of Gul-
lah cabins were painted blue, the color of the heavens. One theory was that the custom of painting doors and windows blue was an unconscious holdover from the early days of slavery in the Sea Islands when Gullahs were given the residue from indigo vats to use on the doors and windows of their cabins. However this does not explain the fact that Gullah conjurers concocted pills for their "patients" the color of which was usually blue also. Perhaps then, the shade blue was effective in keeping out
"speerits." Spirits were said to be afraid of blue because it reminded (775)
them of heaven, hence evil beings could not stand the sight of blue. But the Gullahs themselves would not verify either notion regarding their preference for blue. If asked why they painted their doors and windows blue, Gullahs would smile wryly and say some people "jest lak dat color."[29]

Thus, while Gullahs turned gratefully to the Christian God, whom 775
they regarded as a warm, personal friend, this did not prevent them 761
from retaining some of their ingrained customs and beliefs, as is observed in their attitudes toward life, death and the supernatural. And, even in the Gullahs' approach toward death, a sense of community prevailed. The ritual was observed with respect and responsibility. There was a feeling of satisfaction that, while the individual had to cross the river alone, the right impetus had been given before the deceased left the earth, and thus the living had done their part by fulfilling their collective obligation for the last time.

A direct relationship appears to exist between the African and Gullah 771
theory of being. In both, God (Jesus for the Gullahs) was the apex, 776
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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and praying sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority." [22]

Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others. Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

[21] *Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lent, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."*

[22] *It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
822 did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
954 or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
705 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
782 were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
786 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
569 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
764 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in 1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

[23] M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in West African Travels, that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.

[24] Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion; "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
(177) to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation
178 of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with
177 achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo-
829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make
823 attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 135]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

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1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.' " When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: " 'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk' " (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

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3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

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4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



764 Their presence keeps the spirit away from the living. The significance of
775 spiritual proximity in brilliance gave rise to the BaKongo custom of lighting
[171] bonfires on graves to lead one's soul to another world. Similarly, Gullah torchlight burials may have had a deeper meaning than simply lighting the path. Certainly the presence of lamps on African-American graves indicates that perhaps this was a means of lighting the way to the world beyond, and keeping away the deceased's spirit. Furthermore, the decorations imply the deceased's entrance into the fourth moment, a spiritual existence where all is light and brilliance. Breaking pottery and porcelain was perhaps not done to prevent theft, as some researchers believe, but may indicate the deceased's spiritual release and break with earthly life.[25]

764 Another interesting continuity between Gullah and African traditions
171 in regard to burial is the position of the deceased. In Central West Af-
•823 rica, the coffin is placed so that the deceased faces eastward. Folklorist Elsie Parsons noted that Gullah graves were "invariably dug east to west, with the head to the west." Thomas Higginson wrote in his diary of a "very impressive" funeral for two black soldiers in his regiment. Just before the coffins were lowered, "an old man whispered to me that I must have their positions altered,—the heads must be towards the west." Higginson complied without asking why. Gullahs and Africans shared a concept of the cosmos. The world followed the sun from east to west.[26]

776 Sea Island slaves retained a belief in the power of agents of evil and easily included the Christian devil in their hierarchy. Ghosts, hags, plateyes, conjurers, and others were all instruments of Satan. At times their faith in God may not have surpassed their fear of the devil.[27] On other
776 occasions God could, for the sake of "the faithful," take the role of a
754 conjurer and bring evil instead of good. Although Gullahs believed that Satan and his cohorts were mainly responsible for evil, they also felt that God was sometimes willing to bring evil down upon an adversary of one of His own. In the following illustration, God reportedly used His power in this way. July Brown was a high officer in one of the churches on Edisto Island. When he was interviewed in the 1930s for the Federal Writers Project, he related the story of how he once prayed a man to death:

> I been on de Savannah train goin' to Charleston. My wallet been jam down deep in my hip pocket. Must ob had 'bout twenty dollars in um. Lo and behold when I git to de Union station, I feel in my pocket to git street cyar money, and my wallet done gone! I notice dat when I come out ob de train uh black, shaap face

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Blügen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old [178] folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through [186] and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

771 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong re- 869 ligion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice, indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
• 823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),
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> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For examplo, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400 Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained 2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al. 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and econ-
197 omic independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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285 Near this section lives a Negro basketmaker * who claims that he is carrying on the tradition of his ancestors. He [462] stated that for generations the men of his family had en- [322] gaged in wood carving, basket making, and various phases [286] of weaving, and that the craft had been passed on from father to son.[70] He himself only makes baskets. White oak and bulrushes are selected as the material from which to [824] make the baskets and they are stitched with scrub palmetto. Those made of bulrushes are of the coil type (Plate IIc). A A kind of thin rope is made from this grass which is then twisted around and around and sewn tightly together. The baskets made from white oak are plaited.[70] The types of baskets include hampers, flat clothes baskets, farm and shopping baskets, and the popular "fanner" which the Negro venders balance gracefully on their heads as they walk about the city, displaying a colorful array of merchandise.

322 Some years ago an unusual discovery was made near this 412 district when a boy noticed a carved spoon ** lying on top of 532 a rubbish heap. This spoon (Plate IIa), A which has been carefully preserved, is made of teak, and, judging from the dark polished surface of the wood and its general appearance, it might well be more than a century old. The bowl is shallow and about two by three inches and the whole length about seven inches. The most unusual feature of the spoon is the carved figure of the disproportionate little man forming the handle. Of particular interest are the flat cranium, the exaggerated ears, the gash-like mouth, the queerly shaped nose, the long dangling arms, and the short tapering legs which appear to be far too small for the rest of the body.[41b]

294 Near the Old Fort is the Peace Mission of Father Divine.† 346 This comparatively new religious sect has an estimated mem-

* *John Haynes, 933 Wheaton Street.*

** *Property of Edward A. Sieg, 122 West Jones Street.*

† *Though the meetings of Father Divine are common to many parts of the United States, especially in the North, where white worshippers form a sizable proportion of the followers of Father Divine, this description ac-*



A, [See Categories 285 & 412, plate following p. xxxii-B--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



754 "The toe nails, the finguh nails, even the scrapins frum the bottom of the foot are all very powuhful.[10] If the doctuh could get any of these frum my enemy, he would mix them in whiskey an make my enemy drink. That is all."

"Would the enemy die or just get sick?"

But the old man was brooding with a faraway look in his eyes and would not answer our question.

"Cunjuh," he said again. "You ask me if I know about these dahk things. I know too well. My wife Hattie had a spell put on uh fuh three long yeahs with a nest of rattlesnakes inside uh. She jus lay theah an swelled an suffuhed. How she suffuhed! Jus like the foam that comes on a snake's mouth when he is hungry, she would foam. But she couldn't eat."

"Did she die of snakes?" we wanted to know.

"No. It was predicted that she would have a spell put on uh to die by fyuh and sho enough one night she was burned to death with the snakes still inside uh."[15]

"But how were the snakes given to her?"

"That I can't tell. She maybe drank them in a little whiskey. But I can't tell."

Nathaniel Lewis' somber gaze had all this time been directed through the open door to his garden. It was a pretty little green inclosure with rustic benches set hospitably about. We commented on the vines and ferns, which showed careful cultivation.

754 "You like my gahden?" Lewis said mournfully. "That's
789 all I can think of, my gahden. Theah's a bush out theah
• 824 that's goin to protect me frum any othuh enemies.[24] Nobody can cunjuh me now because of that bush. If only I'd had a little piece of that plant befo, Hattie would be alive an me well an strong. But I kept puttin off goin to get a piece. You have to go to the woods in the dahk of night an find it faw yuhself. If you get caught at sunrise in those woods, you can't get out till night again. You plant a piece of the

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he con-
•824 cluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
787 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to
Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that
556 I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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262 "Can you tell us why?" we queried, but she only shook her
777 head.

"All I know is dat dey's bad luck. I foun dat out, an I wohn leh one come in muh house."

412 Handicraft objects in this section were more numerous than in many of the other communities. We found a most unusual brush * made from the palmetto.[45a] It was about
[824] four inches in length and two inches wide; both bristles and back had been made from a single piece of the rough fiber of the palmetto bark, spliced into splinters on one surface to form the bristles.

322 The work of two wood carvers was brought to our atten-
532 tion. One of the carvers ** made a specialty of small wooden figures (Plate Ia, Ib). He showed us several full length human figures, two or three busts mounted on square blocks of wood, and two oddly shaped objects, each with mask-like features carved on one surface.[41] When we remarked on the originality of his work and its symmetry of design, he said simply, "I jis picked it up wen I wuzn wukin."

The other carver † had made several nondescript figures, but we were chiefly interested in two linked wooden chains (Plate Ia). One of these, which had an attached box with a ball enclosed, was similar to a chain previously shown us by another man in the community. Each man had cut his chain with all its details from a single block of wood.[70f, h]

754 In Frogtown and Currytown there is intense interest shown in witches, spirits, and conjure. Personal experiences
775 were related to us by several old residents, who had come in contact with supernatural elements.

775 Old Henry Gamble ‡ told us that he has been accustomed to "seein tings" since childhood. Particularly on rainy
[115] nights ghosts appear to him. He said, "Sometimes dey float

* *Made by and property of Professor Redmond, Park Avenue and West Broad Street, Currytown.*
** *Jerome Carter, 445 Jefferson Street, Frogtown.*
† *Preston Coleman, 532 Charles Street, Frogtown.*
‡ *Henry Gamble, 519 West Broad Street, Currytown.*



A. [See Category 322, plate following p. xxxii-A--Analyst]

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551 "Ise quainted wid two ole men, one call Uncle Friday, duh
[115] othuh Uncle July," was the statement of a third Brownville resident.* "One wuz bawn on Good Friday an duh othuh on duh Foth uh July." [20]

262 We learned that certain foods are viewed with suspicion and are never eaten or allowed to be brought into the house.[45] The exact reason why these foods are forbidden was not explained to us. One woman said, "One ting I do lak is peanuts, but I dohn eat um. An I dohn let nobody
[777] else eat um in muh house. I dohn know jis wy, but it bring bad luck all duh week." **

The palmetto tree, Robert McNichols † told us, supplies an edible substance in the form of palmetto cabbage taken from the center of the tree, about a foot below the top. This is the terminal bud of the tree, white in color, tender, and re-
[252] sembling the ordinary northern cabbage. It may be eaten cooked or uncooked.[45a]

273 From the same tree a wine is made. We learned two different recipes for the preparation of this beverage. The wine is sometimes made from the cabbage, which when first cut contains a white sap. The chopped cabbage is put in a container where it is allowed to ferment, after which it is strained and sugar added.‡[45b] The wine may also be made from the dark blue palmetto berries. These are placed in a container until fermentation occurs after which the juice is extracted and sweetened. The wine is a clear dark brown and is said to have an excellent flavor. Incidentally, the
• 824 palmetto tree serves a variety of other purposes. Palmetto fibre is used in making baskets, rugs, bottle holders, and numerous other objects.[45]

285 Many of the Brownville residents are skilled in palmetto
322 weaving and also in woodcarving. Walking sticks (Plate
000

* *William Mikell, 616 West 32nd Street.*
** *Beatrice Ward, 832 West 35th Street.*
† *Robert McNichols, Brownville.*
‡ *Ibid.*

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hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick." [48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

WHITE BLUFF

757 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh
• 824 stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh
[784] dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat
[827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad
[825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause
[826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah
[825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

754 "Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix.
759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step," said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried." [1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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# *Darien*

THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF whom live in small scattered communities outside the town, are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come frum Darien."

One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunty Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

Aunty Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope [17] to illustrate her story.

"I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuh much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* *Jane Lewis, Darien.*

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[18] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
(825) wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[60]
yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
(789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[60]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."
797

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
534 alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
(535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
(281) side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
(237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
oak?

.824 "No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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735 fish. People went into the streams and they hauled out fish trying to make a
432 living. Anything they could do to make a living.
236
434 They used to gather moss--this same moss. Every month a man came
735 along with a big truck to pick up this moss for mattress factory. They had
824 pretty good moss business. They had three or four sales a year. They had a special way to cure the moss. Dig a hole in the ground and put hot water on it and that'd make it cure quicker.

735 The homes were poor. Lots of the homes were built out of logs. They
342 go into the woods and cut a log about six feet, then put another six feet. And the frame was cut out of the woods, most of it. Sills, uprights, everything--cut right out of the natural woods. And for a long time they'd be
354 lined with newspapers and any number of houses burned down during the winter. You know those were hard days.

735 The chimney was built out of stick and mud. They built the frame from
342 the ground up out of wood, and they took pine straw and mud and daub
354 that inside and out. Kind of clay-like. They build up this fireplace and give it a shape--outside and inside. Then they make a fire and bake it. It get kind of hard like brick-making, and they'd use those for heating. That was a common thing here then. They could put a rock or something down and cook in the fireplace.

Then in the summertime most of 'em cook outdoors. They'd lay two green logs together and make a fire between and put those pots on. That was the cooking utensils.

Sometimes a rain would come, wash out a piece of the chimney in three places. It was dangerous. Sometimes a house catch afire and burn down from the chimney. Pine straw was the binder with the clay. I don't think there's one around this island anywhere now. It's been years since I've seen one.

735 When I came all these roads were dirt. I think that there were only
493 three cars in my churchyard except mine. That was the general thing all
442 over the island. They used carts and that little tacky--pony, little horse, you know. Almost everybody had a pony, marsh tacky they call it.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## WORLD WAR NUMBER TWO IS WHAT CHANGED
722 THIS ISLAND FINANCIALLY

World War Number Two is what changed this island financially. The army came and got the men, carry 'em to war. Well, the farmer had to change his plan of farm. He had to go to tractors--didn't have the man-

*Mr. Joe Deas*

## I BEEN GOING IN THE CREEK FOR FORTY-ODD YEARS

159 226 Fishing, yeah man, I been doing that for years. Get 'em with net; get 'em with line. Go down and push the boat overboard, go to bail 'em out, and go out casting. We go to Hut Creek, Willis Creek, then out to the sea. Great Lord, that's miles and miles out there—way out past the place they call Kiawah, then go out to the south. Get your whiting and trout. For mullet you go in the night. Course if you got a net, then you can go in the day and catch shrimp.

[286] [227] [824] I make nets—knit 'em with cord and needle. Make my needle out of wood, board, tin. You can make 'em out of palmetto—take a branch of palmetto and cut 'em out of that. I make all most things myself—boat, net, two-wheel cart. If you ain't got that, you have to ride the ox

I do everything from the time I could turn around for myself. I been going in the creek for forty-odd years. Catched a ton of fish. Gone around and sell 'em to different people—make a living. I gone and got a license. Have to go to customs house and get license to go in the creek—get the fingerprint and all. When you come back from the creek, if you don't have enough to sell, you got enough for your family to eat. [432] [434]

That's the way we had to struggle in this world. But thank the Lord, we're here yet.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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St. Simon's Island



192 with a neck of wood attached, and fitted with four strings.[45] A Georgian I know called her devoted colored nurse "Dah," which means mother in an African dialect. Many Southerners are familiar with the odd word swanga as applied to a proud, boastful Negro. They probably assume, as I did, that it is a corruption of "swagger," but like the word "shout" it is another African word that happens to sound something like one of ours. For the same reason such African names as *Sandi*, *Suki*, *Aba*, *Bina*, and *Beti*, that are quite similar to our diminutives, have passed unnoticed, while such names as *Pinda*, *Mandigo*, *Dembo*, *Sambo*, *Cudjo*, *Quash*, and the Arabic names on Sapelo arrest our attention.

192 The survival of African food names such as gumbo or okra (famous in New
252 Orleans), *benne*[46] (that figures in Charleston's special candy), goobers or peanuts,
171 suggests that African cooking methods as well as names survive in Southern kitchens. Much interesting material on this highly controversial subject has been furnished
114 by Herskovits in an article entitled "What Has Africa Given America?"[47] Of all
192 who write about the Negro, I find the conclusions of this well-known anthropologist
171 the most convincing. What he says on the subject of Negro music, on certain "musical" aspects of Southern speech, the survival of African idioms and pronunciation, and the impress on Southern white children of the courtesy instilled into them by their colored nurses ties up with my years of experience with the Negroes.

175 It may be only a coincidence, but *mpinda* and *nguba* are both Congo names
567 for peanut, and the Cater family, of Kelvin Grove, had a slave called Pinda, who was the daughter of their faithful Dembo.[48] Dembo's father was an African prince, to
(192) whom a gun was of greater value than a son—probably there was a surplus of the latter and a shortage of the former. At any rate Dembo was sold into slavery for a

[45] Cable tells us in "The Dance in Place Congo" that "for the true African dance . . . a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of African drums and the banjo thrump and strum." Perhaps this accounts for the banjo not being heard in Georgia—with its strictly English background.

[46] The tradition on St. Simon's is that once you plant benne, you must keep it up. "Old man
(824) Death'll catch you if you don't." If you are ill, you can at least throw it out the window and
(961) give it half a chance to grow.

[47] New Republic, September 4, 1935.

[48] Dembo was the "driver" who had charge of the other slaves under the white overseer. When the overseer killed his master, Thomas Cater, in the neighborhood of 1805, Dembo saved the life of Thomas' only son, Benjamin, and looked out for his young master's interests so whole-heartedly that he earned the hatred of the other slaves. When he died they buried him on the North Boundary of the plantation as far from their own graveyard as they could place him.

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754 wuz a fine lookin boy. Deah wuz so many women attuh him, lots uh people tink one uh dem fix im,[15] but duh doctuh say he die frum pneumonia.

763 "I knowd he wuz gwine die cuz I heahd a owl jis a hootin duh day befo.[44] Deah's udduh signs uh det too, sech as ef
•825 yuh sees a buzzud sailin roun duh elements, das a sho sign. Ef a rat eat yuh dress, yuh musn patch it yuhsef lessn yuh bun duh place fo yuh sew on it, cuz das a sign uh det. Dat happen right heah in dis house fo muh faduh die."

763 She folded her hands in her lap and slowly rocked her chair as she continued. "Wen a pusson die in duh house, ef
775 yuh take em out fo duh ministuh say a few wuds, den deah spirit will hant duh house,[36c] cuz dey jis caahn be happy till dey hab ebryting done propuh an right.[36] I hab heahd spirits roun dis house. Sometime dey call yuh. Wen dey call yuh, dey done come tuh hant yuh an git yuh tuh go weah dey is. Wen dey call, yuh mus say, 'I ain ready tuh go yit.' "

754 The old woman stopped rocking, sat upright, and removed the pipe from between her stained teeth. "An spirits ain all. Deah's witches. Wy, deah's a ole uhmun neah yuh wut people say is a witch wut rides folks.[69] We all leab uh lone. We shuts duh doe ef we sees uh comin. She come lak a night-
[789] meah tuh duh folks wile dey sleepin. But ef yuh puts duh bruhm cross duh doe, yuh kin keep any witch out duh ruhm at night. Witches jis caahn cross obuh a bruhmstick."

Another woman * was scornful about conjure. She tossed her head indignantly as she made known that most of her neighbors for blocks around, her friends, the members of her church, believed in the infallibility of the root worker.

"Wy," she said, "they all believe that everything that happen tuh anybody is cause by some root wukuh.[48] They don't leave anything fuh God tuh do. Ef anybody takes sick, yuh'll fine somebody theah sayin sumpm is wrong with yuh sickness, that somebody 'put down' sumpm fuh yuh. Ef

* *Katie McCarts, 744 Hull Street.*

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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

789 "My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

775 "No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [59] said an-
787 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[60] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

789 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
754 dat flied off tuh Africa.[60a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

789 "One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

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754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[16] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah [10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

"Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 775 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men 787 comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in 789 his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh [825] chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 821 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

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115 "*Mystic Mojo Incense* is anudduh one uh muh bes selluhs.
789 On duh box it says dis is duh same incense used by duh
472 Hindus an Arabs an Tuks, an also duh Egyptians, an Chinese. In every box is five diffunt culluhs, each one fuh a diffunt puhpose." From a box which Mattie had on hand we took down the directions: "Work the magic spell now. Just hold *Mystic Mojo* in hand and light match to tip. Perfumed with rare fragrance and exotic sandalwood, myrrh and incense. Price 25¢. Sweet and strong."

Mattie also constantly reorders a product known as *Magnetic Lodestone in Holy Oil*. "Dis is used," she explained "tuh drive away evil spirits an bad luck an tuh bring yuh luck in love, an business, an gamblin games. Den deah's *Five Finguh Grass*. A lot uh duh people heah are sked of witches an spirits visitin em at night. Dey hang *Five Finguh Grass* ovuh deah bed aw doeway tuh protec duh whole house.[11] Some of em use *Black Cat Incense an Powduh*."

115 A few blocks from Mattie Sampson lives William Ed-
759 wards * who follows the diverse trades of root doctor,[48] piano
[463] tuner, and watchman at a filling station. For a while the old man stubbornly insisted that, although he had been a popular root doctor in his younger days, he had not treated a patient in years. After a good deal of casual friendly conversation, he at length admitted that he was at present doctoring a man who had malaria. He also admitted that he
[757] was treating a cousin for an ailment and said that by the use of roots he had recently cured another patient of kidney trouble.

757 "Muh roots kin cuo mos any pains," he said earnestly.
[231] "I wuks on dogs too. I kin cuo a mad dog in lessn a day ef dey git tuh me in time. I make muh medicine frum King Physics. It grows on duh salts an is bery plentiful neah Montgomery, but yuh hab tuh know how tuh fine it.

752 "Duh spiduh is bote good and ebil an is useful tuh man.
825

* *William Edwards, corner West Broad and 32nd Streets.*

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757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

[752] "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

[237] [825] "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[49a, b]

775 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[12]

759 757 [15] [278] Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[49] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

[787] "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

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777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

[533] "'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[45b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

[759]

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[56a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Talemville.*

WHITE BLUFF

757 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh
824 stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh
[784] dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat
[827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad
• [825] luck.[52] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause
[826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah
[825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

"Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root
754 man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix.
759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

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123 cunjuh." When pressed for details, however, and when as-
771 sured that the interviewers' interest was a friendly one, their
754 attitude frequently changed and they talked volubly of queer happenings in the vicinity.

754 "They jis don't think bout nuthin but cunjuh," said one
(115) woman, a newcomer in the neighborhood.* "Yuh heah all the time of folks havin spells put on em an findin cunjuh bags buried in the yahd. All the times some folks are fixin othuhs.[15]

777 "A woman that lived in Homestead Park jis couldn't seem
754 to have nothin but bad luck. She thought maybe an enemy had cunjuhed uh, so she looked in the yahd an sho nough theah wuz a cunjuh bag. It wuz a queah lookin bundle with a lot of brown clay in it. She destroyed the bag an the bad luck stopped an the evil spirits didn't bothuh uh none."

753 A small child complained to his parents that he felt snakes
•825 moving about in his head.[5, 50] A local doctor diagnosed the illness as ringworm, but this explanation failed to satisfy the parents for the child's own theory of snakes seemed to them much more convincing. One morning, soon after, the mother discovered a large snake crawling about in front of the house. She killed the snake and the next day the inflamed places on the boy's head began to heal. In a few days he was completely cured.**

754 Professional witch doctors and root doctors [48] ply an ac-
789 tive trade and are employed in the more extreme cases, but
(759) often the people take matters in their own hands and by means of conjure bags and charms seek to alter their own destinies and those of their neighbors. Retribution is
(777) brought to bear on an enemy, the favor of a loved one is gained, and luck in business or in games of chance is assured by the possession of some sort of luck charm or powder.[8]

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
*That this informant came from another section of Georgia was reflected in her speech.*
** *Ophelia Baker, Baker's Crossing*

787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died
[789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahn tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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754 she declared. "I buns it so nobody kin wuk hahm wid it." [10]

[?77] Young Reuben spoke up. "Ef yuh weahs a silvuh coin, it
[789] brings yuh good luck," he stated doggedly. "An ef any body cunjuh yuh aw wuk gense yuh, duh money tun black an yuh know yuh hab tuh do sumpm bout it fo duh cunjuh wuks." [12a, c, d]

"Did you ever see anyone who was conjured?" we asked. All three nodded solemnly.

Uncle Ben spoke first. "Dey's mosly all crippled up an caahn moob bout. Ef dey dohn do nuttn, duh cunjuh gits wus an dey dies." [15]

[753] "Folks wut is cunjuhed hab snakes in em an sometimes
[825] frawgs.[5] Yuh kin see em moobin roun in deah bodies," vol-
[759] unteered Reuben. "Wen dey visit duh root doctuh [48] an he wuks obuh em, den dey's jis as good as noo."

"Some folks roun bout say dey sees spirits," added Uncle
775 Ben. "Dey calls em plat-eye, cuz dey hab jis one big eye
776 hangin out in front.[62] I dohn fool roun wid sech tings fuh dey's sho bad luck."

"In some places the people told us that dead people's
775 spirits returned to earth. Is that true here?" we asked.

Aunt Sarah speculated. She wagged her black-bonneted head until her brass earrings jangled. Finally she offered,
775 "I dohn guess yuh be bodduh much by duh spirits ef yuh
764 gib em a good fewnul [36] an put duh tings wut belong tuh em on top uh duh grave." [47]

Uncle Ben helped with this explanation. "Yuh puts all duh tings wut dey use las, lak duh dishes an duh medicine bottle. Duh spirits need deze same as duh man. Den duh spirit res an dohn wanduh bout."

764 Aunt Sarah said that they went to set-ups and that in the
782 old days, after the mourners had arrived, a chicken was killed.[35, 37b, c] Neither Aunt Sarah nor Uncle Ben, however, knew the reason for this.

789 Catching sight of a few crudely made farm implements

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754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[15] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She
git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10]
an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an
wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50]
• [825] yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole
[789] kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-
rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs
484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an
789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an
783 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."
797

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane
534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh
alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an
[535] we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-
gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex
Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were
made.

"Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up
[281] side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight
[237] an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree
trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis."
She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use
824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it.
It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out
on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch
duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll
do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab
535 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-
[533] buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [28]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [29]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken." [30]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [31] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

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DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

"I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

"Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
time dey git tin an po an jis die.[69] Wen a witch come in duh
house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

"Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
[825] buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

"Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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SAPELO ISLAND

829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh,
567 yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh
ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey
git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up
in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I
tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

• 825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long
I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh
cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an
riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a
fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he
web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut
duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly
—An Nancy got um.' "[a]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp
and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The
little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps
shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the
darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the
women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church
and took our places on the second from the front middle
bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most
of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in.
The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over
his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin,
narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned
later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A, [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

796 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity
533 with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots
825 on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire,
789 burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[13b] It is also considered bad luck
484 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method
777 employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you
789 turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they im-
759 ported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

795 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used
825 to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[13a]

821 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having
796 watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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821 over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to
796 the sun.

764 Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the
• [825] coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

527 We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[38]

000 The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

527 all gives praise fuh the good crop an then we shouts an sings
[535] all night.[33] An wen the sun rise, we stahts tuh dance. It ain
o long since they stop that back in the woods but these
young people they does new kines uh dances."

(535) Horace interjected here, "I seen em do those dances back in the woods but not yuh."

We asked what sort of music they had for the dances.

535 "They mosly have guitah now," said Hettie, "an we use
534 tuh use guitah too, but we makes em frum goad an we beats drums too. We makes em frum coon hide stretched ovuh
567 hoops.[35] Muh step-fathuh, Andrew King, who lived down the Satilla Rivuh, use tuh tell me how it wuz in the ole days. He tell me they bring a boatload of them Africans ovuh frum a ilun tuh theah plantation. That wuz jis befo the waw an they wuz runnin frum the Yankees."

262 We asked if she had known any families who refused to eat certain kinds of food.

"Thas a hahd un, ma'am. Mos people eat wut they kin git but I knowd Chahlotte Froman who wouldn tech chicken. They all say that chicken wuz a duhty animal an they ain
(231) gonuh eat em.[36] They keeps chicken cuz frizzle chicken is
(825) a wise chicken. It sho kin fine wut you caahn fine."[13a]

We asked about conjure.

754 Horace laughed and said, "I tell yuh, ma'am, they's mo
178 doin of cunjuh up roun Savannah than theah is in these pahts. I jis bin up theah an I ain nevuh heahd so much talk of it in muh life. Theah's a lot of ole customs still roun an we've all heahd bout em an knows bout em but theah ain nobody much wut's ole nuff tuh pay much tention tuh em." Horace smiled with the superiority of the younger generation.

115 Later we visited Henry Williams,* (Plate XIX),A whose
342 little house (Plate XX)B sat back in a clump of tall, overgrown brush that grew close to the dilapidated paling fence.

* *Henry Williams, St. Marys.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-AA--Analyst]
B, [See Category 342, plate following p. xxxii-BB--Analyst]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [70] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with
534 honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They
533 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[35] Then they beats
764 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the buryin groun.[34] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still
764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the
782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle
754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh
231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo
825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked
115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



000 side the roads in the early morning. Opossums are baked with large
252 sweet potatoes, and raccoons are delicacies no islander will refuse.
The woods are also the home of rabbits, wolves, foxes, squirrels,
224 skunks, wildcats, and even bears, all hunted, though bears are said to be rather rare now. The islanders have generally been able to rely on a variety of wild game. One seventeenth-century explorer compiled a list:

> 224 Deer, of which there is such infinite Herds, that the whole Country
> 136 seems but one continued Park, insomuch that I have often heard Captain Matthew, an ingenious Gentleman an Agent to Sir Peter Colleton for his Affairs in Carolina, say that one hunting Indian had yearly kill'd and brought to his Plantation more than 100, sometimes 200 head of Deer. Bears there are in great numbers. . . . There are Bevors, Otters, Foxes, Raccoons, Possums, Musquasses, Hare and Coneys, Squirrels of five kinds, the flying squirrel, whose delicate skin is commended for comforting, if applied to a cold Stomach, the Red, the Grey, the Fox and Black Squirrels.[34]

• 825 The islanders, old and young, are fully acquainted with the ways of the local wild animals. Their partial dependency on these animals as a food source has caused them to pay closer attention to the animals' personalities and habits than would a hunter from another area. Thus their categorization of the animals into intelligent and not-so-intelligent ones is based on day-to-day interaction.[35]

463 In addition to relying on the natural environment,[36] many islanders continue an economic practice which is still the primary method of consumer exchange in the homelands of their ancestors, selling crafts and services along with their game and farm produce. Individual island families are known for "growing" carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, butchers, cabinetmakers, hairdressers, candlemakers, brickmasons, builders, farmers, ministers, and herbalists (or "rootmen"). Family
(178) members tend to follow the traditions set by preceding members of the family and handed down from generation to generation. The old skills brought from Africa or learned during slavery, when everything needed for the plantation was made or serviced by the slaves,[37] have lingered in the protected environment of the Sea Islands. Among the skills highly valued on the islands are carpentry, masonry, and the like—essential

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



538 on the Sea Islands for his patience and faith in the Lord's salvation. The buzzard is not an animal that the islanders are ambivalent about. [825] He keeps his distance and they keep theirs; they never kill him for sport but actually depend on him to help them locate dead dogs and farm animals which may have strayed away and got lost in the marsh. Variants of "The Buzzard and the Hawk" are numerous and can be found in just about any collection of African-American tales.[26]

Before beginning this tale the speaker had told a series of well-received stories. He paused at the outset to tease the audience into asking for more.

539 The Buzzard and the Hawk

Mr. Ted Williams

Y'all know—(pauses and addresses the audience)—I ain't taking too much time? *No! Uh uh!!*

Huh? *No!*

Y'all know about the buzzard? *Uh uh*

(Looking at the audience as if puzzled) Y'all didn't hear about the buzzard? *No! (laughing)*

(Again, acting even more surprised) Y'all ain't heard about the buzzard?!!! *(The audience laughs at his expression) Tell us!! Tell us about the buzzard?*

The buzzard and the monkey! *(laughing and clapping) Tell us about the buzzard and the monkey! (more laughing and clapping)*

Louis Jerden, Louie Jerden tell y'all about that now, y'all! (Looks at the older members of the audience.) The old people know about Louie Jerden and the buzzard! *(Elderly members nod and smile knowingly)*

You know the buzzard always was a—a nice educated animal, you know! *(Nods) Um hum! um hum!*

E take e time—(reflecting) just like he done with the hawk. *(Nods and um hums in unison)*

Him and the hawk was sitting down on the limb one day, and he said—Him and the hawk had a consolation [consultation].

Say, "I'm very hungry!!!"

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



113 rham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 321–22. The original source for this order is the *Report of the Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1865–66, Exec. Doc. 11, p. 10.

23. Guion Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands with Special References to St. Helena Island, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 18.

243 24. Though many writers have stated that rice was a Sea Island crop (see, for example, Wood, *Black Majority;* and Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource"), Professor Charles Joyner has indicated to me (through personal communication) that rice was grown not on the Sea Islands but in rice fields adjoining nearby mainland rivers. Rice requires fresh water, and the flooding and draining of rice fields require freshwater rivers moved by ocean tides. Thus Sandy Island had rice fields but the ocean islands did not.

113 25. Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 59.

26. Ibid., p. 59.

27. Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Storytelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

262 264 28. Rice is normally eaten for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in variation with different meats, gumbos, greens, and sauces, many of which are still prepared and eaten on the islands in traditional fashions. Two carry-overs, for example, are a kind of okra soup called *ofey okra* in Igbo and a turnip green dish prepared with bits of meat, onion, hot peppers, and pepper sauce that has its counterpart in Yoruba, Igbo, and Ibebio cultures. In Africa these vegetable and meat dishes are eaten with *fufu* or *gari*, a soft substance about the consistency of bread dough. On the islands, instead of fufu and gari, corn bread is served with the greens or okra soup; small bits are pinched off, mashed together with the fingers, and then dipped and rolled in the vegetable sauce.

113 29. Guion Johnson, *History of the Sea Islands*, p. 26.

30. Quoted in Crum, *Gullah*, p. 70.

[226] 31. This practice was also observed by Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake; see "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

538 32. *Ber* is the Sea Island form of the word *Brer*.

000 33. Crum, *Gullah*, p. 55.

34. Quoted in ibid., p. 60.

• 825 538 35. This observation may in part answer a question posed by Richard Dorson, an avid researcher and collector of black folktales. Dorson observes that southern blacks drew a fair portion of their folktale material from the barnyards, fields, and woods which formed their environment. "Why they neglected such familiar denizens as the coon and the possum," he comments, "in favor of the rabbit and the fox, and preferred the buzzard over the owl, remain teasing questions" (*American Negro Folktales* [New York: Fawcett, 1967], p. 67). Perhaps the questions are not "teasing" at all. The animals of the tales are intensely interesting to the islanders because they have had to study these animals so closely to learn to hunt them. According to some of the island storytellers—people who are also known for their hunting skills—such animals as the buzzard are revered for their patience. They are often used as foils to much smarter animals like the monkey or the rabbit. On the other hand, the rabbit is renowned for his cunning and his illusionary and evasive skills. Though his teeth are sharp, he has no

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



825 538 protective coating like Ber Cooter. He cannot fly like Ber Buzzard or remain aloof on a high perch like the owl. His only defense is his wit, and his wit he puts to good use in the tales told about him on the Sea Islands. Knowing his habits well, perhaps the islanders find him more deserving of the titles "trister" and "sporty little animal" than any of the other animals they come in contact with.

82 36. The islanders' interactions with the natural environment go beyond the economic. The children become amateur oceanographers and learn to foretell the weather by the humidity and color of the sun at given times of the day, and the manner in which it sets in the evening. They learn to gauge time within minutes in a furrowed field by [805] counting the number of rows that a shadow covers at certain times of the day, as well as by the distance of the sun as it moves from "day clean"—sunrise—to "out the light"—sunset. "Island time" is important because the inhabitants fish, crab, and shrimp only when the tide reaches certain levels coming in or going out. Water is a subject of much symbolism among the older islanders. Once one has partaken of the [554] Sea Island water, one is thought to have a right to live on the islands. But as I was informed, in no uncertain terms, the water must be *offered* by an older, native-born member of high social esteem for that right to be legitimized.

000 37. On this point see, for example, Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 61–63.

38. Winifred Owens (personal communication).

113 39. Mary Arnold Twining, "An Examination of African Retention in the Folk Culture of the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1977), p. 175.

000 40. Ibid.; Owens (personal communication).

113 41. Greg Day, *South Carolina Low Country Coil Baskets* (Charleston, S.C.: Charleston Communication Center, n.d.).

42. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource," p. 37.

43. William Demerson (Bamidele Ade Agbasebe), *The Role of Wife in The Black Extended Family: Perspectives from a Rural Community in the Southern United States*, New Research on Women and Sex Roles (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women, 1974), p. 135. Demerson is an anthropologist who has spent several years in the Sea Island area.

44. Ibid., p. 130.

45. Ibid., p. 135.

46. For further discussion see Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 141–63, especially p. 144.

47. W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (1924; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 44.

48. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday and Co., Anchor Books, 1970), p. 209.

49. Quoted in Patricia Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Guallah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 134. See also Appendix 3 herein.

50. Georgia Writers Project, *Drums and Shadows*, p. 236.

764 178 171 51. Crum, for example, does not acknowledge the influence of African languages

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 763

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



be seen, their familiar haunts, the time they have to leave their graves and their time of return. 775

For instance, all ghosts leave the graveyard at twelve midnight and return at "fust fowl crow"—all but one who is left on guard. They walk ten feet high off the ground, and cover long distances at a surprisingly short length of time. They like certain trees and certain houses. They have never been known to attack a human being physically, but are able to scare one to death. [767]

These spirits are the "on-easy" spirits who are destined for hell on judgment day, but who roam the earth and "hant" the living for they have no place to rest themselves. These "ghosts," "speerits", or "hants" fall into the following categories:[e]

*Plat-eye*—There are a number of beliefs regarding plat-eye. One is that plat-eye is the spirit of some of "those old timey people what been dead a long time." Another is that plat-eyes come into being when one buries a treasure and places the head of a murdered man in the hole with the valuables. If an intruder approaches the spot, the plat-eye will arise out of the ground in the guise of a six-legged calf or headless hog and frighten the trespasser away.[g] [825] [776]

*Boo-hags*—are spirits of hags. They are sent to plague and pester the enemies of the voodoo practitioner, or the enemies of the conjure man's clients. The spell can only be removed by a charm made by another doctor-nigger or witch who has superior knowledge of black magic. 754 774

*Boo-daddies*—are the spirits of doctor-niggers and conjure men released from the body of the living at night for dread purposes.

*Drolls*—are the spirits of young children who died a painful death. They can be heard, the Negroes say, crying piteously at night in deep swamps and deserted marshland. 775

*Spirit-animals*—are numerous. One particularly fearsome cat, which sometimes reaches a height of ten feet and explodes before one's eyes when the Lord's prayer is recited backwards, can be seen at Hamilton Hill on Edisto Island, when the moon is young.[b,f,g] 776 825

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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776 *Conjure-horses* and *Spirit-bears*—have not been heard of since the War between the States. Old-time Negroes say that a conjure-horse could follow a haunted person for miles, traveling well over the tree tops all the way. They breathed fire out of their nostrils, and when they passed by, the sound of hooves beating against some ghostly substance filled the air. Spirit-bears had long shaggy black hair, and mouths like caverns from which enormous red tongues, dripping with blood, protruded. They could climb the tallest tree on Edisto.

825

LETTERED REFERENCES

000 [a]The Kuranko also believe that such places as the bush, rivers, and mountains are the domain of the "Nyenne" spirits. The nyenne are quasi-humans, some of whom are sympathetic toward humans while others are harmful. Certain individuals are reputed to have special gifts of vision that enable them to see and make contact with the nyenne and even to secure their help in some undertaking. Similarly, the Limba believe that the bush is the domain of a group of spirits who cannot be seen except by those people who are born with "double eyes" or a special "clear spiritual vision." Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34–35; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 22.

[b]Among the Kuranko of Sierra Leone, there is a belief that certain people have the power of transforming themselves into animals in order to harm others. These "shape shifters" are greatly feared and embody all of the anti-social behavior which the Kuranko people try to combat. See Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 22.

[c]In African society, certain men are considered very proficient in the curative art. They are said to have more power over spirits than others have and do not necessarily use this power for positive ends. They can heal, foretell the future, and "change a thing into something else or a man into a lower animal, or a tree or anything." Their medicine is said to consist of charms, grasses, herbs, and barks taken from the bush. It is the spirit dwelling within these men which gives them their power. The Africans say that without the spirit these "magicians," "healers," and "fortune tellers" could do nothing. Allen Wolsey, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Their Customs, Religion and Folklore*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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that the old preacher got away from there so fast that he, who was also running with all his strength—couldn't keep him in sight. 539 [775]

At least this story had its explanation. The next day the old preacher and the young man were told that two Negroes after a fishing trip had stopped under a tree in the cemetery to divide their fish. One had a sack full of fish. The other had only two which he had dropped on the ground as he opened the gate of the cemetery. [226]

### *Truss Gawd*

"Plat Eye? Yas'm. De ole folks is talk about Plat Eye. Dey say dey takes shape ob all kind de critter—dawg, cat, hawg, mule, varmint—and I is hear tell ob Plat Eye taking form of gator. I ain see dem scusing one leetle time. You know dat leetle rwampy place hind de Parsenage? Dem does call dat Parsenage Branch. Well, one time I hab meh bloom on me en wuz clamming dem days, en de tide been berry late in de ebenin. Hit wuz dusky dark when I hit de Parsenage Lane—light dusky dark. I wuzn't feared none tall. You see, ez I say, I hab meh bloom on me in dem days. En I pass de Cap'n barn en stable. Dere he wuz wid Allan son milkin. En I say: "Good even, Cap'n Bill!' En he gin me back meh word. En I bawg t'ru dat deep white san en I passes de graveyard entrance en I leabes de [gate] open en enters dem dark woods whey de moss wabe low en bresh in you face. En I bin think about Plat Eye. De mind come ter me it wuz good time ter meet em. 539 776 825

"Den I bresh dem weepin moss aside en I trabble de wet mud in meh bare feets en meh shoe bein tie ter meh girdle string. En, Miss Jin, when I bin come ter de foot lawg I could see same ez I see yo now. I could see de foot lawg—dat same old cypress what been dere now. He blow in dat las big September gale. En I bin see Mr. Bull Frawg hit de water—ker plunk! En a cooter slide offen de lawg at meh feets. En, Miss Jin, clare ter Gawd, I bin fer look up at dat cooter den I turn meh eye up en dere wuz a cat—black cat wid he eye lak balls ob fire en he back all arch up en he tail twissin en er switchin en he hair stan on end. He move backward front ob me cross dat cypress lawg. En he bin big. He bin large es meh leetle yearlin ox. En I talk ter em en try fer draw close. En I say ter em; 'I ain fer fear nuttin!'

"En I'se try fer sing: 'He carry me t'ru many ob danger. Because he fust lub me. He guard gainst hant en Plat Eye. Because he fust lub me!'

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
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539
776
•825
[533]

"En dat Plat Eye ain gib me back meh word. He mobe forward en he tail swish en swish same lak big moccasin tail when he lash de rushes. En de sound come to me; 'Child ob Gawd, doan you show no fear.'

"En I is brace up. En meh short-handle leetle clamrake been in meh hand en I sing:

> 'Gawd will take care ob me.
> Walkin t'ru many ob dangers,
> Gawd will take care ob me.'

"En den de min come ter me; 'De Lawd heps dem what heps demsef.' Den I raise up meh rake en I come right cross dat critter hed. Ef dat had bin real cat, I'd er pin him ter dat lawg. My rake bin bury deep en de lawg hold em. En I clare ter Gawd, Miss Jin, he up en prance right onder meh feets, dem eyes burnin holes in me en he tail swish-swish lak ole Sooky tail when de flies bad. En meh ire bin raise. I fer struggle wid meh rake en de lawg loose em he grip en I fer pray: 'Gib Addie Strength, O Gawd!'

"En down I come straight t'ru dat critter middle. He stummick ball up same lak de leetle puffer toad-fish. But dat critter ain feel meh lick. En I ressel lak Jacob wid de angel. I bin strong en hab meh bloom on me. It ain 'vail nuttin.

"No, man! Mr. Plat Eye jest es peart en frisky ez fore he bin hit. En I buse em en I cuss em en I say: 'You debbil! Clare meh path!'

"En ef dat critter didn't paw de air en jest raise up dat big bamboo vine, en meh fer hit em ebery jump! So, Miss Jin, I tink: 'Sinner leble dat lawg.' Meh mind come ter me: 'Child ob Gawd, trabbel de woods path!'

"En I turn back en meh haste. En I hit dat path. En I ain bin tarry en jest ez I wuz gibbin Gawd he praise fer deliver me, dere dat cat! Dis time he big ez meh middle-size ox, en he eye bin blaze! En I lam en I lam. En dat rake handle bin wire en bin nail on. En jest ez I mek meh las lam, dat critter raise up fore meh eyes, en dis time he bin big ez cousin Andrew full-grown ox. En he yanish up dat ole boxed pine ez you quits de woods. Yas'm, I ain bleeve in Plat Eye twill den, but I minds meh step since dem days.

"En when I trabbles de deep woods whey de moss wabe low en Mr. Cooter lib en Mr. Moccasin crawl in de firefly flicker—meh packet fer load.

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"Yas'm. I'm ready fer em. Gunpowder en sulphur. Dey is say Plat Eye can't stan dem smell mix. No'm. Dey ain fer trubble me sense dat one time. Uncle Murphy he witch doctor, en he bin tell me how fer fend em off. Dat man full ob knowledge. He must hap Gawd mind in em. So I totes meh powder en sulphur en I carries stick in meh han en puts meh truss in Gawd." 539 778 825 789

[p. 354 is blank]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WORKED THEIR OWN REMEDY

159
757 We doesn't go to no doctor. My daddy used to cook medicine—herbs medicine: seamuckle, pine top, life everlasting, shoemaker root, ground moss, peachtree leaf, big-root, bloodroot, red oak bark, terrywuk.

Now when my children have fever I boil life everlasting; squeeze little lemon juice in it. Once they go to bed it strike that fever right away. That something very good.

And you hear about children have worm? We get something call jimsey weed. You put it in a cloth and beat it. And when you done beat it, you squeeze the juice out of it, and you put four, five drop of turpentine in it, give children that to drink. You give a dose of castor oil behind 'em. You don't have to take 'em to no doctor.

If anybody fall down and break bone, my daddy get a towel and pour
159 some water in the basin—put half a bottle of white vinegar in it. He hot the
752 towel and bathe the leg in some mud. Go in the creek and get some mud, band that whole leg up in mud. Couple days you be walking. That knits it right back together.

For a cut, to stop 'em from bleeding, Daddy just get a big spoonful of sugar and throw 'em in there. He say once a cut stop bleeding it's not dan-
(237) gerous. Spider webs grow up in the house and you get that and tie 'em on. Web grow right in there.

If you get sores you get something you call St. John out in the field. And you see those little bump grow on a gum tree; you get them and you [illegible] them two together and just tie 'em right on that wound. That heals right up.

When my little boy got a nail stuck in his feet, I got a basin of hot water with physic salt and let him hold he feet down in that—draw the poison out. Then I tie a piece of butts meat on it. His foot get better.

You hear about some little thing run back in its hole—fiddler crab? We
159 use that for whooping cough. Catch the crab, boil 'em up with something
757 else—I can't 'call the name—and strain 'em through a white cloth. Give that
825 for drink. It'll cure the running whoop.

All this from old people time when they hardly been any doctor. People
759 couldn't afford doctor, so they had to have and guess. Those old people dead out now, but they worked their own remedy and their own remedy come out good.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



192
*Hippo* for ipecac, probably from the dialect of the cockney English sailors who fetched it home from the Brazils. [278] The British pharmacopoeia of 1725 calls it "hippocachuana, hippechachuana, hippo for short."

*Gaum* (or *gorm*), to daub or smear with spilled victuals and grease; similarly *gaumandize* (*gormandize*) not to eat greedily, but to daub or to spatter oneself with food.

### *Proper Names (Onomatopeia)*

192
*Bloody noun*, the big swamp bull-frog.

.825
*Fry-bakin' frog*, the small pond-frog, supposed to say "fry bacon," "tea-table."

*Higguhri-hee* and *Cuckatoo*, both being terms for the great horned owl.

192
*Nickuhdemus*, *Buhrabbus*, and *Polydo'*, all favorite, mouth-filling names, common in sermons and religious arguments: "Ent de Scriptuh say een de fo'teen chaptuh een Nickuhdemus, dat de lab'ruth wut' 'e hire?"

*Rebus* is of unknown origin, being coupled only with Revelation, meaning from Alpha to Omega: "Uh bin t'ru da' t'ing frum Rebus spang to Rebelashun."

(825) *Po'Jo*, the long-legged, long-necked Blue Heron.

### *Popular Etymologies*

*Consecrate lye* (*concentrated*);[a] *middle-night*, *middle-day*, *middle-blouse*, for mid-night, mid-day, middy-blouse; *inflummashun*, for information; *sparruhgrass* for asparagus;[a] *Sawlketchum* for Salkahatchie, a tide-water river of South Carolina, for which the commoner corruption among the whites is "Saltcatcher"; *preecher on de sukkus* (circuit); *locus preechuh* (local preacher); *petty-* or *patty-auguh* for piragua, pirogue; *Saa'bint Day* (Servant's day) confused with Sabbath Day; *muffle-dice* for hermaphrodite; *grin' salt*, said of a hawk or vulture circling aloft; *carryin'* for carrion; *peach omelet* for peach marmalade; *curly flower* for cauliflower;[a] *Florida lime* for chloride of lime; *sweet religion* for sweet alyssum;[a] *nutten-aigs* for nut-megs.

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[a]Not exclusively Gullah; commonly found elsewhere.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good African mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[21] These curious-looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand" buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[22] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[21] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[22] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A. [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analysi]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



123 I assured her, when she paused for breath, that I realized the truth of what she
786 said. She told me how she had been out picking berries that morning, and a rattlesnake
825 had charmed her little boy. "I call' to him an' he couldn' move—he jus' look at the
159 snake like this." (She stooped down and stared fixedly ahead of her.) "When I pull'
him away, the snake went shzzzz! and the poison went into me." Then it was that
she strode into the middle of the yard and called upon Gabriel.

159 The next morning I was distressed to find that Laura had been taken to jail
123 again. My cook, Julia, and I talked the situation over and decided we would be easier in our minds if we knew she ought to be there. Though noisy the day before, she appeared to be harmless. Dr. Cate, the county physician, kindly took us to the jail at noon, as he also wished to see her. When we reached her cell, he asked, "Well, Laura, what are you here for?" Her reply impressed me very much. "It's not for drinkin' or fightin'—it's a religious affair." But when she went on to say, "I'm havin' a religious war, and I'm puttin' up a dam' good fight," I realized she had better stay
(589) where she was until her ardor cooled:

Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment
Blow Gabriel
At the Judgment Bar!
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment
Blow 'um easy
At the Judgment Bar!
My Lord call you
At the Judgment
My Lord call you
At the Judgment Bar!
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment
Why don't you answer
At the Judgment Bar!
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment
Ha-Ha angel
At the Judgment Bar!

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff
755 because he threw away two rats which had been killed in a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she
[825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same
[826] woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An-
[827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's
774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue un-
[777] less it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby
[764] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed
[789] over the coffin from one person to another in order to prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr.
854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a
774 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in-
789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put
[171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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775 deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den
787 disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa.
789 A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em,"[59] said an-
775 other resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* 787 an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a planta-
(115) tion known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[60] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people
789 dat flied off tuh Africa.[60a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some
754 folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an udduhs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey
787 alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump,
(826) I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh
(825) grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right
(763) up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die."[44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

WHITE BLUFF

757 "Duh wite root," pointing to a wild shrub, "dey use fuh
824 stomach troubles. Buttuh root an palmettuh root an May apple, yuh bile tuhgedduh wid a quawt uh watuh till it simmuh down tuh haf uh pint, den yuh add some cawn wisky. Dat a fambly tonic tuh buil yuh up."

777 Sophie went on to tell us something about the beliefs prevailing in the neighborhood. "Ef some relative is sick, yuh
[784] dohn nebuh deah tuh sew on a gahment wut yuh is weahin cuz dat put a spell on duh sick un an dey mos liable tuh die.[49] Deah's anudduh ting too. Yuh sho bettuh not steal tings frum a grabe.[64] I sho know I wouldn. Deah's jis a lot uh udduh tings bout bad luck too. One sho sign is dat
[827] ef a pusson sneeze wile dey's eatin long, dat is, dey hab food in dey mout, den dey got tuh put it out lessn dey hab bad
[825] luck.[53] Anudduh sign is duh hootin ub a owl."[44]

754 A strange look of doubt and amusement came into Sophie's eyes at the mention of conjuring. She smiled and slowly shook her head.

"I heahd ub a few cases weah dey say one uh duh neighbuhs cunjuh anudduh,[15] but fuh duh mos paht dey all gits long all right. Das cuz we's all Christians an dohn put no faith much in dem kine uh tings. Dey say dat a powuhful chahm kin be made frum grabeyahd dut[9] fuh cunjuhin puhposes, but duh pusson dat git duh dut mus put some pennies on duh grabe, else he hab trouble hissef. Nebuh let a enemy git any ub yuh haiah wut bin cut off aw yuh nail clippins. Ef he git deze he kin make sumpm dat will cause
• [826] lot uh trouble.[10] I kin tell yuh sumpm else bout duh haiah
[825] too. Ef a bud gits duh haiah, yuh'll hab a headache soon.

"Now Uncle John Bowen on St. Catherines he wuz a root
754 man an one time a man come tuh him tuh git somebody fix.
759 Uncle John he wuz fixin tings tuh linguh um, an duh man sit on duh cheah weah he hab duh cunjuh tings an Uncle John he git so mad he git right up an fix duh cunjuh right now so dat man wut awduh duh fixin die hesef. He fix lot

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## I CAN'T STAND TOO MUCH SITTING DOWN

159 461 If I be sitting down and don't have nothing to do, I get stove up. I get painful and lazy. I can't stand too much sitting down. I likes to go. You must be always active. You miss and sit around all day, lay around all night, you're so painful 'til you can't hardly get up. But you be working all the time, get • [826] your nerve together, get your vein together, then your muscle won't lock. Lot of people muscles lock by sitting down so much. No sit down for me. I likes to go.

I do any kind of job. I can plow, I can cut wood, I can sew, I can iron, I can scrub, I can do any kind of work in the field.

159 512 My husband was a farmer. He was a market man. He run a big farm. We have plenty chickens, plenty cow—two cow, and hogs. He get up and go to the market 'round two-thirty in the morning. Then I get up, put my baby to sleep, and get out there. Sometime we have these Columbia truck come in all time of night. These white people come in and carry these cabbage and thing. I'd be out there with them around four o'clock in the morning. After they go I come back to the house to see about the baby, then get in the tub and wash. Do all my washing, do my house cleaning, cook meals, have meals on time, cut cabbage, crate 'em too, pack 'em too.

159 I'm gone through a rough deal, but I thank God I'm still living. And I was doing those things in my nineteen and twenties. I'm fifty-nine now. So I'm not no baby!

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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Georgia

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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before 342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are [177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that [827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and orderly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as [592] ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is 171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die. 775 787 783

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e] 775 825 [827]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it. 775 789

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death. 754 764

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies. 754

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



757 We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But
787 I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

115 Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown
754 complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

754 "Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any shape he got a mine tuh.[68] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru
• [828] uh skin.[56] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cunjuh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuhgit duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it happen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

127 128 178

## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



754 least in the usual sense of the word. The blacks generally speak about
754 "hags"—beings who have all the powers ascribed to witches and a great
774 deal more. A hag is the disembodied spirit of an old woman who practices witchcraft. She is able to slip off her skin at night and roam about, under the earth, on the earth or above the earth, without anyone being able to see her. A person without skin is always invisible, but it is possible to feel them.

When darkness sets in, the hag who has been in the body during daylight hours, frees herself from the flesh, and proceeds to pursue her dread calling—that of "riding" persons against whom she has spite, or plaguing individuals she has been paid to worry. She is able to slip through the smallest cracks of your house while you sleep. She deposits her skin in the chimney corner. On your back, she pummels you to exhaustion, then sucks your blood. Upon leaving, she cries, "Kin, Kin, you know me," until the skin has fitted itself to the hag's body.

Anybody with common sense knows when he is being ridden by a hag.
• [828] First he will have unpleasant dreams and every night they become more alarming. Insomnia is a sure sign, as is worrying at night. If the hag is not called off the person will lose his mind.

A hag will ride your enemy for a small pittance.[d]

### *Supernatural Beliefs*

77 "The Negroes who live down on the salt in the Sea Island region of South Carolina are firm believers in a motley variety of supernatural beings. To them the earth is filled with ghosts, plat-eyes, boo-daddies, boo-hags, drolls and spirit animals. Only the educated Negroes who have
[369] contact with the big cities of America deny the existence of these outer-world creatures. The rest of the Sea Island blacks are steeped in the same superstitions that their forefathers held in Africa."

775 *Ghosts*—A ghost is very real thing to the Negroes of Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands. A ghost, the materialized body of one who is dead, may be said to have the same dignity as a human being as far as its existence is concerned. The Gullahs say that they know exactly where ghosts could

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115 of schooling as evinced by her diction. She is a devout member of the Adventist Church, her day of worship coming on Saturday instead of the customary Sunday, a day observed and anticipated by the average Negro.

791 "Silvia Higgins," Esther testified, "wuz a medium. She
795 talked wih spirits all huh life.[56a, b] She used the rapping signal. I myself have seen the work and acts of spirits. I've seen cheahs and tables move about a room. And I've seen a woman and a boy come intuh my yahd and then disappeah, and I know that the woman wuz dead. The boy wuz not dead but wuz not anywheah in this vicinity. Silvia Higgins wuz my mothuh. She has been dead thirty-two yeahs."

115 One of the most interesting Negroes in this settlement is Tonie Houston,* an old preacher, extremely gracious of manner and eager to be of help.

"I bin yuh in dis town fo dey wuz no big buildings an duh streets wuz all dut an deah wuz no pavement."

• 829 "Do you remember any of the people brought over from Africa?" we asked.

"Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz 'Golla' John Wiley,
[551] Golla' Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Chahles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz 'Golla' Jack, 'Golla' Tom, 'Golla' Silvie, 'Golla' Chahles Carr, 'Golla' Bob, Chahlotte, Cain, an Jeanette, an 'Golla' Alice. Dey wuz all bought by Mr. McMullen."

When asked the meaning of so many "Gollas," he replied,
[101] "All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obuhseas wuz call 'Golla,' and dey talk wuz call 'Golla' talk." His knowl-
[192] edge of their language, gained by association with the Africans, was scant. Among the words he remembered were *musungo* tobacco, *mulafo* whiskey, and *sisure* chicken. A cow was called *gombay* [25s] and a hog *gulluh*.

[322] To questions regarding the utensils, such as buckets, tubs,

* *Tonie Houston, Tatemville.*

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• 829 dishes, and tools, of these people, he answered, "Dey would
322 make any ting dey needed. Dey made spoons, trays, buckets. Dey made piggins an mawtuh an pestle from a lawg uh wood. Dey would make wooden cuttuhs fuh meat an vegetubble an would dress some uh dem wid pretty figyuhs." [70d]

829 For their meetings, he said "Golla" Tom or another would
796 beat the drum signalling them to gather; then all would sing
533 and dance in a circle to the accompaniment of the drum.[23] The drums of death would also sound, summoning to the
764 "settin-up" or wake.[36] "Dey would have some hot drinks," recounted Tonie Houston, "sech as coffee an tea.[37] Den at duh time fuh buryin, duh drum would beat an all would lay flat on duh groun on dey faces befo duh body wuz placed in duh grave. Den all would rise and dance roun duh grave. Wen duh body wuz buried, duh drum would give signal wen all wuz tuh rise aw fall aw tuh dance aw sing." [18]

754 As to the magic of conjure, he had been well acquainted
789 with a "cunjuh man" who, he said, was a native of Africa and could disappear at will. However, this man, Dick Hamilton, had died three years previously.

829 There had also been living in Tatemville "Golla" Jones Davis, an African, who, as affirmed by his relative, Solomon Davis, has not been heard of since his departure for his native land, some five or six years ago.

115 Richard Wright,* bent with age and rheumatism, talked at length about his childhood on the plantation, where he was one of seventy-five children owned by his "Boss." He
[322] attested to the skill exhibited in that day by the men in wood
[286] carving and the making of farm implements [70d] and by the women in making cloth.

777 He was staunch in his belief in signs as he declared, "Deah's many tings wut's bad luck. Ef we come in duh house wid our hat on we hab tuh go back an den pull it off
[356] an den come in. Wen yuh clean duh house in duh day an

* *Richard Wright, Tatemville.*

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115 759 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut [787] a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

• 829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuhchuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns 115 roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud wuz a scah bout dis big."[14] She indicated the end of her 304 forefinger.

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

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759 uh people. Deah so much debilment in ole Uncle John
754 Bowen dat finally he eat out hesef till he fix hesef an die."

534 We asked about the use of drums.

"Yes'm, dey alluz use tuh beat duh drum wen somebody
[763] die tuh let duh udduh folks know bout duh det. An at
[764] fewnuls too, dey beat it."

Relative to spirits, she replied, "No'm, I caahn see spirits
776 cuz I ain bawn wid a caul. But now Bob Delegal he knows spirits. Down on Blackbeard Ilun, deah wuz a big hawg wut wuz a ebil spirit. Dey call um Blackbeard an dey try an try tuh kill um. So ole Bob Delegal cut up some silbuh an put it in he gun. He aim at duh hawg but he miss um an ole Bob Delegal fall down an couldn speak. Dey carry um home an he nebuh did talk no mo an duh nex day he die."

782 According to Sophie the old people on St. Catherines would pray at the rising and at the setting of the sun and at the conclusion of their prayers they would say the words "Meena, Mina, Mo." Asked if she knew the meaning of these words, she shook her head negatively.

"Yuh know, Susie Branch, who lib jis cross duh road
115 deah, could tell yuh some uh deze tings too. We wuz chillun tuhgedduh down on St. Catherines Ilun. I gwine call uh."

In a moment Susie * arrived. Tall and thin, she was dressed in a red, green, and blue cotton plaid skirt and a man's shirt with the tail hanging loosely outside. She was very talkative and was enthusiastic in verifying many of the things that Sophie had mentioned.

115 Susie listened gravely as we inquired about her recollec-
tions of the old people in her family. She told us the follow-
• 829 ing story: "Dey steal muh great-great-gran, uh name wuz Sukey, frum off duh beach in Africa wen she wuz a young miss. I dunno wut paht ub Africa she come frum. She alluz say she come frum Africa, duh country weah dey dohn weah no cloze. At duh plantation at St. Catherines she wuz

* *Susie Branch, White Bluff.*

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duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do any-
[777] ting roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh
[763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef
[825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

•829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died
[789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused,
[777] "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat." [32a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

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115 492 484 "We come in a wagon hitch up tuh a double team uh hawse. We pile ebryting in duh wagon, all duh pots and pans an beddn. Duh women ride in duh wagon an duh men trudge longside.

115 484 "It take us days an days tuh come frum Clinch County tuh yuh. We cross tree ribbuhs. We git tuh one ribbuh wut take us a half day tuh git obuh. Wen night come, we sleep in duh houses long duh road wut duh folks desuhted. I membuh one time we stay at a house wut dohn hab no flo. Jis walls an a roof. We put duh beddn right down on duh groun an sleep deah.

115 567 829 "We done sell tuh Mistuh Barnard. Yuh know duh Barnards, missus? Mis Barnard come outn a Barstow. Dey lib yuh, too. Well, wen we git tuh Wilmington Ilun, deah wuz jis a few houses on duh ilun. Deah wuz still some folks yuh wut hab come frum Africa. I recollect dat one gang uh slabes wuz brung frum Liberia. Dat wuz fo I git yuh. Duh las gang wuz brung attuh I git yuh an dey come ovuh frum Africa an dey stop an add tuh um at Santo Domingo.

"Yuhs heahd bout dat lot, ain't yuh? Big boat try tuh creep up duh Savannah Ribbuh, but dey chase um out tuh open sea an dey keep chasin um till wen dat boat git way an kin lan dem slabes, it way down tuh Jekyll Ilun. Den attuh dey git um deah, dey steal some ub um back an carry um up yuh tuh Hutchinson Ilun. I tink dasso, missus.

"I membuh doze Africans wen dey fus come couldn walk on duh groun bery good. Dey hab lill clumpy feet an dey ain weah no shoes needuh."

We asked if Uncle Robert had ever heard the Africans say how they had been captured and he nodded. "Yes'm, I heahs um talk bout dat many times. Dey say duh wite mens git um tuh come on ship an dey fool um wid all kine uh pretty tings. Den dey lock um in duh hatch an wen dey git ~~out,~~ dey way out on duh open sea."

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829 Did Uncle Robert remember any particular words that the African people had used?

"Ole man Pompey he say, 'skinskon' ebrytime he git mad. Wen he wuz bery mad he alluz say dat. But nobody know wut he mean. He call a watuhmelon a 'balonga.'

"I membuh duh African mens use tuh all duh time make lill clay images. Sometime dey lak mens an sometime lak animal. Once dey make a big un. Dey put a speah in he han an walk roun im an say he wuz duh chief. But dat clay got too much ribbuh mud in um an he ain las long. Sometime dey try tuh make duh image out uh wood, but seem lak duh tool ain right, so mos times dey's ub clay." 41g. 70z. o

We questioned the old man about any other recollections he might have concerning African people and he added, "Doze Africans alluz call one anudduh 'countryman.' Dey know ef dey come frum duh same tribe by duh mahk dey hab.[14] Some hab a long mahk an some hab a roun un. Udduhs weah eahring in duh eah. Some weahs it in duh lef eah an doze frum anudduh tribe weahs it in duh right eah.

829 764 "Deah's two Africans buried on duh ilun right now. Lonnie Green an his brudduh, dey buried right neah duh Indian mouns. Jack Pinckney yuh, he bury um."

At this point Uncle Jack and Uncle Robert engaged in an animated discussion of the types of funerals which had been held in those early days.

[202] Uncle Jack said, "Wen a pusson die, we beat duh drum tuh let ebrybody know bout duh det.[26] Den dey come tuh duh wake an sit up wid duh body."

Uncle Robert added, "Wen one uh doze Africans die, it wuz bery sad. Wen a man's countryman die, he sit right wid um all night. Den in duh mawnin he go out an pray tuh duh sun. Yuh know, missus, doze Africans ain got no Christianity. Dey ain hab no regluh religion. Dey jis pray tuh duh sun an moon an sometime tuh a big stah. Attuh dey

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•829 764 pray, dey come in an put deah han on duh frien an say good-bye.[30, 31] Den dey go home."

764 533 "We beat duh drum agen at duh fewnul."[34] This from Uncle Jack. "We call it duh dead mahch. Jis a long slow beat. Boom-boom-boom. Beat duh drum. Den stop. Den beat it agen."

534 We wanted to know what the drums looked like and the two men took turns in supplying the information.

Uncle Robert spoke first. "Duh ole drums wut duh Africans make wuz make out ub a skin uh some kine uh animal stretch obuh a holluh lawg. Dey didn eben take duh haiah off duh skin. Jis put it on datta way."[35]

Here Uncle Jack spoke up, "Ain so long sence dey stop makin drums. Wen I wuz a young man, we use tuh make um. Dey wuz fo-cawnuhed sometimes an wuz cubbuh wid a skin. Dey wuz bout fo feet high. At duh fewnul wen we beat duh drum we mahch roun duh grabe in a ring."

538 We asked if any of them knew any spider stories. There was some hesitancy; then they all said, "No'm."

[115] Celia Small,* a slim, middle-aged Negro woman, listened intently, nodding her head. We asked Celia if she had heard of them.

"Yes'm, muh granma she speak ub em many time an say dey's wicked." Celia laughed slyly. "She say dey talk bout um mung duh mens."

We asked if the spider had a name, like Brer Rabbit.

"No'm, he ain got no name. Lease, I ain nebuh heahd it. Only time I knows yuh call a spiduh wen yuh say, 'An Nancy got um,' an das wen he ketch duh fly.[53] Duh spiduh is wicked. Hab tuh be bery keahful bout um. He drop right down out uh duh sky on yuh."

"What about the spider stories?" we persisted.

Celia looked at us warningly. She laughed softly.

* *Celia Small, Wilmington Island.*

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538 "Spiduh stories mus be bad. Caahn git duh mens tuh tell um tuh dis day. Dèy jis say dey ain know nuttn bout um. Dey ain want tuh tell um tuh duh ladies."

[115] Gene,* Uncle Jack's stalwart son, who had for the most part stood quietly at the fringe of the little group and had volunteered no information at all, now contributed, "Doze spiduh stories ain nuttn but duhty jokes. Dat's all dey is. Yuh call a duhty joke 'An Nancy story.' Ain no stories tuh tell duh ladies." [33]

789 A sudden silence followed and we asked if any of the
567 group had heard of flying Africans. Uncle Jack's face brightened. "Long as I kin membuh, missus, I been heahin
.829 bout dat. Lots uh slabes wut wuz brung obuh frum Africa could fly. Deah wuz a crowd ub um wukin in duh fiel. Dey dohn lak it heah an dey tink dey go back tuh Africa. One by one dey fly up in duh eah an all fly off an gone back tuh Africa."

789 As the old man was talking, the others nodded in agreement and mumbled that they too had heard of "folks wut
[115] could fly." Peter McQueen,** small and middle-aged, said, "Deah's folks wut kin fly eben now. Folks is alluz complainin bout bein rid by witches." [49]

754 There was again a murmur of agreement and we were able to catch snatches of conversation dealing with people in the neighborhood who had been ridden by witches.

Celia Small told us, "Dey's mosly folks yuh know. Jis change deah shape at night an come in duh house an ride yuh." [68]

"Now das sumpm reel," approved Uncle Robert. "I bin rid lots uh time by witches. Jis sit on yuh ches an ride yuh. Yuh wake up an feel lak yuh smudduhin. Ef yuh kin git duh succulation an tro um off, it all right."

775 The talk of witches suggested other apparitions and we
776

* *Gene Tattnall, Wilmington Island.*
** *Peter McQueen, Wilmington Island.*

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115 Uncle Jonah told us that he was eighty-seven years of age and that he had been born on a plantation on Harris Neck. He had remained there until after the time "uh duh big raid," he said and he had been in Sunbury for a period of about sixty years.

• 829 When asked if he could remember any of the slaves who had come from Africa, a faraway expression came into his eyes. Finally he offered, "Yes'm, I membuh two. Ole man Ben an Sally dey bote come frum Africa. Dey sho use tuh use some funny wuds. Wen it would tunduh, dey would alluz say it wuz 'maulin a bumba.'"

829 538 Uncle Jonah tried to recall some of the African stories he had heard in his youth. He knit his brows in deep thought. After a time he said, "I membuh heahin bout a boatload uh Nigguhs wut wuz bring frum Africa. Dey wuz kep hid in duh cabin till dey git tuh Sunbury. Wen dey let um out an [789] dey see dey wuzn in Africa, dey jis take wing an fly back home. Cose now, ma'am, I didn see dis but I heah bout it many times."

Another story that the old man told us was as follows: "Deah wuz two countrymen wut bote come frum Africa libin on duh plantation. One ub dem die an dey bury um widout duh udduh knowin bout it. Pretty soon he lun bout how he frien die an he make um dig um up. He say he wannuh say a few wuds tuh um. Dey dig up duh man an he speak tuh um an den put um back in duh grabe. It wuz all right attuh he say goodbye."[20]

754 "Uncle Jonah," we asked, "do you remember much conjuring in those days?"

The white head nodded slowly. "Yes'm, deah sho wuz cunjuhin, but deah's mo cunjuhin[15] in deze days dan deah wuz in doze. I heah bout it all duh time roun yuh."

115 322 764 Our interview concluded, we set out in search of Siras Bowen, who, we had been told, carved wooden tombstones.[70a, b] We rode down the sandy, tree-lined road until we came to the

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# *Harris Neck*

361 TURNING OFF FROM THE COASTAL HIGHWAY NEAR
49 Riceboro a tree-shaded dirt road leads to Harris Neck, a remote little settlement connected to the mainland by a causeway and located about forty-eight miles south of Savannah. Narrow, rutted roads curve and turn unexpectedly through
361 the densely wooded area. Set singly or in little clusters of two or three and sometimes almost hidden by the trees and foliage are the houses of the inhabitants. There is a peaceful atmosphere about the entire island; life flows along in a smoothly gliding stream; the people seem satisfied for the most part with a simple, uneventful scheme of existence.

115 The first house we stopped at was that of Ed Thorpe,* a familiar and well liked character in the section. A small, neatly inscribed placard placed near the gate bore the owner's name. The attractive house was set well back from
[351] the road in a large grove of oak trees. A whitewashed fence protected the property.

The old man, who was eighty-three years old, was working in the side yard adjoining the house. His broad, erect shoulders and his bright alert eyes made him appear to be much younger than his actual age. He told us proudly that he had lived in this particular house for twenty-five years. Then he apologized because his present circumstances prevented him from having the house and fence repainted.

• 829 We discussed native Africans and Ed Thorpe remem-
193 bered that his grandmother had come from Africa.

* *Ed Thorpe, Harris Neck.*

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HARRIS NECK

•829 173 "She come frum Africa an uh name wuz Patience Spaulding," he began. "She tell me dat in Africa she use tuh eat wile tings. I membuh she use tuh go out in duh woods roun yuh an bring back some kine uh weed wut she cook. She call it 'lam quato.' It look lak pokeberry tuh me.

"She say all duh people in Africa loves red. Das how dey [567] ketch um. I mean duh folks wut bring um yuh as slabes. Dey put up a red clawt weah dey would see it. Wen dey git close tuh duh boat, dey grab um an bring um yuh. She say das duh way dey ketch huh.

"Wen muh gran pray, she kneel down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'

829 173 754 [789] "Muh gran say deah wuz lots uh cunjuh in Africa. Deah wuz some men wut could make a pot bile widout fyuh an deah wuz some wut could fly.[48, 69c] She tell me dat deah wuz witches wut rode folks.[69] Dey could take off deah skins an hang um up an go out as cats.[68] Wen dey come back duh nex mawnin, dey would put on duh skins. Deah is folks roun heah tuhday wut says dey caahn sleep nights cuz duh witches ride um.

775 "Folks say duh road tuh Maringo is hanted.[59] I use tuh lib at Maringo some time back, but I nebuh did see no spirits. Once I tink I see one. Wen I git closuh, it tun out tuh be a big dog."[54]

115 285 Later that day we stopped at a neat whitewashed cottage and talked for a while with Isaac Basden,* a blind basket-maker[70a] about sixty years of age. The old man had learned his trade during his youth before he had gone blind and now supported himself comfortably in this manner.

We found him sitting in the front room, surrounded by his work. A number of finished baskets were also in evidence. 285 They varied widely in size and shape and were all of the coil type.[70i] Many were fanners, while there were also a number

* *Isaac Basden, Harris Neck.*

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754 cunjuh wut is laid down fuh yuh an let yuh know wen somebody is aftuh yuh." [18a]

•829 The midwife told us that she had recently returned to Harris Neck, after having lived for many years in Waycross. We asked her which community she preferred and she said, "I lak it in Waycross, missus. Duh two places jis ain nuttn lak. Tings is sho diffunt yuh. Duh folks jis dohn ack duh same. Yuh wouldn even know dey wuz human. Soon as I kin Ise goin back tuh Waycross. I jis dohn lak it heah."

533 202 The conversation turned to drums and in regard to this subject Rosa spoke up emphatically. "Yes'm, I membuh bout how some time back dey use tuh beat out messages on duh drum.[26] Dat wuz tuh let us know wen deah wuz tuh be a dance aw a frolic. Wen dey hab a dance obuh on St. Catherines, dey beat duh drum tuh tell us bout it. Duh soun would carry obuh duh watuh an we would heah it plain as anyting. Den duh folks heah beat duh drum tuh let em know bout it in udduh settlements."

533 764 The women also spoke of drums in connection with death customs. They told us that they were still beaten by those in the procession accompanying the body to the grave.[24]

764 "Ebrybody put duh hans on duh body tuh say goodbye," [31] Rosa told us.

"Yuh speak tuh duh pusson, too, an tell um a las message," said Anna.

"Yuh put dishes an bottles an all duh pretty pieces wut dey lak on duh grabe.[47] Yuh alluz break deze tings fo yuh put um down." [47a]

We wanted to know the reason for doing this, for we had been informed on other occasions that it was done so that no one would be tempted to steal.

Rosa, however, stated an entirely different motive.

"Yuh break duh dishes so dat duh chain will be broke. (761) Yuh see, duh one pusson is dead an ef yuh dohn break duh

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361 helter-skelter about the enclosure. There was some wire fencing, but dogs, cats, chickens, a litter of very young (231) puppies, and an old rooster roamed at will. Sunning themselves against a cabin wall were two old women, and from 461 the windows of another cabin popped the heads of three 123 curious younger women. An open door suddenly gave forth several children, smiling and scantily clad, shining eyes and surprised faces upturned to the strangers.

123 The two elderly women rose and came forward to greet us. Our guide explained our mission and inquired as to the whereabouts of Uncle Ben Washington, with whom we wished (115) to talk. Aunt Sarah,* who was Uncle Ben's wife, explained that her husband had gone to work in the woods early that morning.

A glance at the dense forest surrounding the little clearing convinced us that Uncle Ben would be unlikely to hear the halloos with which our guides were attempting to summon him.

115 Just as we were about to abandon the venture a unique figure appeared inside the fence and Reuben Taylor, the older of our guides, exclaimed, "Deah's Uncle Ben now." Uncle Ben ** appeared in a long frock coat and high felt (291) hat, carrying a walking stick. It was difficult to understand how he could have worked in such a costume. He seemed young for the eighty-five years he claimed, for he moved about with considerable agility.

As he drew nearer, Aunt Sarah went forward to greet him and the two old people came toward us together. When we again explained about the information we were seeking, Uncle Ben said with grave courtesy that he was glad to have visitors.

Thinking of the precarious journey that lay behind us and (361) wondering how far from the main road this little settlement (829)

*Sarah Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.
**Ben Washington, in the pine woods about five miles from Eulonia.

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115 361 •829 might be, we asked Uncle Ben how often he went to town. He shook his head slowly. "We dohn nebuh go tuh duh road," he said. "We got ebryting we needs right yuh."

Aunt Sarah nodded her gray head in agreement. "Seems lak we libed yuh fuh mos ub our libes," she stated simply. "We built deze houses wen we fus come yuh. All duh chillun wuz raise yuh an we nebuh take up no time wid duh folks on duh outside. Nebuh did set no sto by mixin wid strainjuhs an sech doins."

Incredible as it seemed, they were speaking the truth. For half a century they had lived in this isolated spot, only a few miles from a frequently traversed highway.

754 Despite their evident liking for solitude the old couple were not averse to answering our questions. "Is there much conjure and magic around here, Uncle Ben?" we asked.

"I heah tell uh tings lak dat," he answered and looked up with a sly quizzical smile. "Ise heahd bout bein cunjuhed an I know fuh true deah's sech tings as magic." Uncle Ben chuckled, "Ef yuh ebuh see a cross mahk in duh road, yuh nebuh walk obuh it. Das real magic. Yuh hab tuh go roun it. It's put deah by a enemy an ef yuh walks cross it, duh ebil spell will cause yuh hahm.[15] Duh cross is a magic sign an hab tuh do wid duh spirits."

[759] "Ef dat happens," said Aunt Sarah, "reckon bout duh only ting yuh could do would be tuh see a root doctuh.[48] He gib yuh sumpm wut cuos yuh."[6]

[789] Uncle Ben turned to us. "Lots uh folks carry hans all duh time an dis bring em luck an keep duh ebil spirits away."[2, 12a, c, d]

[789] The old man seemed unable to describe these good luck charms, but he was more successful in describing the charms used in conjuring an enemy.

"Dey is made mosly frum haiah aw nails an lots uh times duh dus frum yuh foot track," he said.[7]

Aunt Sarah's face darkened. "Ain nobody git my haiah"

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795 tize on duh ebb tide cuz duh ribbuh is spose tuh wash duh
796 sins away.[63] All duh folks sing a song called *All Muh Sins*
783 *Done Wash Away.*"
(533)

There were several white chickens wandering about the
231 yard and Susan told us that her principal reason for keep-
754 ing them was that they possessed the power to dig up conjure.[13]

829 We asked the old woman if she had ever known any Africans, and she said, "I know one man. He name Primus O'Neal. He come frum Africa an he talk funny talk. He call a pot a 'jam.' I membuh he say, 'Lemme cook sumpm fuh nyam.' He mean sumpm fuh tuh eat."

115 It later developed that this same Primus O'Neal was the grandfather of Rosa Grant * whom we found living in a small gray cottage on the Townsend Road. Rosa was sixty-five years old, with copper-colored skin and rather aquiline features.

115 We asked about her grandfather and she told us some of
829 the things of which she had heard him speak.

"He tell me dey nebuh hab tuh plant in Africa. Dey gadduh wile okra an palmettuh cabbage fuh food frum duh forres. He tell bout a wine call 'figlin watuh' dat dey drink in Africa. But he nebuh say jis how dey make it.

115 "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna.
782 I membuh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray.
829 Ebry mawnin at sun-up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'ashamnegad.' Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'

829 "She talk plenty bout cunjuh.[15] Say dat wen a pusson bin made tuh swell up frum a ebil spell, dey got tuh hab somebody tuh pray an drag fuhrum. Ef yuh hab a pain aw

* *Rosa Grant, Townsend Road, Possum Point.*

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POSSUM POINT

• 829 a misery in duh leg aw ahm, yuh kill a black chicken an split it open an slap it weah duh pain is an dat will cuo duh pain.

"She tell me dat in Africa she lib in a palmettuh house. She say dey kill animals wid a bow an arruh. Some dey use fuh food an some dey kill fuh skin. All duh people keep deah finguh nail long so dey could grab tings tuh eat off duh trees an bushes. Eben attuh she come tuh dis country, she keep uh nail long fuh a long time. Wen she staht cuttin um, she alluz bun duh pieces an she bun duh combins frum uh haiah too. She say it dangerous tuh let anybody git um. Dey make cunjuh gense yuh.[10] She say in Africa dey plant berries an pumpkin an dey had tuh plant um ebry seben yeahs or dey die.

"Friday wuz duh day she call huh prayuh day. Den she use tuh make bread. Wen she mix it up, she put duh dough in a wet bag an bake it in duh ashes.

"She tell me bout duh hahves time wen duh folks stay up all night an shout. At sun-up dey all sing an pray and say dey live bettuh an be mo tankful duh nex yeah." [59]

"Was your 'gran' grown up when she came from Africa?"

829 567 "No'm, she wuz jis a leedle ting. She say dat duh way she happen tuh come frum Africa wuz dat dey wuzn use tuh seein anyting red. One day dey see a boat wid a red piece uh clawt flyin on it. Wen dey go up close tuh see it, dey wuz caught. Huh mothuh, Theresa, wuz caught too an dey 829 wuz brought tuh dis country. Attuh dey bin yuh a wile, duh 829 mothuh git to weah she caahn stan it an she wannuh go back 789 tuh Africa. One day muh gran Ryna wuz standin wid uh in duh fiel. Theresa tun roun—so—" here Rosa made two quick swings with her skirt. "She stretch uh ahms out—so —an rise right up an fly right back tuh Africa.[59a] Muh gran say she wuz standin right deah wen it happen. She alluz wish dat uh mothuh had teach uh how tuh fly. She try an try doin duh same way but she ain nebuh fly. She say she guess she jis wuzn bawn wid duh powuh."

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533 534 764 walks in a long line moanin an we beats duh drum all duh way." [24]

534 We inquired about the making of drums and the kinds of drums.

[237] "We makes drums out uh sheep hide but we gottuh dry um an stretch duh skin obuh. Some makes it out uh holluh lawgs wid skin obuh duh en an some ub um is as long as tree feet." [25]

567 We asked the old man if he remembered any slaves that were real Africans.

• 829 "Sho I membuhs lots ub um. Ain I sees plenty ub um? I membuhs one boatload uh seben aw eight wut come down frum Savannah. Dat wuz jis a lill befo duh waw. Robbie McQueen wuz African an Katie an ole man Jacob King, dey's all African. I membuhs um all. Ole man King he lib till he ole, lib till I hep bury um. But yuh caahn unduhstan much wut deze people say. Dey caahn unduhstan yo talk an you caahn unduhstan dey talk. Dey go 'quack, quack, quack,' jis as fas as a hawse kin run, an muh pa say, 'Ain no good tuh lissen tuh um.' Dey git long all right but yuh know dey wuz a lot ub um wut ain stay down yuh."

Did he mean the Ibos * on St. Simons who walked into the water?

"No, ma'am, I ain mean dem. Ain yuh heah bout um? Well, at dat time Mr. Blue he wuz duh obuhseeuh an Mr. Blue put um in duh fiel, but he couldn do nuttn wid um. Dey gabble, gabble, gabble, an nobody couldn unduhstan um an dey didn know how tuh wuk right. Mr. Blue he go down one mawnin wid a long whip fuh tuh whip um good."

"Mr. Blue was a hard overseer?" we asked.

567 829 789 "No, ma'am, he ain hahd, he jis caahn make um unduhstan. Dey's foolish actin. He got tuh whip um, Mr. Blue, he ain hab no choice. Anyways, he whip um good an dey

* *A group of slaves from the Ibo tribe refused to submit to slavery. Led by their chief and singing tribal songs, they walked into the water and were drowned at a point on Dunbar Creek later named Ebo (Ibo) Landing.*

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567 829 789 gits tuhgedduh an stick duh hoe in duh fiel an den say 'quack, quack, quack,' an dey riz up in duh sky an tun hesef intuh buzzuds an fly right back tuh Africa." 68b, 69a

At this, we exclaimed and showed our astonishment.

"Wut, you ain heah bout um? Ebrybody know bout um. Dey sho lef duh hoe stannin in duh fiel an dey riz right up an fly right back tuh Africa."

Had Wallace actually seen this happen, we asked.

"No, ma'am, I ain seen um. I bin tuh Skidaway, but I knowd plenty wut did see um, plenty wut wuz right deah in duh fiel wid um an seen duh hoe wut dey lef stickin up attuh dey done fly way."

115 [789] [322] This story of the flying Africans seemed to be a familiar one, for it was later repeated to us by William Rogers,* who lived about a mile from Darien on the Cowhorn Road. We had been told that he had been a cabinet maker in his youth and still spent much of his spare time in the carving of a variety of objects. The old man was evidently well known in the vicinity, for upon inquiry neighbors quickly directed us to his house.

Because a short time ago a fire had destroyed Rogers' home and most of his possessions, we found him living in an unfinished cottage which was as yet unpainted except for the bluish-green trimming on all the window facings. In spite of the apparent newness of the house, there was a pleasant homelike atmosphere about it. Proof of Rogers' skill was [322] demonstrated in scroll-work which decorated the porch and in a cupboard and fine square chimney in the dining room which the old man and his wife were building.

Rogers, who was seventy-two years old, was small of stature with copper-colored skin and alert black eyes. His manner was affable and friendly despite the fact that a recently suffered paralytic stroke had partially deprived him of the use of his hands. He told us that his grandmother had been

* *William Rogers, Cowhorn Road, Darien.*

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115 Georgia but still retained many pleasant recollections of the days of her early youth. She had heard of many African customs and went on to tell us some of these.

•829 "I heahd many time bout how in Africa wen a girl dohn ack jis lak dey should, dey drum uh out uh town. Dey jis beat duh drum, an call uh name on duh drum an duh drum say bout all duh tings she done.[98] Dey drum an mahch long an take duh girl right out uh town.

"Girls hab tuh be keahful den. Dey caahn be so triflin lak some ub em is now. In Africa dey gits punished. Sometime wen dey bin bad, dey put um on duh banjo. Dat wuz
626 in dis country."

This being "put on duh banjo" was unintelligible to us and we asked for an explanation.

"Wen dey play dat night, dey sing bout dat girl an dey tell all bout uh. Das puttin uh on duh banjo. Den ebrybody know an dat girl sho bettuh change uh ways."

829 The story of flying Africans was a familiar one to the old woman and she said that her mother had often told her the
789 following incident which was supposed to have taken place
567 on a plantation during slavery times.

"Duh slabes wuz out in duh fiel wukin. All ub a sudden dey git tuhgedduh an staht tuh moob roun in a ring. Roun dey go fastuhnfastuh. Den one by one dey riz up an take wing an fly lak a bud.[99b, 99c] Duh obuhseeuh heah duh noise an he come out an he see duh slabes riz up in duh eah an fly back tuh Africa. He run an he ketch duh las one by duh foot jis as he wuz bout tuh fly off. I dohn know ef he wuz neah nuff tuh pull um back down an keep um frum goin off."

115 As we left, Priscilla accompanied us down the walk to the gateway. She was reluctant to see us go and until the last minute regaled us with a variety of stories.

We had learned that an elderly Negro named Lawrence Baker * lived out on the Ridge Road near the Ridgeway Club.

* *Lawrence Baker, the Ridge Road, near Darien.*

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795 during an ebb tide and Lawrence hastened to assure us,
783 "Yes'm, dey alluz hole duh baptism on a high ebb tide. Das so duh tide will carry duh sin out." [63]

551 Had the old man ever known any people who had been named for the days of the week?

"I knowd one man name Fridy, one dat wuz name Satdy an anudduh he name wuz Toosdy. Guess dey name um dataway cuz dey wuz bawn on doze days." [20]

262 Baker told us that many people in the section refused to
777 eat certain foods, believing bad luck would follow if they ate them.

"Deah's lots dataway now," he commented. "Lots uh folks dohn eat some food cuz ef dey did dey say it would bring bad luck on duh parents. Some dohn eat rice, some dohn eat egg, an some dohn eat chicken.[65]

829 "Muh gran, she Rachel Grant, she use tuh tell me bout lot
782 uh deze tings. I membuh she use tuh pray ebry day at sunrise, at middle day and den at sunset. She alluz face duh sun an wen she finish prayin she alluz bow tuh duh sun. She
567 tell me bout duh slabes wut could fly too. Ef dey didn lak
829 it on duh plantation, dey jis take wing an fly right back tuh
789 Africa.

"Muh gran say dey use tuh eat wid oystuh shells. Use
412 um fuh spoons. Wen dey go tuh shoot duh gun, dey ketch
237 duh fyuh wid a rag an flint."

411 We asked him if he had ever heard of a hoe that worked
789 by itself and he told us that he had often heard this story regarding the hoe [39] and that he had also heard many tales about a magic rail splitting wood without anyone touching it.

825 Suddenly the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by a high reed-like whistling sound. It continued for quite a time, then stopped as abruptly as it had started. Was it a person or an animal? It was impossible for us to tell.

"Das a spiduh, missus," Baker explained. "It come roun

SAPELO ISLAND

539 wuk fuh lizzud, an he wahn it bad. One day wen lizzud not at home, rabbit, he sneak up, an he steal lizzud sode. He laf tuh hesef cuz he got da sode. He take da sode tuh he fiel an he staht it tuh wuk. He tink he know duh wuds dat lizzud say tuh sode, an he call, 'Go-ee-tell.' Sode staht wukin. Pretty soon, sode finish duh crop, an rabbit wahn um tuh stop. Sode comin too close tuh noo wintuh crop wut rabbit got tuh hab fuh lib on. So rabbit he yell, 'Go-ee-tell' in loud voice, and sode he wuk all duh fastuh. He cut down ebryting rabbit hab an ain leab nuttn. Lizzud who bin hidin in bush, he laf an he laf tuh he sef at rabbit, cuz rabbit tink hesef so smaht wen he steal sode an now he ain got nuttn tuh eat all wintuh. Rabbit he see lizzud, an he call, 'Stop dis sode.' Lizzud he say, 'It my sode.' Rabbit he say, 'Dasso. It yuh sode, but stop it. It cut down ebryting uh got.' Lizzud say, 'Sode wuk fastuh ebry time he heah 'Go-ee-tell.' " Den lizzud he staht laffin an he calls out loud, 'Go-ee-pom,' an sode stop. Lizzud den go out an pick up sode an tak um home."

• 829 Knowing that Katie was a descendant of Belali, we asked her if she knew anything of him. She nodded and answered, "Belali Mohomet? Yes'm, I knows bout Belali. He wife Phoebe. He hab plenty daughtuhs, Magret, Bentoo, Chaalut, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, an Hestuh.

829 "Magret an uh daughtuh Cotto use tuh say dat Belali an
782 he wife Phoebe pray on duh bead. Dey wuz bery puhticluh bout duh time dey pray an dey bery regluh bout duh hour. Wen duh sun come up, wen it straight obuh head an wen it set, das duh time dey pray. Dey bow tuh duh sun an hab lill mat tuh kneel on. Duh beads is on a long string. Belali he pull bead an he say, 'Belambi, Hakabara, Mahamadu.' Phoebe she say, 'Ameen, Ameen.'

829 "Magret she say Phoebe he wife, but maybe he hab mone one wife. I spects das bery possible. He come obuh wid all he daughtuhs grown. He whole fambly wuz mos grown up.

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829 Hestuh she Shad's gran. Yuh knows Shad? Bentoo she duh younges. Magret she my gran."

We asked if Belali Mohomet had been related to Belali Sullivan on St. Simons.

"I ain know bout St. Simon but Cotto use tuh talk bout cousin Belali Sullivan.

"Yes'm, I membuh muh gran too. Belali he frum Africa but muh gran she come by Bahamas. She speak funny wuds
829 we didn know. She say 'mosojo' an sometime 'sojo' wen she
192 mean pot. Fuh watuh she say 'deloe' an fuh fyuh she say 'diffy.' She tell us, 'Tak sojo off diffy.'

"Wen sumpm done she say, 'Bim-boga-rum.' Yuh tell uh sumpm wut is a suhprise lak somebody die, den she say, 'Ma-foo-bey, ma-foo-bey.'

829 "She ain tie uh head up lak I does, but she weah a loose wite clawt da she trow obuh uh head lak veil an it hang loose on uh shoulduh. I ain know wy she weah it dataway, but I tink she ain lak a tight ting roun uh head.

829 "She make funny flat cake she call 'saraka.' She make
252 um same day ebry yeah, an it big day. Wen dey finish, she call us in, all duh chillun, an put in hans lill flat cake an we eats it. Yes'm, I membuh how she make it. She wash rice, an po off all duh watuh. She let wet rice sit all night, an in mawnin rice is all swell. She tak dat rice an put it in wooden mawtuh, an beat it tuh paste wid wooden pestle. She add honey, sometime shuguh, an make it in flat cake wid uh hans. 'Saraka' she call um."

412 Before the cabin stood a crudely constructed wooden mortar made many years before by Katie's husband and used originally for the pounding of rice. A deep basin-like aperture had been hewn out of the center of a log which was about three feet long and from eighteen to twenty inches wide.[43]

115 Across the dusty road from Katie Brown's another nar-

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115 row wooden gate opened into a field where a winding path led to the small cabin of Julia Grovernor,* called Juno by the island Negroes. Julia, very black, tall and gaunt, was slightly hostile and suspicious and disinclined to talk. Even [123] the pipe tobacco, potent in most cases, she indifferently dropped.

"No'm, I ain know nuttn. Ise feeble-minded. I bin weak in head sence I small chile. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout witches. I ain know nuttn bout root doctuhs. No'm, I ain nebuh heah uh cunjuh. No'm, I ain know nuttn bout spells. No'm, I ain kin tuh Katie Brown."

115 This refusal to answer except in the negative seemed to continue indefinitely. Finally, however, after innumerable 124 slow, quiet, good-humored questions that showed no resentment at her hostility, she became friendly in a reserved and superior way. It was soon evident that this sullen, reticent woman, though hostile to outside invasion, was not feeble-minded, but on the contrary sharp-witted, with a dry sense of humor.

"Muh gran, she Hannah. Uncle Calina muh gran too; • 829 dey bote Ibos. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran Hannah. She marry Calina an hab twenny-one chillun. Yes'm, she tell us how she brung yuh.

"Hannah, she wid huh ahnt who wuz diggin peanuts in 829 duh fiel, wid uh baby strop on uh back. Out uh duh brush 567 two wite mens come an spit in huh ahnt eye. She blinded an wen she wipe uh eye, duh wite mens done loose duh baby frum huh back, an took Hannah too. Dey led um intuh duh woods, weah deah wuz udduh chillun dey done ketched an tie up in sacks. Duh baby an Hannah wuz tie up in sacks lak duh udduhs an Hannah nebuh saw huh ahnt agen an nebuh saw duh baby agen. Wen she wuz let out uh duh sack, she wuz on boat an nebuh saw Africa agen."

* *Julia Grovernor, Sapelo Island. Deceased winter, 1938.*

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115 A back path from Julia's house led to the house of her sister, Katie,* who had a regal and impressive bearing. She, too, had a hostile and taciturn manner.

"No'm, Ise younguh dan Juno. I dohn membuh nuttn uh doze times. No'm, I ain heah tell uh cunjuh. I dohn know bout witch doctuhs. I dohn know spells. No'm, I dohn know none uh dis yuh askin. Yes'm, I nuss Hannah an Calina wen deys ole, but I young chile, an I dohn membuh nuttn bout um. No'm, I cahn unnuhstan um; dey talks a funny talk. I cahn unnuhstan um."

In the afternoon we went to see Phoebe Gilbert,** another descendant of the Ibos, Calina and Hannah. Phoebe, black, buxom, and comely, lived in a comfortable cottage in Shell Hammock. Obviously embarrassed at being the center of a rapidly increasing crowd of Negro listeners, she evaded most questions. Our visit did not prove entirely unsatisfactory, however, for after considerable humorous chatting Phoebe rewarded our efforts by giving a vivid description of how her grandfather, Calina, was captured and brought here from Africa.

•829 "Belali Smith muh gran. I ain know bout Belali
567 Mohomet. Yes'm, I membuh muh gran. She Hannah. Yes'm, muh gran Calina, too. Dey's Ibos. Muh gran Calina tell me how he got heah. He say he playin on beach in Africa, an big boat neah duh beach. He say, duh mens on boat take down flag, an put up big piece uh red flannel, an all chillun dey git close tuh watuh edge tuh see flannel an see wut doin. Den duh mens comes off boat an ketch um, an wen duh ole folks come in frum duh fiels dey ain no chillun in village. Dey's all on boat. Den dey brings um yuh."

115 Cuffy [20a] Wilson,† sitting in the clean-swept yard which surrounded his whitewashed house, told us about the much-discussed experience of a neighbor of his. This dealt with

* *Katie Grovernor, Sapelo Island.*
** *Phoebe Gilbert, Sapelo Island.*
† *Cuffy Wilson, Sapelo Island.*

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115 the current belief concerning the necessity of asking leave to enter the graveyard.

313 "Grant Johnson, he wannuh cut some wood an he git obuh
764 duh fence uh duh cimiterry," he explained to us. "He didn
782 ax leab uh nobody.[*] He wuz a cuttin duh wood down as fas
[795] as he could wen all ub a sudden he see a big black dog wut [54] come attuh im. Dat wuz a shadduh an he ain lose no time in jumpin obuh duh fence.

764 "Wen yuh hab a fewnul eben today, yuh hab tuh ax leab
782 tuh entuh duh cimiterry gate. Duh spirit ain gonuh let yuh in lessn yuh ask leab ub it."

775 We visited Nero Jones,* an elderly Negro who lived on
115 his sixty-five-acre tract of land with a daughter, Henrietta. Sitting beneath the protecting shade of an arbor which overlooked a peanut field, the old man was busily engaged in shucking a large basket of the nuts.

521 He, too, remembered having seen harvest dances. "We
535 use tuh hab big time at hahves," [33] he began. "We pray an sing duh night tru. Wen duh sun riz we go out an dance.
[534] We hab big beatin uh drums an sometimes we dry duh goads an leab duh seed in um. Dey make good rattle.[23, 25]

•829 "I membuh Uncle Calina an An Hannah well. Dey
782 mighty ole an dey bun up in duh house. Day talk lot uh funny talk tuh each udduh an dey is mighty puhticuluh bout prayin. Dey pray on duh bead. Duh ole man he say 'Ameela' and An Hannah she say 'Hakabara.' "

361 Later we drove slowly over the flat grass-lands to Hog Hammock, another Negro community at the south end of
[136] Sapelo. The red-legged herons winging their way against the vivid blue of the sky, the dense foliage rimming the edges of the inland marshes, clumps of feathery bush,-all contributed to the tropical beauty of the island.

115 At Hog Hammock we visited Shad Hall (Plate XVII),** A

* *Nero Jones, Sapelo Island.*
** *Shad Hall, Sapelo Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii-V--Analyst]

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115 another Belali Mohomet descendant, who came to the door of his neat cottage clad in blue denim. Delighted to have visitors, Shad was eager for conversation. With a few polite (123) words of thanks for the pipe tobacco, he began to talk of the old days.

• 829 "Muh gran wuz Hestuh, Belali's daughtuh. She tell me Belali wuz coal black, wid duh small feechuhs we hab, an he (567) wuz bery tall. She say Belali an all he fambly come on same boat frum Africa. Belali hab plenty daughtuhs, Medina, Yaruba, Fatima, Bentoo, Hestuh, Magret, and Chaalut.

"Ole Belali Smith wuz muh uncle. His son wuz George Smith's gran. He wuz muh gran Hestuh's son an muh mudduh Sally's brudduh. Hestuh an all ub um sho pray on duh bead. Dey weah duh string uh beads on duh wais. (782) Sometime duh string on duh neck. Dey pray at sun-up and face duh sun on duh knees an bow tuh it tree times, kneelin on a lill mat."

We asked Shad if he had ever heard his grandmother say anything about Africa. Had she ever mentioned what sort of house they lived in or what food was generally eaten? Shad nodded eagerly, and from the steady flow of talk that followed it was evident that he had heard much of the land of his ancestors.

"Muh gran Hestuh say she kin membuh duh house she lib in in Africa. She say it wuz cubbuh wid palmettuh an grass fuh roof, an duh walls wuz made uh mud. Dey make duh walls by takin up hanfuls uh mud an puttin it on sumpm firm, sticks put crossways so. I membuh some pots and cups dat she hab made uh clay. She brung deze frum Africa. She membuh wut dey eat in Africa too. Dey eat yam an shuguh cane an peanut an bananas. Dey eat okra too. Yes'm, das right, dey calls it gumbo. Dey dohn hab tuh wuk hahd wid plantin deah. Jis go in woods an dig, an git big yam. Dey eat udduh roots too. Dey ain no flo tuh

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• 829 house. Dey sleep on hahd groun inside house. House wuz neah lill ilun weah dey ketch parrot and sell um."

"Do you remember any special kinds of food that your grandmother used to prepare?" we asked.

829 252 Shad, after pondering briefly, said, "She make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it 'saraka.' She make it out uh meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometime she make it out uh rice. Duh cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,' an we all eats cake."

829 We asked Shad what sort of animals his grandmother remembered seeing in Africa, and he said, "She say lion is duh mos powful uh beas. She say lion git up tree jis lak cat. Yuh come long unduh tree, an lion he reach down wid great paws an grab yuh—so. Snakes, dey big, too. Dey wrap deah tail roun tree an lean obuh an reach yuh, too."

829 764 785 789 231 Shad furnished us additional information regarding "set-ups." "Yes'm, Gran Hestuh tell me uh set-ups. Dey kill a wite chicken wen dey hab set-ups tuh keep duh spirits way. She say a wite chicken is duh only ting dat will keep duh spirits way an she alluz keep wite chicken fuh dat in yahd.[55] Lak dis. Hestuh, she hab frien an frien die. Ebry ebenin friens spirit come back an call tuh Hestuh.[56] Hestuh knowd ef she keep it up, she die too. Hestuh den kills wite chicken, tro it out uh doze, an shut doe quick. Wen she tro it out, she say, 'Heah, spirit, moob away—dohn come back no mo.' I dunno wut she do wid duh blood an fedduhs.

754 "Yes'm, I heah tell uh witches, but I ain see um. I know eel skin tie roun neck bring good luck an cuo yuh ef yuh sick. Yes'm, I see um bury sack unduh doe step tuh [11] pruhtec house; I see um tie rag tuh gate tuh pruhtec too.[11a,•] I ain know snake-skin bring good luck, but eel-skin, yes'm.

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754 "Yuh ain heah so much bout cunjuh on dis ilun, but deah's a few wut does a mighty lot uh talkin. Nellie Dixon, she lib right obuh deah in dem trees, she alluz talkin bout roots. She say somebody go tru duh yahd an drap a root fuhrum. She tote a sack roun uh neck tuh gahd um." [8, 12a, c, d]

115 When asked to whom he had belonged during slavery he answered, "Muh fus massuh Montally. He ole massuh.
567 Young massuh wuz Massuh Tom Spalding. Den I belongs tuh Mike Spalding; dat befo freedom. Sometime duh ole folks call duh missus 'maduba' an duh massuh 'mahaba.' Yes'm I bin big man wen freedom come."

527 Shad remembered that during his childhood he had often witnessed harvest festivals and dances.

"Hahves time dey hab big time. It come once a yeah an dey pray an dey sing all night long till duh fus cock crow. Den dey staht tuh dance an tuh bow tuh duh sun as it riz in duh sky. Dey dance roun in a succle an sing an shout. Sho is a big time.[38]

764 "Wen yuh hab a buryin, yuh alluz hab tuh ask leab tuh
782 duh grabeyahd. Dey do dat tuh dis day. Yuh say, 'Fambly, please let us lay yuh brudduh in mudduh dus.' " [60]

764 The story which Cuffy Wilson had already told us about Grant Johnson's having been chased from the graveyard by
313 a shadow was also verified from this source. Shad told us,
782 "Grant Johnson he go deah one time tuh cut wood widout
775 askin leab. He busy cuttin wood wen all ub a sudden he see big black dog comin tuh um wid one paw raise an red eye an big grinnin teet.[54] Grant he ain lose no time in gittin way. Dat dog wuz shadduh wut come attuh um.

829 "Duh ole folks use tuh tell dat story bout duh hoe wut
789 could wuk by itsef. It stan right up in duh fiel widout nobody holdin tuh it.[39] Das ef yuh knowd how tuh wuk it. Doze Africans knowd how tuh make dat hoe wuk an dey knowd how tuh wuk roots.

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829 "Doze folks could fly too. Dey tell me deah's a lot ub um
789 wut wuz bring heah an dey ain much good. Duh massuh
567 wuz fixin tuh tie um up tuh whip um. Dey say, 'Massuh, yuh ain gwine lick me,' an wid dat dey runs down tuh duh ribbuh. Duh obuhseeuh he sho tought he ketch um wen dey git tuh duh ribbuh. But fo he could git tuh um, dey riz up in duh eah an fly way. Dey fly right back tuh Africa. I tink dat happen on Butler Ilun.

825 "I use tuh heah lots ub animal stories, but it bin so long I mos fuhgit bout um. I ain heah much bout duh spiduh cep he is bery wicked an he shahp. He kin spin he tread an riz right up in duh eah widout nuttn tuh hep um. He see a fly an begin tuh spin roun an roun um till he ketch um in he web. Den he caahn git way an An Nancy got um. Das wut duh chillun say tuh dis day wen dey see a spiduh ketch a fly —An Nancy got um.' "[28]

346 On Sunday evening Julius drove us through black swamp and bush to the church at Silver Bluff (Plate XVIII).[A] The little white frame building with yellow light from oil lamps shining through the windows made the night suddenly come
794 alive. Negro men and boys were moving about outside in the darkness and a few were gathered on the steps. All the women and children were inside.

Escorted by Julius and a deacon we went into the church and took our places on the second from the front middle bench. The pulpit stood on the raised platform on which most of the light was concentrated. The men and boys came in. The church was filled with a tense quietness.

793 The preacher came from behind the platform and stood
794 silently behind the pulpit desk, looking dramatically over his congregation. He was tall and spare, with brown skin, narrow face, and a thin pointed beard, a Mohammedan look-
(292) ing Negro. He wore a black skull cap, which we learned later was not ritualistic but was worn to protect his head

A. [See Category 346, plate following p. xxxii-X--Analyst]

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to give way to a growth of towering oaks; then it joined again, resuming its winding trail through the quiet, shadowed countryside.

The little settlement now known as Harrington was formerly the property of the Demere family. A little less than a mile north of this settlement was Harrington Hall, home of Raymond Demere, who came to this country with Oglethorpe after serving ten years under Lord Harrington at Gibraltar.

To the left of the road was a small unpainted store operated by Ryna Johnson's daughter with whom she lived. Various advertisements on the front of the small building gave splashes of color to the green of trees and foliage.

Set back from the store was Ryna's house, surrounded by an expanse of short grass upon which a horse was grazing. The house was weathered with age, as were the vertical boards of the fence that enclosed the garden; here and there in the fence a new unpainted board, regardless of length, had replaced an old, and the top presented an irregular, jagged pattern. The cabin was the usual two-room affair but with a hall through the center and a lean-to in the back. The walls were papered with newspapers and, although there was a motley collection of objects and furniture, everything was scrupulously clean.

Ryna * was blind from cataracts and had not been feeling very well; so she had just got up from bed. Although her body was bent and very feeble, her mind was still clear.

"Ise bout eighty-five yeahs ole, but I caahn tell zackly. I belong tuh duh Coupers wen I wuk on duh plantation. It bin sech a long time I mos stop studyin bout dem days. But I membuh we use tuh hab good times."

In answer to our inquiry regarding any Africans whom she had known during plantation days, Ryna told us, "Alexanduh, Jummy, an William, dey is all African. I membuh ole William well an he tell me lots bout times in Africa. Dey

* *Ryna Johnson, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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• 829 ain weah no cloze, he say, but a leedle clawt string roun em.

"William say dat dey ain hab much trouble gittin tings tuh eat in Africa cuz so much grow free. Dey cut duh tree an let duh suhrup drain out. Duh women tie duh leedle chillun an duh babies on tuh deah back tuh carry em roun.

829 "He say wen dey come in duh boats tuh ketch em, dey
567 trail a red flag an dey ain use tuh see red an das duh way dey git duh load. William he talk funny talk. He hab funny wud fuh tings. I use tuh know some ub em, cuz he teach em tuh me but it so long, missus, Ise fuhgit. But I membuh he
(192) say pot call 'sojo' an watuh 'deloe' an he call fyuh 'diffy.' He sho did dat, but das all I kin membuh. Ef uh study bout em, maybe I kin membuh some mo."

829 We wanted a description of William, the African.

"William a good size man, heaby set. He hab two leedle line mahk on he right cheek." [14]

527 Ryna mused: "Tings is sho change. Wen we is young, we
534 use tuh hab big frolic an dance in a ring an shout tuh drum.
533 Sometime we hab rattle made out uh dry goad an we rattle em an make good music." [23, 25]

We wondered if she, too, remembered the Buzzard Lope
535 and she assured us, "Yes'm, sho I knows it. Ebrybody knows it." [17]

754 Shortly afterward the conversation turned to conjure and the old woman told us, "I sho heah plenty bout da ting. Way
789 back we hab plenty discussion bout root makuhs.[23, 48] I membuh my huzbun Hillard Johnson speak bout a root makuh in Darien wut make duh pot bile widout fyuh. My huzbun he frum Sapelo. He could tell yuh bout sech tings ef he wuz libin."

115 A short distance away lived Charles Hunter,* whose small board house was set well back from the road. The front
(351) yard enclosed by a wire fence was planted with a profusion of brightly colored flowers along the sandy walk leading to

* *Charles Hunter, Harrington, St. Simons Island.*

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115 the house. Across the road to the left was a field which had
(351) been planted in corn.

Charles, a medium-sized, intelligent man, very black of skin and rather small-featured, talked to us about his people.

"Dey is long libin people," he began. "Muh fathuh lib un-
(165) til he a hundud an muh mothuh wuz ninety wen she die. Muh gran, she name Louise an come frum Bahama Ilun.* She lib tuh hundud an fifteen. Das duh way dey do an I guess I'll do duh same."

178 Did the people around Harrington believe in the old customs the way his mother and grandmother had believed in them?

"Yes'm, dey sticks tuh em but duh times is changin an yuh
(764) hab tuh change wid em. Duh unduhtakuh come now an mone lakly he bring yuh back tuh duh chuch an dey ain no watch an singin."

795 In the course of our talk he told us that the river baptisms were held by members of the local churches. "Yes'm, we still baptize in duh ribbuh," Charles said. "We hab one not
(783) long ago. We hab tuh wait till a Sunday wen a ebb tide come at a good time, cuz it duh ebb tide wut carry yuh sin away."[83]

754 Charles confirmed what the other residents had told us regarding conjure.

"Well, dey's some belieb in cunjuh an some wut dohn.
(753) Dey's lots wut say sickness ain natchul an somebody put sumpm down fuh yuh.[15] I ain belieb in it much muhsef but
•829 dey's curious tings happen. Now, wen I wuz a boy deah's a root makuh wut lib yuh name Alexanduh. He wuz African an he say he kin do any kine uh cunjuh wut kin be done an he kin cuo any kine uh disease.[48] He wuz a small man,
789 slim an bery black. Alexanduh say he could fly.[68b, 69c] He
(567)

* *A number of slaves accompanied their masters from the West Indies to this country. It was also the custom for slave ships to stop at the Bahamas en route to America with a cargo.*

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115 could really be so old. We asked him who his people were and what he remembered about the old times.

[567] "We belong tuh duh Coupers. Ise son tuh Belali. He wuz butluh tuh James Couper at Altama. I membuh we hab lots uh time tuh play wen we's chilluns." He smiled pleasantly at the memory.

• 829 This man, too, remembered native Africans he had known, for he told us, "I membuh lots uh Africans, but all ub em ain tame. But I knowd some ub em wut is tame an I knowd one tame Indian."

We asked again about old Alexander, the African root maker.

829 "Yes'm, I membuh him. He wuz a lill black man an he
567 belong tuh duh Butlers but I ain know him well cuz we's diffunt people. Now ole man Okra an ole man Gibson an ole Israel, dey's African an dey belong tuh James Couper an das how I knows em. Dey tell us how dey lib in Africa. Dey laks tuh talk. It funny talk an it ain so easy tuh unnuhstan but yuh gits use tuh it. Dey say dey buil deah own camp deah an lib in it.

"Ole man Okra he say he wahn a place lak he hab in Africa so he buil im a hut. I membuh it well. It wuz bout twelve by foeteen feet an it hab dut flo an he buil duh side lak basket weave wid clay plastuh on it. It hab a flat roof wut he make frum bush an palmettuh an it hab one doe an no winduhs. But Massuh make im pull it down. He say he ain wahn no African hut on he place.

829 "Ole Israel he pray a lot wid a book he hab wut he hide, an
782 he take a lill mat an he say he prayuhs on it. He pray wen
567 duh sun go up an wen duh sun go down. Dey ain none but ole Israel wut pray on a mat. He hab he own mat. Now ole man Israel he hab shahp feechuh an a long pointed beahd, an he wuz bery tall. He alluz tie he head up in a wite clawt an seem he keep a lot uh clawt on han, fuh I membuh, yuh could see em hangin roun duh stable dryin."

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DRUMS AND SHADOWS

829 567 Asked if he remembered any other Africans who tied their heads up, the old man told us, "I membuh a ole uhmun name Daphne. He didn tie he head up lak ole man Israel. He weah loose wite veil on he head. He wuz shahp-feechuh too an light uh complexion. He weah one ring in he eah fuh he eyes.[27] I hab refrence to it bein some kine uh pruhtection (782) tuh he eyes. Wen he pray, he bow two aw tree times in duh middle uh duh prayuh."

535 We asked about the music they used to have and what they used for dancing in the old days.

"We ain dance den duh way dey dances now. We dance (533) roun in a succle an den we dances fuh prayin.[19a] I membuhs (534) we use tuh hab drums fuh music an we beat duh drum fuh dances.[23]

764 533 "Now, ole man Dembo he use tuh beat duh drum tuh duh fewnul,[24] but Mr. Couper he stop dat. He say he dohn wahn drums beatin roun duh dead. But I watch em hab a fewnul. I gits behine duh bush an hide an watch an see wut dey does. Dey go in a long pruhcession tuh duh buryin groun an dey beat duh drums long duh way an dey submit duh body tuh duh groun. Den dey dance roun in a ring an dey motion wid (535) duh hans.[18] Dey sing duh body tuh duh grabe an den dey let it down an den dey succle roun in duh dance.

567 782 "Dey ain hab no chuch in doze days an wen dey wannuh pray, dey git behine duh house aw hide someweah an make a great prayuh. Dey ain suppose tuh call on duh Lawd; dey hadduh call on duh massuh an ef dey ain do dat, dey git nine an tutty.

567 "Dey ain marry den duh way dey do now. Attuh slabery dey hadduh remarry. Dey hab big baptizin in duh ribbuh (585) lak dey do tuhday an dey dip em on duh ebb tuh wash duh (795) sins away an duh preachuh he make a great prayuh tuh duh (783) ribbuh.[63]

534 "Ole man Okra he a great un fuh buil drum.[25] He take a calf skin an tan it an make duh side uh maple. Ise pretty

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534 sho it wuz maple. He stretch em obuh it good. It wuz bout eighteen inches wide an fifteen inches deep wen he finish it. He beat it wid a stick. Ole man Okra he sho kin chase a drum. Ole man Jesse he frum Africa, too, an he make he own drum."

829 567 (192) When we asked Ben if he remembered any African words, he replied, "I know dat deah wuz a ole man, it bin so long I caahn relate his name, at duh plantation wut wehn roun wid ole man Okra an I membuh well he call all duh fish an ting uh duh ribbuh by duh name uh 'nyana' an den I heah pancake call 'flim.' Muh granmothuh Hettie, duh mothuh uh muh mothuh Bella, he come from Africa too an he huzbun come frum Africa. He name wuz Alex Boyd. Alex wuz bery small felluh but heaby an he hab dahk skin an shahp-feechuch. Yes, ma'am, he talk African but he stuttuh so he dohn talk much roun us chillun, cuz we make fun at im, an as I say befo, I wuz small lad den. Alex wuz knock-kneed an he tie he head up in a clawt."

829 Had his grandmother, Hettie, ever talked to him about Africa, we wanted to know.

Ben told us, "Many time. He tell some tings I membuh. He say he mus be bout tutteen aw foeteen wen dey bring im frum Africa. He say deah wuz great talk bout comin tuh dis country an some men tell em it would take only two aw tree days tuh git deah. Dey wuz all happy tuh come. Him an lot uh friens come tuhgedduh.

"Wen Hettie fus come, he say he feel worried cuz he couldn unnuhstan duh talk yuh an many udduh tings bein so diffunt frum he own country. He hab two sistuhs an tree brothuhs but dey couldn git a chance tuh come. He hab mo refrence tuh he mothuh dan tuh he fathuh. An he say dat in Africa he lib in a 'groun house.' It wuz a squeah house, an he say dat he didn lib close tuh a salt ribbuh but weah deah wuz a lot uh wile swamp. Wen he fus come tuh dis country, he didn unnuhstan bout fish. But he tell a lot bout monkey

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829 an parakeet. An, too, he say nuttn ebuh die way. Duh crops jis come back ebry yeah widout habin tuh be planted.

"Das all I membuh Hettie tellin bout Africa. Muh fathuh's fathuh come frum Africa too but wen muh fathuh Belali wuz a small young lad, muh granfathuh wehn tuh Dungeness on Cumberland Ilun tuh trade in slabes an nebuh wuz seen agen. It wuz muh fathuh Belali dat made rice cakes."

When asked about his father's mother, Ben continued, "Muh fathuh's mothuh lib at Altama. Huh name wuz Luna, but muh fathuh's fathuh wuz a unmarried man. Deah's many tings I do not membuh, it wuz sech a long time ago. I know dat wen deah wuz tuh be a buryin, dey alluz bury duh dead at night at duh plantation. Dey alluz come in frum duh tas befo dahk.

(505) "In doze days deah wuz no way tuh git tuh Savannah cep by boat an wen Mr. Couper wannuh go, he use a boat bout fifty foot long an bout six foot wide. He take six strong oahsmen an dey would make it in ten aw twelve hours. I heahd tell ub a house buil by a man frum Africa, wid cawn stalks an mud an wid a straw filluh."

829 The flying story about old Alexander, the root maker, had interested us and we asked if Ben Sullivan had heard of it.

789 "I ain heahd specially bout him but Ise heahd plenty Africans talk bout flyin. Deah's plenty ub em wut could fly.[68a, 69b] I sho heahd em talk bout great doins an Ise heahd ole Israel say duh hoe could wuk by itsef ef yuh know wut tuh say tuh it.[30] It bin a long time sence Ise tought bout tings lak dat, but ef uh studies bout em, dey comes back tuh me."

115 On the way back from Harrington to St. Simons village we stopped at Nora Peterson's * small cabin to talk with her. Nora, the daughter of Tom Floyd, an African who came to

* *Nora Peterson, St. Simons Island.*

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115 this country on the *Wanderer* in 1858, is a nice looking, middle-aged woman, pleasant and up to date. She told us about her father.

"I wuz bery lill wen he died—not mone bout fo yeah ole, uh spec. I do know he come frum Africa. I membuhs dat an uh membuh muh Uncle Slaughtuh wuz his brothuh an he come frum Africa, too. I nebuh heahd him talk much bout it but maybe uh wuz too lill tuh membuh."

Although she had been so young at the time of her father's death, the woman still retained a vivid picture of him and she gave us the following description:

"He wuz shawt an dahk, an heaby buil. Yuh see, he wuzn but bout sixty yeah ole wen he died. Muh mothuh wuz Charity Lewis an uh got one brothuh, Caesar Prince, but he's younguh dan me an dohn membuh nothin."

From Nora's we went to the old tabby slave house of Floyd White * who was related to her. Floyd was of middle height, black, and of a powerful build. When we were uncertain and groping as to the right questions to ask, Floyd was clear and helpful.

"Ise nephew tuh Charity Lewis, so Nora is muh cousin, • 829 but Ise olduhn Nora an I membuh ole Tom Floyd well. I bout fifteen wen he die. He wuz shawt an tick set. I tinks he wuz Ibo. He used tuh whoop an holluh. He say dey do da way in Africa. He wuz doctuh too an he could cut yuh [759] wid a knife an cop yuh. I wish he wuz yuh right now tuh cop me. I sho needs it an it make yuh feel lots bettuh.[48] I heah him talk plenty bout Africa but I caahn membuh so much ub it cuz uh wuz young boy den. He say he lib in a hut on a ribbuh an dey eat coconut an bread wut grow on a tree. Dey plant yam ebry seben yeah an dey dohn hadduh wuk it. Dey hab peanut an banana. He call it by anudduh name but I caahn membuh it. I seen plenty ub African peo-

* *Floyd White, St. Simons Island.*

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ple an dey all say dey plant duh crop an dey dohn hadduh wuk it. I heah lot ub em tell how dey git obuh yuh. Dey trap em on a boat wid a red flag."

Old Tom Floyd was not the only root doctor Floyd could remember. There were many others, he said, some still living and plying their trade.[48]

"I knows a root makuh now," he told us. "Uncle Quawt, he root makuh. Does yuh know him?"

We replied that we had known Quarterman for some time but that he had never told us he could work roots.

"Maybe he ain tell yuh but he kin wuk em all right.[48] He kin put a cunjuh on wid a goofa bag as good as anybody. Now, I tell yuh bout im. Deah's two felluhs in Brunswick wut does a lill killin an wen duh case is call, two buzzud light on duh cote house an wen duh men come up befo duh jedge, he let um go free. Now, Uncle Quawt, he had sumpm tuh do wid dat. Dey ain so many root makuhs lef."

Floyd, too, had heard of Alexander, the old African root maker.

"Yes'm, Ise heahd much bout im. He wuz still libin wen I wuz a boy. Ise heahd em tell plenty uh tales bout im. Dey say duh boat leab fuh Savannah an Alexanduh he yuh. He say good-bye frum yuh an tell em tuh go on widout im but he say he see em deah an wen duh boat git tuh Savannah, Alexanduh he in Savannah on duh dock tuh ketch duh line."

Pleasant memories associated with the social activities of the past caused Floyd to ponder abstractedly for a time. Finally he roused himself and told us, "We use tuh dance roun tuh a drum an a rattle goad. Dey could make good drum frum hawg an bass drum frum cow.[25] Doze days dey ain only beat duh drum fuh dancin; dey beat it on duh way tuh duh grabe yahd.[24] Dat wuz fuh duh det mahch wen dey use tuh carry duh body in a wagon. Dey hab lot uh singin den too an dey hab singin at duh baptizin. Den dey baptize em in duh ribbuh jis lak dey does now. Dey sing wid all duh

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533 candidates walkin in wite robes tuh duh ribbuh an duh
795 preachuh he dip em on duh ebb tide an he pray duh ribbuh
796 tuh take duh sin away.[53] Dey ain mine gittin wet in duh
783 ribbuh.

"Heahd bout duh Ibo's Landing? Das duh place weah
567 dey bring duh Ibos obuh in a slabe ship an wen dey git yuh,
829 dey ain lak it an so dey all staht singin an dey mahch right down in duh ribbuh tuh mahch back tuh Africa, but dey ain able tuh git deah. Dey gits drown."

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## *St. Marys*

361 THE NEGROES OF ST. MARYS LIVE SCATTERED ABOUT the town and its outskirts. In the past few years many of the very old people have died and there remain only a few
115 who are past eighty years old. We went to see Hettie Campbell,* who was only seventy-two. Her mother had belonged to Dr. Wright of St. Marys and all her ante-bellum knowledge had been imparted to her by her mother and her stepfather, Andrew King. When we drove up she was sitting on the porch of her small house. The front garden was a
(351) packed dirt yard with formal plantings of flowers and shrubbery. During most of our talk Hettie's son, Horace,** stood in the doorway, half interested in and half amused by the conversation.

We asked Hettie to tell us about the old times.

• 829 "I remembuh Uncle Patty an Ahnt Rachel. They wuz frum Africa. Aftuh the waw wen they move from the plantation, they lived in a house on the watuhfront an they use tuh talk funny tuh each othuh so none of us chilluns couldn unduhstan em. I dohn remembuh so much bout em cuz uh wuz mighty lill then, but Henry Williams he remembuhs all right. Henry's eighty-seven yeahs ole.

"I do remembuh the big times we use tuh have wen I wuz
527 young. We does plenty uh dances in those days. Dance
(535) roun in a ring. We has a big time long bout wen crops come in an evrybody bring sumpm tuh eat wut they makes an we

* *Hettie Campbell, St. Marys. Deceased autumn, 1939.*
** *Horace Campbell, St. Marys.*

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115 Henry, who sat on his sunny porch, was strong and healthy looking for his eighty-seven years. The shabbiness of his clothes contrasted with the splendor of the naval cap on his head. Two little neighbors, Enoch and Artie Jones, were playing in the yard, (Plate XXI). A

When we told Henry that we wanted to know about old times, he launched into eager conversation.

"I belong tuh William Cole wut live at Oakland Plantation but it wunt long befo the waw an then I wuz free an come tuh town. Wen I wuz bout twelve, I hep Daddy Patty in his tannin yahd ovuh theah on the watuh by the cimiterry. Patty wuz a shoemakuh too an use tuh make all kines uh things out uh hides an skins."

We asked him to tell us all he could remember about Uncle Patty and his wife.

"Well, they's both frum Africa an as I remumbuh they's
• 829 Ibos. They wuz bout middle height an heavy buil. I ain
567 suttn bout Ahnt Rachel but Daddy Patty belong tuh ole man Arnow an I think he bought im at a sale an bring im down yuh. They use tuh talk tuh each othuh in a language wut we couldn unduhstan an Patty use tuh alluz be singin a song, 'a-shou-tu-goula.'

"Daddy Patty, he use tuh talk tuh the mens in the tannin yahd bout weah he come frum. He ain talk tuh me but I heah im. He say they ain hadduh plant but once a yeah cuz evrything grows wile. They buns gumbo fuh wood. He say they live in 'boo-boo-no' made out uh sticks an straw thas plastuhed with mud. Fus they digs a big flat celluh bout a foot deep an packs the earth down smooth an tight. Thas the flo. Then they leans the sticks tuh the centuh an they puts the straw an the mud on em an it come out lak a beehive an thas weah they lib.

"They buil a big 'boo-boo-no' fuh the chief. Patty he wuz the chief son an he have three straight mahks slantin down on he right cheek an that wuz a bran tuh show who he wuz.[14]



A, [See Category 142, plate following p. xxxii--CC--Analyst]

ST. MARYS

829 He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he
567 belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

535 We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs
527 of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [38] an we
567 prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

789 "I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots
787 yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man
262 Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

115 We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

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342 sturdy oak stumps. The front steps were three oak logs of increasing diameter that made a massive if difficult tread
351 to the door. The house was in a large grove of oak trees and the usual plows, iron pots, and implements were scattered about the hard packed, sand yard. Jim Myers owned
423 a good deal of land and there was a well-to-do feeling about the whole place, though it was old-fashioned and isolated in the extreme.

115 Uncle Jim * (Plate XXIII, XXIV) came down the log steps to greet us. His bare feet manipulated the round treads easily. He was a big man, slightly bent from rheumatism, very black with a white fringe of a beard. His eyes
[755] were rheumy with age. Around his ankles were two brass wires, which helped to take the pain out of his legs.[12b]

"Uncle Jim," we said, "tell us about the times when you were a boy."

Uncle Jim laughed in condescending good humor. "Lawd, missus, thas so long ago I ain thought bout them days in a long time and theah ain much tuh tell. Ise bawn jis twenny mile from yuh on Mr. John Tompkins' plantation and I lived roun yuh all muh life. I bin heah on Mush Bluff Ilun a long time."

We asked him if he had known any Africans when he was
• 829 a young man.
567 "Yes'm, I sho knowd plenty of em. Theah wuz a lawg house that belonged to Mr. Hallowes wich use tuh set right ovuh theah in them woods until about ten yeahs ago. That was the house that they kep the wile Africans in. It had big ion rings in the flo. They chained them wile Africans theah till they wuz tame. They'd take em out one by one and they'd give em a stick an put em in the fiel with people wut knowd how tuh wuk and that way they lun how too. They sked to give em a hoe. It's shahp and they might frail roun with it."

* *Jim Myers, Mush Bluff Island.*



A, [See Category 142, plates following p. xxxii--EE and FF--Analyst]

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775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain
(845) nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em.
Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a
caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time
775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then
764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54]
—that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole
days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest
to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals
in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the
day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa
they have night fewnuls."

115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grand-
mother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know
uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun
up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz
a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz
a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I
know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so
much I caahn remembuh all them things."

• 829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they
567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they
alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an
they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special
with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut
she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down
theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr.
Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to
keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin
about two hundud yahds out in the rivuh off Cumberland
tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

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829 and what kind of house they lived in. "She ain speak of wut kine uh house but she do speak of monkeys. They have monkeys all roun em and they dohn have tuh do no plantin cuz evrything is wile and they pick it off the trees."

We asked him if he could remember any African words he had heard his grandmother use. "They wuz funny wuds," he laughed, "I ought tuh be able to remembuh em but I caahn. She use tuh sing songs with African wuds. Ef I could study about em, I might remembuh some but now you ask me I jis caahn git em tuh mine. She did sing a chuch song wut have wuds we could unduhstand, an then in the middle of it she say 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by,' and looked like wen she come to the en of each stanza, she sing 'yeribum, yeribum, yeribum, by.' It sho is a long time ago, them days."

491 Later we followed a deeply rutted sand road which led
493 westward in the direction of Folkston. Few cars traveled this way and once during our trip we encountered an old fashioned two-wheeled ox cart whose driver guided his oxen deftly to one side in order to let us pass.

115 About three or four miles out on the road we turned in a gate and drove to the side of Shadwick Rudolph's * house. The old man greeted us smilingly. At first glance he did not appear to be the eighty-six years he claimed, but on closer observation we noticed that his eyes were dimmed from
(567) age. He talked with us for some time, telling us among other things, "I belong tuh Mr. Dave Bailey. He own Woodbine Plantation. Muh granfathuh, his name wuz Jim. He come ovuh tuh this country frum Africa. He tell me that ovuh theah they have houses made of palmettuh.

829 "Then, ole Nanny Mammy, she live at the plantation too, and she come frum Africa. She alluz set down tuh wuk; no mattuh wut kine uh wuk, she set down tuh do it. Nanny Mammy use tuh set down in the middle of the flo of uh house

* *Shadwick Rudolph, Folkston Road, near Woodbine.*

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829 wen she go tuh eat an she alluz eat out of a wooden bowl. Sometimes she use a spoon, but mos of the time she jis eat with uh finguhs. Muh granfathuh use tuh set with uh an talk. They talk a lot an speak the African wuds an souns. I ain know wut they talk bout, mosly bout the times in Africa I think. One soun aw wud I membuh they say wuz 'cupla' but wut it mean I sho dohn know.

415 "Fuh the longes time I have a wooden bowl [79] bout lak the one Nanny Mammy have. It wuz holluhed out jis as smooth, an it wuz made of some kine uh dahk wood. Not long ago muh wife say she ain see da bowl in monuh yeah. She think mebbe one uh the chillun, muh grans I mean, mustuh misplace it someway.

252 "Theah's a lot uh things I membuh at the plantation. Muh grandmothuh, Sally, she make the bes rice cakes. She make em with brown shuguh. She ain mix em up with honey. I seed em make home-made drums theah too. They 534 stretch a sheep-hide ovuh a roun bucket.[25] Then they beats 533 the drum in the fewnul cession wen they mahches tuh the 764 buryin groun.[24] Long then wen a pusson die they have a settin-up [37a] an have a suppuh too.[37b, c] Theah wuz an still 764 is pussons wut put a dish uh food out on the poach fuh the 782 spirit, but some of em take cooked food tuh the grave an leave it theah fuh the spirit.[58] They say, too, that a frizzle 754 chicken kin dig up any kine uh cunjuh.[13] Theah's a lot uh 231 talk bout cunjuh these days mung the young folks, even mo 825 than in the ole days." [15]

A short while later, our interview concluded, we thanked 115 the old man for the information and took our leave. Looking back we saw him sitting on the steps of his house, his gray head bent, to all appearances lost in a reverie of the past.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation
178 of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with
177 achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private peo-
829 ple and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make
823 attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 135]

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> know. . . . I really don't know why they speaks that way. I don't . . . I don't guess too many people do know why. . . . But I be knowing it's not the water. It doesn't . . . I mean what goes into your system, it comes out on the other end. I mean that . . . this don't damage the brain, or vocal cord, or anything like that.

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Some serious studies of Gullah were undertaken during the first half of the twentieth century, but most of them were linguistically prejudiced. Scholars such as George P. Krapp, Reed Smith, and H. L. Mencken treated the language as a corrupted and intrinsically inferior dialect of English.[4] A. E. Gonzales, a journalist and untrained linguist, provided the most biased and perhaps the most inaccurate linguistic account: "Slovenly and careless of speech, these Gullahs seized upon the peasant English used by some of the early settlers and by the white servants of the wealthier colonist, wrapped their clumsy tongues about it as well as they could, and enriched with certain expressive African words, it issued through their flat noses, and thick lips."[5]

Convictions such as this one were easily refuted by later studies. Lorenzo Turner wrote in 1949: "Up to the present time I have found in the vocabulary of the Negroes in the coastal South Carolina and Georgia approximately four thousand West African words, besides many survivals in syntax, inflections, sounds and intonation. . . . I have recorded in Georgia a few songs the words of which are entirely African."[6] Since Turner's study, most research on Gullah has recognized its legitimacy as a linguistic system. However, no one has studied all of the various categories which are components of any language. As a result of the recent focus on the study of inland black speech in the United States, new curricula have been developed, better teacher-training programs have been implemented, and some negative attitudes have been reversed, not only for black students but for all students who speak nonstandard varieties of English.[7] Given the record associated with the study of "proper" or standard English usage, these accomplishments are no small feats. But not enough work has yet been done on Gullah.

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31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands*.

## Chapter 4

101 175 567

1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corruption of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.'" When members of the Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the people brought over from Africa, he replied: "'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz "Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar, and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla" Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk'" (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

[829]

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2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

823

3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

197 113

4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

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7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

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guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin' " experience just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[23]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery of Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as having a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-building, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

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ships as well. The ontological[27] category of traditional African societies, and which also formed the basis of the Gullah world view, was the fusion of spirituality with human activity and the impact of a sacred presence in all areas of life. Spirituality was a main element of culture, integrating and coordinating other aspects of communal behavior. Such a pattern, so deterministic to group attitudes in West African society, was difficult to obliterate especially among a people so completely defined out of the new social and cultural structure into which they were thrust.

West African world view was consonant with the idea that in a cohesive and integrated community each member had a place. In colonial Kongo whites tended to assume that individualism was absent from black behavior, and attributed to Africans a "Bantu mentality," completely different from "European mentality." As one author noted, this was a rationalization for despotism over Africans. Wyatt MacGaffey maintains that a "purely dogmatic" assumption of some scholars led to insistence that the individual is not differentiated from the collective or clan. One solution, writes MacGaffey, is to distinguish between "true individualism," a commendable trait among the BaKongo, and "egocentrism" which was deplorable. Additionally, MacGaffey sees a difference between progressive "civilized collectivism" and primitive forms of collectivity, the latter stagnating a society. These insights explain much about traditional African society. Certainly Africans had civil, structured communities in which individual activity was forged with collective necessity. Traditional African spiritualism was an individual as well as collective experience. It encompassed the total well-being of the community, but each person had a role in society, guided by spiritual forces. In this sense, religion for Africans and Gullahs, whether essentially traditional or Christian, was a total immersion phenomenon. The sacred was not set apart from temporal, individual, communal, material, or even political concerns, and religion assumed a meaning outside of a "holy" building, a "sacred" day of the week, or a set of dogmas and creeds to be accepted at face value. In traditional African philosophy, spiritual elan affected one's whole system of being, embracing feelings, social interactions, values, fears, and the disposition of the community at large. John Mbiti succinctly expresses this consciousness:

> . . . in traditional society there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, to do so is to be severed from his

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175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands
195 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern
occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the
194 church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur
•829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
> "No Chillun?"
> "I'm not married."
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
> "Oh, you'r joking."
> "Fact."
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
> "You a member sure."
> "Eh?"
> "A member, a church member."
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant
771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a
829 contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

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each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk," wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shelter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein. While there were many children without parents because of the ravages of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gullahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefactors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than
178 I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant
867 peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different
869 thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn,
829 it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is
829 very different now.
(791) There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make
178 life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't
829 go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them
207 time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

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571 'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more
574 friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

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*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

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*Mr. Joe Deas*

## YOU IS ABEL CHILDREN AND I'M A CAIN

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There ain't but two race. Two brother children. If you don't work with me I ain't work with you. You can't do without me and I can't do without you. You may don't want me to your table, but you can't do without me. Cain and Abel—you is Abel children and I'm a Cain. So I got to work with you and you got to work with me. Ain't but two race, and there ain't but two place to go—that's Hell and Heaven. If you miss that, you just forever done. That's all.

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[p.120]

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*Mrs. Betsy Pinckney*

## YOU CAN BE BLACK OR SCARLET

829 Now some people after slavery times think to themselves, "If I see a white and he needs help, but they didn't tell me to do it, I wouldn't do it anymore." But me, I go there and they ain't call me neither. He need help and his family need it, and that's the reason God help some people to get along so good.

I treat everybody right; my heart open for all. And that's why people treat me well for it. That's right! Sometime I pick the bean and I say, "I ought to give 'em a quart of bean." Well, when I send that bean, how they glad.

I don't care what kind of people, I going there and help 'em. I do it, sir. I got proof! You can be black or scarlet but it don't make no difference. The pure in heart shall see God.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## NOW THE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT WHITE PEOPLE

829 177 When I were growing up, I must have seen one white man in my life. And I was so scared of that white man I never see his face. You might see but two white man in the whole Johns Island then. But now the island is full of white people. There so many white people it seem like there always one now. Before then you wouldn't see no white people there in six or seven months. But now, the world is nothing but white people. White people!

829 177 The Bible says you must love your fellow mans, 'gardless of what color you are, you must love 'em. Ain't no need for I love my color, hate you. 'Cause God don't please with it. 'Cause we all is God's children. We must love one another.

829 77 The church doesn't do a thing for you no more than preach a sermon. That's all the preacher do for you. But you got to live a life living right here. The way you walk and the way you talk, the way your action—there's your sermon right there. You preaching your sermon before you die.

The way you treat people, that's your heaven right there. Now if you born dumb, you just dumb. If you're a mean person all your life, you're just a mean person; people can't say good for you. If you're a good person all your life, that's all people will say is he's a good person. Got to first have heaven here before you have Heaven. If you have speck in your heart, you cannot get in God's kingdom. I never been up there yet, but I feel about it.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

•829

## I COULD HAVE BEEN SOMEBODY

I apply for a job and you apply for a job, and I'm the better man, then I should get the job, not you because you're white. I believe to myself that the biggest mistake that I've made was not being born white. To me I could have been somebody if I was born white. I felt before that I had the intelligence to be somebody . . . now I'm nothing.

*Mrs. Belle Green*

## WE'RE THEIR ONES HERE IN THE WORLD 'TIL GOD COME

We're their ones here in the world 'til God come, but they don't like we colored people. All these here want out you is work. And they can get 'em—give us our three dollar a week. You not going to feed yourself with that. Outside of that, you can go.

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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

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## I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT

You find people 'sociate with Negro 'round here, Charleston is not their home. That is one thing I can't understand, because we have to do everything for them. I was working for my lady for three years. I raise her baby. Mostly all these people have a maid or baby-sitter. You can't 'sociate with 'em and then people want you to cook their food and take care their children. I can't figure it out.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY DON'T WANT TO GET OUT ON A LIMB

•829 177 I believe, in my honest opinion, that there's a whole lot of white people on this island that's not bad at all. And I think they would like to see everybody happy, but they don't want to get out on a limb from their own people, be called "nigger-lovers" or any other stories that the people can dream up for them.

I knew a white guy and we sat around and was drinking beer and talking and he was saying that he was with the Negroes in most of the things that they wanted and he believed that most of the things they wanted was right. He said he has never done nothing to hurt the Negroes. I told him that I felt like he hadn't done anything to help the Negroes either because he just sat back and was sort of looking out for his personal self, instead of saying to his friends, when they have gatherings and the question comes up, "I don't believe that we are right in what we are doing. I believe that everybody should have a chance."

829 177 357 I think seriously that we got a whole lot of Negroes that are hurting us more than the whites, by acting content—like the maids in the house. Any time the madam would say something to them, they would smile even though within themselves they were unhappy. But this is what was expected of them and so this is what they're doing. They have been conditioned to this. They are not frank and not honest with themselves or the people they deal with. I believe this is one of the things that's hurting us because then the white man feel that he could always push you back, because you're just that way; you're not going to stand up to nothing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## 829 177 ALL WOULD BE GETTING EQUAL EDUCATION

As far as Johns Island is concerned, we got a long way to go. I believe sincerely that there will have to be something that happens real bad to change the situation here. We've coexisted all these years. We have accepted this, and the white man have accepted it. Very seldom do we have to come together on any major thing. So in this respect we could make it if we could keep on going like that, but we can't. Because we have gotten to the place now that my kids are not wanting what I wanted, or *thought* I wanted.

[871] Nobody has applied yet to go to the white high school. But I think

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when it come right down to it, it's gonna be accepted. Actually Johns Island is real poor and I don't think nobody could afford for money to be cut off from the schools. The superintendent of the schools told me that if the schools were closed, the Negroes would suffer more than the whites. I don't believe this, and I don't believe that he believes it, because actually to me then we all would be getting equal education—nobody gets none.

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*Miss Carol Bligen*

**I KNOW BE TROUBLE**

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If they integrated Haut Gap School, be trouble. I know be trouble, 'cause I don't like nobody to tease me. If one of them come and tease me, first thing I do, I going fight.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## INTIMIDATION HAS BEEN BAD

177 829 The whites and the Negroes on this island haven't gotten involved in violence. But the intimidation, I think, has been bad as far as the white is concerned. Like making a person feel like he might not have a job tomorrow. This is something that bothers the Negroes a whole lot. Although it never bothered me because I feel like anybody that works me, he's working me because he's making some money off me, he's not working me because he likes me. He's working me because I'm a good worker and he needs me. And I believe that we all need each other--without the whites the Negro couldn't make it; and I believe without the Negroes the whites couldn't make it.

177 829 464 They've used the migrant workers in this intimidation. When I first knew about the migrant workers, they were really, really treated bad. They had no place to stay when they came here, and they were always treated bad. But since the integration movement has started here on the island, I think the white farmers have really gone for the migrant workers because they know that the migrant laborers really don't stand for nothing. They're just somebody to work.

Most of them, I've found out, have been in trouble before. They had trouble somewhere, or they couldn't make it at home, or something like that, and that's how come they become migrant laborers. So the white farmers figure, "Here's a chance for us to use the Negroes without the Negroes really being able to do anything about it. We don't have to worry about them getting an education. All they want to do is get our crops out, and then we can sort of hurt the Negroes here on the island by doing it this way."

The biggest farmer here, during the last season, he was working the migrant laborers three days and the regular Negroes on the island two days a week. So this is something where the Negroes used to look forward to [465] making during the summertime eighty or ninety dollars a week, it be cut down to thirty-five or forty dollars a week.

177 829 This is to try to keep the Negroes from participating in things. It doesn't matter whether he or she has been participating or not, he's automatically placed in this category. Two farmers came by the Progressive Club last year during the workshops there and acted like they were taking down license numbers. Nobody knows if they were actually taking down the numbers or not; they never published them, but this really scared a lot of Negroes and they wouldn't even want to bring their cars around.

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*Rev. C. C. Brown*

**WE GOT ALONG**

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The Negroes have been afraid to trust the white. They feel he isn't wanting them to begin with, and the white men feel that they are superior. That's what we have on this island.

There has never been any race problem since I've been here. By race problem I mean there hasn't been any violence. We got along. The Negroes just used to take things as accepted course. They been resigned to their fate, most of them, and satisfied with that.

You can tell the difference in the whites' attitude since 1954. They weren't quite as friendly, some of 'em, as they had been, because they thought there was going to be a rushing into the white schools, and they didn't want that. But I don't think they have to fear about that. Nobody's ever tried to go there.

It's just a matter of time until they are going to accept integration. Well, I don't know about Johns Island. I won't say that here because, you see, people accept according to their education, I believe. The more a man knows, the more intelligent he becomes of worldly affairs. But now this island here is going to be a long time, I think.

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The newspaper see a relation between the two races, they make that white man a Communist. Infiltration! Any time relationship between Negroes and whites, always be somebody tag 'em as a Communist. That's one of the policies of this Southland you'll find. They don't have anything else to say, they just say that. Just like Martin Luther King. They say he's a Communist and that's not true. Just a man trying to get what belongs to him.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE NEED TO MAKE FRIENDS

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I have a white friend and we usually be frank with each other. He ask me, "Don't you think that the Negro want integration because they want to marry white women?"

I laughed. I said, "Are you kidding? You ever know any garden that's pretty without having a variety of flowers?" I said, "If you have all black flowers or all white flowers you don't have much of a garden, but if you have all kinds of flowers it looks pretty. Now Negroes can choose from almost white to the very black and different shades between, and then he's just wanting to have integration to marry a white woman?"

Years ago the Negroes on this island were skeptical of a white person if he show as if he want a friendship with them or help them, because only thing they know about the white folks is go out and work for them and they treat them as animal, and that's all. That's the kind of relationship they call good--to go out and do what they want done and then go home. Years ago, Negroes have never seen a white person come around, no more than if they come out to the house to ask them to work. They wouldn't even much come in, and the Negroes couldn't even go in the white folks house regardless of how much they work. But now things are changing a little bit.

Some time ago I went to a white home here, and I rung the bell, and to my surprise, the man invited me into the kitchen. We began to talk together, and the white girl came and peeped through the door to see who the daddy was talking to. And she went back to the mother and I heard the mother say, "Who is that?" and the girl say, "Mr. Jenkins." I was surprised she had said that. I just want to know what the mother thought when a white girl calling a Negro *Mister* Jenkins. That was a surprise to me. But we talk in a friendly manner 'til I ready to leave.

And I think it is because of these white persons who have come here, who have stayed with me lots of times, we have gone around together, we have sung together, we have prayed together, we have eaten together. And I think some of the white folks here are being ashamed of themselves just now. They can see the handwriting on the wall. We need to make friends.

You can see a change in the most of them. Not too many have come out openly and invited me in their home and sit with them as these one or two. The white magistrate has invited me in his home. We sat to the table together and discussed things on the island and the betterment of Negroes, and some white farmers have call me and we begin to talk. Not in the masses, but you can see the feeling, and they respect you much better. It's not the kind of relationship they were calling good relations some years ago, that you go out and do what I tell you to do and then go home.

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159 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his
578 own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 There's been a great awakening through television and through the
190 news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## 159 AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

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Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[789] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of the kids get to be addicts. Some of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

873 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

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If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages—fact, they have to do that. There's

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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## I LIKE THE HISTORY OF IT, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN A PART OF IT

178 829 You might take the position that people who live in the culture recognize it as something real great. Most of the time people from outside recognize it a whole lot more than the people that live it everyday. You're talking about people who have done a lot of hard work and been through a lot of hell. But if you can come in and see it, it's so nice and quaint. "I just love to see the quaint little way that they talk," and so on. Folk don't see themselves in that way. Many folk have tried to get rid of that culture that you're talking about.

I don't miss being in Moving Star Hall at all. The way that I like to miss Moving Star Hall and some of the things of the past is to reminisce. But I would not like to be back in it. I like the history of it, and to know that I have been a part of it. I do miss that tradition when Moving Star and all the lodges [529] used to come together on Labor Day. That was a festive time with food and a parade. They used to play flute and drums. That was really exciting.

At certain ages we used to go to Moving Star Hall, and the young people would stand outside and burn tires until almost time for them to have whatever they're going to eat and then you're going to go inside. That's the part that really used to be nice because guys would be talking so much jokes, those stories about the monkey and the baboon; people doing the dozens.

[571] People probably do miss things like the Hall, but there is a lot of community concern and coming together still going on. I still have certain places on the island where I will go on a Thursday or a Friday night, and I'll just slip in and catch up on everything that has gone on. You just sit and all the information passes on. There's a kind of camaraderie that comes out of that.

I always believe that things just move to other levels. Another generation takes it to another level.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## CULTURE IS AN INBRED THING, BUT IT NEEDS TO BE FED

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I think the culture has a better chance to survive if you have some control over it. That has been my dream to try to make sure people have an economic base, and then you can go back, then you can sit around and talk about parents and grandparents. But if somebody is sitting around hungry and you're gonna tell them about some damn culture, it don't make any American sense.

So what it is that some of us have been about is you can upgrade peoples' health care, you can upgrade their housing, if you can upgrade their education, then they themselves begin to look at their own history, because they have some leisure time to look at it.

Culture is an inbred thing, it's in there, but it needs to be fed. The best way to feed it is to make sure you got some of the basic necessities to survive.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 829 [545] When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. [711] Most of the white community around here really don't understand the strength of something like that.

468 829 533 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture that.

527 829 199 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that, that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

4: Caravan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WE HAVE TO KEEP IT ALIVE

829 I want to see my children go on, as long as people want to hear them and they've got the voice. It means a lot to me and it means a lot to them. If they stop, it's going down. We have to keep it alive.

You've got to talk and give people an understanding about what you're talking about—the background and where it came from. That's very important. The young people don't know many of the things that happened. It takes somebody who came out of this experience to teach them and tell them the meaning of it and what it can do for them. I have the experience 'cause that's all I was doing my whole life. My parents and grandparents talked all about how they came up, and I took it in.

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



464 community as well as domestic servant for the post office—
562 a unique job combination which she handled with skill and
197 grace. Increasingly, the job patterns of island women are
463 associated with greater use of standard English than those of either island men or mainland women in the lower socio-economic group.

829 A second factor which may influence both choice of
186 language variety and choice of occupation is that of identi-
562 fication with island life. A more detailed attitudinal
[121] study is needed to describe the dimensions of this factor, but casual observation and conversation with young people gave some indication of its importance. In general, young males seemed to identify more strongly with island life than young females. Fifth-grade boys expressed some regret that a ferry would soon connect the island with the mainland, saying that the island wouldn't be the island anymore. All girls and women who expressed an opinion about it universally welcomed the easier access to the mainland that a ferry would bring. In one large family which had eleven children ranging from eight years to about twenty-four, the mother and father had a long-standing argument about the value of island life. The mother preferred the convenience of mainland living, while the father maintained that they could "have more" on the island, in terms of land and material goods, than they could have anywhere else. A son in his twenties maintained that he would want to raise his children

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown



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there so that he could teach them the things he had learned, and expressed his belief that older siblings who had moved away would return in later years. A daughter in her late teens praised the island as a place to grow up, but said she would not ask her future husband to live there. Another brother spent long hours in the company of an aged step-grandfather, listening to his stories about the old days on the island. One young mother in another family spoke with feeling of her loneliness during the days she spent on the island with three pre-school children, when most other adults were away at jobs on the mainland. In general, the men on the island seemed to share in more communal activities than did the women. To the outside observer, island life seemed more difficult for women than for men. There was some indication that identification with island life increased with age, for both sexes. One older woman had lived for much of her married life near the metropolitan center of Charleston, returning to the island in later life. Another older man and his wife had spent some years living and working in New York City, returning to the island when his aged parents needed them. They were both leaders in community and church life on the island; their speech reflected their wide range of experience. In formal church speech events, both spoke and read language very close to standard; in their conversations with each other at home many creole features were used. At the close of the field work for the

[197]

829 present study, a foster son of this couple returned from New
186 York after the father's death to live with his mother on the
562 island. Despite the difficult living conditions, the island remains a valued place to come home to for both middle aged and older adults. Those with the greatest degree of identification with island life seemed to be young men and older adults of both sexes.

5.2 Age of Speaker and Language Use

121 Age groups were selected on the basis of natural
561 groupings which existed in the island community itself.
484 Young people from the age of junior high school up to the early twenties formed a natural group which commuted daily to the mainland, and organized parties and dances on the island. Middle aged adults from about 30 to 50 had growing families of their own and commuted to mainland jobs daily. Older adults over 65 had either slowed down or quit entirely their mainland jobs and spent much of their time daily on the island itself; they, with a small group of pre-school children, constituted the day-time population of the island.
12 After it became apparent that a portion of the mainland popu-
56 lation differed in important respects from the island com-
184 munity, older adults from the lower socio-economic mainland group were included in the study. Language used by these age
121 groups is compared in Table 6 above (see page 120). The
561 table also reflects the relationship between the social
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9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

CHAPTER TWO

## *African Survivals on the Coast of Georgia*

123 There are survivals of African songs on the coast of Georgia. But let no outsider imagine they can be heard for the asking. From experience I know this to be true. It took me three winters on St. Simon's to hear a single slave song, three times as many winters to see the religious dance called the ring-shout, still more winters to unearth the Buzzard Lope and similar solo dances, and the game songs known as ring-play. It may be only a coincidence, but the "funny songs" with African words, translated by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner, have been the last to be found. They were discovered about the time Negro educators began to teach their pupils that the term African was not synonymous with barbarism, and that Africa had a culture of its own.

181 The secretiveness of the Negro is, I believe, the fundamental reason for our ignorance of the race and its background, and this trait is in itself probably an African survival. Melville J. Herskovits bears out such a conclusion when he quotes a Dutch Guiana Bush Negro as saying: "Long ago our ancestors taught us that it is unwise for a man to tell anyone more than half of what he knows about anything." [1] It is amusing to question Southerners as to the number of times they remember hearing Negroes volunteer information. Not one so far has recalled an instance in which something has been told that was not common knowledge.

181 829 This inborn reticence, coupled with the fact that natives of Africa remember little about their forebears farther back than their grandparents,[2] is undoubtedly responsible for the race's lack of a past in either the Old World or the New. It is possible, however, that there may be a cause for their apparent forgetfulness of which the white man is unaware. On Sapelo I got the distinct impression from two descendants of Old Bilali, the famous Mohammedan slave, that the dead were dead,

[1] *Handbook of Social Psychology.*
[2] *Mentioned by Clement Egerton in African Majesty.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring
829 up trouble for yourself. In Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

181 Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad-
567 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch
[535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the
181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States*,
177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of
567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

[3] In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.

[538] [4] Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.

[5] Mary H. Kingsley, in West African Studies, tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



794 "Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at
796 the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

## BELIEVER I KNOW

175 This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall mag-
159 nolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about
(533) 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of
(291) the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States
began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift [4] at the time her
(829) family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533
539

I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
  Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
  Believer I know

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



## CONCLUSION

178 538 (533) Of course there is much in the Gullah tradition that has already passed beyond recall, and much that is passing with this generation for lack of suitable recorders. "Hymns, songs, folk-stories, animal-myths, fables, aphorisms and proverbs, wit and humor, it has, and a great mass of unrecorded folk-lore, legend and tradition, preserved in this unstudied dialect like flies in amber; there are, peculiar to it, certain Rabelaisian *contes ridicules*, told in cabins with wild mirth," *histoires satyriques*, and ghastly *legendes macabres*," besides which the uncanny tales of Hoffman are puerile in power to chill, but harder to get at than the things banned by the Great Tabu.""

It is all interesting—superstitions, folk-lore, tales, songs, and dialect—and the literature that enshrines the Gullah tradition will always remain a significant chapter in the great book of human life.

000 As an example of the dialect itself there may be quoted

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[609] (83) [171] "Told to white people (only to men of course) rarely except under the loosening urge of whiskey, on special occasions such as a hunting or fishing expedition. The experience of Mrs. Elsie Clews Parsons on St. Helena Island in searching for material of this kind is both interesting and illuminating. She says: "The more or less obscene turns occurring now and then in the Bahaman tales are quite lacking in Carolina, whether as a result of natural indifference to the obscene or of greater sophistication, it is somewhat difficult to estimate. In the deliberate suppression of certain tales or 'toasts', as drinking-verses are called in both the Sea Islands, and the Bahamas, the sophistication is plain enough. 'Some is so evil, I don' like to go t'rough wid 'em;' said one who failed to tell me the many 'toas'" he had boasted of knowing. Tale No. 78, 'Man Under the Bed,' a variant of the well-known European tale of 'The Woman and the Friar', is one of the commonest of Bahaman tales. One day I happened to ask Mr. Jack if he knew it. 'Oh, you want dem kin' o' tales too! I could tell you a heap o' dem tales, but I blush fo' you,' he said. 'You must not,' I rejoined, 'for it is my business to take down all kinds of tales, no matter what they are about, and just as they are.' Finally, out of the 'heap o' dem tales', he told me the very tale I had referred to, as well as one other tale of which a variant is familiar on Andros Island, 'The Three Sweet-hearts,' (No. 77). James Murray said that he knew twenty-five or thirty 'man's tales'; 'but,' added he, and too firmly for challenge, 'I wouldn' go t'rough wid 'em.' Artistic story-teller as he was, he would forego part of the point of a story rather than commit the moral impropriety of telling it. 'I leave it dere,' he would say. White story-writers, like Harris or Jones or Christensen, have left it there, too, I infer. Indeed, Mrs. Christensen has told me that, faithful recorder as she was, on this point she had been selective: the stories she found 'vulgar' she had not taken." *Folk-Lore of the Sea-Islands*, Preface, XX, XXI.

A hint of the latent vulgar possibilities is found in the *double-entendre* riddles Nos. 29, 30, 31, 32 (pp. 156, 157), on which Mrs. Parsons makes no comment.

"One of which Mr. Bennett has himself brilliantly re-created in *Madame Margot*, The Century Co., 1921.

"Bennett, II, 52.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



114 and I believe that a diligent search among the less sophisti-
538 cated islanders will reveal about as high a proportion of this type of story as is found in the Bahamas and West Indies.

114 Mrs. Parsons also believed that obscene turns, so com-
538 mon in the Bahamas, were "quite lacking in Carolina." This might have been true as far as she could tell, for the
•831 Negroes were undoubtedly inhibited in the presence of a woman collector. I found their stories and riddles quite rich in *double entente* and obscene turns, and the most vulgar story I heard was told me by a 16-year-old school girl. Many stories have their "other" versions. On several occasions, men or boys told the conventional versions if girls were present, and then took me aside to tell me the tabooed versions. These were often merely risqué or vulgar rather than truly obscene, but there was plenty of the latter to disprove Mrs. Parsons' idea. Indeed, whether she knows it or not, her book contains a considerable quantity of vulgar folklore.

538 Because of the existence of Mrs. Parsons' excellent
book, it is unnecessary to give in detail in the present re-
128 port all of the folklore collected on St. Helena Island. A few typical stories, riddles, beliefs, etc., are sufficient here. For further details and for a larger bibliography
538 of Negro folklore, one may consult Mrs. Parsons' work.
113 *Black Yeomanry*, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., and *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, by Guion Griffis Johnson, companion volumes to this one, contain much valuable material relating to folkways on St. Helena Island.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

 567

his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) [837]

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 [412]

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SANDFLY

761 Wen a pusson dies some one have fix im sho. Bout a yeah
754 ago an ole woman went fuh a walk right down this road yuh. She went up on a hill cross frum yuh weah she live an the nex mawnin she wuz foun dead theah. Mos folks said she wuz cunjuhed that night, though theah wuz some wut did say she have haht trouble. Jis a week aw so ago the brothuh of a neighbuh die right sudden an folks said he wuz cunjuhed too." * [15]

764 In regard to death we found a rigid observance of customs that were prevalent also in the other communities. For example, one Negro's body had been shipped back from New York City in order that it might be buried in Sandfly. Oth-
764 erwise, we were told, the spirit of the deceased would have found no rest, but instead would have roamed the country-
775 side.[1] Here, too, was observed the practice of placing broken bits of pottery and possessions last used by the dead person on the grave for the purpose of supplying the needs of the spirit.[47]

• 832 In Sandfly there is a ready market for love powders and
789 charms.** This field has been highly commercialized and representatives of different corporations frequently visit
[443] Sandfly selling such articles as *Adam and Eve Root*, *Lucky Mojo Love Drops*, *Black Cat Ashes*, and *Courting Powder*.[8] Apparently the women resort to the use of the love charms more frequently than the men, and their reason for doing so was described by one woman as being "so dat dey kin rule duh men." †

754 Old and young entertain a firm belief in the existence of witches and spirits. The witches may come in a variety of shapes, appearing as a person either male or female, an animal, or sometimes as an insect.[68] When questioned regarding the apparitions, one person said, "A witch ride muh sistuh mos every night.[69] He come singin a lill song. I

* *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 had the dark full lips which some people call "blue lips" because of
142 their defined darkness and smoothness. They are the kind of lips that never need lipstick, but I have seen her take one of her children's graphite pencils, scratch it against a surface to make the point soft and blunt, and rub it across her lips to accentuate their darkness. In spite of having had five children, she still had an excellent figure, and a figure is important to Sea Island men. Her rounded posterior filled out her jeans and made all of her clothes hang just right. She told me once that
159 she was not sure it was an advantage to a woman to be built the way she was, because if she had not had, in her own words, "such a big
836 ass," maybe the men would have left her alone, and she would not
142 have got pregnant when she was fourteen. She reflected on that statement for awhile, took a long draw from her cigarette, and then
• 832 amended it by saying, "Hell, who knows what I would have done?" She had always liked men as much as they seemed to like her, she finished by saying, and she probably would have got pregnant anyway.

159 I concluded that her attractiveness emanated not only from her looks but from her style and manner as well. She had a natural, inborn sophistication and presence that any *Vogue* model would envy. I showed her a copy of *Vogue* once, along with *Essence*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ebony*, and asked if she would like a complimentary subscription to one for Christmas. She flipped through *Vogue* and commented that she had no place to go to wear the kind of "shit" the models displayed; she browsed through *Essence* and said it had too much fancy cooking, and the only food that tasted good to her was cowpeas and bone; she read through *Cosmopolitan* and said it seemed to be about white women wanting sex, and hell, she got enough of that without reading about it. She finally settled on *Ebony* because she liked the pictures of Billy Dee Williams.

In spite of her language and outward hardness, there was something about Ida Mae that made her very feminine. Perhaps it was the way she held her cigarette, the way she walked, or the way she smiled just enough to show a glint of her gold tooth. Perhaps it was the
159 coyness with which she captivated a man's attention, any man's, that
832 made the more respectable women of the community dislike her and the more respectable men, especially the older ones, want to get close enough to her to smell her perfume, maybe inadvertently brush against her, or at least get into a position to see her back action as she walked away. I even overheard a deacon in the church comment to her one

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



159 afternoon, while buying a soda at Mr. Ted's store, that she had on a
832 mighty fine-looking dress and it was sho' hitting her in all the right places. She turned, gazed into his eyes just a split second longer than what was respectable, flipped a few ashes from her cigarette on his shiny black shoes, smiled ever so slightly, and walked away. He watched her as she moved out of his eyesight. Then he hitched up his pants, put both hands in his front pockets, and asked the Lord to give him strength.

159 Late one Saturday afternoon I walked up the lane past the Angel
123 Oak behind Miss Myma's house to visit Ida Mae. She lived in a two-room shanty with three of her five children. The two older girls had lived with her mother since they were born. There were no children yelling and screaming outside, however, so I thought Ida Mae was not home. I started to leave when she popped her head out of her bedroom and said, "Hi, Pat." I was lonely, so I was glad to find her in. I asked her why it was so quiet, and where the children were. She said she sent them down to her mother's house to spend the night. When I asked her why, she replied, "Ain't you business, but I de spect company soon, and when he de come, you go have fe leave." I said that was okay. We sat on the broken steps in front of her shanty and chatted about general things, children, school, work, people on the islands.

She asked about my husband and if he didn't get jealous with me running around down there. I said I didn't think so, that I had really never given him a reason to be jealous. She replied that men never needed a reason to be jealous, that they were jealous by nature and it was to a woman's advantage to keep them that way. She asked what I was doing on the islands every year, and what Africa had been like, and if the men loved big-butt women there as much as men did here. I told her that I was trying to reconstruct Africanisms, and yes, the African men loved big-butt women as much as Sea Island men did. In fact, I told her that my female friends in Nigeria had teased me because my rear end was not as round as theirs, and I had retaliated by saying that was true for me, but the Sea Island women still had behinds that would put theirs to shame. She laughed and said she was glad I told the bitches that.

She offered me a cigarette. I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't smoke. Then she offered me a shot of whiskey; again, I thanked her but refused, saying I didn't drink. Then she offered me a joint; I thanked her and said I didn't smoke pot either, and wondered where

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



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3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



175 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Bap-
567 tist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery"
584 and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women
• [836] had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the ma-
[583] jority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> [587] If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for
> [765] a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to help her. . . .
> . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds
> [586] her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth
567 and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted
581
597

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from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called.

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, the couple went home to the cabin which the master or overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of morality was one of the evils most often cited against him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the nature, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.
[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

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567 burden upon the parents, for the master provided for all
585 children alike. A violation of marriage vows was accom-
• 837 panied by no disgrace or punishment other than that in-
flicted by the master or by the church if the culprit were
a member. There seems to have been very little intimacy
567 between the white men and the Negro women on St.
[144] Helena Island. The northern missionaries found not
more than five or six mulattoes on the whole Island in
1861.

567 There were forces sufficiently strong to keep many
581 slaves faithful to their marriage vows. Chancellor Har-
per, of Charleston, called attention in 1854 to the fact that
slave marriages were often faithfully adhered to during
life.[22] In 1857 a sea-island planter, in recounting the
567 deaths among his people, mentioned with sadness that of
581 "poor old Sandy and his wife Joan." "The latter died
593 apparently of mere debility; and her husband, after watch-
[165] ng until her death, went to bed at midnight, complaining
merely of a sore throat, and expired the next evening with-
out any one suspecting that he was seriously ill." The
planter concluded that the faithful old man had died of
"mental depression, operating on a feeble constitution."[23]
On Edisto Island there still lives "Old Jeff," born in
slavery, who, although as devoted to his wife as Sandy,
lived on after her death. Every day he went to her grave
to mourn and there he slept at night. After several
months his friends became alarmed at his behavior. Upon
being questioned he explained that he intended to dig up

[22] "Memoir on Slavery," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 219.

[23] Couper-Wylly Papers, James Hamilton Couper to James Couper, April 13, 1857.

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his wife's bones and take them to his house so that he could have 'he wit' me always."[24] 581 593

FAMILY LIFE

In their attempt to impress the sacredness of marriage upon their slaves, the whites were often discouraged by the low value which the slave women placed upon chastity. Wives were as prone as husbands to break the marriage vows. In fact, the female tended to be the dominant sex in slave life. It was decidedly to the advantage of a black man to have the good will of one of the women of the plantation, for life thereby was made much easier. On the plantations where clothes were issued by the yard, it was customary for the women to do the sewing for the family so that a husband was almost as dependent upon his wife for a new suit of clothes as he was upon his master; but, on the plantations where superannuated women were delegated to do all the plantation sewing and mending, the slave men were somewhat more independent of their women. 567 581 562 (831) [837]

The weekly issuance of rations, a predominant portion of which was corn, was also dealt out in the bulk and must not only be shelled but pounded into grits before being cooked. It was customary for the women and children to assemble at the cornhouse on Monday, an hour or so before "fust dark," to receive the weekly allowance from the driver. Kneeling or sitting upon the ground with her children about her, each woman shelled the corn, using a cob to increase her speed. On some of the plantations there were improvised mortars for shelling corn, made of 567 252 (412)

[24] Information obtained from J. Swinton Whaley, Little Edisto, S. C., and from a personal interview with the Negro.

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I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without saying a word to me or any other white man. I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

175 657 585

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for the occasion.

175 797 581 585 837 657

Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

175 657 715 797

[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

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ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; so we hab to get out. 175 731

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23] 731

## THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly against the door of her little cabin, two small children pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while 175 837 84

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
•837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
[848] desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the
175 Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
794 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
793 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during antebellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte*
844 women on half task until confinement. Every planter
[843] who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
[743] come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

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beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Midwives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[59]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[60] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[61]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[59] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[60] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[61] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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771 rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

771 Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowl-
754 edge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

754 Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east
[115] of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds
[464] Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh."[7]

787 "Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

775 "I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

775 The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um?[59] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz
• [845] bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked.
787 I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 543 East St. Julien Street.*

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787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, *]

301 Another old woman * can recall when her slave mother
751 used to carry her on her back to the spring on their planta-
(115) tion. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood. Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

"Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz
• (845) bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

* *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

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754 anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[18, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well [761] every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

787 She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

787 "Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an 779 have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the [574] fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will 787 die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

775 The next person * we interviewed several blocks away ex- [115] pressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the * [845] other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

775 "Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an 787 muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

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754 bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let
789 them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to
824 do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

754 Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't
[845] really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul."[4]

775 We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little
787 ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

775 "I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house
787 is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a
556 ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

[113] * *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

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342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads
115 peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly
775 off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life.[59] One time a ghos try tuh
787 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by
787 witches [59] an seed a thousandn mo ghos.[59] I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but
[845] dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double caul [4] an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um.
[775] A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

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115 Eighty-year old Martha Page,* a small and frail woman, remembers her African grandfather and the strange "talk he use tuh make wid two udduh slabes on duh plantation."

"Wen dey git tuh gabbin, yuh couldn unnuhstan a wud dey say," Martha informed us. "Muh gran sho hab funny [226] name fuh call ting, too. He lub tuh hunt an fish an he use [224] tuh hab a lill piece uh wood wid a string on each en tuh kill [533] squhrel an hawk wid. He call it he 'wah-hoo bahk.' Sometime he use tuh sing a song das staht off like dis, 'Dody boda do daudy.' He say it mean, 'We come fuh make waw tuhday.'[1]"

754 "Did your gran tell you about magic and conjure?" we asked.

789 "Dat he did. I sho wuz sked ub im wen he use tuh talk bout dem ting he people in Africa could do.[15, 22a, e, 48] Some ub em could make yuh disappeah, he say, an some could fly all roun duh elements an make yuh do anyting dey wants yuh tuh do. Wen I growd up, I discobuh dat plenty uh duh tings gran tell me is sho nuff true."

"You've had personal experiences?" we queried hopefully.

"Me an muh sistuh bote. Witches use tuh ride uh regluh till it seem she gwine swivel away an die.[69] One day a man tell uh tuh tro salt on duh bed an no witch would bodduh uh. So dat ebenin muh sistuh sprinkle a heap uh salt on uh cubbuh.[69a] Soon attuh we git tuh bed, I seen a cat come [68] right in duh doe an look me in duh eye. I try tuh holluh but uh couldn make a soun. Nex ting I know sistuh wuz poin watuh in muh face.

"I dohn take tuh witches," said Martha Page. "I dohn mine ghos, cuz I caahn see em as I wuzn bawn wid a caul.[4] [845] But I dohn want no mo sperience wid witches. Das wy uh sprinkle salt down ebry night uh muh life."

The broom precaution against witches is also believed in

* *Martha Page, 606 Zubly Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



789 (115) mention this story to Carrie Hamilton,* whom we next visited.

"I hab heah uh dem people," said this seventy year old woman, who has the tall, heavy frame of a plantation hoe hand. "Muh mudduh use tuh tell me bout em wen we set in duh city mahket sellin vegetubbles an fruit. She say dat deah wuz a man an he wife an dey git fooled abode a slabe ship. Fus ting dey know dey wuz sole tuh a plantuh on St. Helena. So one day wen all duh slabes wuz tuhgedduh, dis man an he wife say, 'We gwine back home, goodie bye, goodie bye,' an jis like a bud dey flew out uh sight.[59a]

"Muh mudduh use tuh tell me all kine uh ting cuz I wuz (845) bawn wid a caul[4] an wuz diffrunt frum duh res. Ebry now 775 an den I see ghos. Dey hab all kine uh shape, sometime no head, sometime no feet, jis floatin by.[59a] Dey is duh spirits uh duh dead, but ef yuh dohn meddle in deah business, dey ain gwine meddle in yoze."

178 Not only among these older Yamacraw Negroes but among younger residents we found a solid background of ancestral beliefs and practices, for here little of modern progress has touched the dirt streets, pebbly walks, and tumble down houses of another day.

754 (593) (115) Ellen Dorsey,** forty years old, born in Savannah, gave us a detailed description of the conjure her husband put on her.

"Me an him couldn git long so I lef im. He went tuh a root doctuh[48] fuh him tuh make me come back home. Den duh root doctuh put me down sick so duh wite people I wuz wukin fuh would dischahge me. I had pains runnin up an down muh whole body, an I knowed I wuz cunjuhed but uh 754 wouldn gib in.[15] I call me in a man who use tuh try tuh sell me a han tuh wawd off cunjuh.[12a, c, d] He rub muh legs down 755 twice a day, an one mawnin a big black snake run outuh muh big toe.[50] 'Deah goes duh devil,' say duh root man, an frum

* *Carrie Hamilton, 530 West President Street.*
** *Ellen Dorsey, 515 West Congress Street.*

TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn
775 dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh
(231) brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh
(845) mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

278 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at
533 funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

"Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix
252 duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 Justine Singleton* believed firmly in the existence of
787 spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh
(115) an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin
(759) willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-
759

*Justine Singleton, Tatemville.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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Georgia



duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[24a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

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Georgia

HARRIS NECK

115 ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was
351 restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At
406 a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an
415 immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast
133 stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-
137 draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

1:5 When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

[845] "I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task
[787] of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

[845] "Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

775 "What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired.
787 A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[59] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
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115 early days, but her memory was rather clouded. She answered pleasantly, however, and when she was not talking to us mumbled softly to herself.

775 "I do know dat folks bawn wid a caul kin see spirits,"[4]
787 she admitted. "Plenty uh folks roun yuh say duh spirits
845 peah tuh um."[59]

When we inquired about drums being beaten at funerals,
764 she shook her head stubbornly and refused to say anything
533 on the subject.

The daughter, overhearing the conversation, paused in her task of ironing, and said, "Yes'm. Dasso. They beats the drum tuhday at the fewnul.[34] Specially ef yuh blongs tuh a awganization, they goes right along in the fewnul pruhcession an beats the drum as they mahch. I remembuh
[202] heahin bout in the ole days they beat out messages on the drum.[26] Let the folks know wen sumpm wuz bout tuh happen. Wen they give a dance ovuh on St. Catherine, they beat the drum tuh let the folks heah know bout it."

764 At a funeral, the bottles and dishes and other possessions belonging to the departed person were left on the grave, the women informed us. "The spirit need these,"[47] the younger
[775] woman explained, "jis lak wen they's live. Evrybody mahch roun the grave in a succle an shout an pray."

262 We inquired if some people in the section were afraid to eat certain foods. Once more Josephine shook her head in negation.

The obliging daughter who listened intently to everything that was said again interceded. "I do heah bout that. Theah is some folks wut caahn eat suttn foods. They say it's bad luck an they nevuh do eat it. Right now theah's lots of foods wut some folks dohn eat."[65]

527 At this point in the conversation the older woman brightened and told us about the harvest festivals held during plantation days.

"We hab big feas. Ebrybody bring some ub duh fus

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us. We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

759 755

Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an opportunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

775 845 787

The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [39]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

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Georgia

HARRIS NECK

775 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?"
•845 we asked.

787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh
[755] chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[8a]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had
789 found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 12] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

DARIEN

825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
[777] no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[59] Yuh
787 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]

845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[69] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
[825] mal, sometime lak bud.[68] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[69c] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

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Georgia



775 We asked Uncle Jim if he could see spirits. "No'm, I ain nevuh seen em. I wuzn bawn with a caul [4] an I caahn see em. (845) Now, muh brothuh he kin see em cuz he wuz bawn with a caul. He see em all the time. Spirits is alluz roun in time 775 of fewnuls an wen a pusson die, we have a settin-up and then 764 we leave sumpm wut we got tuh eat in a dish by him to eat [54] —that is, we use tuh do that—an we put salt on em in the ole days an we go up to em an we put our hands on theah chest to bid em feahwell." [31]

764 We asked Uncle Jim if they used to have night funerals in the old days. "No'm, we alluz have our fewnuls in the day time but my great granmothuh, now, she say in Africa they have night fewnuls."

115 We asked him to tell us more of his African great grandmother.

"Muh great gran, huh name wuz Bina; thas all we know uh by. She brought up muh mothuh cuz muh gran got bun up in uh house wen muh mothuh wuz two days ole."

We asked him if he remembered her well. "Yes'm, I wuz a big boy about fifteen wen she die an they all say she wuz a hundud an thutty yeahs ole at that time. She sho ole, I know dat, but she remembuh plenty. She tell us chillun so much I caahn remembuh all them things."

829 We asked again about night funerals. "She jis say they 567 have em at night but she didn say wy. She did say they alluz kill a wite chicken at the time they go to bury em an they take the blood an feathuhs an they do sumpm special with em but I ain unduhstood how it is.[35a, b] I tell you wut she tell me, how she get heah on a big boat an she lan down theah on Cumberland Ilun on a big dock in the time of Mr. Nightingale an she say they put em in a lill pick house to keep em safe an the chimbly of that same lill house is standin about two hundud yahds out in the rivuh off Cumberland tuhday."

829 We asked if she had told him how they lived in Africa

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with [272] penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [787] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 787 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).[A]

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious 952 or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island [538] folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

APPENDIX E

# *Gullah Folkways*

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA 127 128 workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless 178 otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

### *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) A child born with a face caul is able to see
(789) supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power
(751) to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

539 while one sleeps. If the living spirit comes in contact
774 with an evil spirit, living or dead, while outside of its sleeping body, it will race to return to protect the body. When it returns to the body the person wakes up frightened
[761] as a result of the spirit's experience. If the spirit fails to return to the body, the person dies in sleep.

539 25. When children are born with a caul over their
775 faces, they are thought to be able to see ghosts. This
845 concept is also widespread in inland Black communities. To eliminate the problem at birth, the caul is chopped, cooked and fed to the infant so that it returns to the spirit within the body. It is thought by the islanders that the spirit alone should possess the visionary power.

538 26. Line 18: the phrase *dark the light* is understood by Gullah speakers to mean 'the sun had set', or 'the sun was shrouded by clouds'. Reference is made to the sun in line 26, *The heavier de was getting*, which means the sun was getting lower and lower in the sky.

538 27. Line 19: *Yatta* is the African name given to his
551 mother at birth. *Liza* is her English name, which she used only in business affairs. Turner (1949:40) notes that most Gullah speakers use two kinds of given names: one English, called their true name and used in outside communications, and the other a pet or basket name, used among friends and relatives. The practice still continues.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



567 among my earliest playmates, and during my whole life his attach-
165 ment never varied. I shall gratify myself by placing a stone on his
964 grave.[57]

INFANT WELFARE

567 The children's diseases were sometimes more disas-
758 trous than cholera or dysentery, despite the general pre-
cautions observed in caring for the plantation children. Planters usually insisted that the young be given special attention, and they also urged mothers to take proper
567 care of themselves during pregnancy. Henry A. Middle-
758 ton, Jr., would not permit any woman to work on his is-
844 land lands in midwinter, and he immediately put *enceinte* women on half task until confinement. Every planter
(843) who had a hospital for his people insisted that the mothers
(743) come there for confinement, for there they could be better cared for and kept more quiet, but the women invariably preferred their own houses where they could gossip with their friends without restraint, and they usually managed, as Couper told Sir Charles Lyell, to be taken by surprise at home. Mothers were allowed a
567 month of rest after confinement, an advantage rarely en-
758 joyed by hard-working English peasants, and were not
• 846 put at full tasks until the child was eight months old.

Doctors were seldom called at the confinement of a
567 Negro woman,[58] for the woman's mistress herself seldom
844 received such attention. In every group of plantation
759 slaves there were one or more midwives listed on the plantation record as the "granny," or nurse, but known

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] MS in Hawks Letters, Library of Congress. Dr. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, May 17, 1862, from Edisto Island: "In midwifery here, Drs. are not called, several births have occurred since I have been here all attended by the Negro women on the place."

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a prayin' now.[24]

175 After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
178 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
592 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
[848] the "churching." The significant change in family life was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had appealed to the man as the head of the family and had urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
[423] places. The land which they bought from the Government was in their own names and they came to look upon the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery days.

175 Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
346 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

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to the people themselves by the respectful title of Maum. The mistress herself or the overseer's wife was also usually present to assist the midwife at the confinement of a Negro woman. At Christmas the planter rewarded the granny by giving her 75 cents for each delivery during the year. He also might seek to encourage the mother to care for her child properly by giving her, perhaps, as much as a $1 for every living child she had at Christmas. Henry A. Middleton, Jr.'s, practice was to give every woman with an infant one month old $1 and the same amount to every woman with a year-old child. At Christmas in 1859, he rewarded twenty-six mothers with month-old infants, and fourteen mothers with year-old infants.[80]

St. Helena planters allowed new-born infants "two of each garment and six diapers."[80] The garments were flannel dresses, dresses of cotton checks, and jackets of homespun.[81]

As soon as a mother resumed work after confinement, she was often required to take her infant to a nurse or granny, whose task it was to take care of both the "lap babies" and the "knee babies" during working hours. Sometimes the same granny looked after the plantation babies year after year, while on other plantations this task was assigned to a group of women who took turns every month "minding child." Henry A. Middleton, Jr., rewarded the "monthly nurses" on his plantation "75c. for infants that live." As long as a mother suckled her infant, she left her work in the field at stated intervals to do so, or an older child brought the baby to the field to be fed.

[80] Weehaw Plantation Book.
[80] *Port Royal Letters*, p. 44.
[81] Weehaw Plantation Book.

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
•853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
862 plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[63]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
(164) as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[63] *Ibid.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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[p. 55]

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757 brown pea liquor as a wash for smallpox, a mixture of lard and mocking-bird bush (cassena) as an ointment for smallpox, soot for cuts, and lemon juice and ashes for colds.

757 One woman reproved a member of the research staff because he threw away two rats which had been killed in 755 a trap. She said that the rats were just the thing she [825] needed for a tea which she wanted to brew for her ten-year-old son to cure him of bed-wetting. The same woman believed that her failure to "bind" the boy—that [826] is, to wrap cloth tightly around his abdomen—while he was a baby had resulted in his being weak physically. An- [827] other woman believed that if a stammering child drank water from a bell he would be cured.

•854 Many mothers with babes in arms will call the baby's 774 spirit when they start home after a visit, believing that the spirit might stay behind and evil consequences ensue unless it is called. It is considered bad luck to let a baby [772] be near the coffin at a funeral. If one is present he is passed [764] over the coffin from one person to another in order to [789] prevent his spirit from accompanying the dead. Mr. 854 Wildy, teacher of blacksmithing at Penn School and a 764 member of the quartet, said that on one occasion his in- 789 fant was taken to a funeral. He had thought nothing of the superstition, but other people at the funeral became very much disturbed on seeing the baby and would give him no peace until he had passed the child across the coffin.

764 As elsewhere in the South, the St. Helena people put [171] on the grave the things last used by a person. These are usually china, glasses, pitchers, medicine bottles, and other inexpensive things, but sometimes articles of value are left on the graves—antique clocks, vases, and the like.

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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have
advised the people to set the women in their proper place
—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.;
and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is
just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing
degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be
more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain
Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour
of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at
their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three
dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near
the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for
the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking
party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children
were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
• [854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant
tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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She is fifty or
159 more years of age, gets around well, is the oldest member of her household, and is primarily responsible for the total care of more than
• [855] en children, ranging in ages from two to sixteen years of age. Some of them are her own children; others are her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Six of them live with her, and four are left in her care during the day while their parents are away working. I had the pleasure
[123] of spending more than two weeks residing with Miss Deeley and her large family. I shared a large room with three of the girls and came to appreciate the effort that went into keeping that room clean and orderly at all times. No one was allowed to retire for the evening without a
[515] bath regardless of circumstances. Most of the time, a fire was built around a large black pot in the early evening to heat the water for baths before supper was served. All the children were lined up and given baths in a number-three washtub, given their nightclothes, and served supper around a large handmade wooden table. Miss Deeley had not
[354] accepted electricity for her home, so a kerosene lamp was the primary source of light after nightfall. Mealtime was always a pleasure at this home. The last meal of the day often consisted of cowpeas and rice
[264] cooked and seasoned with "bone," or rice served with shrimp and
[262] other fish caught by the children during the day. There was always hot corn bread and molasses and a bucket of iced tea.

159 After meals were served, the children gathered around the open fireplace, and Miss Deeley entertained all of us for hours until the fire
539 died down and the sleeping children had to be carried to their beds. This woman was an avid storyteller. Her general procedure was first to get everyone settled. Then she herself could get comfortable in the place always reserved for her by the window. After poking around in the fire until she was satisfied that it was burning well, she would lean back in her chair, take a couple of good bites of tobacco, kept in her apron pocket, and then lift up the youngest child into her lap and begin to reminisce about happenings during the day. She had the ability to tell a range of stories, but she seemed particularly adept at hag, ghost, or other psychological thrillers. She traveled around much in her day as a migrant worker in Arizona and Colorado; she said she heard some of her stories around the campfires there. Others she had learned from her parents and grandparents, and still others she said she had just made up to keep the children entertained.

538 Miss Deeley was fairly strict with the children. Once she permitted
115 two of the oldest to go to the island store for some "sweet"; she spat

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE

464 The people on Johns Island, those that are not working in the city or as domestics, most of them make their living off truck farms on the island. Especially the women. They work on the farms of plantation owners. They pick snap beans, they dig white potatoes, they pick tomatoes, peck cabbages, spinach and whatnot. Those are the things that they depend on for a living.

During the winter months they go into a hardship because most of the farms don't have anything to do. That's the hardest time that they have to face.

Sometimes we underestimate these people and forget they have something we really need. These are people who haven't gotten a college education, or even a high school education. But anyone able to raise twelve children—and raise 'em healthy too—must know something good. They were smart enough to plant and to raise the kind of thing the children need. They raised their own hogs, they raised their cows, they had the milk with vitamin D what they need.

181 (871) (855) (231)

Some of these older people thought very deeply. Mother-wit and faith in God helped them to do a lot, and some achieved more than some of the young people who have been able to go to college.

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159 was there. I didn't have no partner to pick up potato with, so he say, "Come
584 on; I'll be your partner." So we was partner for the day, picking up potato until over with. And when I get 'round about fifteen, sixteen years old, he come to my house and ask my mother can he keep my company. My mother ask me, will I accept it. First I say I don't know. So he come back and come back. And finally he wrote my mother a letter. Mother call me, she ask me, will I accept Arthur Lee company. So I say yes.

Those years keeping company I doesn't go out with no fellas, but I does see other boys, talk to them, go out to a party my brother be along. But I never love but one, and that's the one I get married to.

159 Now I'm twenty-five. I have five children. I work from seven in the
464 morning 'til five-thirty in the evening—five days a week doing kitchen work. I mind five children, and when I get home I got to take care of five of my own.

My husband leave home 'bout six in the morning for he to wait on the road for a ride to go to work. He don't have he own transportation. He works out on contractor job, 'round about four years now.

(465) It's tough to raise five children—sure is. My husband make 'round thirty, sometime forty dollars a week. And if it rain he don't bring in that because he don't work. I get paid for holiday when I'm off, but my husband don't get paid. He just have to wait it out. My mother used to take care of
(855) the children that aren't in school before the house burn down, but now I don't have anyone to take care of them. I have to stay off from work and start all over housewife again.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 177 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

*Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife [855] and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the [603] kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a certain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 177 I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding [593] there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 177 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were [874] orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 505 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles further. During the day, the only men usually on the island are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

512 [732] [734] [855]

512 505 [574]

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) (789) A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) (751) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 178 855 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West African family and tribal traditions. Among West African tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island 121 629 623 [177] [692] elders were responsible for making and interpreting the Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which drew the attention of the White world were brought to the White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 888 178 121 [177] Although their functions have been limited, the elder Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African 121 855 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea Island and West African child rearing practices.

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
621 nities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would
861 have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of <u>child rearing within a West African heritage</u>. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have
advised the people to set the women in their proper place
—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.;
and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is
just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing
degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be
more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
• 855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain
Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour
of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at
their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three
dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near
the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for
the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking
party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children
were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant
tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

567 593 861 [867] 567 855 157 [291]

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

HARRIS NECK

775 "What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?"
845 we asked.
787 "Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh
[755] chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

845 Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[8a]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

856 Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had
789 found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 13] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

754 Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh
[789] an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

APPENDIX E

# Gullah Folkways

177 178 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

127 128 178

## *Folk Beliefs*

775 [856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.[a]

[p. 344]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail. Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the
177 age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the
• 851 Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience
171 and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

538 Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories. But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening
517 around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

## The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Rev. U. L. Brewer*

## I BEEN SWALLERIN' BITTER PILLS

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I been swallerin' bitter pills and chewin' dry bones. In the old day they just give me cornbread and sweet potatoes, but still I could plow the hell out of their mules.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## THAT'S THE WAY I COME UP IN THIS WORLD

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I come up in a hard time, and I still having a hard time. I was the oldest one in the house, and I had all the work to do. When I was small they put me to tend corn—ten cents per task. Some day I do five task, some day I do six. Tend 'em. If there's two stalks in a hill you kill one off. In September we go and pick some weeds we call Morning Glory.

[243]
[857]

Sometime I use to have time to play on Sunday evening, but I couldn't go no place. I couldn't go no further than the house. I get cornstalk and make corncob dolly and play with dirt and spoon. I never went to no dance. My mother didn't allow us to leave the house. When they do have something like the Fourth of July or Labor Days, a big drum come from the city. Play drums and horn.

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[529]

That's the way I come up in this world.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't.

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And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays.

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A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

592 However this is not the total explanation. It is also
184 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
•857 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
861 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
[867] These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. These households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

592 184 857 861 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>. [593] In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 593 178 861 592 Differences across the generations were much more frequent than across island and sex. The element which underly much of the differences was "en ma dae" references of parents and elder parents. The way this works is that each parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The demands of the environment in which grandparents were reared differ from the household patterns under which parents were reared. The main differences other than that of exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared in farming households. Consequently as children, the grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the tasks and responsibilities of children were even more clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

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[For additional information on parental discipline, see Category 861.]

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

178 887 fewer and fewer places to collectively express their wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

887 •86 Even more important, what these elders know must be readily accessible to the children and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

217 One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

(P XV-B)

128 males and 9.4% of the females.
861

TEST OF THE SEX NULL
HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

128 Males will report no more use of physical punishment
•86 than females.

1. This was a measure of the relationship between the variable of sex and use of physical punishment. The rationale which applied to the use of questions two and eight in the above two cases also applies here. Question five, "Bo n Gal beat d sami?" was also used in this test. In this case question five is the most direct measure of the relationship between sex and use of physical punishment. Under question five the relationship was nonsignificant at .05. The critical value with 2 df was 5.99, while the Chi Square value was 2.73. The relationship was also nonsignificant under question two, the Chi Square value was 2.11 with 2 df the critical value was 5.99 at the .05 level of significance.
2. The relationship was significant under question eight. The critical value with 5 df was 13.28, while the Chi Square value was 15.42. The level of significance was .01. Because the direct and one of the tangential test were nonsignificant, the $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ was upheld.
3. Only four of the relationships between the sex of the respondent and discipline practices and beliefs were

128
.86

significant. The broad inference is that male and female Sea Islanders are closely agreed in their discipline attitudes and behaviors. They were not agreed however relative to the question of the causes of punishment.

4. This relationship was significant at the .001 level. Males tend to indicate that fighting was the primary cause of punishment, while females indicated chores as the prime cause. The sexes were not agreed (.05) about the age at which children are too old for physical punishment. However the dominant tendency was for the sexes to be agreed. Enlight of the eight relationship in which there were nonsignificant differences between the sexes, the null or chance hypothesis was retained.

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disci-
plined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial actr could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which signifi-
•86 cant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the persceptive of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea-Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
[177] siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad scale influence of the mainland elements on island

184 discipline habits is not the case. While the generational
•86 factor was upheld, the dominant pattern was the absence of
[177] significant differences across islands and particularly
across sex lines.

● 861

[For additional information on parental discipline, see Category 86.]

121 Consequently, as more Black parents seek knowledge of their
855 West African heritage and strive to rear their children in
178 an African framework, the potential contribution of Sea Island child rearing research is evident.

181 The Sea Islander is known in contemporary Black folk-
121 lore as funny talking and quick to fight. The other view is that the Sea Islander is extremely religious and quick
[621] to pray. Perhaps the single most recurring report is of the cultural cohesion of Sea Island communities. It is this cohesiveness which makes Sea Islanders a unique source for research on discipline behavior.

121 Certainly the relative isolation of Sea Island commu-
621 nities adds to the possibility that its inhabitants would
• 861 have similar life histories, beliefs and attitudes. These factors have been shown to act as correlates of discipline behavior. The cohesiveness of the Sea Island communities suggest that the Islanders may have similar predispositions toward discipline. Consequently, the Gullah people are a unique source of data of the effects of antecedent conditions on discipline behavior.

121 In the continued absence of systematic data on Sea Island family systems, it may be difficult for significant numbers of Black parents to develop clear conceptions of <u>child rearing within a West African heritage</u>. Hence, before undue emphasis is placed on direct comparisons of West

121 African and the child rearing practices of Black American parents a clear conception of Sea Island child rearing beliefs and practices may be an essential prerequisite. Until this prerequisite research is completed, projected relationships between Sea Island and West African child rearing must be viewed as merely conjecture. The intent of this investigation is to outline the child rearing discipline habits of Sea Islanders.

THE SEA ISLAND FAMILY

121 861 Because of their lower socio-economic status the use of physical punishment manifested in parental discipline may be commonly reported by Sea Island parents. However the factors of isolation and clearly defined social patterns may negate that of socio-economic status, and have the effect of diminishing the use of physical punishment. Or these factors may have the opposite influence of increasing the use of physical punishment.

121 592 861 The relatively small living space of Sea Island households coupled with a high proportion of extended family situations could produce a high use of physical punishment in discipline. Similarly the low educational attainment levels and occupational status would suggest high use of physical punishment among Sea Island parents. That whipping as a form of discipline commonly found among West African peoples would be also common to Sea Island parents is

121 178 861

121 consistent with the postulation that Gullahs have main-
128 tained West African cultural traits.
86

At present the extent to which these relationships
121 will hold for Sea Island parents can only be postulated.
86 There exists in the literature few clear statements describing the rearing practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks. Neither is it clear how these rearing practices and attitudes have been formed or modified as a consequence of time, isolation, and/or as a result of the American experience. Likewise the extents to which the discipline practices and beliefs of Sea Islanders is commonly held across generations can only be postulated. It is not clear whether younger islanders hold attitudes toward discipline which mirror the views of older islanders, or if there is a trend toward more attunement to the rearing practices and discipline methods commonly found among urbanized youths. Neither is the literature clear on the discipline attitudes and practices of island parents in comparison to their elders. The intent of the present investigation is to provide some indication of the discipline practices and beliefs of Gullah Blacks, and to provide a historical perspective of those practices and beliefs and to thereby tentatively assess the extent and direction of change.

121 PURPOSES OF THE RESEARCH

This research investigation has four primary aims:

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V Island by sex by questions one thru thirteen.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

I a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_0$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

II a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_0$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

III a) $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$
Males will report no more use of physical punishment than females.

b) Alternate hypothesis: $H_3$: $M_1 \neq M_2$

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DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

The research is not clear on how discipline is applied in extended family situations. In households in which grandparents are present there is more opportunity for value transmission. One result may be less variation in discipline behavior across generations. The extended family structure no doubt adds to the chance for value conflicts to occur. However, the high cultural status accorded Sea Island elders may tend to negate the chance for the occurrence of value conflicts. It is also likely that younger Sea Islanders whose values conflict with their parents may

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than
603 paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of the discipline philosophy of two for one. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has case "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, The Role of the Father in the Family, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

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## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

861 The results reported here are on the use of physical discipline. In this review it must be emphasized that use of physical discipline is by no means exclusive; but rather is but one type of interaction in the overall discipline pattern. Verbal discipline interactions are very much a dimension of the broader pattern. To regard the use of physical discipline as the only or even as the dominant interaction to the neglect of other is a serious error in judgement.

128 The data organization and analysis represented in Tables 4, 5, and 6, are the one by one organization (1-1-1-1-1) where each one represents one Island.

128 861 VARIABLE OF ISLAND

A Chi Square was not computed on question one, because all respondents reported use of physical and verbal discipline. Question one was, "Waak kin ob punishment di ya use?" A .02 level of significance was found between the variable of island and question two, "Hov oben beetn fer dis?" The responses were: <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. The Chi Square value was found to be 40.40 with 8 degrees of

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 57]

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freedom (df). The critical value was 39.29. Forty-one percent of the Yonges Island, and 37.5% of Edisto respondents said that they were beaten for a social behavior <u>everytime</u>. On the near islands, only 4.2% of the respondents indicated the <u>everytime</u> response. Consistently 66.7% of the James and 83.3% of the Johns Island respondents selected the <u>often</u> response. The responses were somewhat consistent across the islands in the percents saying they were beaten sometime. From James to Edisto, these percents were: 29.2, 8.3, 16.7, 29.2.

The relationship between the variable of island and question six, "How ole yh wen ya git d last beatn?" was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The responses were: <u>Fourteen to Sixteen</u>, <u>Seventeen to Nineteen</u>, <u>Twenty to Twenty-two</u>, <u>Twenty-three to Twenty-five</u> and <u>Twenty-five to Thirty</u>. The Chi Square value was 10.22 at 16 df, the critical value was 26.30, the highest percent (25%) of respondents who indicated that their last beating were between 14-16 years were residents of Edisto and Wadmalaw. Twelve point five percent of the other islanders agreed. Over 37% of the islanders said beatings ended between 17-23 years. Six point three percent of the James Islanders said beatings were continued into the 25-27 range.

The relationship between the variable of island and question eight, "Wen ya was gitten d mas beatn, how oben?"

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was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The Chi Square value was 19.66 while the critical value at 16 df was 26.30; the responses were: Six or less times per year, one time a month, three times a month, once weekly, twice weekly. None of the James Islanders said physical discipline was metered out as infrequently as six times a year. In contrast 16.7% of the Johns, Yonges and Edisto Islanders said beatings were this infrequently. Four point two percent of the James, and 8.3% of the Wadmalaw respondents said beatings during their peak periods were as frequent as twice weekly. None of the respondents on the other islands said beatings were this frequent. Over 68% of all the islanders indicated that the frequency of beating was between one to three times a month.

TEST OF THE ISLAND NULL
HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

Respondents across the five islands will report no significant difference in the use of physical punishment.

1. Question two, "How oben beetn fer dis?" was used to test $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$. This question is a measure of the relationship between the frequency with which use of physical punishment followed asocial behavior and island affiliation. The Chi Square value was 18.69, while the critical value at 8 df was 18.17. This relationship was significant at the .02 level. With a .02

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significance level, $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ was rejected in favor of the alternative $H_1$: $M_1 \neq M_2$.

2. Two tangential tests of this $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ were conducted. Questions six and eight were used for this purpose. Question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beetn?" is in essence a measure of the relationship between the duration of use of physical punishment and island affiliation. As such this relationship was considered as a tangential measure of the Null Hypothesis. The Chi Square value for question six and island affiliation was 10.22, while the critical value at 16 df was 26.30 (.05). In this case the chance hypothesis was uphelded.

3. Question eight, "Wen ya was gitten de mas beetn, how eben?" was a measure of the frequency of beetns during peak disciplinary stages and island affiliation. While this relationship was a more direct measure of the Null Hypothesis than question six it was still a tangential test. The Chi Square value was 19.66, while the critical value at .05 with 16 df was 26.30. The Null Hypothesis was upheld. The two tangential tests supported retention of the Null Hypothesis. However because of the directness of the first test and the determined significance power (02), the Null Hypothesis was rejected in favor of the alternative $H_1$: $M_1 \neq M_2$.

4. Although the most direct test of the relationship between

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island affiliation and use of physical punishment was significant at the .02 level, the alternative hypothesis was upheldod with some reservation. This caution is warranted because the majority of the island relationships were nonsignificant. For example parents across the five islands indicated that both sexes received the same punishment (question 5). Similarly, there were nonsignificant relationships between island affiliation and: (a) the boundaries of asocial behavior (question 9), (b) use of both beating and scolding in discipline (question 11), and (c) the generations across the islands indicated similar problems in rearing today's children in the traditional mold (question 10).

VARIABLE GENERATION

Significance was determined at the .01 level for the relationship between variable of generations and question two, "How oben beatn fer dis?" The responses were <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. Chi Square was computed at 13.36 with 4 df. The critical value was 13.28. Forty-six point four percent of the children indicated they were punished <u>often</u> and <u>sometime</u>. While 14.3% of the parents indicated punishment was <u>sometime</u> and 60.7% said <u>often</u>. Conversely, 28.6% of the grandparents and 25% of the parents said they were punished <u>everytime</u>. Only 7.1% of the children indicated they were punished <u>everytime</u>.

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.861 At the .05 rejection level the relationship between the variable of generation and question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beatn?" was significant. The responses were: Fourteen to Sixteen, Seventeen to Nineteen, Twenty to Twenty-two, Twenty-three to Twenty-five, Twenty-seven to Thirty, with 4 df the critical value was 9.49, the Chi Square value was 2.96. Twenty-five percent of the grandparents and 10.7% of the parents said beatings were terminated between 14-16 years. Fifty percent of the parents and 39.2% of the grandparents said beatings end between 17-19 years. Thirty-five point seven percent of the grandparents and 39.4% of the parents indicated beatings were continued after the youngster reached 20 years.

The relationship between question eight, "Wen ya was gitten d mas beatn, how oben?" and the variable of generations was significant at the .001 level. The responses
861 were: six or less a year, one a month, three a month, one a week and two a week. Twenty-eight point six percent of the grandparents said they were beaten six or less times per year, while only 3.6% of the parents shared this frequency pattern. Sixty point seven percent of the grandparents, 46.4% of the parents and 39.3% of the children shared the one beating per month pattern. Seventeen point nine percent of the children and parents reported beatings as frequently as one per week. Three point six percent

861 of the grandparents also reported beatings as frequent as one per week. Only children (7.1%) reported beatings as frequently as twice a week.

TEST OF THE GENERATION NULL HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

12 861 There will be nonsignificant differences in the use of physical punishment across generations. $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2 = M_3$.

1. The relationship under measurement was between generation membership and use of physical punishment. The same rationale for the use of questions two, six, and eight developed in the test of the first Null Hypothesis also applies here. Again question two is the direct and questions six and eight are tangential measures of the relationship.

2. Under the direct test the relationship was significant at the .01 level. The Chi Square value was 13.36, while the critical value at 4 df was 13.28. The first of the tangential measures was insignificant. The critical value at (.05) with 4 df was 9.49, while the Chi Square value was 2.96. In this case the $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2 = M_3$ was supported. The second indirect test of the relationship (question 8) was significant at .001. At 8 df the critical value was 26.12 while the Chi Square value was 26.37. These significance levels (.01, .001) are the basis upon which the Null Hypothesis was

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rejected in favor of the alternative $H_2$: $M_1 = M_2 \neq M_3$.

3. Significant generational differences in discipline behavior and attitudes were clearly noted. As a matter of fact nine of the generational relationships were significant. Five of these relationships were significant at the .001 level. It is extremely clear that the generations differ in application of and in attitudes about discipline. There were however, nonsignificant differences across the generations relative to: (a) the age at which children are no longer beaten (question 6), (b) the causes of the last beating (question 7), and (c) on the boundaries of asocial behavior (question 9).

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VARIABLE OF SEX

The relationship between the variable of sex and question two, "How oben beatn fer dis?" was nonsignificant at the .05 rejection level. The responses were: <u>everytime</u>, <u>often</u>, <u>sometime</u>. The critical value was 5.99 at 2 df the Chi Square was 2.11. Sixteen point two of the males and 32.4% of the females said the <u>everytime</u> reaction ratio was used by their parents. Fifty-four percent of the males and 59.6% of the females thought physical discipline often followed asocial acts. More males (29.7%) selected the <u>sometime</u> reaction ratio than did the females (77%).

The relationship between the variable of sex and

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question six, "How ole ya wen ya git d last beatn?" was nonsignificant. The responses were: Fourteen to Sixteen, Seventeen to Nineteen, Twenty to Twenty-two, Twenty-three to Twenty-five, and Twenty-seven to Thirty. The Chi Square value was 8.80. The critical value at 4 df was 9.49. Twenty-seven point three percent of the females and 4.3% of the males said they received their last beating between 14-16 years respectively. Thirty-nine point one percent and 48% of the males and females said their last beatings were between 17-19. Twenty-four point three percent of the females said they were beaten after age 20. This compares to 66.5% if the males who were beaten after age 20.

The relationship between the variable of sex and question eight, "Wen ya was gitten d mas beatn, how oben?" was significant at .01. The responses were: Six or less a year, one a month, three a month, one a week and two a week. Only 5.4 percent of both sexes said beatings during peak periods were as frequent as twice weekly. Seventeen percent of the females said they received six or less beatings per year, which compares to a 2.7 percent for males. Thirty-five point one percent of the males and 39.6 percent of the females said beatings were no more frequent than once a month. Seventeen percent of the females and 35.1 percent of the males reported beatings as frequent as three times per month. Weekly beatings were reported by 21.6% of the

128 males and 9.4% of the females.

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TEST OF THE SEX NULL
HYPOTHESIS ($H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$)

128 Males will report no more use of physical punishment
86 than females.

1. This was a measure of the relationship between the variable of sex and use of physical punishment. The rationale which applied to the use of questions two and eight in the above two cases also applies here. Question five, "Bo n Gal best d sami?" was also used in this test. In this case question five is the most direct measure of the relationship between sex and use of physical punishment. Under question five the relationship was nonsignificant at .05. The critical value with 2 df was 5.99, while the Chi Square value was 2.73. The relationship was also nonsignificant under question two, the Chi Square value was 2.11 with 2 df the critical value was 5.99 at the .05 level of significance.
2. The relationship was significant under question eight. The critical value with 5 df was 13.28, while the Chi Square value was 15.42. The level of significance was .01. Because the direct and one of the tangential test were nonsignificant, the $H_0$: $M_1 = M_2$ was upheld.
3. Only four of the relationships between the sex of the respondent and discipline practices and beliefs were

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## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

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Crum[22] claimed that the Gullah people have no interest in the future. This researcher found the case to be the opposite. The Gullahs, the elders in particular, are constantly looking ahead to the day on which their life patterns will be judged fitting to "keep eternal company in the Great Kingdom." Their life paths and worldly efforts are aimed at nothing else than at the day when their deeds will be reviewed. It is with the religious context, that the discipline behaviors of the Gullah people must be understood. Malicious acts of child abuse, and the heavy handed parent are frowned upon. Discipline acts for the Gullah, are aimed primarily at keeping the child "on d steppn of d Lord," meaning that the purpose of much of the discipline behavior is to prepare the child for demands of living the religious existence. Dr. Spock's notions of child rearing have no relevance in the Gullah household. Here the teachings contained in the Bible are the guide-posts the parent follows. Discipline manifested as physical punishment appear to be no more frequent than the verbal

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[22]Crum, op. cit.

771 means of socialization. The sternness of the religious
861 behaviors of the Gullah people are metered down into their
182 discipline behavior. Among these people the 99.9% effort toward adherence to religious commandments as in child rearing just is not good enough. The only acceptable effort is all the way. This often reached quest for total committment in religious activities is the basis upon which the obedience of children are judged. This must be constantly in mind when interpreting the discipline behaviors of Gullah parents.

861 Gullah parents are constant observers of the behavior
[867] of children. The boundaries around what constitutes asocial behavior are clearly understood and learned early. The child in turn knows full well what behaviors will elicit which response by the parent. In accord with the religious teachings, the parent will not hesitate to punish disobedient behavior. Punishment though is not always or most frequently manifested in its physical form, but rather the form of discipline used will depend on any number of factors in the environment. The prime determinant being the overall behavior of the child. Gullah parents emphasized to this researcher that discipline must be tendened with mercy. "Billie ya ca'n trash dem all d timb, ya gotta scol some en beet some." They felt total reliance on physical discipline in disregard to the overall behaviors and

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect.
In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the
discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[577] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obe-
dient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated.
In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child
who has been socialized properly.

861 The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
177 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in
the environment which act to make for proper rearing of
children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it
and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands
the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles
makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the
proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the
situation this way: "d paren should be shami while d roun
on de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no
choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind
ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible fer d chil, dey
must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no wat
goina happen ta d chilln ta dae. Ef d paren dan't see ta

861 177 it quik, dey is head fer d fira en brim stan. But it ain't dey falt."

861 184 177 The relationship being described here explains the higher tolerance of today's parents and is explicable in part by generational differences and in part by the exposure element-distance from mainland. In the case of exposure, the more distant Gullah families are more isolated from the mainland socializing influences. An effect of this more limited exposure is more adherence to "the discipline habits of ole." This adherence was reflected in the lower tolerance (reaction ratio) of parents on the distant islands. In further explanation, the work habits of women on the near islands contribute to their being the most tolerant parents. The occupational habits of these women frequently take them into the households of White families of higher economic status. When this Gullah parent is exposed to an alternate discipline pattern, this exposure may then underly the differences in tolerance found between sexes and islands.

593 861 184 The tolerance of differences may only be a function of exposure time. The case here is that parents who are engaged in the work force spend less time with their children than do elder parents. Hence the working parent would not be as quick to react to disobedience on the part of children than would grandparents who are actively engaged in child

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

However this is not the total explanation. It is also
592 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
184 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
857 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
861 These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
[867] with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

592 stoves would come to a halt if wood was not cut in time for
184 meals to be prepared. On the near islands with household
857 supplied with only gas stoves or with both, the child's
•861 negligence would not have such dire consequences. In view
of this it is easy to see how the chores of children on the
far islands would be a more serious matter, and why such
households tend to operate on an <u>everytime reaction ratio</u>.
[593] In contrast, parents on the near islands can more afford
the gift of tolerance toward neglected chores, and to react
to disobedience on a <u>sometime basis</u>.

561 Differences across the generations were much more fre-
593 quent than across island and sex. The element which underly
178 much of the differences was "en ma dae" references of par-
861 ents and elder parents. The way this works is that each
592 parent tries to rear children like they were reared. The
demands of the environment in which grandparents were
reared differ from the household patterns under which par-
ents were reared. The main differences other than that of
exposure were in labor habits. Grandparents were reared
in farming households. Consequently as children, the
grandparents were up before day-break and actively engaged
in burdensome farm labor. In these farming households the
tasks and responsibilities of children were even more
clearly defined than they are today or in the childhood of
the present parent generation. Similarly the consequences

561 of not completing tasks were harsh because chores were
593 meaningful to the household. It is reference to this
178 agrarian life and the demands for the obedience of children
861 upon which grandparents draw. That the generation of par-
592 ents now share significantly different childhood references than their parents merely illustrates the component of change in the agricultural habits on the islands. In agreement with this, parents reared in more distant households, where the farm habit is comparatively more active tend to mirror the views of the preceding generation. A similar positive relationship between exposure to the farming habit and the cohesiveness of discipline behavior across the two generations exist on the near islands. The generational differences found in this study can certainly be attributed to the farming versus non-farming pattern. This rationale was expressed vividly by Grand Flower, who at 78 years sees big differences in the rearing habits of her day and those of today. "Billie, let me tell ya son, we haad no timb fer fooln. Wen d cock taak en bernean we up wete de fas cro. I go ta git d wata en me sista she giz d wod. Wey be fa d life ob dae comin we haad d bakfas redi. Abta we done wete d pos en plata wen goin ta d fiel. Dey we waak puen sed en d grun or piken en pulen dat wat don redi, we dey til d timb com n fer fix d supa den bak ta dat huse we goin. We giz d mel fer d men fak, den we carie it ta d fiel we

561 sta en d fiel til d lite nea goin. Billie, ma un I tel ya
593 dey no timb fer d chilln to b disobedient."
178 Today's children are not reared in the farm habit.
861 Few of the parents have had long ~~to~~ exposure to the pat-
592 terns in which the elders were reared. It is consequently the differences in exposure and work habits which underly changes in the generational views of Gullah parents. The significance of differences in the discipline view of the two generations illustrates not only that the "en ma das" reflections of parent and elder parent differ, but it is also a measure of the direction of change. Grandparents were the most frequent to respondent "ma paren use beetn everytime," while parents and children said <u>often</u> and <u>sometimes</u> more frequently. As a matter of fact, twice as many parents cited they were punished <u>sometime</u> than did elders. The direction of change between the generations is clearly that in each subsequent generation parents are less apt or as quick to punish the child.

861 Still another point to be considered in looking at
562 the relative tolerance of the female parent is that of role
[578] differences. Males consistently cited fighting as one of the chief reasons for being disciplined. On the other hand not getting the chores done was a prime reason for disci-
[462] plining girls. This is explained in that males had few household responsibilities and were not disciplined for

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disci-
plined on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the social behavior of female children would be committed in or close to the house, than would be the case for males. This suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which signifi-
86 cant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the preceding discussion must be seen in the perseptive of broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
[177] siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad scale influence of the mainland elements on island

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## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

592 178 177 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the tested generational relationships were significant. These differences between generations were primarily attributed to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure to mainland patterns. The island work force are now 464 177 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston. 861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different industries in the region, women are heavily engaged in domestic service work. The projected results are that women because of the nature of their employment were much more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast, the clustering work habits of males, in which members of families are employed by the same employer has operated to negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents. The more demanding work requirements which accompanies the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed. It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder islanders base their discipline references was unknown to

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86 the island children. The parents themselves have been away
178 from this habit for nearly as many years as they were en-
56 gaged in it. Consequently, the stern disciplinary demands
593 of the farm habit was not bei. : transferred to this genera-
tion of young islanders. In this light, the childhood
histories of the older parents was discussed. It was seen
how the harsh work habits required in farming families
demanded the obedient behavior of children. Under the bur-
den of farm labor, parents were less tolerant of disobe-
dience than parents are today. The reason given was again
differences in occupation. It was also said that parents
86 living in isolated communities were apt to discipline
184 children more quickly than parents who have jobs, because
they spend time with their children. For the farming par-
ents, the fatigue element was said to diminish their tol-
erance level, and that isolated households operate in an
<u>everytime</u> reaction ratio. These religious beliefs were
771 introduced as elements which influence frequency and methods
86 of discipline. Gullah Island parents, in this vain, strived
to rear children under, and by guidance of the Bible. In
562 discussing the sex role differences, parents tend to more
86 rigidly enforce discipline on female children. This rela-
tionship was explained along two lines. The first was the
status that the male child has on the islands. Here a
dominance of females places a premium upon male children.

562 The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an
86 African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend
[178] to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was
offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining.
[578] Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a
common behavior of males. The reason for fighting as a
[177] more frequent behavior of males on James Island was ex-
plained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders
to mainland patterns.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
562 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have advised the people to set the women in their proper place —never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.; and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be more indignant than these, I suppose."[27]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
855 mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking party they seemed."[28] At all other times, the children were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[27] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[28] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

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567 After eight months the child was put on a diet of vegeta-
853 bles, milk, and starches prepared, on the best managed
plantation, by a special cook assigned to that task. On
862 Weehaw plantation the children's allowance was given out every morning and cooked for them three times a day. They had vegetable soup every day and rice for dinner three times a week. While the potatoes lasted, they had potatoes every day for breakfast. During the winter they had molasses three times a week and milk on alternate days. After May first, however, they had molasses every day until milk was again used in winter.[22]

567 Despite this special attention, the proportion of chil-
165 dren in the total number of deaths on Weehaw was high. In 1856 six out of eleven deaths were of infants under one year; in 1857 thirty-three out of forty deaths were of children under three years; in 1858 twelve out of fourteen were of children under two; in 1859 fourteen out of eighteen were of children under one; in 1860 thirteen out of twenty were of children. The causes of death
(164) as listed by the planter were as follows: diarrhea, pneumonia, debility, fever, spasms, lockjaw, dysentery, convulsions, accident, cholic, worms, and teething, with the largest number dying of lockjaw.

165 It must not be overlooked that the infant death rate among the whites was also high. Planters on St. Helena Island seem to have had as much difficulty in rearing their own children as those of their Negroes. The tombstones still standing in the cemeteries there show that parents sometimes lost four or five infants in succession. James A. Pope lost five children under six years of age

[22] *Ibid.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

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I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn, it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

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829
[791]
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The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is very different now.

There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

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'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 869 869 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

186 178 869 869 And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

[538] So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 533 [534] The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

771 means of socialization. The sternness of the religious
861 behaviors of the Gullah people are metered down into their
182 discipline behavior. Among these people the 99.9% effort toward adherence to religious commandments as in child rearing just is not good enough. The only acceptable effort is all the way. This often reached quest for total committment in religious activities is the basis upon which the obedience of children are judged. This must be constantly in mind when interpreting the discipline behaviors of Gullah parents.

861 Gullah parents are constant observers of the behavior
[867] of children. The boundaries around what constitutes asocial behavior are clearly understood and learned early. The child in turn knows full well what behaviors will elicit which response by the parent. In accord with the religious teachings, the parent will not hesitate to punish disobedient behavior. Punishment though is not always or most frequently manifested in its physical form, but rather the form of discipline used will depend on any number of factors in the environment. The prime determinant being the overall behavior of the child. Gullah parents emphasized to this researcher that discipline must be tendered with mercy. "Billie ya ca'n trazh dem all d timb, ya gotta scol some an beet some." They felt total reliance on physical discipline in disregard to the overall behaviors and

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
[177] tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of inter-
actions with children are key elements in the measured
differences in the discipline habits of women both across
generations and islands. It might also be added that the
work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in
terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a
higher income base also contributes to the differences.

592 However this is not the total explanation. It is also
184 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
857 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
861 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
[867] These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits.
Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw
water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the
child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious
consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb
the operations of the household. Those households on the
more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



562 wrote, "but domestic freedom—the right just found, to
593 have their own way in their families and rule their wives—
that is an inestimable privilege! In slavery the woman
567 was far more important, and was in every way held higher
662 than the man. Several speakers have been here who have
advised the people to set the women in their proper place
—never to tell them anything of their concerns, etc., etc.;
and the notion of being bigger than women generally, is
just now inflating the conceit of the males to an amazing
degree. When women get the vote, too, no people will be
more indignant than these, I suppose."[227]

567 The care of the children was divided between the
mother and the plantation nurse, with the other children
855 also doing their share of "minding child." When Captain
Basil Hall visited a plantation near Charleston on his tour
of the South in 1828 he found the mothers in the field at
their work and "a sober old matron in charge of the three
dozen shining urchins, collected together in a house near
the center of the village. Over the fire hung a large pot
[262] of hominy, a preparation of Indian corn, making ready for
the little folks' supper, and a very merry, happy-looking
party they seemed."[228] At all other times, the children
were in the mother's care. It was not an uncommon sight
[854] to see a woman going about her home work with an infant
tied securely to her back.

567 Parents were severe in the discipline of their children,
593 for they did not want their offspring to grow up to be "no-
861 manners." They taught them to curtesy when ap-
•867 proached by a white person and to hold out their hands to

[227] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 184.
[228] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 210; *supra*, pp. 97-98.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



shake; to keep silent in the presence of elders and otherwise to show respect for age. Some of the missionaries who arrived on St. Helena Island shortly after the opening of the Civil War were indignant at the harsh treatment the children received at the hands of their parents. "I don't suppose these children ever received a caress or a word of tenderness since they were infants," wrote Arthur Sumner. "The children are invariably spoken to in harsh and peremptory tones by all grown niggers, and are whipped unmercifully on the least offence. Yet they are very obedient to their parents, and certainly stand much more in awe of adult darkies than they do of us mild-eyed missionaries."[29] Miss Towne concluded that parents were not really harsh to their children, but that their rough way of ordering them about, threatening to "skin um 'live" and to "bro'k um back," merely sounded savage. All visitors to the Sea Islands, either as guests of the master before the War or as missionaries, agreed that the children, despite the rough treatment from their parents and despite the fact that they seemed to have no games,[30] were a happy, carefree lot. Sir Charles Lyell thought the Hopeton plantation children had "such bright, happy faces when three or four years old, and from that age to ten or twelve . . . such frank and confiding manners, as to be very engaging."[31] Yet all were horrified by the fact that their mothers permitted them to run about in summer completely nude, a practice which people of today, with their recent adoption of the sunbath theory, would be inclined to approve.

567 593 861 [867] • 567 855 157 [291]

[29] Arthur Sumner Papers, St. Helena Island, July 9, 1863.
[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 192n.
[31] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 263.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



248 with slavery, the mention of cotton in Sea Island folklore and literature generally has negative connotations.

243 Today neither cotton nor rice is grown to any extent on or around
248 the Sea Islands. Rice was gradually eliminated by the many disastrous floods and storms which frequent the Carolina coast. Cotton was abandoned in favor of more lucrative means of support, especially since the cotton-picking machine eliminated the need for harvesting of cotton by
241 hand. The primary crops now are edible produce, including soybeans, peas, okra, tomatoes, corn, peanuts, and watermelons, and many folk narratives focus on the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of these crops.

226 Another major food source is fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, mussels,
262 clams, lobsters, conchs, and sharks, all of which the islanders prepare expertly and variously. Fish has always been important in the local diet. Consider, for example, a resident minister's account of the varieties available around Edisto Island in 1800:

[136] The creeks, rivers, and seas which indent and surround the island furnish at different and appropriate seasons of the year, a great variety of excellent fish—as the larger drum, the small black drum, bass, rock-fish, sheephead, cavallie, bonnetta, salmon-trout, yellowtail, ale-wife, croaker, plaice, flounder, skate, pike, shad, and catfish, and many others, suitable for the table. Porpoise and sharks frequent the creeks and surrounding waters. Some of the latter are seen and caught of an enormous size. They are considered as just objects of terror by the negroes. And yet, although the fishermen continue hours together waist deep in water, and have often the misfortune of hooking them, they escape with impunity.[30]

226 Crabbing and fishing are so much a part of Sea Island culture that
[868] many children learn the fine art of casting and netting as early as three years old. Some residents who earn their livings from fishing practice an old African method of netting fish in mass. An elderly gentleman explained to me that his grandfather had taught him to beat on the sides of his boat to attract fish and porpoises to the area (see Appendix 1). A The porpoises scare schools of fish ahead of them, and the fish are then caught in the nets. In a variant of this method, a group of fishermen will wade out into the water to beat on their drums or other instruments. The more noise they create above and below water, the more

A. [For Appendix 1, see Category 226, pp. 151-155--Analyst]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often re-
178 flect African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the re-
463 gion, and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States. The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show bas-
[531] kets have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigan-
[177] tic woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent. Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient African craft.

285 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina
171 coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique, the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal, though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans
[178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them, it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with
868 the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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Children learn the art of basketmaking at an early age.

[p. 19]

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



285 rials—pine needles, bulrushes, sweet grass, and palmetto leaves—for
868 the girls and women to weave. The children learn to make baskets at around six years of age, and by the time they are in their teens, each has mastered a certain style and design that generally carries his or her
285 trademark in the weave. Most of the baskets follow a simple coiling technique with a knot used as a base. The free ends of the sweet grass bundle are folded and then wound around the knot to begin a coil. Then an opening is pierced in the center knot and a strip of palm leaf is pulled through the opening, wrapped around the grass coil, and pulled back through a second opening made in the knot to anchor or station the coil. As this process is repeated, the coil begins to circle out from the center knot to create a basket base that is circular or oval. From this base, the basket is constructed by changing the angle at which one circular row is fastened to another. The palm stitch in the Mt. Pleasant baskets does not interlock with the stitches in previous rows of the coil. Consequently, the stitches appear to radiate out from the center knot in a linear way, much like the spokes of a wheel.[41]

The baskets, like the islanders' other crafts, are displayed along
439 U.S. Highway 17, north of Charleston, or sold in the open markets
439 near downtown Charleston where tourists crowd in daily to haggle over the prices of vegetables, hand-woven clothing, jewelry, and other wares, including items of brass, silver, and gold. Everything has a bargain price, and the basket sellers, like the other marketeers, are professionals in the art of bargaining. Baskets are priced according to size and difficulty of design, and it is a bad reflection on one's selling skills to be pressured into parting with a basket at a price lower than that established by the community; such an act may bring censure from one's family and from members of the community. The basket weavers, although seemingly unsophisticated and some of them certainly poor, are quite shrewd bargainers. I watched an exchange that took place when a very impressive car stopped in front of a basket stand along Highway 17. The driver, smoking a large cigar and accompanied by three elegantly dressed women, strolled over to look at the baskets. He picked up a tray of coasters and asked the basket weaver how much she would charge him to make coasters with specific dimensions for his beer cans. She hesitated, looked down at the basket that she was weaving, and said, "About twenty dollars." He then asked how long it would take for her to make them. She replied with some reservation that it would take her at least a week. He quickly took a

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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[226]
[868]

Sea Island children are intimately familiar with the ocean and learn the art of casting and netting as early as the age of three.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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[539]

SOLO: Annie?
CHOUV: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
CHOUV: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
CHOUV: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
CHOUV: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



123 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its door.

• 868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
533 so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,[A] to the younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.)[B] Where death has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with distinction.

533 But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
177 tude of those Negro school-teachers [10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
178 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" Europeanized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as "The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are substituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie" —for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remembered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musical taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
177 hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes
178 him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

[10] At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor, loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]
B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

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30. Julia Teaching the St. Simon's Children: "Emma You My Darlin'"

[facing p. 192]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

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> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(P. XVI-A)

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## THEY WANT ME TO TALK ABOUT THE PAST

159 178 869 869 829

I tell you, young people got a lot chance to think more in their age than I had to think in my days. 'Cause I couldn't think 'bout nothing but plant peas and corn in my days. But now these children got so much different thing to go through and learn, and they got nice schools. If they don't learn, it's nobody's fault but their own. Then I try to teach them these stories and different song and let them know what blues was like in my days coming up. My children like it. They sit down and they want me to talk about the past. They enjoy hearing it. I want them to know about it, so when I gone there be somebody to carry it on.

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

## LIFE IS VERY DIFFERENT NOW

178 829 [791] 178 829 207

The old times was hard, but we still need religion right now. Life is very different now.

There is so much television here now; you didn't had that. It don't make life easier for me; it make 'em hard 'cause people stay home more. Lot don't go to church and different thing because they stay for see story. In them time only story you would hear tell, you tell your own story. This time, you watch television for story.

And the children now, they watch the TV and they take the thing on the TV to do just what they doing now. They think what is on the TV is real. But them time there doesn't be that kind of killing and shooting and cutting up like what going on now. Once in a while you hear about somebody die, but don't never hear about nobody get killed.

*Mrs. Alice Wine*

## EVERYBODY SITTING ON THEIR OWN STOOPS

178 829 571 571

'Course that day, coming in 1919, all around like that, people was more friendly to one another. People come and sit with you and read the Bible. But these days you don't find anybody come visit. Everybody sitting on their own stoops. You don't find nobody to my house. When you're sick, people used to go around and have meeting for you and pray for you. Now the people who live in the house with the sick people got to come and ask somebody come pray for them. But before, people know you is sick. Not now. That's done pass.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN2
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Isabel Simmons*

**ALL JOIN AND MAKE THAT HALL**

The only time they miss me at that hall, I either sick or off on some church duty. That hall mean a whole lot to me. It give me strength, spirit to carry on. I know everybody who comes. Some is friends, cousins, sisters, some neighbors. 796 344 346

I remember when Moving Star Hall was built, 'round about 1913, '14. Father help build the hall. Mother too. We all throw money until we gets enough to buy the land. All pay seven dollars for the lumber. All join and make that hall. They used to have prayer service in the house—only family then. Afterward, they began to have joint class from house to house. Then when we get the hall, we begin to have meeting there. 344 346

My daddy teach we how to sing, teach we how to shout, teach we how to go fast, teach we how to go slow. And then going to meeting, or later going to church, he'll teach we how to behave yourself when we get out to different place, before we leave home. 796 786 867

Used to be plenty people there—all them old people. They sing those old time spiritual, better than how we sing it now. Joe Bligen and Levy Green. Joe Deas was a good singer too, when he was much younger. Had plenty of singing womans, too. 796 533

That hall be full of people. Every Sunday. We have meeting in the neighborhood three time a week—Sunday and Tuesday and Thursday night. They keep a meeting going from eight until twelve. Then I get out, tomorrow morning I go on the farm make a day's work, too. 796

142 291 796 533 786 794

4: Caravan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I REALIZE I'M HERE FOR SOME PURPOSE

159 794 I was about twenty-seven when I start to go to Moving Star Hall regular. Since I was a little boy, Mom used to take me there on her back—I was so small to walk in the dark, you know.

159 794 There was a time when blues was all that was on my mind. But the truth is the light, and after getting old in age I realize that I'm here for some 793 purpose. Father always teach me the Bible, teach us how to sing and how 533 to pray, and tell us what must not do and what must do to inherit life everlasting. So I stop and ask myself some question. Then I just had to change (869) from singing blues and begin to go back to what my old parents said—singing spiritual songs.

And I found out that's better.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## THIS IS GOOD, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP YOUR EATING

159 794 We all as kids went to Moving Star Hall. As far as I was concerned, I just had to be there. We used to enjoy the singing and the shouting. And at 796 a certain period of the night, all the youngsters in there had to go up front 786 and kneel down and everybody prayed. That place used to be full—three nights a week. You couldn't get in that place if you be late on Sunday nights. (178) And it was so much young people. All of a sudden it just start dying off.

For one thing most of the young people started going away. Like me, 159 I went in the Army. I was about fifteen. Once the kids start going to different places, and we start to be more enlightened, then we start getting away 178 from this old type of thing. As we get more education, we come to find out 849 that this wasn't the type of thing we needed to help us through the world. 794 We needed more than this. This is good, but it doesn't help your eating. 796 Why waste time with something that you aren't gonna get anything out of at all? You gonna be looking forward to when you die, and man, you hungry now.

That Moving Star Hall business just about died out completely. Then they started building it back up again. Now some of the people, the Moving Star Hall Singers, are enjoying some of the fruit of their labor.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHAT I KNOW I TRY TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

186 538 173 867 869 When I come up, my parents sat us down on Sunday afternoon after church and taught us stories, and their life stories—how they came up. Some of my great-grandparents came up in slavery times, and all these stories and folktales that I tell are from way back in the history of slavery times.

• 869 And what I know I try to teach my children—my seven daughters and six sons, and ninety-five grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grands, so as 186 the generations go on, it won't die out. I think the past is very important for 178 them to understand. We don't know what the future will bring. So maybe the 867 future will bring back the past. There's a lot of people on this island, older 869 than I am, they know all about the past, but they feel so embarrassed to explain about it. They figure people are going to look down on them as nothing. But I always say, "I am just what I am." And what I want my children to know that when I'm gone, my children can teach their children.

So I have over thirty head of children come to my home on Sunday afternoons and I teach them different things that it's important for them to [538] know. They rather hear stories and folktales. I think if all the mothers would teach what they know, they would keep their children out of trouble. They would have something to build upon. They'd have something to look forward to. But to just turn them loose and not let them know what to expect, that's why children be in so much shock when things happen to them. It's our parents' task to teach our children.

186 The songs tell stories too—the religious songs and the blues songs. 533 Those songs gave us a feeling to go on. That's all we had to live by. We sang and the games we played. We didn't go to piccolo or none of that—there [534] wasn't any of that in those times. We take a tub and washboard and make our own music. On Sunday evening my father's house was full up. We sing and shout and feel good about it. We had a good time. We didn't be sick. We didn't get in no trouble. Everybody loved one another. And we still love to sing. That is our talent God bless us with. We love to sing and we love people. We love to get along with everybody. We was brought up like that.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. Benjamin Bligen*

## I FIND NO FAULT LIVING HERE ON THE ISLAND

823 Johns Island is my home. I was born and raised here and it's peaceful. I've traveled across different parts of the world and I love different places, but I love Johns Island the best. There's peace and quiet here and nice places to go if you feel like travel. You can go in the river. You can go swimming if you want to. You can go fishing if you want to. You can go crabbing if you want to do that. You can go and sing and shout if you want to; no one to stop you. I find no fault living here on the island. I love it here. I make up my mind to be here until the Lord make a change in my life, to take me on home.

533 The singing brings joy to your soul. Regardless of how much you feel down and you feel like you can't move, you start singing one of those songs and it brings joy to your soul and lifts you up. You start thinking about the good things, and we realize we've got somebody on our side. We're trying to pass it on to the younger folks so they can carry the old traditions on. Our old [178 186] folks taught us these songs and they would like for we to carry it on through and they would like for we to pass it on to the young generation so they can keep it up. And I hope that many and many that come to our different churches will hear these songs and sing these songs and will be able to carry it on when the older ones have passed on out of this world.

771 It's a different time now than when I was growing up. It's harder now to get the young people to come on the old side. My family had a strong re- 869 ligion. I try to keep on the road that they was traveling on and do the things they want me to do. Hopefully, I will be able to teach the young people the way that my old folks taught me, that they will have something that will stand by them when trouble rise. Whatever comes up against them in life they will have something to hold onto, something that will deliver them in the time of their need.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright.
423 For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant
432 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

511 The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton
464 Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in
177 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricultural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

464 While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort
871 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi-
177 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requisite education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

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177 464 Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

177 Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment, and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the unintentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

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464 177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

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793 537 796 Often the test of a good Sea Island minister is how well he can arouse and excite his parishioners. Most of the ministers are from the area and know well the rhetorical skills and techniques necessary to keep a congregation involved in the service. From the time when young children begin going to the church services, they learn that rhetorical skills are to be praised, practiced, and deeply venerated as essential characteristics of learned people. Learning, to the islanders, does [871] not necessarily mean college education. Most of the Sea Island ministers have had no formal education at all, yet they could equal and surpass the most prolific expositors of the canons of rhetoric. For example, though this speaker has never heard of Cicero or studied the classical theories of rhetoric, note the unusual skill with which he makes his plea to the congregation, creating the long, flowing, masterfully constructed phrases characteristic of Ciceronian style:

[539] Heavenly Father
Look at Reverend Pinckney one more time
Who is going to unfold the word of eternal truth
Want you to please, dear Jesus
Give him a silver trumpet
[So] he can coax and call some more ushers into this fold
And then, then, then, my Master
Look at the mistress of ceremonies
Jesus
Want you to plant her feet deep down in the soil, Master
Where she'll never be [up]rooted by the storm of life[54]

796 533 [793] [794] Often when a sermon is completed, the minister will begin to sing. It is essential for a Sea Island minister to be a good singer as well as a good speaker. Singing is a regular part of the islanders' daily lives. Many older people sing with fervor and passion as they work in their gardens or in the fields, even when they are alone. Singing is thought to be good for the body, the spirit, and the soul: it enlivens the spirit, which permeates the soul, giving it spiritual strength, and the soul in turn revitalizes the body with physical strength to carry on in times of despair or when physically exhausted. During the church services singing often stirs and excites an already "happy" congregation. When the [786] music begins, some of the congregants throw up their hands, jerking and shaking their bodies in the movements of the shout. The music

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them] found a wino in New York City and just walked up to him and said, "I heard you own some property on Johns Island." The guy thought he was kidding because he had never been to Johns Island. So he just started laughing. [The developer] said, "I'm serious. You get a witness and come with me and I will give you five hundred dollars for what you own." So this guy, you know, he thought Santa Claus. So he got one of his friends and they went downtown, and he had everything probated, signed it off, and the people came down here and created all kinds of problems for the rest of the family. Eventually, they had to end up selling that land . . . because with this property, when the families are so large, most of the time you can't even get all of the family together, so they could agree who's going to get the swampland, who's going to get the house, who's going to get the waterfront. . . . But the court could sell all of the land and divide the money equally. And so, when this land developer bought this land . . . , he came down here and he wanted his portion. . . . He is now one of the heirs. But [he and the family] cannot agree on which piece. . . . Then he goes back to the court and says, "We can't reach an agreement." And if you can't reach an agreement, then the court will come in and put it up for sale.

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Obviously, the question of land retention is directly tied to the education of the landowners about the legal responsibilities involved. For more than twenty years, groups have been operating in that interest throughout the Sea Islands and the rural South. In 1970 Professor Robert Browne, who was then studying the loss of black land in the South for the Black Economic Research Center in New York (he is now at Howard University), was able to obtain a million dollars from a private donor to organize the National Emergency Land Fund. The fund has focused on educating black landowners about their responsibilities, helping them express themselves, putting land into production, and resisting aggressive development.

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The fund has worked in conjunction with the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, one of the oldest institutions established for the education of blacks in the United States. Penn School began by teaching newly freed slaves and continued as the only high school for black children on the island. In 1948 the bulk of its programs were transferred to the county public school system, but most of

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its community outreach activities were continued. The Penn Center, currently directed by Emory Campbell, acts as an information and referral source, provides such social services as visiting families to help them select food crops, and educates in matters including use of land and landownership.

Bill Jenkins was working for Penn Community Services in the early 1970s when he helped put together a program called Black Land Services, in response to a number of requests for help in retaining ownership of land. He is now active in the South Carolina Land Owners' Association, an offshoot of the National Association of Land Owners, which presently operates only in Mississippi and Alabama. Faced with serious cutbacks in funding and manpower, the South Carolina Land Owners' Association is not able to be as active as it once was, but Jenkins and co-worker Joe McDermott continue their educational activities in the islands on a reduced scale.

The desire of the dominant society to reclaim the Sea Islands, though shortsighted, nonetheless seems likely to prevail. As Ed Brown puts it, "The industry is there." The displacement that has already occurred will have long-term repercussions. "The social consequences of the pressures from development on the Sea Islands will be seen another five to ten to fifteen years," notes Emory Campbell. "It's subtle now but we at Penn Center see it as a very serious problem—serious today as it is going to be serious in another ten to fifteen years."

The islanders' ineffectiveness in resisting the often reckless advances of developers must be laid at the door of the very insularity that for so long protected their culture. Adherence to traditional ways has by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force. The price they are paying now is one more legacy of slavery.

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177 668 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs* v. *Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs* v. *Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the 177 668 875 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Carolina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding any city or state employee to belong to the NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

•871 875 641 666 In 1957, with training and assistance from Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins began the first citizenship education school on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher. The classes did not merely stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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114 her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to
123 young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960.
533 Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this
(668) spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

875 In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of cit-
874 izenship schools to other islands and the Charles-
641 ton area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such
875 community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mis-
641 sissippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration cam-
• 871 paigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil
563 rights groups turned their attention to voter regis-
(668) tration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the ap-
(66A) proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son, Evan. During the next two years they shared in the
(123) life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this music die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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000 cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who
159 was born and raised on Johns Island and became
• 871 one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history
[128] of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were inter-
159 viewing people for the update to this book, Sep-
876 tima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her
[668] death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

159 In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

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179 counter those of outside interests. The County
177 Commission accepted this new plan for limited and controlled development in early 1988, but the island residents know they must be constantly vigilant to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
758 well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization was put in place to address health needs on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
[743] part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement association, it grew to include environmental health, housing for the elderly, nutrition, and programs for substance abuse, as well as the development of a full-scale medical clinic and a nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the present and the future of five sea islands—Johns, James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
[423] Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes increasingly valuable for tourist development, the patterns of passing property down through families and the need to know about land and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the community. People on Johns Island are now well aware of the value of their land and are coming together to plan their futures. Further down the coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community Center has sponsored a program to guard against the loss of land by blacks. The center's director, Emory Campbell, having seen his home community of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the 1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker, Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island to participate in workshops on land issues.

• 871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern
(563) on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
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871 the schools were integrated, and St. Johns, previously all white, became the high school for all
563 island youngsters. Many white parents subsequently put their children into a private academy, but for the youth of the black community, St. Johns High offered new hope. Yet today the school system is still lacking. A desegregation suit against the county school system has been in federal court for
(691) six years. Brought by the Justice Department with
(668) the NAACP, it charges the Charleston County School Board with maintaining segregation and providing inadequate educational opportunities for minority students.

178 For nearly thirty years two things have greatly impressed us about Johns Island. One is the continuing process of community education and struggle that enables local people to maintain some measure of control over their institutions and their lives. The other is the rich Afro-American cultural life on the islands. Given the pressures of development and economic survival, the need to address contemporary issues with sophisticated tactics, what will survive of the older sea island culture? Public interest has certainly grown in coastal culture, language, and history on both a popular and scholarly level. In addition, there have also been patterns of change in the community and the cultural choices made by island people.

545 The Moving Star Hall Singers, a family group who began traveling nationally when we lived on Johns Island, continues to travel and to share religious music, folktales, children's game songs, and life experiences in a range of settings. They are widely recognized as outstanding carriers of the oldest layer of Afro-American cultural expression in the United States. In more recent years they have been invited to perform in local situations, including the Spoleto Festival held annually in Charleston. In the summer of 1988 they performed at a national festival of Afro-American arts in Atlanta.

159 In 1984 Mrs. Janie Hunter received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endow-

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## SOMETIMES WE UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE

464 The people on Johns Island, those that are not working in the city or as domestics, most of them make their living off truck farms on the island. Especially the women. They work on the farms of plantation owners. They pick map beans, they dig white potatoes, they pick tomatoes, pack cabbages, spinach and whatnot. Those are the things that they depend on for a living.

During the winter months they go into a hardship because most of the farms don't have anything to do. That's the hardest time that they have to face.

18 Sometimes we underestimate these people and forget they have something we really need. These are people who haven't gotten a college education, or even a high school education. But anyone able to raise twelve children—and raise 'em healthy too—must know something good. They were smart enough to plant and to raise the kind of thing the children need. They raised their own hogs, they raised their cows, they had the milk with vitamin D what they need.

[891] [855] [23]

Some of these older people thought very deeply. Mother-wit and faith in God helped them to do a lot, and some achieved more than some of the young people who have been able to go to college.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## THEY DON'T WANT TO GET OUT ON A LIMB

829 177 I believe, in my honest opinion, that there's a whole lot of white people on this island that's not bad at all. And I think they would like to see everybody happy, but they don't want to get out on a limb from their own people, be called "nigger-lovers" or any other stories that the people can dream up for them.

I knew a white guy and we sat around and was drinking beer and talking and he was saying that he was with the Negroes in most of the things that they wanted and he believed that most of the things they wanted was right. He said he has never done nothing to hurt the Negroes. I told him that I felt like he hadn't done anything to help the Negroes either because he just sat back and was sort of looking out for his personal self, instead of saying to his friends, when they have gatherings and the question comes up, "I don't believe that we are right in what we are doing. I believe that everybody should have a chance."

829 177 357 I think seriously that we got a whole lot of Negroes that are hurting us more than the whites, by acting content—like the maids in the house. Any time the madam would say something to them, they would smile even though within themselves they were unhappy. But this is what was expected of them and so this is what they're doing. They have been conditioned to this. They are not frank and not honest with themselves or the people they deal with. I believe this is one of the things that's hurting us because then the white man feel that he could always push you back, because you're just that way; you're not going to stand up to nothing.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## 829 177 ALL WOULD BE GETTING EQUAL EDUCATION

As far as Johns Island is concerned, we got a long way to go. I believe sincerely that there will have to be something that happens real bad to change the situation here. We've coexisted all these years. We have accepted this, and the white man have accepted it. Very seldom do we have to come together on any major thing. So in this respect we could make it if we could keep on going like that, but we can't. Because we have gotten to the place now that my kids are not wanting what I wanted, or *thought* I wanted.

• (871) Nobody has applied yet to go to the white high school. But I think

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829 when it come right down to it, it's gonna be accepted. Actually Johns Island
871 is real poor and I don't think nobody could afford for money to be cut off
177 from the schools. The superintendent of the schools told me that if the schools were closed, the Negroes would suffer more than the whites. I don't believe this, and I don't believe that he believes it, because actually to me then we all would be getting equal education—nobody gets none.

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*Miss Carol Bligen*

**I KNOW BE TROUBLE**

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If they integrated Haut Gap School, be trouble. I know be trouble, 'cause I don't like nobody to tease me. If one of them come and tease me, first thing I do, I going fight.

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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

**WE GOT ALONG**

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The Negroes have been afraid to trust the white. They feel he isn't wanting them to begin with, and the white men feel that they are superior. That's what we have on this island.

There has never been any race problem since I've been here. By race problem I mean there hasn't been any violence. We got along. The Negroes just used to take things as accepted course. They been resigned to their fate, most of them, and satisfied with that.

You can tell the difference in the whites' attitude since 1954. They weren't quite as friendly, some of 'em, as they had been, because they thought there was going to be a rushing into the white schools, and they didn't want that. But I don't think they have to fear about that. Nobody's ever tried to go there.

It's just a matter of time until they are going to accept integration. Well, I don't know about Johns Island. I won't say that here because, you see, people accept according to their education, I believe. The more a man knows, the more intelligent he becomes of worldly affairs. But now this island here is going to be a long time, I think.

The newspaper see a relation between the two races, they make that white man a Communist. Infiltration! Any time relationship between Negroes and whites, always be somebody tag 'em as a Communist. That's one of the policies of this Southland you'll find. They don't have anything else to say, they just say that. Just like Martin Luther King. They say he's a Communist and that's not true. Just a man trying to get what belongs to him.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**"MAN, ESAU JENKINS' NAME ON THE VOTING MACHINE!"**

159 666 871 Then I ran for the school trusteeship on this island. I ran knowing that I wouldn't have won unless a miracle had been done. They had three white persons to run. I made four. And I came out third, so I got more votes than one of the white candidates. That scared some of the white folks here, and the man who is on the county council decided that they would change voting for trustees on the school board. They would have it be appointed because Johns Island strength was growing too much.

The reason why I ran is because I wanted the Negroes to know that it is their privilege to go into any office they're qualified to handle. They are taxpayers and they have just as much right to run for public office as the white persons. I ran because some Negroes thought that if a Negro name ever was placed on a voting machine, that person would be killed. Or they thought that a Negro's name couldn't be placed on a voting machine.

159 666 And so I ran and my name was placed in alphabetical order and they saw it. And when one of the guys went in and saw my name, he went and told the rest, say, "Man, Esau Jenkins' name on that voting machine," says, "You better go on down there and vote." And that year we had about ninety-nine percent of the Negroes who registered vote. Encourage them ever since to vote.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

**WE'RE NOT FOR SALE**

(661) After we got started and the Negroes started registering, then a bribe was made to me. They sent someone to offer me whatever I want if I would stop teaching Negroes to register and vote and go along with the white folks. Well, I didn't accept it.

159 871 661 185 My argument at that time was that we need a high school on Johns Island and we need to get our children off their feet who are walking ten miles per day to try to get an education. They walk in the rain, in the cold, and the sleet and we believe it cause a health hazard. So I told this man who offered me the money, "We're not for sale, and we're only going to support

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159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
87 plus transportation to take them to and from school."
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The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
159 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
87 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
177 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
185 outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
[875] have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
● 891 scratch to seventh grade.

177 So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
185 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
[661] know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
177 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
[465] —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

878 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
813 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
494 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## EVERYBODY LISTENED WHEN ESAU TALKED

554 Esau did not get the kind of recognition he deserved for the work he did.
758 He spearheaded so many things: the Charleston County Citizens' Commit-
74 tee, the Credit Union (and it was countywide, which is very unusual), the
[452] Comprehensive Health Center on Johns Island. He would be really proud if
[734] he was alive today to know that they got the nursing home and the senior
[737] citizens' home. He fought like anything to get the health clinic on the island so they could have medical care for the people over there.

554 While he was living, he didn't get that much praise. But it didn't damp his efforts at all. His children suffered a lot for him being so aggressive. They couldn't get jobs in Charleston County. But he still wouldn't let that turn him around. He continued to fight for what he thought was right for his people.

554 Esau didn't finish his high school education until after he'd gotten mar-
191 ried. There were a lot of people, professionals or educators, who felt that if he changed the way he talked, it would be so much better. But I used to say, "Everybody listens when Esau talks in his same Gullah language." He was telling it like it is, and they heard what he was saying. You would think that with the exposure he had, and with him going all around the country, some of it would rub off. I don't think he wanted it to rub off. He maintained his speech as it was. So he had criticism from a lot of the educated folk, but he was saying what they needed to be saying. And he got the benefits for them.

554 He would have a whole lot to say about education. He would be very
•871 disappointed about how far we still have to go, but he wouldn't be bitter about it. He would be saying that we haven't accomplished yet what we need to accomplish. And he would see in what way he could work to bring it about.

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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 554 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 554 871 [171] I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior. [171] Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

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*Mr. Myles Horton**

## THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

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The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

(875)

Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

(533)

Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

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871 the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their
641 community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns.
666 Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide lead-
185 ership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander
[875] to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teach-
871 ers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima
875 Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive
185 than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands of black people throughout the South.

641 The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the
871 origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a
185 vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recogni-
[668] tion. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a
[875] teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins whose idea it was in the first place.

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*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## AFTER I CAME BACK FROM HIGHLANDER, I DECIDED I SHOULD GET ESAU TO GO

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I knew Esau Jenkins when he was a boy of fourteen and came to my school to learn how to read. All his life Esau devoted himself to improving conditions on Johns Island.

Esau had a bus that he drove from Johns Island to Charleston and back, carrying tobacco workers and longshoremen to work. One morning one of the women on the bus made Esau a proposal. "I don't have much schooling, Esau," she said to him. "But I would like to be somebody. I'd like to hold up my head with other people; I'd like to be able to vote. Esau, if you'll help me a little when you have the time, I'll be glad to learn the laws and get qualified to vote. If I do, I promise you I'll register and I'll vote."

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159 That appealed to Esau, and he agreed to help her. He had a portion of
● 871 the South Carolina laws typed up, those that pertained to registration and
641 voting, and he passed them out to the people who rode his bus. To those who
666 couldn't read or couldn't understand the language of the law, he patiently
185 explained the requirements. When he was waiting for his passengers to assemble or when his bus arrived in town a few minutes early, he would discuss those laws with them.

871 The woman who asked Esau for help was Mrs. Alice Wine. She had a
641 marvelous ability to memorize; she memorized the whole section of the con-
666 stitution that they were studying. Soon she was ready to go and be registered.
153 While she was standing in line awaiting her turn, one of the women ahead of her, in reading a section of the constitution, mispronounced the word "miscegenation." Immediately Mrs. Wine pronounced it correctly. The registrar spoke out sharply, "No coaching, please!" When it came her time, Mrs. Wine "read" every word perfectly by reciting from memory. She was given her registration certificate, and she was one happy soul.

871 But Mrs. Wine wasn't satisfied. She really wanted to know how to read.
641 She asked Esau if there was any kind of school where she could learn to read
666 and write.
185 After I came back from going to Highlander the first time, I decided that I should get Esau to go. We went up there and found out that many people could talk to him and give him help.

Myles Horton had been into Charleston to try to get people to come up to Highlander. Now, through Esau, he had a way to reach people. One Christmas Myles went down there with his children and spent the whole Christmas season just walking around the island and talking. He stayed in Esau's house, and the people really enjoyed him. Myles had a way of speaking to people that made them become endeared to him.

Myles always told people about the injustices that were there, that they had not seen. He said, "Now, you know, any day I can go back with my own people and not have to endure these things, but you have to live with them always. I want you to see if you can get to the place where you can register and vote. You need to think about what you can do for these children that are coming along."

(113) Septima's words are from her autobiographical book *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*, written with Cynthia Stokes Brown and published in 1986 by Wild Trees Press, Box 378, Navarro, Calif. 95463.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I STARTED TO TEACH THEM WHAT THEY WANTED TO LEARN

When they asked me to teach the course, I said I would help but I wouldn't teach because I wasn't a teacher. But Myles and Septima both said that if I didn't do it, it wouldn't be done. They wanted someone who was familiar with the philosophy of Highlander. They did not want a professional teacher to do it because they adhere to too strict a curriculum and they wouldn't listen to what the people were saying. So I accepted the challenge.

I had this material from my sister-in-law and she taught from the first to the third grade. That's all the material I had, plus the voter registration material and the Declaration of Human Rights. As soon as I walked in there and started talking with the people, I realized that her material was too juvenile. They were adults and I had to teach them on their level the things that they needed to know.

I had each one of them come up that first night and talk with me about some of the things they would like to learn. I had a little article for them to

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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
(212) students was on that first night.

The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
871 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
872 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything
185 but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

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871 641 185 [64] We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

871 668 In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

871 641 666 185 [875] We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

871 668 One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

641 666 185 It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## I DON'T THINK PEOPLE ON JOHNS ISLAND KNOW WHAT AN IMPACT THE PROGRAM HAD

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There were tens of thousands of teachers and students who went through that program. It lasted until 1970, and I think that what happened is that foundations thought that we had achieved what we were working for. We had the Voting Rights Bill and we had accomplished desegregation and we had gotten blacks elected to office in all these different states, so the money started drying up for the program.

The curriculum we developed on Johns Island became the curriculum that went all across the South. It was all the things the people had said they wanted to know and learn. I don't think the people on Johns Island know what an impact the program they were involved in had—how it went so far and so wide.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

(743) (739) (734) (362) (873)

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

(162)

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# AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 875 641 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Petersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship (668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they rose to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 533 114 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field (P 235-A)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able
177 to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her
198 homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

741 Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health
178 Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission,
758 Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship
● 891 education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,
533 Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan
668 to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk
128 through time. The first edition of the book intro-
121 duced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the out-
177 siders with intentions that have nothing to do with
178 the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

*Bernice Johnson Reagon*

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators.
Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously
the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work
for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland.
With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a
whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain,
such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in
schools in other states.

•871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only
one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never
attended school. An early school on the island was held in
the church building, paid for by island residents themselves.
In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought
a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete
two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries
of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one;
those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or
friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In
recent years the county school district has provided boat and
bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary
and high school students; the island school was closed with
consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

193 urban ghetto which was in sight of City Hall in the upstate
369 community had traveled much less extensively than had the children in the isolated rural community of Georgetown County. The rural children, many of whom had lived for extended periods in northern cities, used far more creole forms in their speech than did urban children in the upcountry. Indications were that these rural children might command a wider range of language structures along the creole continuum than those in the more urban area. In asking about mobility
484 patterns among adult speakers in the island community, I
464 discovered that many, if not most, older men had lived off the island for extended periods of their lives and that most
562 women had commuted off the island on a daily basis to mainland jobs for the past three or four decades. In the main-
[184] land community, similar patterns prevailed for men, while women were much less mobile and generally worked near or in
562 their own immediate community. Furthermore, educational
•871 patterns for women were different in the two communities to
184 a striking degree. Many mainland women in the older genera-
(212) tion were illiterate, while some island women had gone away
[423] to college. Land ownership patterns on the island provided a measure of economic security which enabled islanders to help educate their daughters. For these educated island-
167 women, geographic mobility was associated with social mobil-
166 ity as well. None who had college educations now lived on
562 the island; some were married to mainland businessmen and
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167 others lived in other states. For speakers whose social
166 situations are roughly similar in other respects, mobility
562 seems to affect language usage to some extent. Table 9
• 871 provides figures on degree of geographic mobility and use of creole and nonstandard forms for island and mainland speakers.

TABLE 7

167 MOBILITY PATTERNS AND PERCENTAGE OF CREOLE AND
166 NONSTANDARD VARIANTS
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| | | Speaker | % c/ns Variants | Mobility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MAINLAND | old | 1f | 68 | 0 |
| | | 2f | 78 | 0 |
| | | 3m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 4m | 32 | 3 |
| ISLAND | old | 5f | 38 | 1 |
| | | 6f | 23 | 3 |
| | | 7m | 35 | 3 |
| | | 8m | 39 | 2 |
| | middle | 9f | 0 | 2 |
| | | 10f | 8 | 3 |
| | | 11m | 15 | 3 |
| | | 12m | 31 | 2 |
| | young | 13f | 33 | 0 |
| | | 14f | 0 | 1 |
| | | 15m | 52 | 0 |
| | | 16m | 42 | 1 |

Mobility:
0 - never lived or worked outside community
1 - worked daily outside community
2 - lived weekly or monthly outside community
3 - lived yearly outside community

f - female speaker
m - male speaker

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926
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533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island." In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[171] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, can sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout a *full heart and a troubled spirrit*."

[162] "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1903. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

"*St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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against teaching slaves to read had long been in abeyance when Sunday schools began to be organized among them early in the ante-bellum period. Masters usually encouraged their people to attend these Sabbath schools and often delegated their own children to do the teaching. The reaction against the Abolition agitation led many planters to fear the consequence of their people's learning to read. Accordingly, the Sunday school movement was largely abandoned after 1835; nevertheless, on every plantation there were always some slaves who either were taught to read with the permission of the master or who picked up the knowledge clandestinely. Miss Towne found on St. Helena Island in 1862 a cabinet maker, Will Capers, who could read and write and who hoped the Government would pay him for teaching his fellows. He told her that he conducted a secret night school for men during plantation days.[64] Nevertheless, it was unusual for a slave to know his letters, and most of them could not count beyond, "one, two, five, eight, ten."[65]

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For the most part, sea-island planters found their laborers mild and forgiving, quick to start a quarrel, but as quick to forget it. Sir Charles Lyell thought that there were more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal than had been known among the coastal Negroes for half a century.[66] They were a good natured, happy people, making the most of their lot, forgetting the work of the day in their hours of "pleasuring."

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[64] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 27.

[65] Towne, "Pioneer Work on the Sea Islands," *Southern Workman*, July, 1901. Miss Towne, however, could not have come in contact with the house servants, but only with the field hands.

[66] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 266.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

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The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

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"The very oaks are greener clad,
The waters brighter smile;
Oh, never shone a day so glad
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle!

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

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Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.
[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

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When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of plantations in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

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Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

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[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.
[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.
[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 112.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

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It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits." [26]

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In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc. no. 79*, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Wording, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

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ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

[28] The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

[29] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

[30] There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

[31] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Miss Yvonne Hunter*

**ALL US WORKS**

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I am in third grade. I got left down one year because my mother was in New York one spring and I didn't have no shoes. I take arithmetic, language and reading. I like arithmetic best. When I grow up, if I don't be a secretary, I want to be a nurse.

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For lunch at school we have popcorn, links, milk, roll, and have soup sometime. We have to pay for it. Sometime we take sandwich. At home we have grits, sometime rice for breakfast. Put milk and butter on rice. And have bread. Supper we have chicken and rice. Have greens, sometime cornbread and soup—vegetable soup. When Itchy and Joe go in the creek, we have oshters, crab, clams, fish.

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Mother want us in bed at six o'clock. Sometime we go to bed seven-thirty. Six sleep in a room. Tina and me sleep together, and Patricia and her two children sleep together, Mama and Papa sleep together, and Itchy sleep on the chair, and David and Johnny sleep on the couch.

We get up six o'clock. The bus come by at seven. School start at eight-thirty. It takes five minute to get to school in the bus. I wash dishes before I go to school.

All us works. Sometime I wash dishes and I sweep the floor and I mop the floor. I cook. I cook grits, rice, cornbread. I cook meat, fry chicken, and I can make macaroni, and I can make salad.

I don't know if I want to get married. I don't like boys.

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[537]

SOLO: Annie?
CHOIR: Ma'am?
SOLO: You been to the wedding?
CHOIR: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: Did you get any cake?
CHOIR: Yes, ma'am.
SOLO: How nice that taste?
CHOIR: Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
Did you been to the wedding?
Yes, ma'am.
Did you get any wine?
Yes, ma'am.
How nice that taste?
Nice, nice.

Annie?
Ma'am?
You see my turkey?
Yes, ma'am.
Which side he gone?
So, so.
Will you help me catch him?
Yes, ma'am.
Get ready, let's go.
ALL: Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo, shoo,
Shoo turkey, shoo.

524 *Miss Yvonne Hunter*

## A LOT OF KIDS PLAY THOSE GAMES

I learn some songs and games from my mother, some from my brother, and then I learn some in school. A lot of kids play those games. Mostly girls. Kids that are seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve play. There are some that don't like to play the games.

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It's no music teacher at school. Our teacher have times for teaching songs. They have piano. When Mama teach us songs, she teach us until we learn it good.

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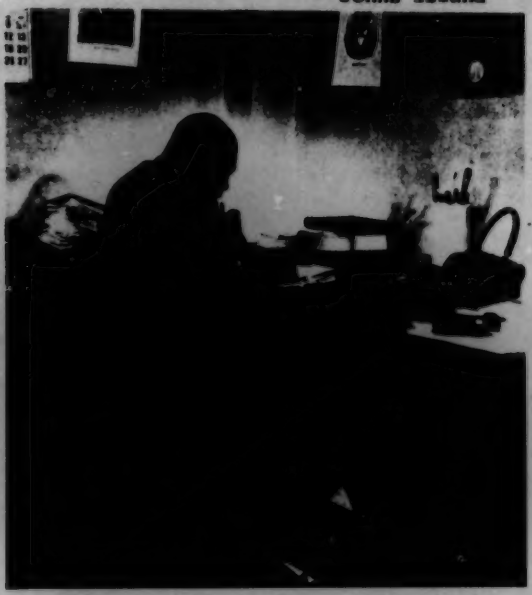

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

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And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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159 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from
871 scratch to seventh grade.

So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that
177 I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I
185 know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing
[661] to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I
494 had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to
477 eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one
177 —to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on
[465] driving and keep on fighting.

● 872 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few
873 children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we
494 have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

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I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive
494 Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do
666 something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
875 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
(212) students was on that first night.

The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
871 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
● 872 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything
185 but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO-THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what."

121 views.) In newly independent states and nations and in a pluralistic society like that of the United States, such action-oriented field work may now be the only feasible kind, as previously dominant groups interact with those now assuming control over their own institutions and directions for the first time. The telling factor, of course, in choosing such an orientation for linguistic field work should be the kinds of insights into the nature and uses of language gained by this approach.

3.2 Functions of the Field Worker Within the Community

123 Because the river island which was the focus of my
• 872 study was largely inaccessible to outsiders, I initially obtained a job as a volunteer teacher's aide in the elementary school on the mainland which island children attended. For several mornings a week I assisted a white female teacher in the upper grades, who taught more than one hundred pupils, the majority of whom were black, in both science and social studies classes each day. During the course of a morning, I came in contact with one to three island children in each class, and encountered a broad spectrum of language characteristic of rural Georgetown County. As much time as possible
(126) was spent initially in listening to the children, recording certain grammatical constructions on paper as they were heard and noting the speaker and the circumstances. Switching from creole features to more standard usage was noted,

123 especially when younger students spoke with the white teacher
•872 whose native dialect was a midwestern variety of American English, and differences in playground language and classroom language were also observed. Significant lack of understanding between teacher and pupil occurred on occasion. Efforts were made on both sides to remedy this lack of understanding, with children switching from Gullah syntax to more standard forms when asked to repeat an utterance and with the teacher giving additional directions to certain pupils known to have some difficulty in understanding her expectations. The teacher made no noticeable alteration in her language patterns, however. Whenever possible, other classrooms were visited and services appropriate to a teacher's aide were given when asked for. Conversations with the staff were helpful in learning of the difficulties which had been faced by beginning teachers who were unfamiliar with language patterns in the area, and in learning something of the attitudes toward language held by those staff members who were native to the county. The range of language used by the teachers themselves was also easily observed in informal groups having coffee or engaged in playground duties. Attendance at parent-teacher meetings gave limited contact with some parents in a school setting and with several school board members and community leaders.

123 As I got to know individual children, I made efforts to extend my contact with them beyond the school framework.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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Williams relates the following incident as an illustration of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, perhaps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were carried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[133]

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

[133] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
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to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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ents and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived $200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.[19]

### THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.[20]

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

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[19] Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen.*

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, p. 315.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

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The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

[28] The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

[29] MS. Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

[30] There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

[31] MS. Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
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872 [175] grades. The school was equipped with blackboards, charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901, Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904 when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial and agricultural training similar to that offered by Hampton.

527 [46] [567] As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning, so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday night was the time for general merriment, a dance for non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were. 175 527 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plantation where she lived the people were beginning to have parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night," she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers, etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They [273] are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[82]

574 527 175 Although there were occasions when people from all parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

[82] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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423 177 them] found a wino in New York City and just walked up to him and said, "I heard you own some property on Johns Island." The guy thought he was kidding because he had never been to Johns Island. So he just started laughing. [The developer] said, "I'm serious. You get a witness and come with me and I will give you five hundred dollars for what you own." So this guy, you know, he thought Santa Claus. So he got one of his friends and they went downtown, and he had everything probated, signed it off, and the people came down here and created all kinds of problems for the rest of the family. Eventually, they had to end up selling that land . . . because with this property, when the families are so large, most of the time you can't even get all of the family together, so they could agree who's going to get the swampland, who's going to get the house, who's going to get the waterfront. . . . But the court could sell all of the land and divide the money equally. And so, when this land developer bought this land . . . , he came down here and he wanted his portion. . . . He is now one of the heirs. But [he and the family] cannot agree on which piece. . . . Then he goes back to the court and says, "We can't reach an agreement." And if you can't reach an agreement, then the court will come in and put it up for sale.

423 871 Obviously, the question of land retention is directly tied to the education of the landowners about the legal responsibilities involved. For more than twenty years, groups have been operating in that interest throughout the Sea Islands and the rural South. In 1970 Professor Robert Browne, who was then studying the loss of black land in the South for the Black Economic Research Center in New York (he is now at Howard University), was able to obtain a million dollars from a private donor to organize the National Emergency Land Fund. The fund has focused on educating black landowners about their responsibilities, helping them express themselves, putting land into production, and resisting aggressive development.

871 The fund has worked in conjunction with the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, one of the oldest institutions established for the education of blacks in the United States. Penn School [873] began by teaching newly freed slaves and continued as the only high school for black children on the island. In 1948 the bulk of its programs were transferred to the county public school system, but most of

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that in Moving Star Hall.

177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
178 ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
796 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
[344] and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night watch meetings attended primarily by the older people. These important gatherings now take place in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[794] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
[795] pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
494 stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
[443] a successful consumers' cooperative owned and operated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[529] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[812] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[666] (p.xii-B) cation and voter registration.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## THE STRUGGLE HAS COME WITH ESAU

He's a self-made man—what you call pulling up by your own bootstraps. Everybody here live practically on the same level, but Esau is in a class all by himself.

When we first came to Johns Island in '36 I saw there was a future for Esau. He used to come to me for night teaching. I taught him, right here in my house, to continue his English and grammar and reading. Then, when he stopped coming here, he went to night school at Burke in the city and developed and increased his knowledge.

There's not another one here like him. I knew his father. He belonged to this church, but his father was not that type of person. He was the kind of "you doing too much, Esau . . . ." You know.

We have a civic organization here on Johns Island and Esau is the president. He's tried to let other people take over, but we elect somebody, he serve maybe three months and give it up, and Esau just have to take it back over again. That's why he's stayed in office so long. Others become discouraged and quit. But he hasn't ever become discouraged. He just work on through.

There's always two groups when somebody like Esau builds himself up—one that appreciates and another that doesn't think too well of it. I think now most everybody sees what he's done and I don't think he has

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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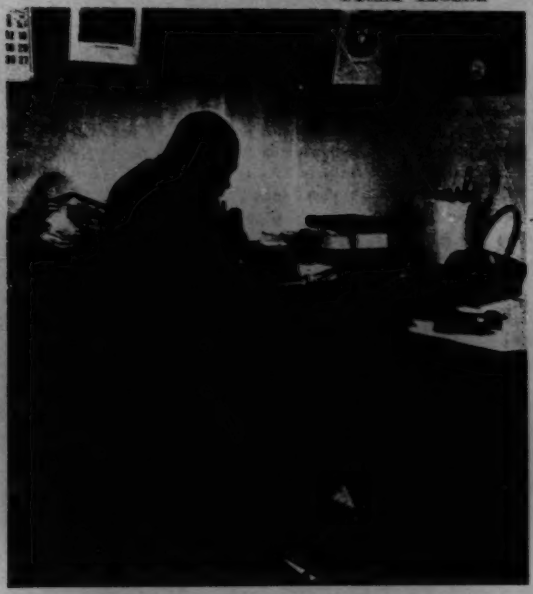

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

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159 I was able to have my children educated. One son is a captain in the Army,
● 873 one a navigator in the Air Force, two daughters are teaching, one son is a professor of music.

And now there are other folks on this island being encouraged to send their children to get a higher education. We know that some day in the near future Johns Island will be a better place to live.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

159 185 873 **ESAU STARTED THE MOVEMENT, WITH HIS OWN CHILDREN IN A LITTLE TRUCK**

When I came here thirty years ago, there was no chance for any schooling beyond the fifth and sixth grade. Esau started the movement by going into Charleston, with his own children in a little truck, taking them to Burke High School.

Then the County eventually consented to pay the tuition at Burke for all who graduated the eighth grade here. And the load kept increasing as the nine little schools on the island educated a group every spring. So they decided it would be better to go ahead and build a school over here with the people, and consolidate rather than to pay this tremendous tuition cost and transportation to Charleston. And that's how Haut Gap High School came to be here.

Esau started it. He's the originator of it. They might not give him credit for getting that school built, but I know 'cause I was here.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

159 **IT'S GOOD TO DO YOUR OWN FIGURING**

[465] [241] I shall never forget those days when I have worked long on the farm—for fifty cents a day—plowed, lined out straight rows to spread fertilizer in, and come back and put the potatoes in the trench and cover it up.

At that time I was about eighteen or twenty years old. I married when I was seventeen, and because I felt like that wasn't any kind of money to support a family with, I left and went to work somewhat for myself.

My father was a farmer and a carpenter. He was doing carpenter work when he was much younger, and he tried to teach me how to do it. I worked with him for a while, but I didn't like carpenter work too well. I imagine I

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## EVERYBODY IS JUBILANT FOR THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

159 641 666 185 The Negroes outnumber the white here 'round about two and a third to one. The potential voting strength for Negroes is about two thousand against around one thousand white, if we could get them all registered. They have been doing it much faster now, because I know the last ten years before the new registration started, it took us ten years to get seventy-five or a hundred person registered, and then starting back in 1957–1958 it got better. Since then we put nearly four hundred people on the books. They are civic-minded now, and they want to take part in it. I think so much progress has been made in the last few years due to the citizenship school that was started here by the Highlander Folk School.

159 873 185 I first attended Highlander in 1954. They asked each individual to give the immediate problem in his locality. My immediate problem was adult education, because so many person were here who couldn't read and write and I know this condition, because I would have been almost in the same condition if I didn't go back to school. So I asked the Highlander Folk School officials if it were possible to help us set up night schools for these people to help them become better citizens.

They said if I could find a place, could find a teacher, they could help take care of the expenses. So they did. And that was very, very important to helping us to get as many persons registered on this island.

159 666 873 185 And then people on Wadmalaw and Edisto Islands found out later the reason Johns Island was so successful in registering Negroes. They ask me if it's possible to help them to get an adult school. So the next year when I went to Highlander, when it comes time for immediate problem again, I brought in Wadmalaw and Edisto, and they again say they will help if I could find a place and the teachers. I found the place, and today Wadmalaw registered more Negroes than ever registered in the history of Wadmalaw. In the 1964 election Wadmalaw had about two hundred Negro votes for Johnson. Most of the white folks were voting for Goldwater, but Negroes voted enough to hold it in the Democratic column. That's the only area in Charleston County that went for Johnson.

The same thing is happening on Edisto and all over the county. In 1954 in the county there were 'round about five or six thousand Negroes registered. In 1964 almost fourteen thousand. So everybody is jubilant for the Highlander Folk School, who have helped them to see the light.

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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## KNOWING HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

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We had gotten quite a few people registered through that adult citizenship school, but they did not have the political education or understanding of voting. So we decided to teach them what the ballot means. I started what we called the "second step" political education school, because the people who registered to vote would vote because we told them to vote.

There were many persons who did not know how many men in the House of Representatives; why Charleston County has eleven in the House; how many men in the Senate; how many congressional districts we have in South Carolina; who are the men elected and sent to Washington to represent these two districts. We feel that if these people know about these things, they will be more interested in voting, and they will help others.

As you know as well as I do, that if a person doesn't know a football game, a basketball game, neither a baseball game, he hears other people laugh and sees how other persons play, but he doesn't know *who* plays well, because he doesn't know the game.

The same thing goes with some of the people who don't know anything about political action, so we felt like it was our responsibility to teach those people and have them well-informed.

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Along with political education, we have taught a good many persons how to sign checks, fill out money orders, how to crochet, how to sew, how to fill out blanks for their drivers' licenses. I think it was a great success.

Then after I was elected President of the Citizens' Committee of Charleston and Charleston County, I set up what we call a voter registration and information center, to which place people will come in for information. Whatever information they need, they come to this center.

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The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle--twenty dollars for each one --to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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the deed, and let them run it, and just check with them once a month, so they believe you meant good for them. And now I have all the confidence in you." Evidently that's the reason why it took me ten years to make him realize we can get along together. 159 185

The whole entire group work faithfully with me now. I think we are doing very well because of the fact that we are working together. And more people are using the place now. They see the need for it.

They didn't have any place to go on this island for recreation. That's one reason we built this, and then call it "sea island" center instead of community center, because we serve James Island, Johns Island and Wadmalaw. Unless they play in somebody's yard, there's not a place where they can have a proper game on any one of these islands. 159 345

Our school doesn't have a gym, probably won't ever have one. In October of this year the basketball teachers came down to the Progressive (526) (893)

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 159)

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159 Club and asked us to let them play basketball there. They'd been playing
346 outside during this basketball season, and they'd been getting beat eighty-
567 something to twenty.
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Last night we had the school come in and they had a talent show, and
159 had a record hop behind it, and I understand about two hundred head or
346 more were there. Then we started a Boy Scout here. We are interested in
873 getting the boys because we feel like it would be a good thing for young
575 boys to be a better citizen. They are planning to have their programs at the Club.

Then we have a young citizenship group that we organized. It con-
159 cerns itself with race relations and voter registration or everything that goes
346 to make the human being happy. They got a volume of encyclopedia to
575 study a variety of words that they might have a vocabulary large enough to answer questions. And they feel happy about it, because that's one of the things kept them from running up and down the street and have nothing else to do.

159 I stated before that we emphasize the word "progressive." If we are
185 going to be progressive on this island, we still have a lot to do.

*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## THOSE TYPEWRITER CAME FALLING DOWN
159 IN THE SCHOOL, OVERNIGHT
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We need better equipment and better instruction in our schools to make our children better able to compete with other children. I felt there are so many Negroes whose children wouldn't be college material, and so many Negroes' income wouldn't allow them to send their children to college. If a child goes to school and just take up home economics and some agriculture, they wouldn't able to use it when they come out, and they be just as bad or worse off than a child who hasn't gone to high school who will go on the farm and work and never think about it.

The child who had been through high school feel bad scrubbing somebody's floor or working on the farm—much worse than the child who never had any training. So my suggestion was that the school give shorthand and typing.

I told Robert Johnson, a man who is very energetic in doing things, to go to the Haut Gap School and ask the principal if it be possible to get in some typewriters and give shorthand and typing, that our girls who would want to be secretary and can't go to college would come out and know how

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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159 185 873 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in some of these lawyers' offices.

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 185 179 873 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island—I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race—because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

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159 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the
185 teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against
any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand
873 in the way of our children's education. You got yours."
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*Mr. Esau Jenkins*

## I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

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Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they have games and workshops and where we have had some folk songs which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $600 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

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*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of the kids get to be addicts. Some of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

• 813 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

829 464 882 If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages--fact, they have to do that. There's

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*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## I DON'T MIND TALKING ABOUT WHAT I SEE

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The school situation is still one that really bothers me—especially St. Johns High School. The school has 600 students and seventy percent of those students are on free or reduced lunch. These are black children from Johns and Wadmalaw islands. Ten percent of the students go on to college and I'm not concerned about them, but I am concerned about the ninety percent of these black children who cannot go to college, who do not have skills to develop self-sufficiency, and who have to go through school for four years, finish high school, and then have to go right back and either do domestic work, go to Kiawah Island and make beds, go to Kiawah Island and clean yards, or go to Kiawah Island and wash dishes. It doesn't make sense.

I feel very frustrated by what's happening to our children on Johns Island today. They're saying they have to go to James Island if they want to learn a trade. I'm against that. And so that's my fight with the school system. If you have a curriculum that's not meeting the needs of these students, something is wrong.

I would like to get on the school board, but they won't put me on there. They think I'm radical. I'm not radical. I'm just very candid about what I see and I don't mind talking about what I see.

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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## ALL THIS IS AN OUTGROWTH OF PEOPLE FEELING EMPOWERED

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On Johns Island you see the results now really, the aggressiveness of the people and the confidence they had in moving forward, when you look at the sea island clinic, and you look at the senior citizen center and the nursing home and the housing project for senior citizens. All this is an outgrowth of people feeling empowered by being able to read and write and understanding how to go about pressing for things like that. They became very active in the PTA and things that they didn't bother with before because they couldn't read or they couldn't understand what was going down. Before they had a high school on the island, a lot of people who had relatives over here in the city would send the children over here to go to school, to try to get an education. And they had to do that for a long time before they got the high school.

[743] [739] [734] [362] [873]

But all these things that finally came about, came about from these same people that learned how to read and write and fight for their kids to get a decent education right in their own home rather than having to cross the bridge to come into town to get an education.

*Mrs. Ethel Grimball*

## WE'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATES WE WANT

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People are still voting today. Blacks now rule Wadmalaw Island for the Democratic party. Before this, the white people in the Democratic party brought a slate in and then they immediately passed that slate. My father and others said, "We're not going to go along with a slate that they bring in. We're going to vote for the candidates we want." And that's how we changed that situation on Wadmalaw Island. After the voter registration drives, the people got more interested in the importance of voting. Therefore, we got a lot of people on the books. Eighty-five percent of the population on Wadmalaw is black. Most of the whites left the Democratic party when the blacks got control of it. Before that the whites ruled everything on Wadmalaw Island. It was the tradition.

[162]

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators. Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland. With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain, such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in schools in other states.

871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never attended school. An early school on the island was held in the church building, paid for by island residents themselves. In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one; those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In recent years the county school district has provided boat and bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary and high school students; the island school was closed with consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

873 For three generations a few young women on the island have attended college. At the time of the field work for the present study, at least four young women were attending colleges within and outside of the state. No young men were
(874) orientated toward college, although one had attended technical school. Reasons for this sex difference will be discussed in the final chapter on social factors related to linguistic change.

512 The rhythm of daily life on the island centers around
505 the morning and evening boat trips to and from it. Before seven in the morning the noisy school boat has taken the first load of youngsters to meet the school bus at the mainland landing. Numerous small boats take workers to their cars at the landing or to meet rides on the highway some four miles
512 further. During the day, the only men usually on the island
(732) are two who are blind and one or two who may be temporarily
(734) sick. Several older women remain, some of whom care for
(855) very young children entrusted to their care. Occasionally a younger woman with several pre-school children remains daily to care for them, but most women have mainland jobs. By
512 four o'clock the last boatload of children has returned from
505 mainland schools, and older boys prepare to meet returning parents in the family boats. By dark, most of the people have returned to their island homes and will spend the remainder of the evening on the island, except for special
(574) occasions. Occasionally trips will be made to visit a sick

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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491 one-lane affairs, which pass through woods of oak and pine
and marshes filled with cat tails. The church itself is an
346 impressive structure, built by the cooperative labor of the
461 men many years ago, each of whom hauled an allotment of con-
476 crete blocks from the boat landing in ox carts over the
493 deeply rutted sand roads. It was built in a location equally
368 distant from the "four corners" which were populated at that
time, and faces due east. Preceding the major morning ser-
794 mon, three Sunday-school classes are held simultaneously in
the church sanctuary, with oral reading and discussion of a
printed lesson a major component of the lessons for all age
796 groups. Formal preaching is held one Sunday each month, with
[793] morning and evening services conducted by a well-educated
[794] minister who comes from Georgetown. On other Sundays, ser-
vices are conducted by church members. The most prestigious
794 social group on the island is that of the Board of Deacons
571 of the church; this small group of six or seven of the oldest
men conducts the major business of the island. Other busi-
575 ness is conducted by two women's clubs or "lodges," which
often meet on Sunday afternoons in the abandoned schoolhouse.
Other social activities are parties, adult education classes,
music and dancing, and story telling. Community parties
527 are sometimes held in the old school building, and adult
873 education classes have been conducted there as well. Music
533 is a highly valued activity in every age group, as evidenced
535 both by the singing for Sunday services and by the dancing

562 region hold jobs outside the home (see U. S. Census Bureau
463 figures, 1973), the major jobs held by them have been teacher or nurse on the professional level and domestic servant or farm laborer at the non-skilled level. Up until the past decade or two, segregation practices kept black women out of most factory jobs and clerical positions. Figures from the
[197] 1970 census show that now two of the top five jobs held by black women in rural South Carolina are at the professional level and require use of a standard variety of English daily.
[465] Because salary levels for black women are so low (less than half the median salary for black men in the region), and because almost all of them work at some point in their lives, the incentive to prepare for the higher-paying professional jobs available to them is great. Some anecdotal evidence
562 indicates the strength of this incentive for island young
• 873 people. In one older family, the women had attended college
463 for four generations; men were skilled construction workers
464 with no college education. One man in this family had financed the college educations of two sisters, working as a skilled craftsman himself. When questioned about why no young men from the island attended college, one young man replied that it made no sense unless he were to study for something "big," like a doctor; laying brick he could make more money than a woman teaching school could make. Occu-
464 pational choices for black men who remain in rural South
562 Carolina are limited chiefly to jobs which require little or
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2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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764 be for that of an elderly person who had acquired many friends and relatives over the years.

795 The Sea Island churches are the mainstay of the community and are always full of life, vigor, and energy. Many of them have long and illustrious histories. The Hebrew United Presbyterian Church on Johns Island, for example, was organized in 1868 after the white Presbyterian church no longer admitted blacks to worship at its services or in its building. The blacks held services in a bush tent until a new 346 building could be put together out of lumber left on Seabrook and 795 Kiawah beaches by a shipwreck. At the time the island could be reached only by boat, and according to the church historian, the organizing members gathered the wood, put it on a raft, and floated it to the construction site.

Brick Church, located on St. Helena Island, is a Baptist church with an even longer history. It was constructed by slaves for their masters in 1855. In 1862 the slaves, who had been permitted to worship in the balcony, took over the church when the white masters fled the island during the Civil War. Before Penn School (the first normal industrial and agricultural school for the education of blacks in South Carolina) was erected in 1864, the school's founder, Laura Towne, held classes in this church. An elegant two-story structure, Brick Church has been standing firm and serene for more than a century on the grounds of what is now Penn School Center.[53]

[567] [874]

796 The Sea Island church services are lively and enthusiastic. At a good Baptist or African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Sunday morning 794 service, the singing and praising will be audible for many miles. If there is a pianist, drummer, guitarist, or tambourinist, the service is even more energetic. The musical instruments are secondary, however, to the congregation's expressions of joy through handclapping, handshaking, and general rocking and swaying. It is literally impossible to attend these services and not be moved to participate actively. Even the smallest child attempts to move in time to the beat of the songs. The [793] rhythm is also a very important part of the sermons. The minister uses many rhetorical devices to involve his congregation in the service, [537] chief of which is the repetition of words and phrases at the beginning and end of each statement (see Chapter 3). The parishioners are mesmerized by the flow, rhythm, and steady recurrence of the repetitions, and their responses keep the service alive and active.

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her version, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," to young civil rights workers at conferences in 1960. Thus it was that the Johns Island version of this spiritual became one of the great inspirational theme songs of the civil rights movement.

In 1961, prompted by the rapid growth of citizenship schools to other islands and the Charleston area, Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson developed the first program to train citizenship school teachers. This curriculum spread throughout the South as participants came from the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Thousands of teachers were trained. Such community leaders as Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi and Hosea Williams in Georgia went home to teach and to organize voter registration campaigns. They simply refused to put up with segregation anymore. By 1962, when the major civil rights groups turned their attention to voter registration, they were able to use the approach pioneered in the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961 because by then it was clear that the approach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

SINCE 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son, Evan. During the next two years they shared in the life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this music die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
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177 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the
668 NAACP were being organized in South Carolina. By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs v. Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs v. Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the
177 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Car-
668 olina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding
any city or state employee to belong to the
●875 NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

In 1957, with training and assistance from
891 Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau
895 Jenkins began the first citizenship education school
641 on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to
666 be the first teacher. The classes did not merely stick to reading and writing for voter registration but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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nearly six hundred registered black voters were added to the rolls in Charleston County through the efforts of the citizenship school.

Guy Carawan first arrived on Johns Island on Christmas eve of 1959, and Esau Jenkins took him to the all-night Christmas Watch Meeting in Moving Star Hall. There Guy encountered African cultural survivals and what he called "the oldest form of Negro folk life still alive today in the United States." He had come to Johns Island from Highlander Folk School to learn about sea island culture and to serve as a chauffeur for Septima Clark, who did not drive. A native Californian with family roots in South Carolina, he had a master's degree in sociology and some training in folklore when he came to live with Esau Jenkins on Johns Island. Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Guy to community meetings and church services, where he met and sang with various members of the black community. "With these two beloved leaders to vouch for me," he noted at the time, "I've had the inside track in getting to know people who under different circumstances might be suspicious and unfriendly." He was inspired by the islanders' Afro-Christianity and their "praise house" form of worship. He thrilled to the old sea island spirituals and the islanders' "shouting" style of singing them. He fell in love with the sea island folktales and folk beliefs. He immediately recognized the importance of the rich folk culture he encountered on Johns Island, which would bring him back to the island year after year.

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During his first winter on Johns Island, Guy developed a singing program as a new feature of the citizenship schools. The singing program had two purposes. One was to help keep alive the islanders' beautiful singing traditions. The other was to build group consciousness and boost morale by singing the old spirituals, protest songs, and other folk songs. The singing program proved to have profound inspirational value for everyone who participated.

One day Guy sang a version of "Keep Your Hand on the Plow." He had learned the song in the 1950s as part of the Peoples' Songs Movement. Alice Wine told him she knew "a different echo to that" and sang a sea island version. Guy passed on

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[668] proach worked. Thus the citizenship schools on Johns Island were the foundation for the voting rights movement and played a major role in the overthrow of Jim Crow.

114 Since 1959 Guy had spent part of each year working with the citizenship school on Johns Island. In 1961 Guy married Candie Anderson; and in 1963 they moved to Johns Island with their small son, Evan. During the next two years they shared in the
[123] life and fellowship of the black community around Moving Star Hall. Their purpose was to help preserve some of the older black folk culture on the island by bringing honor and recognition to it. As Guy wrote to Pete Seeger in 1965, "These days, you can go to any one of the major folk festivals at Berkeley, UCLA, Chicago, Philadelphia, or Newport and see some of the finest folk talent in the country. But the communities from which these people come have been neglected. Leadbelly and his music are forgotten in Shreveport, Louisiana. I'm hoping our work on Johns Island (South Carolina) will provide an example of what can be done in other areas. It would be a shame to let this mu-
114 sic die at the roots." To that end Guy and Candie
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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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cation and voter registration. The man who organized the Progressive Club was Esau Jenkins, who was born and raised on Johns Island and became one of the most effective grass roots leaders in the South. It was Esau who first conceived the Citizenship School Program, which the Reverend Martin Luther King's organization later administered throughout the South. The remarkable story of Esau's life and his efforts to bring progress to Johns Island is told in chapter 6. At that time it was not so clear how important the spread of the Citizenship School Program across the South was to be. A chapter has been added to trace the history of the program in the 1950s and its subsequent impact on the civil rights movement.

Esau Jenkins died in 1972, and his wisdom and understanding, his fighting spirit, are missed by all. In December 1987, while we were interviewing people for the update to this book, Septima Clark also died. A teacher all her life, she taught on Johns Island in 1916 as a teenager. She was part of the Charleston County school system until 1956, when she was fired for belonging to the NAACP. She then went to work for the Highlander Folk School and became supervisor of the literacy program in the sea islands. At the time of her death, she was recognized nationally as an educator and civil rights leader.

In 1988 many of the families who told their stories in the early 1960s still live on Johns Island. Most of the older people have passed on, of course, and children have grown and married and have children of their own. The younger generation has received more education, sometimes quite sophisticated skills. Gerald Mackey is a good example. At the end of chapter 6 he can be seen as a teenager riding in the back of a truck on the way to work in the fields. Today he is an evaluator of teachers for the school system and a candidate for his doctorate. Esau's children became teachers, community workers, a lawyer, the administrator of a major health care delivery system on Johns Island.

Bill Saunders told us in 1965 that had he been born white, he might have accomplished something. He nevertheless has gone on to accomplish a

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school, plus transportation to take them to and from school."

The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm. Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing, those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. William Saunders*

## I'M PRETTY BITTER ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT

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I've been thinking about Mrs. Septima Clark. Here's a person who got fired from a system after teaching over thirty years for belonging to an organization that she would not denounce (NAACP). They refused to give her even her retirement. That same system, that same power base, allows her fifteen, twenty years later to be on the school board. That same power base turns around later on and says, "You can have your retirement." And that same power base is saying, the mayor is saying, the governor is saying, "This woman is a hero." There's something wrong with that!

Those power brokers can say, "At eighty years old we can make you a hero; we can line your wall with plaques; because you're no more threat to us." And the reason we can make you a hero is that now we got to look out for Bill Saunders and them that is coming along. And they're the ones that's going to give us some trouble. And as new people come along, then some of us become worthless, so we get plaques and stuff.

When the superintendent of the school system for the state can say, on the morning that Mrs. Clark dies, that there's nothing wrong with our school system, we got a perfect school system, there's no bias, there's no problem, and that will go. And then the judge turns around and says yes, the only problem is poverty and it will take fifty to a hundred years to straighten that out, and then they say Mrs. Clark is a hero. The mayor says, "There's nobody like her. She never got loud, she never raised her voice, she's sweet, and she got things done. We loved her." I'm pretty bitter about things like that.

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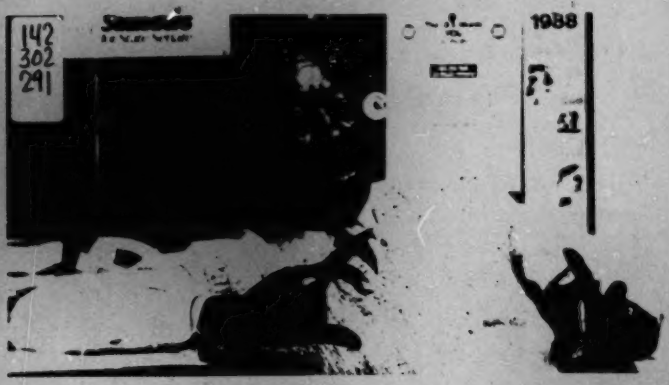

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Gerald Mackey*

## YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

*Mr. Abraham Jenkins*

## I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mr. Myles Horton**

# THE PEOPLE OF JOHNS ISLAND DESERVE TRIBUTE

871 641 666 185 The citizenship schools were inspired by Esau Jenkins who was trying to teach his Johns Island bus passengers to pass the South Carolina literacy test required for voting. In a 1955 Highlander Folk School workshop he had asked for help. In an effort to respond, we spent the next two years acquainting ourselves with the culture of the island and with the people. We found out by living and working with them what their problems were and that they wanted to be voting citizens.

[875] Bernice Robinson was chosen to teach the first citizenship school because she respected the people and, having had no teaching experience, would be nonjudgmental and experimental. She began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by saying, "I am not a teacher; we are here to learn together. You're going to teach me as much as I am going to teach you."

The curriculum was developed day by day. They learned to write letters, to order from catalogs, and fill out money orders. They made stories about the vegetables they grew and the tools they used, the chairs and tables in the room. They moved on to reading the Declaration of Human Rights, which hung on the wall, and the South Carolina constitution, which was a prerequisite of becoming a voter.

[533] Music and singing familiar songs livened up the long evenings and blended with the joy of learning. Singing sea island folk songs, spirituals, and protest songs helped build the group's consciousness and boosted morale as together they tackled the difficult task of learning to read and write.

This pioneer citizenship school, which met biweekly for three months, grew from fourteen to thirty-seven students. It was soon followed by a second school. Out of the first two schools, sixty people, two-thirds the total enrollment, passed the literacy test for voting. That is, they "graduated."

Esau Jenkins had an explanation for this accomplishment. He said, "No one wants anything more than to be a first-class citizen. That is what makes you learn what you have to learn." Their motivation was for an achievable goal rooted in their culture. Although each individual had to learn to read for him or herself, they studied as a group, they supported and encouraged each other as they painfully struggled to read. As they took the first steps in learning to read and write, they made use of what they had learned without delay. The process that evolved was simple and easy to explain and could easily be adopted elsewhere, making the multiplying process easy.

The enthusiastic new voters immediately spread the word to neighboring South Carolina and Georgia sea islands. Soon the citizenship schools were started on Edisto and Wadmalaw islands, and before the three months period ended, half those enrolled had learned to read and write well enough to pass

*Founder and former director of the Highlander Folk School.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 the literacy test and become registered voters. Some had organized their
641 community for discussions of civic issues and voter registration campaigns.
666 Later, as on Johns Island, they would run for public office and provide lead-
185 ership in the emerging civil rights movement.

In 1961 the citizenship school program was transferred from Highlander
to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the meantime Septima
• [875] Clark and Bernice Robinson had developed a residential program for training
volunteers who wanted to be citizenship school teachers.

Before becoming the educational arm of the SCLC, the number of teach-
871 ers trained were counted in the hundreds, but after the transfer, Septima
875 Clark reported that they were counted in the thousands. More impressive
185 than these figures was the vitality of the educational process which set in
motion a liberating force that gave dignity and collective power to thousands
of black people throughout the South.

The people of Johns Island deserve tribute for the role they played in the
641 origin and development of a citizenship/literacy movement that became a
871 vital part of the civil rights movement and has achieved international recogni-
185 tion. Special tribute is due to the first pioneer citizenship school, created by a
[668] teacher who had never taught before and her students who had never been to
[875] school; and to the coordinator Septima Clark and especially to Esau Jenkins
whose idea it was in the first place.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

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## I STARTED TO TEACH THEM WHAT THEY WANTED TO LEARN

When they asked me to teach the course, I said I would help but I wouldn't teach because I wasn't a teacher. But Myles and Septima both said that if I didn't do it, it wouldn't be done. They wanted someone who was familiar with the philosophy of Highlander. They did not want a professional teacher to do it because they adhere to too strict a curriculum and they wouldn't listen to what the people were saying. So I accepted the challenge.

I had this material from my sister-in-law and she taught from the first to the third grade. That's all the material I had, plus the voter registration material and the Declaration of Human Rights. As soon as I walked in there and started talking with the people, I realized that her material was too juvenile. They were adults and I had to teach them on their level the things that they needed to know.

I had each one of them come up that first night and talk with me about some of the things they would like to learn. I had a little article for them to

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 read and to sign their name. And they would say quietly, "I can't write" or "I
•895 can't read that well," and that's how I found out where each one of those
[212] students was on that first night.

The people we worked with were denied an education and so we had to
871 teach them how to read and write. I don't remember when they got a full
872 nine months elementary school on Johns Island. They didn't have anything
185 but a little four-month school when Septima was teaching over there. When the people needed them to work in the fields, the farmers just went and knocked on the school house and the kids had to come out. So they didn't even get a full four-month education.

871 And then they told me the things they wanted to learn, which was to be
212 able to write letters to their relatives that live elsewhere and read letters from
185 them, rather than have to carry them to the white people they worked for to read them for them. They wanted to know how to do money orders. So then I started to teach them what they wanted to learn.

871 And of course they were conscious of the voting process because Esau
666 had run for school board in 1954. He didn't win because he didn't have
185 enough blacks registered on the island to put him in. They had three positions open and he came in fourth. Well, after that election they started appointing the school board members. Therefore, the students knew the importance of getting registered to vote. So it wasn't hard to sell them that idea. But like I said, I worked with them on the things they wanted to know first.

We had no idea of the school spreading. We were just doing what Esau asked us to do for his people on Johns Island. Well, they started registering to vote, and then they encouraged other people to go and register to vote. People on Johns Island were registering to vote so fast that people on Wadmalaw wanted it. Then Edisto wanted it. Then we wound up in the north area of Charleston with two classes.

*Mrs. Bernice Robinson*

## THE PROGRAM WAS TRANSFERRED
871 TO THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN
185 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By 1961 so many people were asking for the program from all around the South. Myles felt it was getting to the point where we were spreading ourselves too thin. The best thing for us to do was to contact organizations and have them send people in to Highlander to be trained as teachers. We would work with them for one week and train them as teachers. Then they could go back and set up classes.

871 And then we talked about second-stage classes—political education. Our
641 classes didn't just stick to reading and writing to register to vote. We talked
185 about the power that was in the hands of the people if they know the set-up of the government. So we talked about the set-up and who you go to for what.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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871 641 185 (664) We always told the teachers that if there wasn't an organization in their community, organize that first class into a community organization so that they would meet once a month and could get information about what was going on in their community, what they needed to do, how they needed to pressure their local government about certain things, what they could get from the federal government. And to always try to bring someone in who had some information in those fields, so that it would be a continuing, educating process.

871 668 In the summer of 1961 the program was transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. SCLC continued to do what we had started to do when we had the program at Highlander and that was have organizations send representation to them for a one-week workshop—for teacher training. Then they would go back into their areas. They came from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi.

*Mrs. Septima Clark*

## THE CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS WERE THE BASE ON WHICH THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS BUILT

871 641 668 185 (875) We were trying to make teachers out of people who could barely read and write. But they could teach. The people who left these training sessions went home to teach and to work in voter registration drives. They went home, and they didn't take it anymore. They started their own citizenship classes, discussing the problems in their own towns. "How come the pavement stops where the black section begins?" Asking questions like that, and then knowing who to go to to talk about that or where to protest it.

871 668 641 666 185 One time I heard Andy Young say that the citizenship schools were the base on which the whole civil rights movement was built. And that's probably very much true.

It's true because the citizenship schools made people aware of the political situation in their area. We recruited the wise leaders of their communities, like Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi. Hosea Williams started out as a citizenship school supervisor. The citizenship school classes formed the grassroot basis of new statewide political organizations in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. From one end of the South to the other, if you look at the black elected officials and the political leaders, you find people who had their first involvement in the training program of the citizenship school.

It was 1962 before the major civil rights groups were ready to do something about voter registration. But we had developed the ideas of the citizenship schools between 1957 and 1961. So all the civil rights groups could use our kind of approach because by then we knew it worked.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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Johns Island

# AFTERWORD

668 In 1961 I was one of the students driven from Albany, Georgia, to Dorchester Center in McIntosh, Georgia, for the first Citizenship Education Training School operated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Andrew Young had come to Albany to describe the program, which was based on the one Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins had initiated on Johns Island. Many of us who made up the first class had been suspended from Albany State College for participating in demonstrations and getting arrested. The demonstrations were in support of students who had been arrested after they attempted to buy tickets from the "white only" window of the Trailways bus depot. The demonstrations and increasing arrests quickly developed into a full-blown local movement. The idea of becoming trained to run schools to teach people to register and vote seemed a worthwhile activity to us and to the leaders of the local movement.

871 When we arrived at Dorchester, we met our
• 875 teachers—Dorothy Cotton, who came from Pe-
641 tersburg, Virginia, to work with SCLC; Septima Clark, who lost her job as a teacher in Charleston because of her membership in the NAACP and her work with Highlander; and Bernice Robinson, who was the first teacher of the citizenship school on Johns Island. In the classes at Dorchester we learned about the political structure of our communities as well as how to teach people to read and write. At that time I had never heard of precinct meetings and knew nothing about the local and state party systems, even though I had done well in my civics and government classes in school. But those classes had nothing to do with what I knew about Georgia. The classes that Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Dorothy Cotton taught were eye-openers to a new way of looking at our community. For the next ten years, the citizenship
(668) school program trained grass roots leaders as they
pse to action in the growing civil rights movement throughout the South.

668 At Dorchester, Cordell Reagon, a SNCC field
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114 (P 235-A)

464 aged men work together on construction crews in nearby towns,
[484] some commuting as much as fifty miles each day. Younger men
[463] are skilled bricklayers, electricians, and boat operators. Women's work is now much more isolated than was previously the case, with the majority of them engaged in domestic work for individual families or for resort motels on the mainland. With the easing of segregation practices in the region as a whole, some women have moved into jobs in the public domain, such as cashier, store clerk, and delivery of mail. A few
[873] women born on the island between 1930 and 1950 have obtained
[875] college degrees and now teach in mainland schools or in schools in other states.

871 Education is highly valued by island residents. Only one older man in his eighties was encountered who had never attended school. An early school on the island was held in the church building, paid for by island residents themselves. In the thirties one of the wealthy Northerners who had bought a nearby mainland plantation donated funds for a concrete two-room school building on the island and paid the salaries of its first teachers. This school was an elementary one; those who wanted further education boarded with relatives or friends in nearby towns and attended their high schools. In recent years the county school district has provided boat and bus transportation to mainland schools for both elementary and high school students; the island school was closed with consolidation of small county schools about ten years ago.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island



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to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It depends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an adequate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble schools of the various islands, one is struck with several facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Helena, has little training beyond the school in which he teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches about seven grades in a one-room building.

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I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mens, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mr. William Saunders*

## WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of the kids get to be addicts. Some of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

873 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

*Rev. G. C. Brown*

## IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

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If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages—fact, they have to do that. There's

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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nothing much for them to do here but cut cabbages or run a tractor, maybe drive a truck or do something in the field. And there's not much money in it for them.

They mostly go to New York and find jobs somehow or other—working as domestics or doing small factory work. Very few ever come back to live. They come back to visit about once a year. But they don't ever come back to live.

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1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia



hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines Island. After the War between the States many of these Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made frum udduh roots and herbs an son uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[48]

We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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*Mrs. Idell Smalls*

## I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experi-
179 ence that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in
159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the
186 importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth
178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

(191) The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having,
+197 such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of
(536) Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing
(883) her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

795 outside the realm of the existing programs, the older tradi-
794 tional methods of helping are reenacted.

794 The Young Islander and the Church
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> Geme ta ole timb religion, geme to ole timb religion, geme ta ole timb religion. It be good enoub fer ma mama, it be good enoub fer ma papa, it be good enoub fer me. It be good enoub fer me.

This ole song of religion dedication still has meaning and is still the path taken by younger islanders. But the path these days is not taken without hesitation. Younger islanders spend a great deal of time in discussion of the worths and limitations of the church. The focus of much of this discussion is on the dominance of Elders. The younger islanders feel that the Elders are maintaining the church in the ole manner which excludes their influence. Elders in
[771] turn suggest that the practice of religion is a long time faith, that the young ones are recent to their belief and have not paid the religious dues which warrants keeping company (having input into the church) with the ole time practitioners. In spite of the disagreements the young continue to participate in the church.

SEA ISLAND MAGIC MEDICINE:
A CONSEQUENCE OF NECESSITY

758 Sea Islanders have never had ready access to medical
759 personnel. There are only two doctors on the islands. Both the doctors and a new health clinic system are recent to the

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

# *Frogtown and Currytown*

361 WITHIN THE WESTERN LIMITS OF SAVANNAH ARE
133 Frogtown and Currytown, through which flows Musgrove
Creek, narrow and sluggish, on its way from "Big Ogeechee"
[342] to the red Savannah River. These are two poor communi-
[363] ties, as can be seen from the paintless little houses on dirt
streets that often lack sidewalks. With the canal cutting
the center of the district, there is scant space for gardens;
(351) but in spite of this, there are small patches of earth green
with collards and turnips, and almost every "stoop" is decorated with a row of plants in tins of assorted dimensions.

.887 During week days, with many persons away at work in other sections of the city, it is mostly the old who are found at home. Grandmothers and grandfathers "mind" the small children while the mothers work out.

115 One old woman, Anna Miller,* had lived most of her youth on a Butler Island plantation, where some of the older workers had occupied the same cabins given to them before emancipation.

"Sebral uh dem hans wuz bery ole people," said Anna Miller. "Dey speak a funny language an none uh duh res ub us couldn hahdly unuhstan a wud dey say. Dey hab special name fuh all kine uh ting, but duh only ting I kin membuh is dat dey call a watuh bucket a 'juba haltuh'."

262 We found here, too, that in certain households certain
777 foods are considered to bring bad luck.

"I dohn eat peanuts," Millie McKen ** told us, "an I dohn let a soul in muh fambly eat em."

* *Anna Miller, 1018 Cuyler Street, Currytown.*
** *Millie McKen, 409 West Duffy Street, Currytown.*

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



Children are expected from Sea Island marriages, whether they are the couple's own or just living with them. Children are highly prized regardless of the financial condition of the parents, and abortion is rare and generally viewed as an abomination against God and nature. If a young couple joins a parent's household, rather than establishing a new one, the elder members of the family usually take responsibility for the care and discipline of the children. Many elderly residents, the guardians of several generations of children, attribute their longevity and good health to the belief that they *cannot* die until all the children for whom they are responsible are grown and able to care for themselves, or until their responsibilities are delegated to someone else. Some children are reared by sisters, aunts, uncles, or even distant cousins. It is not unusual for a child to reach adulthood living not more than a block from the natural parent but residing with another relative, who is perhaps childless or more financially secure. Even children born out of wedlock generally know who their fathers and grandparents are. These children are given the same respect in the community as legitimate children and are as likely to be reared by the paternal side of the family as by the maternal side.[45]

The church is probably the most important social organization in the Sea Island communities. Outwardly, the Sunday services follow the patterns prescribed for Baptist and Methodist churches and are thus based on Christian doctrine. Some of the beliefs of black Christians in the Sea Islands are quite distinctive. For example, I have heard many elderly residents speak of a tripartite division of the human being into body, soul, and spirit, whereas Christian doctrine teaches that a person has only a body and a soul which is synonymous with the spirit. According to many elderly island residents, when one dies, only the soul returns to the kingdom of God. The body and spirit remain on earth. And although the soul of the dead person cannot harm the living, the spirit can, at will, cause another to harm him- or herself.[46]

This concept of a tripartite body, soul, and spirit, with the body and spirit remaining on earth after death and able to influence the living, is widespread in West Africa today. Many African peoples do not conceive of any geographical separation between the real world and the spirit world; as soon as the body dies physically, they believe the person arrives in the spirit world.[47] To these physical and spiritual entities, some societies add a belief in a "shadow" entity.[48] The Sea

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-S (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

178 fewer and fewer places to collectively express their
887 wisdom and their traditions. With the testimonial meetings no longer taking place at the small praise houses, they gather in the larger churches or in the senior citizen centers. But as they explain, "You can't feel yourself in such a large place," or, "You can't really shout on a cement floor covered with carpet." And who will help the younger people recognize and value the strength and beauty in the older forms of cultural expression?

When we were on the islands in December 1987, we went to a Christmas party for senior citizens from centers on each of the five islands—about two hundred people, all from the older generation, attended. At each of these centers regular gatherings are held, and singing and sharing stories and remembrances are a vital part of the meetings. For all the interest of a wider public in sea island culture, it would seem that this kind of gathering in the community on a regular basis is the most encouraging thing of all.

887 Even more important, what these elders
86 know must be readily accessible to the children and the younger people on the island. Surely in some homes and in some churches it is. It would be wonderful if it were also part of the school system. Mrs. Hunter is occasionally invited to a school in the Charleston area to share what she knows, but as she explains, many older people know what she knows if only they were encouraged more actively to pass it on. In the Johns Island senior center Mrs. Maggie McGill has organized a group that includes her mother (Mrs. Maggie Russell) and others, all of whom are wise in the old ways. The Senior Lights have recently begun to give programs of sea island spirituals and shouts in the Charleston area. In February 1989 they represented the coastal region in a conference at the Smithsonian Institution focusing on congregational song and worship traditions in black communities.

217 One very encouraging development in the Charleston area is the work of the Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture. One of its goals is to maintain an archive of material from the Afro-American people of the lowcountry.

(7 XV-B)

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

217 It houses several collections especially relevant to island residents, including the Esau Jenkins papers. In 1987 we placed more than sixty hours of recorded material, along with prints of Robert Yellin's masterful photographs at the center. We wanted people from the islands, as well as scholars, to have access to this material.

In 1963 Esau Jenkins told us:

•887 503 869

> Now some of us, because we can read a little bit more, forget about the place we came from and some of the songs which help us go on. And when older folks sang those songs, it helped them realize they're trusting in God and reaching for a better day. We certainly wouldn't want the children to get away from it. We should cherish it, we should preserve it and keep it. . . .
>
> Now if we hide those sweet songs and try to get away from what we came from, what will we tell our children about the achievement we have made and the distance we have come?

814 In 1988 we noticed a plaque in the office of Bill Jenkins, Esau's oldest son and the administrator of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care Corporation:*

> A people who have not the pride to record their history will not long have the virtues to make history worth recording; and no people who are indifferent to their past need hope to make their future great.

000 There really is treasure here—honey in the rock. Our hope is that it will always be a part of the islands and a source of strength to island people as they struggle with the pressures and challenges of the present and the future.

114 *The authors' royalties from the Brown Thrasher edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* are going to the Tree of Life Fund administered by the Comprehensive Health Care Corporation in support of cultural activities in the community.

(P. XVI-A)

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

ment for a creole language to survive.

Today, the language situation on the islands is complex. The communities are changing under the influx of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated, many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder member is usually the established household spokesman, and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language of the younger generations. While many do not purport to actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal attacks).

## 1.0. Focus of this study

The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina



given island in order to be accepted as a natural member of the community. Members who are brought to the islands as spouses are recognized as members by association with a known island family, but even one who has been married to an islander for twenty or more years never achieves the status of a full member of the community.

Membership is most often established through oral transmission of lineage, as opposed to birth certificates or other documents. Thus one is expected to know one's lineage, for this knowledge can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection in any social setting. It is normal protocol, for example, for a young person to undergo seemingly intense interrogation by an older island resident who wishes to place the younger person. If one can explain satisfactorily who one's parents are, who one's parents' parents are, or even who one's cousins' parents are, then kinship is established and one is viewed as a member of the community to be accorded all due warmth and hospitality. The islanders can be chilly and sometimes openly hostile to strangers, black or white, who have no local kinship ties or affiliations.

As would be expected in such closed communities, familial ties, marriages, and the concept of the extended family are taken with utmost seriousness. The extended family is an African-like social tradition on the Sea Islands, just as it is in most inland black communities; acknowledging and readily accepting the obligations and responsibilities due not only to one's spouse but also to one's spouse's family is a part of island culture. The "conjugal bond is strong and literally lasts until death parts the spouses," and common-law marriages are as valid and stable in the eyes of the community as those marriages contracted under law. There is a low incidence of divorce and separation. Disagreements and conflicts do arise in Sea Island households, of course, as they do in any household. But understanding and accepting the relationships inherited in an extended family appear to alleviate many of the conflicts experienced in the sort of nuclear family that is characteristic of European cultures, such as mother-in-law/daughter-in-law antagonism. Like the members of extended families in Africa, people on the Sea Islands act with deference toward their elders, and most elders accord a great degree of respect to young adults, especially those with children. That is, conflicts are minimized because each member acknowledges and respects the others' domains.[44]

Most of the inhabitants of any given island are related; thus marriage between persons from the same island is not encouraged. Chil-

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Janie Hunter*

## WHEN YOU GET TO OLD AGE YOU TURN A HAG

775 I say see it to believe it. Ghosts shows up to some people, and some people they don't. But I'm not scared of 'em. I'm more scared of live.

776 But hags, that's real. When you get to old age, you turn a hag. Hags
888 come to your house and hag your children. Children can't sleep, or a hag take somebody child and put 'em under the bed. Sometime a hag sit on you and keep you from getting up, try to smother you.

But you could tell a hag. I heard my old people say, if you want to tell a hag, put a broom 'cross your door. If that's a hag, he going take up that broom, ain't going step across it.

(789) If hag bother you, use salt and pepper. Sprinkle either by your bed or 'cross your door and they won't come in. The salt burn their skin.

*Mrs. Mary Pinckney*

## I GOT A BLUESY FEELING

533 I like blues. My uncles Benji and Willis—oh, they could sing! Willis is come home 'round twelve and one o'clock in the night and wake up everybody on the hill. Go one side by the pump and he sing that blues from then 'til four in the morning. Wake up everybody. Mama is come outside, say, "Willis, why don't you come on in the house?"

"Can't come in the house right now, Doll, I got a bluesy feeling." He sing.

(534) And Benji, Benji could sing! He have one them cowhorn and he get up and put it to his mouth and blow 'em. Just like a trumpet. And Willis be singing the song and he be blowing the horn and they going down the road blowing and singing. And I be right there listening to 'em. I follow them too. They is like for I follow them 'cause I sing right along with them.

(534) My brothers sing blues too. Joe, he like all different kind of song—spiritual and blues. Sometime he be home by heself and go on the road or stay on that porch or go under a tree, sit down and just play his guitar and sing his song. And I'll go and help him.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

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*Ms. Elaine Jenkins*

## I GET MY STRENGTH FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE ON THESE ISLANDS

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I don't know how other young people feel, but I get my strength from the older people on these islands. My mother is one of them. I like to talk to my mother and her friends. When we get together, we always go back to the old days. And those days were hard days.

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The songs at Wesley, I mean the songs that the older people raise from the floor, those things do something for me. The music is a vital part of that service. There's almost a song for every feeling and mood. I can only talk about Wesley, but I don't think there's any danger of the older songs dying out there. Those songs are being passed down from the old people. Like Mrs. Hunter—Mrs. Hunter's children and her grandchildren. And then I hear them, and I'm sure other people hear them, and you write down the words.

([178])

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My brother Bill has been doing a lot of videotaping and the folk don't mind. We hope to just hold onto those things and put them aside for safe-keeping for the others who'll be coming along. Talking to the older people about the old days when there was really no connection to the city, they had to be self-sufficient. I don't think any of those things will ever be lost.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

*Mrs. Ruth Bligen*

## I LIKE TO BE ALONG WITH THE OLD PEOPLE

533 794 In church we have a lot of different choirs. But if you want to raise a song, you do that. Sometimes I'll sing. Sometimes Benji will sing. We have a good time. Our pastor is very nice. He likes singing, too. He likes singing and shouting. On Thursday nights, we have prayer meeting at the church. You (796) express yourself and pray. It's like in the hall. The young children are not (888) going to carry on like the old people. But I like the old people. I like to be along with the old people. And we had some wonderful times in Moving Star. I don't think the old songs will die out. We still sing it. I love the old songs.

*Mr. William Saunders*

## IT'S THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE SINK OR SWIM

771 794

I feel I am more fortunate than most of the people who are fighting in the arena I'm fighting in because I have a way to recharge my batteries. The religious aspect of my life is pretty real to me. It gives me a lot of strength. Wesley has been my power base. It has made me feel capable of doing anything.

794 533 796 It's real to me. The singing of a person like Ruth Bligen. To hear her some Sunday morning. Her voice is purer now than it's ever been. She just gets to the place that she passes out. Just knowing what she's been through, when she sings it's not a performance. You can see Benji on a Sunday morning. He's so articulate and his Gullah becomes more profound than most people because he says it so distinctly. But to see him pray and he gets to a point where he's got to stop, and somebody's got to go and take him down because of his problems.

771 794 178 It's the place where people sink or swim. And it's the only thing they have to turn to. And yet they're always walking with their heads held high. And that's a strength that the people had on the island that I believe is dying. That strength and the proudness is not there anymore like it used to be. Sometimes you skip a generation, for whatever reason. So maybe the cycle will come back again.

But it's a base for me. It's my power source. I come back to the city, where I can go for another six days with all of the adversities that face me.

533 enjoyed at parties. Congregational singing in church is
535 often accompanied by dance movements and clapping, particu-
[196] larly on the part of older women. Story telling is also a
538 highly valued activity, with males of all ages being especi-
888 ally skilled at this art. With old age, the obligation to
538 remember and relate oral history of importance to the family
or the social group is placed upon both males and females.
Young people spend many hours with old people, listening to
these historical accounts and to the stories of ghosts and
spirits which abound in the area.

621 The closed community of the island can be usefully
compared to more open black communities on the nearby main-
land. Three different island residents expressed spontane-
ously, at different times, their appreciation for living in
a community where "nobody bothered you." The closed nature
of the community makes for less interference from the domi-
nant whites. Land ownership and a relatively long history
464 of independent conduct of their daily affairs on the island
484 has made for self confidence and willingness to try new jobs
[159] and live in unknown cities at least for short periods of
time. Islanders frequently live and work off the island
[166] during their middle years, returning to live on the land
owned by their families in their old age or when their aging
parents need their help. Geographic isolation has also meant
limited job choices, however. None who engaged in business
or professional occupations have been able to remain on the

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing children in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often made the elder councils of each island the primary legal body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
• 888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

861 The elder Sea Islanders are active disciplinarians.
887 Because of their roles as community disciplinarians coupled with the large number of households in which elders are primarily responsible for disciplining, elders will provide opportunity to assess the effect of age on disciplining
[888] pattern. Because of the status positions elders hold in Sea Island communities and because of the isolation factor, it can be anticipated that physical discipline would be found to be particularly prominent. Elder Sea Islanders may also report rather unique disciplining techniques which are either in present use, or which have become extinct. This
[178] possibility exists because the isolation of the Sea Island supports the retention of West African cultural patterns.

121 Some islands are more inaccessible than others. A
361 measure of the effect of isolation on discipline patterns
861 and techniques will be obtained through cross island comparisons. It is anticipated that there will be a linear relationship between degree of isolation and use of physical discipline.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island



567 that was distinctive. He taught his wife Milly (Illustration 34)[A] how to make "goof
754 bags." Apparently his magic was no more potent than Gullah Jack's when it came
(561) to protecting himself. Gullah Jack was executed in Charleston for his part in the
(682) uprising of 1822; and when Jim Polecat was old, decrepit, and a nuisance, his own
(888) children pushed him into the fireplace, and burned him to ashes. Milly must have
159 been a peculiar character. She would turn her back on you when she had anything
342 to say. When her cabin was built she insisted on having no windows—a good Afri-
754 can mode of construction. She said: "Door's enough to watch." When urged to have them for ventilation, she insisted that "Chimney gives enough air." There were no windows put in. The walls of her cabin were lined with boxes and trunks that had belonged to her children, all of whom were dead or in the penitentiary. It is no wonder she was moody, and that the other Negroes were afraid of her. They might well be, for—in addition to being looked upon as a witch—she was the mother of seven murderers.

231 In every Negro settlement there are usually frizzled chickens.[31] These curious-
825 looking birds are supposed to be on the watch for goof bags or any "sleight-o'-hand"
754 buried under doorsteps. Josephine tells me that she always keeps one around for such a purpose. If the chicken "come clean" (loses its feathers), it is a sure proof that it has scratched up something intended for its owner's bad luck. So much for black magic. You hear little about it, but the belief in its efficacy turns up every now and then when least expected.

793 At the risk of being tiresome, it may be well to call attention to various obscure
751 customs among the Negroes that could easily be passed over as idiosyncrasies. From
796 the pulpit of the Jewtown African Baptist Church I heard Parson Joe Lowman say with a weak voice that he was feelin' very po'ly and in no condition to preach a Christmas sermon, but by the grace of God he would do his best. I was astonished to find, as he warmed to his subject, "The Christ Child and the Three Wise Men," that his voice grew stronger and stronger. When his sermon was finished, I realized that I would never hear a better one, and that he had either received supernatural
000 aid or was a consummate artist—perhaps both. Later, I read an article by Morton C. Kahn, on "Adventures in Medical Research among Two Strange Tribes of Dutch Guiana,"[32] in which the author described the greeting employed by the Bush Negroes, the translation of which runs somewhat as follows: "Howdy, white man.

[31] Captain R. S. Rattray tells us such freakish birds are called asense chickens in Ashanti.
[32] "Where Black Man Meets Red." Natural History, May, 1936.

A, [For Illustration 34, see Category 754, plate facing p. 225--Analyst]